

Race, Ethnicity and Football

Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues

Edited by Daniel Burdsey

Race, Ethnicity and Football

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Emergent Issues
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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of Mark Dacosta Alleyne (1961-2009). During the early stages of this book's production, Mark passed away unexpectedly during a study trip in Guatemala. Mark was an important influence during my early years as an academic, helping specifically to shape my ideas about race and anti-racism, and more broadly demonstrating what a life in the academy entailed. An erudite scholar, passionate anti-racist, dedicated activist and respected teacher, Mark was also a great friend, a brilliant wit and possessed a personality that would literally light up the room. I hope that this volume does justice to everything I learnt from Mark about critical, interventionist scholarship in the field of ethnic and racial studies.

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DB
Brighton
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Introduction

1 They Think It's All Over . . . It Isn't Yet!

The Persistence of Structural Racism and Racialised Exclusion in Twenty- First Century Football

Daniel Burdsey

FOOTBALL: WHAT'S RACE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

During the early stages of this book's production, a debate developed in the media regarding the significance of race in contemporary British society. It followed the comments of the then Labour government's Communities Secretary, John Denham, in January 2010 that 'focusing on somebody's race or ethnic background to explain their achievements or opportunities is far too simple' (cited in Travis 2010). Detailing the social changes that Britain had undergone during his party's tenure, he spoke instead of the salience of individuals' class status in underpinning contemporary inequalities, adding that 'we must avoid a one-dimensional debate that assumes all minority-ethnic people are disadvantaged' (cited in Sparrow and Owen 2010).

In one respect, this was simply another intervention from a party that displayed an inconsistent stance on race equality during its administration. Having overseen the Public Inquiry into the murder of black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, in 1993 and the introduction of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, this government also introduced draconian legislation around immigration, asylum and the so-called "war on terror" (Pitcher 2009). Yet, in another sense, Denham's comments signified a broader shift towards a neo-liberal approach to engaging with race and racism. Through this increasingly pervasive way of (avoiding) thinking about racial phenomena, 'in diluting, if not erasing, race in all public affairs of the state, neo-liberal proponents nevertheless seek to privatize racism alongside most everything else' (Goldberg 2009: 331). Either way, it was a particularly crude dismissal of the enduring spectre of race at the beginning of the twenty-first century.¹

The relevance of the debate to this book was immediately apparent, with Denham's claims closely echoing commonsense discourses within British football about the decreasing influence of race and racism in the recruitment and selection policies of professional clubs and national federations.

Whilst few would posit its total absence from the game, racism is now viewed by many people as confined largely to history and/or remaining predominantly the preserve of a small number of residual bigots tucked away on the terraces, rather than permeating the clubs, structures and organisations that comprise this area of popular culture. Increasingly, in football as in other aspects of society, ‘the individualization of wrongdoing, its localization as personal and so private preference expression, *erases institutional racisms precisely as conceptual possibility*’ (ibid.: 362–3, emphasis added). The (selective and myopic) list of “evidence” underpinning this shift towards a perception of post-racial football is substantial: the number of minority ethnic players (both men and women) playing at the highest echelons, dominating domestic leagues and the UEFA Champions League at club level, and the World Cup on the international front; the global flows of player migration between countries and continents; the decision to award the 2010 men’s World Cup Finals to South Africa (the first ever on that continent); and a general decrease (in some countries, at least) in the prevalence of overt, racist incidents taking place in the stands and on the pitch.

Despite the superficial and simplistic nature of many of these claims regarding a move towards racial equality in British football, it would be clearly incorrect to assert that there has been no progress over the last couple of decades. Perhaps most notably, the establishment of an anti-racist movement, consisting of both independent organisations with a national remit and local fan-based initiatives, has been one of the most marked social changes in the post-Hillsborough British football landscape. It has certainly led to a shift in perceptions amongst *some* individuals involved in the game, as well as those who follow and report on it. My own experiences as a fan are testimony to the improvements that the game has seen. As an Everton supporter growing up in the 1980s, I watched what were always “all white” line-ups and endured widespread allegations that the racism found on some sections of the terraces was reflected in the club’s selection policy. I can still painfully recall the despondency and sickness I felt deep in my stomach on the occasion that large numbers of fans around me repeatedly chanted “Everton are white!” during a match at Arsenal in the early 1990s. I equally remember my sense of hope when the Everton fanzine, *When Skies Are Grey*, initiated its ‘No Al Razzismo’ campaign shortly afterwards, and my feelings of pride and sense that meaningful change was perhaps afoot, ten years later, in seeing a team in which minority ethnic players made up the greater part. I now cheer on a squad including Nigerians, black Britons and Frenchmen, a Moroccan-Belgian, a Samoan-Australian, an Albanian-German, and dual heritage players from England, the United States and South Africa.

The symbolism of this cultural shift and its wider ramifications certainly should not be dismissed. However, I am at risk here of endorsing the very reasoning I want to argue so strongly against. Hence, great caution is required and it is necessary to question what, if anything, this symbolism

actually means. Put simply, the numerical representation of minority ethnic professional players no more represents a genuine change in the overall culture of football than, say, the number of minority ethnic police officers signifies a truly multicultural police force. Whilst the representation of (some) minority ethnic communities has increased significantly over recent decades, only a very superficial reading could claim that this signifies a meaningful shift in the occupational culture of football as a whole. Overly optimistic views of progress neatly sidestep questions around power and politics, and ignore the fact that to look beyond the multiethnic spectacle on the pitch, in Europe at least, football remains a primarily white institution: games are watched by crowds of predominantly white supporters, controlled by white match officials, and teams are run by white (male) managers, coaches, owners and directors. More broadly, the game is governed by institutions in which most members are white (and again male). Look closely though and, apart from the action on the pitch, you will often see a significant presence of minority ethnic people in the stadium: they will be directing you to your seat or serving you refreshments. The racialised historical antecedents, and continuing legacy, of these roles—entertaining or serving the white folk—should not be lost within the contemporary clamour of positivity.

One might counter that both within the everyday interactions of player subcultures at professional clubs and in amateur leagues based in large urban centres throughout Western Europe a form of multiculturalism or, perhaps more accurately one of ‘conviviality’, has become habitual (Gilroy 2004). In such instances, although racism persists, ‘processes of cohabitation and interaction . . . have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life’ (ibid.: xi). However, studies of football, in the Netherlands for instance, have demonstrated how popular beliefs around the game’s integrative potential—or, more specifically, dominant attempts to facilitate this—can often be misguided, ephemeral and actually contribute to enhanced segregation and absolutist ideas of difference (Burdsey 2008, Müller *et al.* 2008).

Taking the above discussion into account, the overarching aim of this book is thus to highlight football’s position as an exemplar of the unequivocally political nature of the putatively *apolitical* (Carrington 2010). It is a sphere that, a decade into the twenty-first century, continues to facilitate a prominent and forceful articulation and contestation of the cultural politics of race, ethnicity, racism and multiculturalism, and still reflects many of the contemporary ethnic, racial and religious divisions, antagonisms and inequalities present in the wider local and global society. Accordingly, this book proceeds from a position that racism in football is much more than a matter of individual bigotry or occasional, spontaneous prejudice; it is *structural*, or what has also been labelled ‘systemic’, i.e. ‘a material, social, and ideological reality that is well-embedded in major . . . institutions’ (Feagin 2006: 2). As Michael Eric Dyson (2009: 186) poignantly remarks, ‘we must not reduce the problems of race to face and skin; we must also see them in structure and system’.

THE MARGINALISATION OF RACE AND THE 'NON-PERFORMATIVITY' OF ANTI-RACISM

A decade ago, Les Back *et al.* (2001: 164) identified that:

the typical “public” response of football clubs and individuals associated with the game to allegations of racism has historically been one of denial: denial that the problem exists at any significant level at individual clubs or amongst players, denial that there is a problem within the game more generally and, on occasion, denial that racism exists itself as a problem in society.

This is a worldview that arguably continues to permeate aspects of the game, as well as sections of the mass media and the general public. Yet, the subtle difference is that rather than contending that racism has *never* existed, the current dominant position recognises that whilst it was once a problem, it has now been largely eradicated. When racism does occur in stadia—or, more precisely, when its presence cannot be denied—it is habitually deflected from the game itself, with blame attributed to extremists (for instance, neo-Nazis and hooligans); groups which, we are told, are not “real” football fans and have thus infiltrated the game in order to purvey a broader political agenda (see Back *et al.* 1999). On the pitch, racist incidents are viewed as sporadic occurrences caused by sport’s highly charged, competitive nature or emanating from occasional, individual prejudices (Müller *et al.* 2007). In terms of participation levels, communities that are under-represented as players, coaches and managers are blamed for causing their own exclusion, rather than being seen as the recipients of exclusionary attitudes and practices. In short, the idea that racial inequality in football is structural and institutional is still widely shunned.

Specific, practical reasons why racism might be denied in various aspects of sport (Long 2000), and football specifically (Burdsey 2007a, Lusted 2009), have been outlined in detail elsewhere, noting individuals’ inabilities to recognise, acknowledge, accept and ultimately eradicate racism. In addition, we might also look, more theoretically, to a broader shift in “race-thinking” that impacts on sport as much as it does on the wider society. In football, it is generally agreed that race *should not* be a criterion in recruitment and selection processes, and that racism *should not* be present in stadia. On the surface, this is clearly and unequivocally a positive standpoint, yet in its practical manifestations it is rather more problematic. This is because the position “should not” is frequently conflated with that of “is not”. As notions of race *per se* are seen to be irrelevant and/or counter-productive in football (e.g. “they are just footballers”, “we want the *best* players, whatever colour”, invoking notions of race to target opposition players has a negative impact on one’s own team as well, etc.), other ways of thinking about, and through, race—including, at the most extreme,

sometimes even acknowledging the existence of racism—are consequently marginalised. As David Theo Goldberg (2009: 36) argues, ‘as race evaporates from the socio-conceptual landscape, racisms (in their plurality) are pushed further and further out of sight, out of “existence”, unmentionable because the terms by which to recognize and reference them recede, fade from view and memory’. Critically, he points out that ‘it is not that race is simply silenced, if silenced at all’, but rather that its presence becomes more ambiguous, its naming becomes less explicit and its identification becomes more difficult (Goldberg 2010: 90).

Critical race theorists, in particular, have demonstrated that whilst individuals’ non-engagement with the language of race ostensibly reduces the significance of racial classification in the public sphere, in reality ‘colour-blindness works as an ideology by obscuring the institutional arrangements reproducing structural inequalities and does so in a way that justifies and defends the racial status quo’ (Rodríguez 2006: 645, see also Bonilla-Silva 2006). Ben Carrington (2010: 4) identifies a similar process with regard to dominant assumptions about the neutral, benign nature of sport, arguing that:

it is sport’s assumed innocence as a space (in the imagination) and a place (as it physically manifests itself) that is removed from concerns of power, inequality, struggle and ideology, that has, paradoxically, allowed it to be filled with a range of contradictory assumptions that have inevitably spilled back over and into wider society.

It is precisely, therefore, the fact that notions of race and racism are *believed* to have been eradicated from much of football that allows them to operate as they do—in complex, nuanced and often covert ways that go under the radar of football authorities and beyond the capacities of anti-racist groups. Indeed, as Goldberg (2010: 90) puts it, such “silencing” can proliferate the condition, pervading undetected by a broader public’.

I wish to propose one further contention in this chapter before going on to outline the rationale for, and contents of, the book itself. My argument is that—for the most part—football clubs, governing bodies and even elements of the anti-racist football movement still do not possess a sufficiently sophisticated approach for identifying, and “tool-kit” for addressing, the myriad racisms—and their intersections with other forms of discrimination—that exist in the game. The football “establishment”, in particular, seems to adopt a paradoxical approach towards issues of racism: it welcomes the presence of anti-racist organisations—most prominently Kick It Out and Football Against Racism in Europe—but simultaneously fails to acknowledge the extent to which racism actually continues to exist and the various ways in which it manifests itself. Football’s governing bodies also display a resolute refusal to meaningfully utilise this anti-racist movement and its ideological framework, to enact appropriate penalties against those supporters, players, clubs and associations that perpetrate prejudice and

discrimination. Financial penalties for racist supporter behaviour amount to the equivalent of little more than a few hours' wages for star players, whilst UEFA's claims that it will introduce temporary stoppages in, or even abandon, matches where there is continual racist chanting have failed to come to fruition. It is almost as if the mere public support (or, arguably, "lip service") given to anti-racism by clubs and governing bodies, and the construction of an official consensus around the undesirability of racism, are believed to be a sufficient safeguard against racism actually being put into practice. This lack of commitment to implement their claims and a reliance on symbolic gestures by these institutions represent what Hylton (2010: 345)—drawing on Ahmed (2006)—insightfully terms the 'non-performativity' of anti-racism in sport.

David Gillborn (2008) has argued that in the British education system, dominant notions of (anti-)racism are unable (or unwilling) to acknowledge and address prejudice and discrimination beyond the most blatant and crude forms. His description can be applied equally to the situation in British football. A contributing factor underpinning this overly simplistic, and often ineffective, approach to anti-racism is the hegemonic 'official multiculturalist' approach to racial equality that is employed throughout much of the game (Burdsey 2011). This framework involves the public celebration of difference and thus provides a veneer of progressive action, but at the same time is content with 'bracketing or avoiding institutional and structural determinants of inequality' (Gordon and Newfield 1996: 79). My point here is certainly not to reject multiculturalism *per se*, as has occurred in much political and academic discourse and practice across Western Europe over the last decade (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), for it has a crucial part to play in the broader struggle for racial justice. Rather, my critique is directed towards a particular, corporatist manifestation of multiculturalism that harmonises with, rather than disrupts, triumphalist narratives and thus does not challenge the hierarchisation of difference (Kim 2004). In other words, this is not 'multiculturalism-as-citizenization', which is 'about constructing new civic and political relations to overcome the deeply-entrenched inequalities that have persisted after the abolition of formal discrimination', but the promotion and celebration of fixed, static cultural differences (Kymlicka 2010: 37–8). As such, this approach fails to foreground a radical, progressive anti-racist element in anti-discriminatory praxis (Berman and Paradies 2010). Whilst not wishing to deny the (usually) sterling intentions and efforts of those working towards this aim, as Ben Pitcher (2009: 15) points out, it is 'important to recognize that it can no longer be presupposed (if, indeed, it ever could) that what we call anti-racism will necessarily describe a set of values that will challenge and deconstruct racist practice'.

I am clearly not arguing, then, that the fight against racism in football has not made any progress over recent decades, or that its current existence and manifestations are completely ignored. Such a proposition would be

absurd given the available evidence, for racism in the game is challenged and spoken about (in certain quarters) more now than it has ever been. Rather, the contention is that the 'the discursive and ideological space in which racism can be openly addressed and challenged is being redrawn' (Rhodes 2009: para. 4.4). In other words, 'institutionally, it is not that race has been made "absent" but that its presence has been rendered invisible and silenced (save to the sensitive eye and ear), purged of explicit terms of reference' (Goldberg 2010: 91). Racism in football evidently *can be* and *is* talked about and challenged. Yet, this can be undertaken increasingly only on certain terms, by particular individuals, in specific contexts, and as part of a dominant discourse that situates it as emanating from, and manifesting itself in, a limited number of non-institutional outlets and not as an intrinsic, structural characteristic of the game.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The plans for this book began in November 2008, somewhere above the Atlantic Ocean on a flight between Chicago and London. Trying to pass the time, I jotted down a series of ideas for future research projects and attempted to map some of the work being undertaken by other academics around race, ethnicity and football. Following a series of subsequent e-mails inviting these scholars to become involved in a virtual research cluster, the project became more tangible in May 2009, when most of the contributors presented their draft chapters at a one-day conference at the University of Brighton.

Given the reflections on my years as a football supporter detailed earlier in this chapter, my personal motivations for editing this book may come as little surprise to readers. They are closely aligned to those of Les Back and his colleagues in writing their own, seminal tome on racism in football—as an outlet for turning their frustrations around continuing to witness racist behaviour at matches into something productive. In other words, 'to break out of the confinement of being a "spectator" named so eloquently by C. Wright Mills and turn private troubles into public issues' (Back *et al.* 2001: xiv). Whilst overt racist behaviour at matches may have declined since the publication of their volume, this book similarly seeks to rally against the more intricate, covert and institutionalised forms of prejudice and discrimination that still exist within the game.

In terms of its intellectual genesis, much of the thinking around this collection (and the individual chapters within it) is influenced by three hugely important books that were published a decade ago: Les Back and colleagues' *The Changing Face of Football* (Back *et al.* 2001), Jon Garland and Michael Rowe's *Racism and Anti-racism in Football* (Garland and Rowe 2001), and Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald's '*Race*', *Sport and British Society* (Carrington and McDonald 2001). These were significant

publications not only in terms of their foci and scope, but also for the way they introduced “mainstream” social theory and a critical sociological gaze to debates around race and ethnicity in football. These texts provided a cogent delineation of the fact that racism was often complex, nuanced and subtle, and not peripheral to the game; rather it was central and structural. As the first edited volume to provide a comprehensive sociological analysis dedicated entirely to race, ethnicity and football, this book aims to extend these discussions, both in terms of developing existing research areas and illuminating a variety of hitherto unexamined topics.

If it is not already apparent, it should soon become clear to readers that the examples and case studies included in this collection draw predominantly on the British (and Irish) context. Given the growth in global scholarship around football, together with an increasing appreciation of the diverse contexts in which issues surrounding race and ethnicity manifest themselves within the game, one could be excused for questioning the need for another book that focuses on this rather specific geographical area. Martin Bulmer and John Solomos (2008: 1191), for instance, have emphasised the myriad global sites in which ethnic and racial phenomena are currently being examined, highlighting:

the diverse range of research that is going all [sic] over the globe on aspects of race and ethnic diversity, the variety of empirical and theoretical perspectives that have emerged, and the multiplicity of voices that have gained ground over recent years.

This is gradually being reflected in studies of football, where even English language scholarship has finally, and quite rightly, begun to push the investigative lens much further afield than its traditional British/European domain. Why then a focus on Britain?

Along with the fact that the contributions in this collection clearly demonstrate the depth and breadth of scholarship being undertaken in the field in the British (and Irish) context, the main reason for the geographical focus of the book is to challenge the specific contention that racism is no longer a significant issue in *British* football. Although racism in the UK has undoubtedly been challenged, relatively successfully, in many (if by no means all) areas of the game, it is apparent that a degree of complacency has set in regarding the extent to which progress has been made and the subsequent need for further anti-discrimination policies. A significant factor underpinning this view is the manner in which ‘race relations’ in the domestic game are compared favourably to those in mainland Europe within dominant popular, political and media discourses. Whilst throughout the 1970s and 1980s, British football was widely associated with violence and hooliganism by the rest of the continent, ten years into the new millennium the tables appear to have been turned, with many in Britain viewing racism as the preserve of other European nations. In particular,

one can trace this worldview back to 2004, when England's black and dual-heritage players were subjected to deplorable, and extremely audible, racist abuse during a friendly match against Spain in Madrid. The widespread criticism from substantial sections of the English football establishment and British media of the Spanish fans' behaviour at the stadium was, of course, entirely appropriate. However, the metaphorical glass houses from which this opprobrium was meted out pointed to the inherent hypocrisy in this reaction and the claiming of some very shaky moral high-ground.

Since this incident, the commonly articulated "defence" to allegations of racism in British football has been that the situation is by no means as bad as elsewhere (see Kassimeris [2007] or the Kick It Out website [www.kickitout.org] for meticulous catalogues of racist incidents in continental Europe). Admittedly, Britain does not witness the levels of neo-Nazi activity commonly associated with matches in much of Eastern Europe, nor are games blighted by "monkey chants" when black players are in possession of the ball as frequently takes place in Spain or Italy. As Gardiner and Welch (this volume) demonstrate, anti-racist measures and governmental legislation have made the likelihood of such behaviour in British football (in stadia at least) extremely remote. Yet, by distancing British football from these overt examples of fan racism, many individuals, both within and outside the game, have been able to obfuscate the more complex, subtle and nuanced patterns and processes of racialised discrimination and exclusion that continue to permeate the inner workings of the game here. This book is intended to act as a timely reminder that the situation in Britain needs to be kept firmly on anti-racist agendas and any sense of complacency must be constantly challenged.

There are a number of other features about this book which are important to emphasise and these are outlined below: the way that football is utilised in its very broadest sense, the conceptual underpinnings of the issues under examination, and the way that the essays are situated in relation to the existing field.

First, it is crucial to point out that, notwithstanding the contention that racism is structural or systemic in the game, this book is about race, ethnicity *and* football, not simply *in* football. This is more than purely a semantic distinction. Rather, it is intended to demonstrate that football is often merely the *context* or *referent* for racist behaviours or sentiments, which often manifest themselves in abstract, and sometimes novel, ways that have little (if anything) to do with the actual playing or organisation of the game itself. By way of a brief global example, it was football that French far right politician, Jean-Marie Le Pen, infamously chose, in 2006, to contextualise his criticism of immigration and ethnic diversity in France, arguing that the multiethnic men's national team (see Hare 2003) did not represent his racially exclusive vision of the country. Four years later, following France's ignominious exit in the first round of the 2010 men's World Cup finals, his daughter, and vice-chair of the *Front National*, Marine, reiterated these

criticisms. Forming part of broader anti-immigration rhetoric, she argued that the team's poor performance could be attributed to the fact that representing France was purely a decision of convenience for its black players, whose real allegiances were directed towards the former French colonies from which they trace their ancestries (Erlanger 2010).²

Second, the book conceptualises *racisms* as existing in the plural, and understands constructions of race and manifestations of racism as historically grounded as well as the product of particular contemporary social and cultural relations (Feagin 2006). The writers recognise the enduring nature of racism as an ideology, and as a hierarchical and oppressive classificatory system in sport (and beyond), yet at the same time appreciate that manifestations of racism are influenced and underpinned by specific local and global factors, conditions, epochs and political climates.

Taking this into account, and given the variety of groups covered in its chapters—ethnic, racial and religious communities; both “visible” minorities and those who, in certain contexts, might be regarded as ‘marginal whites’ (Garner 2007: 99)—this book centralises the inter-related notions of racialisation and racial formation. The former helps us to understand ‘those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological [and cultural] characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities’ (Miles 1989: 75). Mindful of Goldberg’s (2009) critique regarding its often nebulous application, it is used here both to detail the presence of race-inflected social situations and to critique the normative assumption of the football setting as a racially neutral one. Omi and Winant (1986: 61) point out that racial formation ‘refers to the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings’. The chapters in this volume demonstrate that football, and sport more broadly, intrinsically embodies these processes. Certain groups—including those who would not traditionally be identified, or identify themselves, as *racial* groups, such as Catholics or Muslims—are racialised as homogenous groups, with particular demarcations and boundaries of ‘Otherness’ brought to the fore at different times and in different spaces. This applies not only to the general ways that they are perceived, portrayed and treated, and their assumed possession of fixed, immutable and often “dangerous” physical and cultural traits, but also more specifically to the manner in which these attributes are believed to affect their capacity or inclination to play football.

There are additional, important aspects of employing the concept of racialisation here. It directs the analytical lens away from simply looking at those groups that are racially defined, and scrutinises the motivations and interests of dominant groups as well (Murji and Solomos 2005). It also makes it clear ‘that racism is never simply racism, but always exists in a complex imbrication with nation, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality’ (Rattansi 2005: 296). In this latter respect, although the chapters in this

volume centralise race and ethnicity, they also highlight the importance of their intersectionality with different forms of identity and sources of social stratification. For instance, Alastair Bonnett (2008: 18) argues that ‘although racialisation is still important in the contemporary world, scholars in “racial studies” need to widen their horizons: “race” and “racism” are not sufficient categories with which to understand ethnic exclusion in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries’. As such, this book heeds the suggestions by Cole (2009) and Clarke and Garner (2010) about the need to broaden notions of racialisation to focus on more than just phenotype, and to map and analyse how other, *cultural* attributes are employed in processes of ‘Othering’ particular groups.

Finally, the book’s subtitle, *Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues*, demonstrates how it seeks to position itself within the field: reflecting on inveterate issues and problems, yet also signposting new inequalities, challenges, directions, approaches, methodologies and solutions. This collection brings together a range of academics, comprising both established commentators and up-and-coming voices. Critically, this group of authors comprises significant ethnic diversity and includes a number of female scholars, thus representing a marked shift from the white, male academic gaze that has dominated scholarship in this field in Western Europe for a number of years. In order to foreground this diversity and to avoid collapsing the different approaches and viewpoints into a single, authoritative voice, every effort has been made in editing the text to allow authors to employ their own classifications and nomenclature. The notion of race, for instance, is utilised both with and without quotation marks; and, whilst ‘BAME’ (black, Asian and minority ethnic) is used in some chapters, other authors prefer simply ‘minority ethnic’. Rather than muddying an already complex field with neologisms for describing ethnic diversity, this reflects the complex and contested use of terminology in the area and, crucially, the myriad ways in which racialised groups *themselves* construct and articulate their identities. Most importantly, the contributors are linked both by their critical responses to dominant claims that racism has been eradicated from British football and that equality of opportunity is available to all ethnic groups, as well as their commitment to using their scholarship and positions in the academy in an interventionist manner to try to effect social change within the game.

OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

In the opening essay, John Williams addresses the context of Liverpool with his socio-historical account of how issues around race have intersected with the trajectories of the two professional clubs in the city: Everton and Liverpool. He argues that this famous British trading seaport is an important site for exploring the genealogy of black communities in the UK, before going on to demonstrate how football has been central to notions and

geographies of racialised exclusion in the city for over one hundred years. Employing a diachronic approach, Williams shows that minority ethnic players have gone from originally being widely seen as an unwelcome, “foreign” influence to making key contributions to football in the city over the last twenty years. Notwithstanding this, he demonstrates that their inclusion has always been contingent and that their participation has habitually been subject to the presence of racism.

Colin King uses his positions as a coach, scout, activist and academic to provide a powerful critique of the manner in which African footballers are scouted, developed and ultimately transferred to European clubs. His chapter demonstrates the potential of the football system to reproduce specific features of the transatlantic slave period, namely the exploitation and commodification of the black body, the under-development of African societies and the (forced) migration of black footballers, in order to generate profit for white-owned businesses. In his analysis, King demonstrates how residual “scientific” ideas about the black body are combined with marketing and business theories in football that privilege and normalise whiteness, and result in the simultaneous inhibition of organic African sporting development and continual supply of inexpensive sporting labour to European clubs.

David Hassan and Ken McCue revisit a context well-known for the centrality of football in creating and reflecting social divisions, but rather than looking at sectarianism in the Irish game, they cover the new ground of *racial* prejudice. Using examples from both domestic and international football, they illustrate that despite widespread denial of the fact, racism and anti-migrant sentiment are increasingly present in the game in the north of the island. In the Republic, they show how football reproduces the complex and contradictory manifestations of exclusion found in wider society, by facilitating the contingent inclusion of certain minority ethnic groups, whilst simultaneously excluding other racialised communities. Their chapter also sheds light on some positive—if not entirely faultless—measures that have been introduced to try to combat ethnic and racial prejudice in the Irish game.

Steven Bradbury’s contribution introduces readers to the under-researched topic of race and amateur football. Focusing on the English county of Leicestershire, he demonstrates how minority ethnic football clubs both enable resistance to racism and facilitate the articulation of cultural identities. Bradbury also evaluates the shifting focus within many of these clubs, from being primarily male, adult leisure spaces within British Asian and black communities to initiating the involvement of young people from diverse backgrounds. Finally, the chapter examines how these developments have been inhibited by the effects of hegemonic whiteness and a sense of defensive protectionism within the operational practices of the local County Football Association, which have reinforced existing structures of white privilege and racial exclusion within the local amateur game.

The chapter by Paul Campbell addresses a similar context, focusing specifically on the role of minority ethnic clubs in challenging racism both in amateur football and wider society. Identifying the importance of de-essentialising notions of sporting “blackness”, Campbell uses Highfield Rangers, an African-Caribbean club from Leicester, to demonstrate the shifting ways that football can be used to articulate communities’ identities, needs and resistance during differing socio-political contexts. His analysis shows how the uses and meanings ascribed to the club by second-generation African-Caribbean members have fluctuated over the last forty years, and need to be framed within the city’s contemporary ethnic, employment, social and physical landscapes. Through a combination of historical and contemporary data, Campbell meticulously details how changes in localised constructions of “blackness” influence what football now means for racialised groups of this generation.

Aisha Ahmad’s chapter examines the experiences of Muslim footballers and the rise of Islamophobia in British football. Situating these developments within wider social processes that have occurred in the post-9/11 and 7/7 climates, she provides a detailed exploration of the ways in which dominant discourses and worldviews around Muslims manifest themselves in this sporting sphere. Emphasising intersections between ethnicity, religion and gender, she specifically addresses the identities, experiences and perceptions of *female* British Muslim players, thus providing a timely shift from the dominant academic focus on young Muslim males. Drawing on in-depth interviews with members of the British Muslim Women’s Football Team and an analysis of the Women’s Islamic Games, Ahmad highlights the dilemmas and discrimination that Muslim women face in participating in football, particularly in relation to wearing the *hijab*.

Aarti Ratna’s essay similarly explores the topic of British Asian female participation in football, focusing in particular on the interplay between notions of race, nation, inclusion and belonging. Her analysis shows that whilst the majority of academic literature has addressed these issues in conjunction with men’s sport, these trends can also be found within the women’s game. Drawing on in-depth interviews with British Asian female footballers, Ratna shows not only the various ways in which these players position themselves vis-à-vis the England football team, but also both how these identifications are stratified by other aspects of social identity and the ways in which players attempt to gain (contingent) inclusion in such collectives. She also explores alternative sources of ethno-national affiliation for these players and outlines the problems that can arise in these contexts.

According to the 2001 UK Census, the fastest growing minority ethnic group is the ‘mixed’ category and so Mark Christian’s chapter on black mixed heritage footballers is particularly topical. His contribution proceeds from a historical discussion of inter-racial mixing and goes on to outline how football provides an important contemporary arena for the sociological analysis of dual heritage individuals. Christian posits that the growing

number of black mixed heritage footballers in the British game could potentially signify a number of broader social trends. However, crucially, he maintains that one thing it does *not* signify is the end of racism; whilst this group's increasing prominence in the game may well be a distinct feature, it should not be extrapolated uncritically to suggest racialised progress is necessarily taking place either in football or the broader society.

Samaya Farooq addresses the broader role of football, focusing on the educational setting of an all-male Islamic independent school in the West Midlands of England. Following a sensitive examination of dominant portrayals of young British Muslim males in contemporary society, she goes on to explore boys' and young men's complex identity politics, specifically the ways that they construct notions of selfhood in, and through, the sphere of school-based football. Farooq highlights the importance of football in this context, not simply as a valued leisure activity for these boys and young men, but also as a way of engendering the "tough talk" they deploy in other aspects of their lives. Her analysis draws on the concept of 'muscular Islam', utilising it in a novel context to provide a timely exposition of the relationship between football, masculinity and Islamic identities.

The chapter by Peter Millward explores the motivations of English fans travelling to Switzerland for the 2008 European Championships and discusses whether they can be characterised as 'cosmopolitans'. His chapter builds from an in-depth critique of the concept of 'cosmopolitanism' as it has been employed in existing social science literature, both in sport and more broadly. He then offers a further empirical insight through interview and observational data involving visiting English fans. Millward demonstrates the inherent contradictions in these fans' behaviours and articulations, in that whilst many exhibited a 'thin' sense of cosmopolitanism—based upon the pleasures derived from travelling overseas to a multinational sporting event, whilst having no cultural attachment to any of the competing teams—this existed *alongside*, rather than precluded, manifestations of 'everyday xenophobia'.

Following the approach famously articulated by C. Wright Mills, Jack Fawbert uses his 'sociological imagination' to analyse an aspect of his personal experience as a West Ham United supporter: the under-representation of minority ethnic fans at the club's matches. Fawbert begins by outlining the ethnic diversity of east London, where the club is situated, and then provides a cogent analysis of how the socio-political history of the area, together with manifestations of whiteness, exclusion and racialised nostalgia—within the club and beyond—conspire to exclude minority ethnic supporters from the stadium. Crucially, he also shows how social class can intersect with processes of racialisation to further discriminate against minority ethnic groups and inhibit their inclusion in professional football fandom.

Similarly focusing on fandom, John Flint and Ryan Powell address the informalisation of conduct in Scottish football. Using an Eliasian theoretical approach, they highlight how the spaces and arenas that comprise this

context are conceptualised as influencing the behaviours of spectators, and detail historical and contemporary examples of sectarian antagonisms in the game. Central to their argument is a delineation of the intersections between ethnicity, religion and social class, specifically how the latter dictates the way in which particular acts are judged and regulated. In this regard, the authors show how football is utilised both for more formalised articulations of ethno-religious identity and as an informalised space for sectarian expression, yet also mirrors attempts to regulate fan behaviour found in the game more broadly.

Jim Lusted returns us to the realm of amateur football and his chapter details the way in which the introduction of race equality initiatives has been received at the grass-roots level by County Football Associations (CFAs). He begins by providing an overview of the formation of race equality strategies in football and locates this within the wider socio-political context. Then, drawing on in-depth, qualitative case studies of CFAs, he identifies some of the key generative mechanisms behind the widespread scepticism towards these policies and analyses the factors underpinning this resistance. Central to this opposition, Lusted argues, is a reinvigorated notion of amateurism, primarily claims around the fairness of sport and the rejection of political interference, which continues to influence the ways in which ideas of race can be discussed and utilised.

The chapter by Simon Gardiner and Roger Welch provides a timely update on their previous research, which examined the intervention and engagement of the law with manifestations of racism within English sport. Focusing specifically on football in this present contribution, their chapter examines both the criminalisation of spectator racism and the anti-discrimination provisions that operate in the football workplace. In their analysis, they contest the argument that “more law” will alleviate the problem of racism in football, arguing that whilst the law does have a role to play, its success is contingent on its application in conjunction with other anti-discrimination measures. The authors contend that whilst legal provisions have contributed to the reduction of racist hate speech and abuse, both on the terraces and in the footballing workplace, more can be done and they suggest a number of practical ways in which this might be realised.

In the collection's closing essay, Kuljit Randhawa uses his position at the forefront of grass-roots football development to document contemporary issues related to participation by British Asian communities. He outlines current levels of engagement and analyses the central challenges these groups face in translating their passion for the game into inclusion within the realm of professional football—both on and off the field of play. Randhawa's analysis covers a wide range of issues, including the *ad hoc* nature of British Asian football participation; an inability to access existing, and develop new, pathways to playing, training, coaching, education and employment opportunities; responses from key stakeholders; and the continuing presence of racial discrimination. Crucially, and in keeping with

the stance of the whole collection, he adopts an interventionist, scholar-as-activist approach, concluding his chapter with a number of proposed solutions as to how the necessary “conditions for change” can be created.

NOTES

1. For a fuller critique of Denham’s comments see Sivanandan (2010).
2. For a discussion on similar developments in Germany, with neo-Nazi groups opposing the increasing multicultural nature of the national team, see Dowling (2010).

Racialised Exclusions and 'Glocal' Im/mobilities

2 'Dark Town' and 'A Game for Britishers'

Some Notes on History,
Football and 'Race' in Liverpool

John Williams

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I want to comment on recent developments in debates about racism in English football, but I also want to explore some of the historical, social and cultural background to questions about 'race' and the national winter game in England. I will focus here, initially at least, on just one key football location in England, the strongly Celtic-influenced north-west seaport city of Liverpool. More especially, I want to examine, historically and culturally, articulations of 'race', difference and exclusion mainly around Liverpool Football Club. Before that, I will argue, more broadly, that this famous British trading seaport is an important site for exploring both the genealogy of black communities in Britain and the historic roots of English professional football, as well as the latter's role in the normative production of popular racisms around British sport. Having explored these issues at some length, I conclude with a few comments about more contemporary developments around the football/'race' agenda in both Liverpool and England.

SLAVE CITY

The ideologies and profits of slavery and the history of black settlements in many English cities have intimate connections. In 1699, the *Liverpool Merchant* sailed from the River Mersey for what maps of the day called 'Negroland', thus becoming the first identifiable British slave ship. The city of Liverpool's intensive involvement in the slave trade meant that by the mid-eighteenth century, many fashionable, wealthy households in the city could boast black servants, and associations between "blackness" and the urban morphology of Liverpool were already well-established, with the early designation of one local south dockside area in the city as 'Negro Row' (Costello 2001, Belchem and MacRaild 2006). George Frederick Cooke, an acerbic eighteenth century dramatist, once famously responded to boos in a Liverpool theatre with the retort: 'I have not come here to be insulted by a set of wretches, of which every brick in your infernal town is cemented by an African's blood' (cited in Hill 1989: 72). Undaunted,

Liverpool's well-established US trading links and its lucrative involvement in the international cotton business meant that the city's commercial interests in supporting slavery across the Atlantic remained prominent well into the nineteenth century. Indeed, many nineteenth century Liverpool cotton merchants unashamedly and publicly sided with the pro-slave Confederate South during the American Civil War (Belchem and MacRaild 2006). Nevertheless, reformist commentators on Merseyside at the end of the nineteenth century, and after the Great Famine influx from Ireland, were keen to point out that Liverpool was actually a successful "melting pot" for migrants, whilst emphasising the philanthropy and ostentatious "high-mindedness" of the Liverpool families and firms who had made their huge wealth via the port's various sea-trading businesses (Lane 1997). But the clear polarity expressed here, between the ideal of a city of liberal cosmopolitanism—the prosperous Liverpool as second city of empire, a welcoming gathering point for black, Irish, Chinese and Welsh migrants—set against the history of slavery and the ugly racism which characterised local ethnic relations and public discourses in the city, means Liverpool is probably best described as being 'dominated by a fractured white majority . . . an uneasy mix of peoples with neither hard-edged ghettos nor a new melting pot cultural synthesis' (Herson 2008: 69).

These internal tensions came to something of a head early in the twentieth century with local official concerns about 'contagion' and 'contamination' echoing in the conclusion of the Head Constable's annual report in 1904. He argued that the city was 'beginning to suffer from the presence of the undesirable alien', a view which accelerated racialised spatial segregation, producing so-called "no-go" areas for whites, but especially for blacks and Chinese, in the middle of Liverpool (Belchem and MacRaild 2006: 368). White fears about miscegenation became more prominent and eventually coalesced around the serious 'race' disturbances which broke out in Liverpool in 1919. On 6 June, the *Liverpool Echo* described even the long-established black communities in the city as 'distinct foreign colonies' and their separateness from the local mainstream as 'partly a check against the pollution of a healthy community by undesirables'. Four days later, on 10 June 1919, the paper argued that 'one of the chief reasons of the anger behind the present disturbances lies in the fact that the negro is nearer to the animal than is the average white man and that there are [white] women in Liverpool who have no shame'. *The Times* of 10 June reported that a large body of police requisitioned by the city authorities to quell disturbances on Merseyside soon got into their stride: 'whenever a negro was seen he was chased and, if caught, severely beaten'.

POLITICS AND FOOTBALL IN LIVERPOOL

The early football clubs on Merseyside had their own distinctive political agendas but few links with—and little interest in—the racialised struggles

already being fought out so desperately in the distant south end of the city. Liverpool arrived relatively late to organised football compared to parts of east and north Lancashire and the Midlands, but Everton FC grew rapidly after 1878 and was one of the founder members of the Football League ten years later, playing initially at Anfield and winning the League title in 1891 (Corbett 2003, Kennedy 2004, Lupson 2008). A bitter split followed in the Everton FC boardroom in 1892, centred around the broadly democratic ambitions of the club’s original Methodist and Liberal founders and the more autocratic and commercial philosophies of a local conservative brewer and Freemason John Houlding (Kennedy 2003, 2005). Eventually Houlding was ousted and set up Liverpool FC. The resultant two major professional football clubs each harboured a latent political utility for their influential local owners and shareholders, and they ended up being sited less than a mile apart across Stanley Park, the public green lungs of north Liverpool’s impoverished working class people (Marne 2001), in the adjacent wards of Everton and Anfield (Kennedy 2004, Kennedy and Collins 2006, Williams 2010).

These were areas of Liverpool which were most strongly dominated by the white working-class Protestant majority, and the cultural and formal politics of Orangeism,¹ which were set against the desperation, poverty and sickness of local Irish Catholic “intrusions” around the north docks and in the poorer neighbourhoods of Bootle. Needless to say, these northerly locations were places where very few black Liverpoolians lived or even could ever venture safely (Frost 2008). This situation of radical racial and geographical—and arguably *sporting*—apartheid in the city would endure for much of the twentieth century and it would help define local responses through sport to black Liverpoolians and the local audiences for the two major professional football clubs for the next hundred years. Neither club could be identified as an obvious safe option for black Liverpoolians—though there is some evidence that local black tipsters had an early presence at the city’s other great sporting event of the day, the Grand National horse race at Aintree (Chandler 1972). Thus, the city of Liverpool was both a major urban site for racial unrest and repression, and (along perhaps with Glasgow) the premier single location for following association football in the world, especially after Everton won the FA Cup and Liverpool the Football League title in the same year, 1906. The reputation of the city on both accounts—enduring, divisive racism *and* footballing excellence—would survive largely intact for much of the next century. But how, if at all, were these two conditions interconnected?

OVER THE WHITE LINE

The sporting lives of the very few, exceptional, early black Football League pioneers, including the upper middle-class Ghanaian Arthur Wharton, the Egyptian Hassan Hegazi, and the Barbadian-born (later commissioned

British Army officer) Walter Tull, have been well documented by social historians. Phil Vasili (2000) points out, for example, that Tull was roundly abused during a visit to the ex-slaving port of Bristol whilst playing for Tottenham Hotspur in the Southern League in 1909. No doubt the “welcome” was similarly inhospitable for any early black footballers visiting imperialist and patriotic—and racially divided—Merseyside. Despite a local (and national) reputation for cosmopolitanism and cultural radicalism, the port had actually done very good business out of the wars of empire and Liverpool Council remained staunchly conservative-dominated until 1955 (Mackenzie 2008).

This local conservatism found expression in Liverpool football in early anxieties about the very large number of non-locals—“outsiders”—who dominated the ranks of the local major football clubs before the First World War. Moreover, this was no policy hatched in haste and then discarded: in the twenty-two years that followed Liverpool’s formation, on average, fewer than one in ten first-team players actually hailed from Merseyside (Preston 2007). There is no evidence at all to suggest that either Merseyside club tried to sign black players, had any active local black supporters, or made any attempt at all to make contact with, or cultivate, a spectator following from Liverpool’s ‘Dark Town’. Simple geography, the local status of, and dominant racist perceptions about, Liverpool’s black community, allied to the likely reception such followers would surely have faced among the clubs’ highly localistic core white support—which was already noted for its violent hooliganism (Williams 2010)—made this suggestion little short of risible.

Employment restrictions, which intensified under the 1919 Aliens Act and the Orders of the Council of 1920 and 1925 that followed, would mean that few English football clubs would (or could) turn to foreign (non-Commonwealth) players during the inter-war years and only eight foreign recruits in total were playing in the four English professional divisions by 1925 (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001: 48). Around this same time on Merseyside, the dark-skinned and curly black-haired Birkenhead-born Bill Dean, a rapacious centre-forward and record goal scorer for Everton in the inter-war years, was emerging as a national figure and local icon. Dean was cryptically nicknamed ‘Dixie’ by his own followers and he occasionally suffered at the hands of rival fans: he once leapt among spectators at Tottenham Hotspur to confront a supporter who was aiming racist abuse at him (Walsh 1978). Three decades later, the similarly pigmented Cornishman Mike Trebilcock, a man who scored two crucial FA Cup final goals for the Blues in 1966, was quixotically greeted by locals at Goodison Park with the song: ‘We’ve got the best nigger in the land’ (Hill 1989: 74). Eventually—and perhaps also surprisingly—it was Everton who finally, briefly, challenged the exclusionary local mould in Merseyside football in 1974 when the winger Cliff Marshall signed for the Goodison Park club. Marshall became the first black man to play for either of the top Liverpool

clubs, more than 200 years after black settlers first arrived in the city, 96 years after Everton's formation, and more than a century after the arrival of organised football in the area. But predictably neither Trebilcock nor Marshall was able to make a successful professional playing career in the city of Liverpool.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

English contacts with "foreigners" through football in the inter-war years were usually made via club close-season tours. After Liverpool FC won the League title in 1922, the club's board accepted an offer to play title rivals Burnley in an exhibition fixture in Milan. The English football hierarchy at this time was little impressed with the continental game or sporting contact with "foreigners". Writing in the Liverpool *Football Echo* on 18 December 1924, the Football League's Charles Sutcliffe, an ardent anti-European, and known variously in the English game as either 'the brains of football' or the 'football dictator', told the people of Liverpool that, 'I have no desire to see another game with continentals in this country' (Inglis 1988: 110). The Football Association (FA) Secretary, Stanley Rous (1978: 90), confirmed later that in the English football establishment, 'there was a sense of natural superiority, a smug feeling that all was right in our enclosed world and others had nothing to teach us'. The sporting amateurs at the FA and the Foreign Office worried especially about the low behavioural standards of "foreigners", but also about the images of Englishness that abrasive working-class professional football players might leave in their encounters in unfamiliar international sporting locations (Beck 1999, Polley 2006).

In Milan, in the summer of 1922, Liverpool lost 0–1 to Burnley in a match frequently reduced by the terrific heat to walking pace. Liverpool's captain Tommy Bromilow reported in the Liverpool *Evening Express* on 26 May that spectators 'showed their disapproval by some hooting and booing'. 'What an excitable people these Italians are!', continued the Liverpool captain in a local press posting on 31 May 1922, 'Whenever a possible chance presented itself and the shooter failed, he was greeted by a combination of howls of derision or disappointment . . . The players took no notice'. A week later, when Liverpool played a combined Italian team from Tuscany and Ligne in a 2–2 draw, the contest reached a tipping point after an Italian player was barged and fell heavily, breaking an arm in the process. Never, said Bromilow, in the *Evening Express* on 7 June 1922, had he played against opposition which had shown:

such recklessness and disregard for the rules [sic]. I have never played in such a game wherein so much hacking, kicking and pushing was tolerated. In fact, the home side indulged in everything except biting. They would not play the game properly, nor would they allow us to.

Because the everyday and spectacular contexts provided by sport represent one of the most common ways in which national identity is grounded (Edensor 2002: 78), these popular accounts of “difficult” English football encounters abroad would help, normatively, to shape wider relationships between the English game and various “outsiders”. They would also sculpture wider public perceptions in Britain about acceptable masculinities and the racial ‘Other’, especially in viscerally segregated cities such as Liverpool, in a period when so few “ordinary” British people travelled internationally—unless, of course, they had been sent by their government to fight foreigners. Typically, the northern football press commentator, W. Leslie Unsworth, argued in the *Evening Express* on 17 June 1922 that these club trips abroad were hardly enjoyable affairs. Coaching and tactics were still widely regarded in England as duplicitous, alien practices, designed to undermine common English decency, team work and grit: ‘foreigners focus on the science, tactics and niceties’, he told his Merseyside readers, darkly, ‘but they still have a great deal to learn in the matter of showing the sporting spirit. We need more visits [abroad] to “educate” the continentals’. It was the British—and particularly the English—leading the way in sport, once more.

These sorts of deep-seated tropes and ingrained prejudices about “foreigners” and their obvious “unsuitability” for football featured routinely in the English press in the first half of the twentieth century, almost without qualification or question. They would have also worked alongside and reinforced existing local ‘neighbourhood nationalisms’ (Cohen and Bains 1988) in cities such as Liverpool and no doubt helped to intensify and confirm local depictions of black populations in the city as similarly foreign and alien “outsiders”. Much later, England’s involvement in World Cup competitions abroad would also often fuse sporting xenophobia, extremist politics and casual expressions of domestic racism and exclusion (see Williams *et al.* 1984). Some of the hostile themes in Bromilow’s reporting from Italy were also picked up in a series of heavily racialised popular fictional football stories carried soon after in the local *Evening Express*.

Published on 21 October 1922, one such story, ‘The Team of All Nations’, depicted an ex-British serviceman, ‘Sam’, embarking on a mission to form an international football club to try to bring the disparate peoples of the world together in post-First World War sporting harmony. This was a typical press and political theme of the time: the despairing British valiantly attempting to knit together a new and coherent international post-war order out of decidedly unpromising raw material. Inevitably, Sam’s plans are doomed to failure, even in the realms of popular press fiction. The team the ex-British serviceman tries to assemble is made up of a rag-bag of foreign misfits: unreliable Swedes and irrational Egyptians, and an excitable Spanish goalkeeper who ‘you could smell a mile [off]’, a coward who drew a knife when dropped from the team. A comically effeminate Frenchman, Hyacinth Bourget—‘he has some flower’—is described as a

'foul dog' when he, ridiculously, challenges a supposed love rival to a duel. Finally, also involved was a player called Mass Tull Dixon (perhaps a coded reference here to the black pioneer Football League professional, Walter Tull), described in the *Express* as a 'coal-black coon' on the wing, but from no identifiable country of origin. Dixon is depicted as a pathetic wretch; a man psychologically destroyed, reduced to tears, when his supposed teammates heartlessly smash his banjo in the dressing room before a match, an act which reportedly 'finished the nigger.' The patently racist moral of this tale was clear enough for the story's narrator: 'Football's essentially a game for Britishers. These foreigners ain't got the right temperament'.

'THEY SHALL BE OUR TEACHERS'

Given this routinised hostile press representation of racial and national "difference", the apparently ingrained nature of British football isolationism, and the generally low prestige still afforded competition with foreign football opposition—England played in none of the inter-war World Cup finals and Charles Sutcliffe described the 1934 tournament as barely more than 'a joke' (Taylor 2008: 163)—it is no surprise that, even more than 30 years later, the FA Yearbook of 1965 could report only fifteen foreigners playing in the top two divisions in England and that, 'the great majority come from South Africa' (cited in Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001: 48). However, from the mid-1920s, ironically, it had been Liverpool FC that had championed a minor new internationalism in the English game—but also, simultaneously, a reassuring colonial 'whiteness'. It happened because on 1 October 1924, the Anfield club was thumped 2–5 by a touring amateur team from white South Africa. The following day, the *Liverpool Daily Post* described the drubbing as 'a lesson for English players', whilst the *Liverpool Echo* on 2 October 1924 thought the visiting South Africans were nothing less than a revelation: 'We must learn our lesson afresh', it advised, 'They shall be our teachers'.

Crucially, of course, as English-speaking, white colonial subjects, these visitors were racially, legally and culturally perfectly acceptable to the Liverpool board and to the club's supporters; their freedom to settle in England had been established under the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914 (Taylor 2005). In the reception held after the match, ex-Liverpool man John McKenna, now of the Football League, highlighted the beneficial effects of English touring teams on (white) South African football—though the pace, flexibility and technique shown by the visitors were hardly typical 'English' traits. The parsimonious Liverpool board immediately began importing South African players, initially for just £90 travelling and hotel expenses. The physicality and cleverness of the South Africans attracted the Liverpool directors, as did their assimilatory whiteness and their incredible cheapness. In the early 1930s, Liverpool would boast six South Africans

on the club's books and, on occasions, played only two Englishmen (Young 1963). According to journalists, they were 'the League of Nations club' (cited in Taylor 2005: 207).

In the wake of this embracing of foreign football imports to the city, Merseyside's own black community remained largely impugned and "detached". It was effectively labelled, in a 1930 report on the "colour problem" in the city sanctioned by the University of Liverpool, as a breeding ground for mixed-origin social misfits (Fletcher 1930, see also Christian 1998). 'Dark Town' had been swollen in number by the settlement in the city of men who had fought with the Allies in the Second World War, and in August 1948 a further serious outbreak of inter-racial rioting near the Rialto Cinema and on Upper Parliament Street in the south end of the city alarmed Merseyside once more. Sixty people ended up in court, most of them 'coloureds', as the local press insisted on calling all black people in Liverpool. Many required hospital treatment. Part of the backcloth to these most recent disturbances was undoubtedly the National Union of Seamen's colour bar on the local working of British owned vessels (Vasili 2000). The *Liverpool Echo* of 3 August 1948 reported that defence lawyers also challenged the supposedly "impartial" role of the Liverpool Constabulary by claiming, not for the first time, that 'the defendants were badly knocked around by the police'.

Racism and systematic exclusion underlined these recent outbursts from Liverpool's long-suffering black populations in education, employment, law and order, housing and safe access to public space. Why should football be different? A visiting Nigerian "national" football team to Liverpool soon after, in September 1949, typically produced a rather different response to that afforded the city's previous African football visitors. The bare-footed tourists—"wizards in bare feet"—certainly had talent: they thumped local club Marine 5–2, with winger Titus Okere identified by the *Liverpool Echo* as a man who 'given the experience, could find a place in most English League sides' (cited in Vasili 2000: 81). Under floodlights, the Nigerians later drew 2–2 at South Liverpool, allowing the Merseyside press plenty of "jokes" about looking for the 'whites of the Africans' eyes' and the problems of finding black men in the dark. More serious objections about these "darkies" were raised by the *Liverpool Echo* on 28 September 1949, which claimed that the visitors would 'obviously' be advantaged by playing under lights because, 'their natural vision tends to be sharper than ours in the shades of night'.

A crowd of 13,007 witnessed a contest that brought 'almost unceasing gasps of amazement from the crowd at the Nigerians' speed or powerful barefoot shooting'. Their frightening pace, reported the *Echo*, 'by comparison, would make some of our senior players resemble rheumatically old cab-horses'. It was actually true that the Liverpool and Everton clubs were, by now, full of ageing and inadequate professionals. Both were already on the precarious slide towards relegation. But, unlike in the 1920s, Liverpool's

inert and conservative board was palpably not in the market for Africans—certainly not *black* Africans—no matter how talented, nor how fast. Tellingly, too, the British Council official reception held in the city for the Nigerian team offered invites only to black African students rather than to members of Liverpool's host black community. The latter were perceived (probably quite correctly) as having few meaningful connections to local cultural and official networks, organised sport or to the senior local football clubs in the city (see Vasili 2000).

FOOTBALL SOCIALISM—BUT WITH A COLOUR BAR

When Liverpool FC under its autocratic directors—the Anfield “family”—did finally fall out of the First Division in 1954, the club's travelling support, with so little to cheer on the field, sometimes threatened to overwhelm local police forces. The visit of Liverpool to Doncaster Rovers on 30 March 1956 was very clearly one of a number of “lively” away affairs at this time. Rovers fielded the future stand-up comedian, Barnsley-born Charlie Williams, at centre-half—one of the very few black players in the English game in the 1950s. Williams, an ex-colliery worker of Barbadian and English dual heritage, later built a stage career in the tough times of the early 1970s out of “jokes” which reinforced his (mainly) white audiences' nervous prejudices about ‘Pakis’ and ‘coons.’ But for four years in the 1950s, Williams was a resolute and regular fixture in the Rovers team—and an obvious target for racist attack. A letter from Doncaster to the *Liverpool Echo* on 4 April 1956 complained of concerted racism from Liverpoolians during the visit to Yorkshire. Williams had been, ‘reviled by a loud voice snug in the crowd; this being coupled with the colour of the player's skin’. Stones and a knife were reportedly thrown at the Doncaster keeper from the visitors' end, and local letter writers to the *Liverpool Echo* on 4 April were generally alarmed about the abuse and the actions of ‘filthy-mouthed, beer swillers’ from the city and worried that ‘several Liverpool fans [were] ready to fight—literally—over their team’.

Into this complex Merseyside recipe of racial exclusion and rebellion, its football internationalism, violence and conservatism, and Liverpool's near unique historic brew of racism, imperialism and cosmopolitanism, now came a new ingredient: a shot of West of Scotland native ‘socialism’. Bill Shankly arrived to manage Liverpool FC in December 1959, a young and charismatic self-proclaimed man of the people who wanted to rekindle the intimate relationship that had once existed between the Liverpool club and its supporters, but which had dimmed under an autocratic board. Famously, Shankly eschewed formal politics in favour of a communitarian team spirit: ‘people dealing with people, and people helping people’ (cited in Keith 1998: 103). Shankly casually aided pensioners with their morning shopping in Liverpool, attended supporter funerals and

birthday parties unannounced, gave tickets and loans to ticketless fans, and arranged practice matches between the club's apprentices and local refuse collectors. His message was that no-one—at least no-one from the white neighbourhoods of the city—should fall outside the scope of the club, and that no player should ever get beyond his station in relation to the people who funded his career—the manual workers of Merseyside. 'I knew that . . . the people who produced that [Kop] roar were men just like myself who lived for the game of football and to whom football was their abiding passion', Shankly said, 'I knew that no matter what trials lay ahead I would be at home among folks of my own kind' (cited in Williams 2010: 296).

The phrase 'folks of my own kind' is a telling and familiar kind of sporting aphorism in this context. For example, key Shankly players such as future Liverpool captain, the rough-edged Scouser, Tommy Smith, later described as entirely 'normal' the propensity for white people to want to move house should a 'nigger' or 'coon' move in next door—or, worse, try to date their daughter (Hill 1989: 91). In football terms, his manager Bill Shankly had strong claims to be both a traditionalist and a moderniser: he was hewn from a dignified and undifferentiated pre-war Labourist Scottish mining background, but Shankly was also the man who dragged the Liverpool club into the media age and the new cosmopolitan European era for sport (Ward and Williams 2001). For Shankly, football matches were won mainly through comradeship, fortitude and brave hearts—the decent, residual qualities of the white British northern working-class (Liverpool seldom signed footballers from the south of England because they supposedly lacked this northern collectivism and grit). Toughness, trust and an intuitive feel for the binding ties between men were central themes to the Shankly project: uncommitted opponents typically had 'a heart as big as a caraway seed' (Bowler 1996: 93).

After gaining promotion in 1962, Shankly finally won the FA Cup for Liverpool in 1965. This Wembley final—highly unusually—brought his young team up against a *black* South African, Albert Johanneson of Leeds United. The Liverpool defenders were told in the dressing room before kick-off that if they allowed Johanneson to play, the winger could be fast and dangerous. But a remedy was at hand: harry and verbally abuse the winger because (like all black players) he lacked "character" and could be easily discouraged. In short, 'he would pack it in' (Hill 1989: 70). The story is a telling one. Like most white British men of his background, generation and class, Bill Shankly and his staff had little experience of, nor interest in, black footballers or the British members of African and/or Caribbean diasporas. The black communities of Liverpool were certainly entirely foreign to Anfield and Shankly's life-world, to his own non-particularising 'whiteness' (Dyer 1988) and to his 'socialist' Liverpool football project. When Bill Shankly looked from the Liverpool dugout to his beloved Kop in the 1960s, he saw only white, Scouse faces peering back at him.

Indeed, so complete was the football colour bar, so profound the segregationist distinctions drawn between the north and south ends of Liverpool, and so ingrained the denial about racism in both the city and football, that senior officials at Liverpool FC, such as veteran Secretary Peter Robinson, could later profess that, ‘I’ve never sensed there was a great racialism [sic] here’ (cited in Hill 1989: 100). The tiny number of local black fans who bravely ventured from ‘Dark Town’s’ Toxteth to Anfield in the 1960s and 1970s risked abuse and attack from fellow Liverpoolians because of the primacy of highly localised ‘race’ distinctions—often mediated and articulated via interchanges with black America (Brown 1998)—over domestic cultural, sporting and spatial ties. As one black pioneer Kopite put it, ‘You belong more with your blackness than your Liverpool accent, because you don’t have a sense of belonging to the framework defined by your accent’ (cited in Hill 1989: 78).

Shankly’s English successor at Anfield, the County Durham-born Bob Paisley, had similar class and cultural roots to his Scottish mentor. Paisley made the club the dominant force in European club football in the 1970s whilst maintaining some of those deeply impacted white English assumptions about the natural duplicity of “continentals” (Kennedy and Williams 2004) and the inherent ‘Otherness’ of black footballers. When asked by a Danish journalist in the early 1980s why Liverpool had recruited so few black players, Paisley replied, evenly, ‘We don’t trust them’ (cited in Hill 2001: 142). Liverpool’s extended playing success under Paisley, and then Joe Fagan, lasted until some desperate masculine adventurism in the face of the onslaught on the city of the policies of Thatcherism imploded before the 1985 European Cup final into televised drunken, xenophobic violence by some Liverpool supporters at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels. Thirty-nine fans, most of them Italian, died after a wall collapsed; a European ban on all English clubs followed (Taylor 1991, Allt 2004, Foot 2006).

But before this international disgrace, in 1981, at the apogee of organised, violent racism around the post-war English game (J. Williams 1992), and almost at the same moment as the south end of Liverpool erupted, once again, into mass racialised street rebellion, a *bona fide* black Scouser, Toxteth’s Howard Gayle, had finally graduated into the ranks of the Liverpool first-team. This belated connection between the city’s black communities and virtually the only existing Merseyside business—football—which was operating successfully at the height of Thatcherism in the 1980s was not a happy one. Dave Hill’s (1989) seminal account of Gayle’s traumatic refusal to ‘play the white man’ or to be the ‘house nigger’ (King 2004a) inside Anfield is instructive: the Toxteth man eventually had to pursue his faltering football career elsewhere. By challenging, head-on, the role of casual racism as an acceptable part of the accommodating masculinist “banter” of the English club dressing room and football’s white managerial and board-room cultures, Gayle’s uncompromising expressions of localised and classed racial politics—in football parlance, his “chip on the shoulder”—provided a telling contrast to the middle-class, educated urbanity and greater personal

security exhibited a few years later at Anfield by the Jamaican-born, England international winger John Barnes.

While Gayle's difficult Anfield experience crystallised for black Liverpool its existing perceptions of the local football clubs as inherently racist institutions, the laid-back Barnes, largely cosseted from the worst excesses of racism, by contrast seemingly shrugged off crowd and player hostility and abuse. Barnes even embraced his highly transgressive Anfield dressing room nickname of 'Digger' and once, as a joke, attended a club fancy dress event disguised as a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Positive support among local fans for Barnes also intensified as his treatment by followers of England became increasingly intolerant. But the intelligent Barnes—a much better player than Howard Gayle—was also a realist; he knew about the city's reputation for racism and that the support of the Liverpool crowd was likely to be highly contingent. Even a player of his greatness was only a string of poor performances away from the "pure hell" of being just another unwanted "black bastard" in the city. As he put it in his autobiography, 'the Kop would have slaughtered me with racial abuse if I had faltered on the field. I knew that . . . What a target I would have been . . . they would have crucified a struggling black' (Barnes 1999: 95–6).

'POST-RACIST' FOOTBALL—IT'S A BUSINESS THING

The brilliant John Barnes was still playing for Liverpool when the post-Hillsborough era of the game in England from the early 1990s promised a new deal on challenging racism and racist exclusion, one which was aimed both at blacks and British Asians. But the English game seemed singularly incapable of reflecting on and addressing its own institutional forms of closure; the employment of black and British Asian senior administrative staff inside clubs and the governing bodies, and of black coaches and managers, had progressed only at a seemingly glacial pace (King 2004a, Bradbury and Williams 2006). But, more widely, things *had* begun to change. The city of Liverpool had opened its own International Slavery Museum to better reflect on its past, a historic landmark which prominently carried the words of Frantz Fanon that: 'Europe undertook the leadership of the world with ardour, cynicism and violence'. Merseyside had also experienced considerable commercial and cultural regeneration around new tourism and hotel, bar and retail outlets as part of the *Liverpool One* development, and had achieved international celebrity via the against-all-odds success of the Liverpool Capital of Culture celebrations in 2008. There was hope for the city, once again, as it started to attune its various outputs to the new demands of the late-modern consumer global economy.

In football, a new generation of coaches and managers in England carried much less of the cultural baggage that had so weighed down their

predecessors; technocrats, cosmopolitans and experience abroad were now valued in football—not least at Anfield—rather than viewed with typical English derision or suspicion (see Williams and Llopis 2006). Moreover, the launch of the heavily marketised FA Premier League in 1992, coupled with the founding of the national Let's Kick Racism Out of Football (subsequently Kick It Out) campaign in 1993, promised new forms of marketing, global branding, micro-fan management and 'race' awareness, designed to rid the English game of some of its debilitating "anti-social" behaviour—including hooliganism and racism; or at least to quell their more overt manifestations. Perhaps the dominant new discourses in late-modern football about recruiting a "family audience" and improving "customer satisfaction", and its costly new multi-national player bases, could somehow magically erase the disquieting and divisive consequences of racism, and the disfiguring associated inequalities generated by the structured interrelations of place, gender and class (Williams 2006).

The logic of the market would now be substituted as the key "neutral" mechanism via which top football clubs were increasingly able to choose their supporters from *outside* their traditional fan bases. While England waited (improbably in this new global era) for the breakthrough of British Asian players (Burdsey 2007a), and even as hidden histories began to emerge about black and British Asian football hooligans (Leitch 2008, Khan 2010), a growing, affluent young British Asian middle-class was especially well-placed to demand and shape the more "civilised" climate that was now slowly being established off the pitch inside all-seater English football stadia, including Anfield.

It was also quite plausible, of course, to imagine (as many do) rapidly growing markets in India and Pakistan for merchandise and television coverage of the new English Premier League (Oliver 2007). Even the famous Liverpool Kop now shimmered, almost for the first time, with signs of the "Asian Liverbird"—with turbans and pockets of scarfed-up British Asian support, drawn almost exclusively from outside the Merseyside area. The television impact, especially of John Barnes, had been to combine the positive markers of the sort of social capital which is produced by a good education and a stable middle-class upbringing with new messages from the game—and the city—about acceptance and inclusion; all allied, of course, to a winning mentality (Verma 2008). But for the "new" Liverpool, this British Asian link was also about building a relationship that was essentially about global image management and promoting future business. As British Asian Liverpool fan Mohammed Bhana (2008: 18) put it concerning future policies for the club:

the Asian population in the UK contributes a great deal to the British economy. It boasts the largest food empire in Europe and an ever-increasing number of successful entrepreneurs, as well as the rise of ethnic media and products, among other things. If the club develops a

hard-hitting marketing strategy there's a unique opportunity because the market is demanding it.

All this also meant that those local communities which had become detached or had traditionally been disqualified from active football support by impacted racism, or which were now excluded by price or by the deterioration of local community and family structures, could best be serviced, instead, by contact with young players and coaches working on club community schemes. These "flawed" customers of late-modernity would routinely track the exploits of the Premier League's burgeoning global roster of black professionals from Africa and Europe indirectly via such schemes. Or else they could watch the ubiquitous live television coverage of Premier League and European matches in the city's pubs and bars (Williams 2006).

At Liverpool FC, expensive new young international black recruits, such as the Malian Momo Sissoko and the Surinam-heritage Dutch winger Ryan Babel, were key figures in promoting the club's *Respect 4 All* project in local schools, on combating drugs and gun crime, and raising awareness about racism, bullying and disability. These were important local interventions, of course, but invariably they had purely a fleeting presence and evaluation of their impact still seemed implausibly thin. Their effects were also likely to be lessened by the especially bleak history of the relationship between the club and some of the city's most disadvantaged local communities of the type I have briefly tried to sketch here. Indeed, as the "new" Liverpool FC of the Premier League era has increasingly tried to promote its market-driven cosmopolitanism and its corporate global credentials outside Liverpool, paradoxically, closer to home on Merseyside it has been the policies of localism of the less successful Everton FC which have arguably been more instrumental in recruiting young British local black or dual-heritage football talent—Victor Anichebe, Jack Rodwell and Leon Osman among them. Everton has also had rather more success in finally making meaningful connections with the people of Liverpool's 'Dark Town' via, for example, the highly innovative work of the Everton Foundation.²

Meanwhile, the national public perception of Liverpool's long-standing black presence seems to have changed relatively little in recent years. For example, on hearing of the fatal shooting of an 11-year-old boy in Liverpool in August 2007, the *Daily Mail* columnist Amanda Platell confessed that, 'I assumed the victim was another poor, fatherless black kid', an occasion therefore for, 'sadness, but also for resignation' (cited in Wilby 2007). In fact, the dead child was Rhys Jones, a football-mad white boy from a "respectable" two-parent household, who had been killed accidentally in the Croxteth area as a bystander in a local teenage gang war. Rather than a forgotten statistic—another 'race' killing in 'Dark Town'—the tabloid press decided this white murder was, instead, (another) "pivotal moment" for a bout of

national soul searching (see Sampson 2007). Meanwhile, the hapless Platell might have been saved her embarrassing confusion about 'race', violence and Liverpool had she known just one vital fact about the case: young Rhys and his father had been active Everton season-ticket holders.

Contrasting with Everton's new Merseyside connections and its continuing local rootedness, the Liverpool club (as has happened elsewhere in England) is now uncomfortably foreign-owned. It has a more multicultural, more cosmopolitan and less local supporter base, one which now cheers on a multinational and multiracial group of largely imported and (local fans might say) often uncommitted millionaires. These international recruits, many en route elsewhere, are invariably managed these days by a foreign coach, not by a product of the Liverpool boot room.³ In 2009, only nine of Liverpool's squad of 37 players was English. Tickets for Liverpool's matches are expensive and difficult to access, and the Kop today waits—passionless, its critics might argue—to be entertained more than it typically drives its favourites on, as it once did (Williams 2001).

In the new conditions of global, late-modern football, staged under CCTV cameras for a family audience, overt, collective crowd racism in crowds at both Liverpool and Everton is unusual. But individual racism is far from absent: old prejudices die hard. Actively supporting football is also still littered with obstructions for Merseyside's black communities. And Anfield is no longer quite Tommy Bromilow's, or even Bill Shankly's, Liverpool—for both good and ill.

NOTES

1. The mass-member fraternity, the Orange Order, was one of the key socio-political vehicles of Protestant identity in late-nineteenth-century Liverpool. The order was first founded by Protestants in 1795 in Northern Ireland as a response to the perceived threat of a union between the Catholic 'Defender' movement and the liberal Protestant United Irishmen who favoured Irish independence. In Liverpool, Orangeism was regarded as a major bulwark against the potential spreading influence in the city of Catholicism and Popery.
2. For example, in 2007, Everton formed a unique partnership with the Toxteth Tigers basketball club, which has been working with, and for, the black community in sport in the south end of Liverpool since 1968. Members of the club sat on Everton's anti-racism steering group and the newly named Everton Tigers professional club played in European competition, winning the national British Basketball League play-offs in 2010. In 2010, the partnership ended and the club were renamed Mersey Tigers.
3. The Liverpool 'boot room' is, simultaneously, a reference to a philosophy about collaborative styles of play, the traditional longevity and continuity in the recruitment of Liverpool coaching staff, and a small kit room under the Main Stand at Anfield where the club's coaching staff typically met after matches and training to drink a bottle of beer and discuss tactics and the condition of the Liverpool first team. Supporters attribute the great success of Liverpool between 1962 and 1990 to the policies and approaches of the boot room, but its influence has diminished under the influence of recent managers and especially the new foreign technocrats.

3 Is Football the New African Slave Trade?

Colin King

When you do buy them, you have to consider how many to go for. . . They have power and therefore in the modern game they are quick and strong. Most of them are centre-backs or centre-forwards. . . They are also hungry, but I cannot believe we don't have hungry players in Europe. Maybe they practice in the streets. . . If they are only motivated by money it does not last. . . The danger, if you buy because you are desperate, is that you overpay and you have no time.

(Arsene Wenger, Arsenal manager, cited in Evening Standard 2008).

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the reluctance of academic sports scholarship and sports journalism to acknowledge how features of slavery have led to the underdevelopment of African football. This analysis is based on different personal observational positions as a licensed coach, scout, sports scientist, MBA sports graduate and evicted African. The chapter criticises this reluctance as disguising the replication of the exploitation of the black body. The intent is to assess the potential of football to reproduce specific features of the slave period; namely venturing into African communities and taking black children away through contemporary notions of talent identification. It argues that there is a connection between marketing and business theories in football in the way they have colluded with the scientific constructions of black men as compatible with a specific physical labour role, now operational inside football.

This chapter suggests that these constructions of the black male body have re-emerged in the neo-colonial age through the sale of the black sporting body in football on three inter-linking levels. Firstly, the transport of black footballers as commodities from Africa into the neo-colonial zones of Europe, underpinned by a contemporary psychological and business science that goes beyond the simplicity of trafficking, trade or smuggling, as discussed by Scherrens (2007), Darby (2007a and 2007b) and Bessoni *et al.* (2010). Secondly, the chapter argues that modern day scientific racism can be analysed through a lens of whiteness as an unconscious, new sporting culture. This is the culture in which scouts and coaches, similar to the metaphor used by Rodney (1982), have contributed to the underdevelopment

of the economic, social and political landscape of African football and humanity. In the third section, the chapter deconstructs the strategic layers of these cultures of whiteness that dehumanise African football, based on three empirical research projects into the scientific, psychological and management approaches of modern racism in football. The chapter argues that the chains from these approaches have created new models and new features of slavery inside football, the alleged “people’s game”.

IT’S NOT SLAVERY, IT’S JUST FOOTBALL?

There appears to be a reluctance to discuss how features of slavery have emerged inside football. The word ‘slavery’, on a Foucauldian level (see Foucault 1961), appears too emotive a narrative to understand the trading of the African body through the connecting periods of slavery, imperialism and colonialism to the new sporting migrants—black footballers. The features I look at are not the pain of the Middle Passage and the destruction of African humanity. Rather, I examine the features that are invisible to European sport theorists, that is the failure to see the DNA (Dangerous Negative Approach) of whiteness as a science that has accumulated validity through the work of, for example, Kane (1971), Cashmore (1982), Victor (1993) and Entine (2000), and reduces African footballers to the new labour demands of football. Furthermore, I show how academics, restricted by the political constraints of academic institutions, have failed to analyse how white personnel disguise features of slavery through clouded notions of trafficking.

Under the European Convention on Human Rights, human trafficking is regarded as a modern form of slavery, with people treated as commodities that can be bought and sold. Whiteness fails to understand the legacy of slavery, of which it has been one of the main beneficiaries. Whiteness as a psychosis is a deflection from the realities of seeing the ways in which colonialism, sport and society connect. This is the psychosis in which Europeans in football have colonised specific parts of Africa with similar intentions to slavery or trafficking: the appropriation of black footballers as labour for profit from black families.

It is important to consider what this narrative conveys, for human trafficking contains human, legal and social constructions. For Poli (2006), trafficking in football operates directly through clubs’ recruitment or indirectly through the promise of football-related bribes to attract a child. Others have argued that the situation is a case of “new” slavery versus “old” slavery, but this debate fails to analyse whether European football as a global industry continues to collude with European theories of Africa that emerged during slavery. Football has the latent potential to underdevelop Africa despite its good intentions, such as the decision to award the World Cup to South Africa in 2010. This underdevelopment is best conceptualised through Rodney’s (1982) notion of the ‘balance sheet of colonialism’. As a

concept, the notion of the balance sheet is useful in analysing the different levels in which Europe has dented the economic ability of Africa to trade, sell and have a greater status in the politics of the global game.

It is important to understand the notion of underdevelopment by examining how, from stakeholders to academics, whiteness perpetuates remnants of past slave ideologies and a new triangle of trading African players across Europe. Whiteness de-racialises sport as a market through complex legal strategic jargon from the European Union and European Council Law. This deflects from Europe's entry into Africa via claims of colour-blindness, diminished accountability for its colonisation of the social spaces of African communities and a welfare approach to sport in Africa. The origins of this disguise between features of slavery and football can be examined in the transition from the transatlantic slave trade and the assumed termination of the purchase of slaves from Africa. Whilst two million Africans lost their lives, it is estimated that any reparation cost would need to be 7 trillion pounds (Channel Four TV 2005). It is now widely assumed that the legacy of that period is dead, despite Rodney's (1982) analysis of its political and economic structures as entrenched in the socio-psychological facets of European life. Football articulates these facets in a number of paradoxical ways.

This paradoxical relationship is represented by English fans who embrace the song *Rule Britannia*, which includes the line 'Britain never, never, never shall be slaves'. This is without any awareness of how the lyrics echo the superiority of whiteness as exempt from being slaves. The myths of slavery inside the culture of management through white managers were echoed again in 2006, when the Chelsea manager, Jose Mourinho, commented that the French FA's decision to make Claude Makelele return to the French squad meant that 'he was being treated like a slave with no rights' (cited in Tulse 2006). Football disguises the real truth behind the ownership of African players. Furthermore, the stereotypes of black players as intellectually deficient were reflected by Ron Noades who, as chairman of Crystal Palace FC during the 1990s, claimed that "they are ok in the summer" and "they are good when the ball is in front of them". Gladwell's (2005) notion of the Blink theory—the power of thinking without thinking—is thus useful in assessing these moments as representing the implicit historical associations that have transcended from slavery about African players.

These modern features of "slavery" are translated as issues of immorality. For example, Sepp Blatter, president of FIFA, claimed that the extraction of young African footballing talent represented 'social and economic rape' (cited in BBC 2006). However, the investigations into whether features of slavery exist in the game have not been substantiated by black British players, who seem reluctant to disclose how football replicates patterns of the plantation field: performing for white coaches, managers and owners, and being placed in "non-thinking" positions on the field of play because of an assumed biological gift of speed and strength.

The aversion to seeing the new realities of the African slave trade inside football may appear an emotional resistance to being made accountable for the sins of one's white forefathers. Football has a similar mode of production to slavery, forcing players to sell their labour to those who own the means of production, that is, white stakeholders. This reproduces the forces of racism for African players, both ideologically and economically. The analysis of modern racism in football is content to discuss racial abuse on the terraces of English society, without any analysis of the specific content of the abuse and the symbolism of the banana that reduces the black players to their post-colonial perception—the sporting animal.

WHITENESS AS A SCIENCE IN THE TRANSITION FROM SLAVERY TO SPORT

Sports science has become a powerful method in reproducing biological features of slavery. It has the power to collude with colonial perceptions of African communities, primarily the dislocation between the black body and black mind. It has created the construction of the archetypal sporting body as being African, aided by Entine's (2000) journalistic investigation into the biological myths of the black athlete. Through questionable notions of race, DNA and skin colour, his analysis of eugenics and science has created the value of the African body, with West Africa the home of speed, and North and East Africa the home of endurance. This provides the underpinning of the rationale for talent identification programmes and the competitive rivalry of European football clubs to enter Africa.

During my MSc research, I examined whether talent identification in football is a science or a form of conjecture in relation to the perceptions of African players in European football. I compared the science of talent identification based upon anatomical, physiological and genetic differences and showed how this correlated with a new type of racial 'stacking' in the twenty-first century. In this instance, science represents a form of conjecture based upon a set of implicit cultural values operated by scouts, coaches and managers at the elite levels of professional football. This was investigated through the manner in which individuals such as Kane (1971) have constructed the black body as bigger and faster. He makes visible a psychosis of whiteness in the ways stereotypes of the physical qualities of black sportsmen are linked. His research asserts that slavery "made" black Africans superior athletes through its repercussions for their anatomical and physiological profiles. This includes the physiological characteristics assigned to African sportsmen as having longer legs, narrower hips, wider calf bones and greater arm circumferences. He thus develops the scientific seeds for the emergence of European talent identification in relation to African players.

This construction reduces African players to purely their physical attributes, as perpetuated by Victor (1993), who argues that the period of slavery made the black body conducive to the playing demands of the modern game. It is important to translate the features of slavery in football as symbols, patterns of behaviour and ideologies that impact upon black players' lives. Slavery instilled a racialised exploitative system over a four-hundred-year period that demonised the black family as defective and maladjusted. Welsing (1994) argues that slavery has forms of symbols, and in football the black child is a symbol of white club managers' and coaches' ownership inside academies now placed in Africa. Sport science has created the rationale for this new type of symbolism, reinforced by Woolnough (1983) with the claim that African players have 'magical' strengths. For C.L.R. James (1967), this is the conjecture from the colonial period which perpetuates the superiority of whiteness and the inferiority of African people. The symbolism of innate racial difference through sport is further assisted by ideas that have transferred from the period of slavery which place black children as lacking intellectual skills (Burt 1935, Eysenck 1971, J. Watson 2007).

Through my MSc research, I demonstrated that football-related studies have not found any distinct differences in terms of height, weight, body fat, somatotype and muscle shape between African and European players. Similarly, there are no distinct differences in terms of anaerobic power or muscle fibre tissues (Reilly and Thomas 1976). In terms of the science of race as a feature of slavery, artificial illusions have been created between race and ability that have resonated inside talent identification programmes designed to identify those individuals with genetic physiological traits suitable for a particular sport. Worthy and Markle (1970) collude further with this race ideology in which whites are better at self-paced sports and blacks have an edge in reactive sports. The economic rationale for this assertion can be located in Szymanski's (1993) research into the respective economic worth of black and white players. Whilst black players were seen as more successful than their white counterparts on the field of play in terms of their individual performances and contribution towards team success, they actually cost less. This has important implications for the psychology of whiteness as a management culture.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PSYCHOLOGY AS A FEATURE OF SLAVERY IN FOOTBALL

The hypothesis that sport reproduces features of the psychological aspects of slavery is personified by Melnick's (1988) research into how constructions of race shape the 'stacking' of black players into labour-specific positions on the field of play. Similar to studies in North America and Britain, Edwards (1973) suggests that the field of play replicates a racialised division of labour. This is crucial to understanding how racism as a science emerges

in sport and becomes institutionalised as a management system. My MSc study of 10,000 players in the period 1985–2010, including six European Leagues and sixty international teams, revealed no significant differences in height, weight or positioning by race between black and white players. It appears that a psychological belief system within the science of sport and race has led to a rationale for the business structures of sport which have re-enacted features of the old trading systems in football.

During my MBA study, I compared the strategic human models that operate in both the slavery and contemporary periods, which position European whites as purchasers of Africans as commodities. Rodney's (1982) notion of the 'balance sheet of colonialism' was used to conceptualise the features of slavery that continue to dehumanise the black body as a source of trade. I argue that Europeans as managers in the institutions of football clubs enter Africa not to engage in trafficking (illegally removing), but to purchase African players, based upon a set of scientific, racialised values. These values are enshrined in the economic price placed on African labour by European clubs as the purchasers. The business unit is represented by the football academies emerging in Africa as the new plantation fields run by white personnel.

During this study, I adjusted the balance scorecard strategy from the work of Becker *et al.* (2001) to examine how Eurocentric post-colonial business models operate inside sport. Using Rodney's (1982) 'balance sheet of colonialism' enabled an analysis of the similar phases of underdevelopment of Africa by Europe in which European psychological, social and cultural concepts of human capital have contributed to the exploitation of African people as a commodity. I argue that a new feature of the cultural and psychological legacy of slavery is represented by the 'cultural balance scorecard of neo-colonialism in football', which constructs African labour as a significant resource.

To understand how human capital models of race operate in sport, it is important to trace their evolution from 1448, when the Portuguese invaded West Africa and the English ventured into South Africa to buy African slaves for profit. The rationale for Europe's entry into Africa for slaves from the fifteenth century was based on a racialised form of human capital. That this process of racialisation initiated from slavery is argued convincingly by Mills (1997). He states that there originally existed an agreement, or 'race contract', among European men in the beginning of the modern period to identify themselves as 'white' and therefore fully human, and to identify all others, in particular the natives with whom they were beginning to come into contact with, as non-white 'Others' and therefore not fully human.

The absence of an Afrocentric analysis of the role of human capital management in sport as a feature of slavery is never challenged. Ramdin (1987) suggests that slavery represented an overseas discipline that ensured the continual exploitation of colonial labour and was achieved through an ideology based on racial differences around notions of inferiority and superiority,

constructed to keep blacks in subjection. His notion of 'plantocracy racism' articulates the presence of a British capitalism that seems to permeate into the neo-colonial age of football. It represents an economic trade compatible with the demands of British capitalism in purchasing slaves for specific labour demands on the plantation field. This objectification of African labour as chattel, ownership and a global human capital system has important implications for sport, which embraces political, social and economic control over the black body.

Asante's (2003) Afrocentric approach is useful in analysing the features of slavery in sport that have led to the strategic re-enactment of a science in terms of how white men inside football perpetuate the myths of the African body. It is the process of maintaining African personnel as culturally different, and to be civilised, humanised and assimilated, that makes visible this feature of slavery inside sport as part of the development of a European business approach. In terms of the notion of the 'balance sheet of colonialism', an 'imbalance' is created from slavery between European and African communities that enables Europe's entry into Africa to extract tangible resources, notably footballers.

THE VISIBILITY OF WHITENESS AS A FEATURE OF SLAVERY INSIDE FOOTBALL

To view whiteness as an invisible, normative standard (Delgado and Stefancic 1997) shows its potential to replicate the same values, behaviours and actions of the colonial period within the world of modern sport. Similarly, Nkomo's (1992) notion that whiteness defines the science of certain organisations, and Ashcroft and Allen's (2003) contention that it represents a professional norm, reveal whiteness as a particular set of cultural features. More analytically, Said (1994) argues that whiteness is a secret cultural weapon in the management of organisational culture. The dominance of white, male personnel in the management structures of sporting organisations has developed their human capital, economic wealth and strategic competences through the colonial period, including FIFA, the major European football leagues and the English FA. Cooke's (2001) work on the connection between slavery and management demonstrates the strategic relationships involved in the construction of nineteenth century American railroads, with 38,000 managers managing four million slaves. His analysis of the legacy of slavery in these management systems can be used to show how the principles of human capital translate to the sporting ownership of African players as a value held by white men.

Sport as a management structure is built on the scientific illusions of the physical superiority of the African body. The strategic capability of sport and the power of whiteness are formed around a set of scientific models which provide the basis of a European approach to gain competitive strategic advantage over African players. The psychological features of slavery

are best reflected in Hoberman's (1997) concept of 'the athletic zing of the black mind' in which the position of whiteness as a psychological contract sees African personnel purely as products. For Kovel (1988), this psychology is institutionalised through the notion of whiteness as a culture, whilst for Basso (1979) the culture of whiteness in sport depends on the success of black players to reproduce the acceptable codes and behaviours of white men in power. The implications for African players are best personified by Fanon's (1967) theme of 'negrophobia', whereby the power of whiteness is enacted through a set of legal and economic controls that lead Africans to internalise their inferiority. The psychological features of slavery inside sport can be analysed in the context of the Africans who resisted slavery being labelled as having the mental illness drapetomania. A similar condition can be seen inside sport in which white men cannot see the implications of the legal and economic powers that force African players into a similar condition of compliance.

MANAGING WHITENESS AS A REMNANT OF SLAVERY IN FOOTBALL

The business structures of sport, notably the corporate institutional bodies in European and English football, have important historical links to Africa and utilise distinct trading routes similar to past ventures. Using Becker *et al.*'s (2001) 'workforce scorecard' to analyse the market forces in football, African players have become tangible assets. European football structures continue to evolve along similar lines to the corporate business structures of slavery, such as joint ownership and public limited companies. This reflects Rodney's (1982) 'phase three' of the underdevelopment model of Africa. It is the phase in which African football is continually underdeveloped by the scouting, coaching and administrative structures of European football.

The perception of Africa as underdeveloped is best articulated through the resource-based approach of Collis and Montgomery (1995), in which football companies reproduce white management human capital systems based on "extracting" African players as resources. Global economic purchasing values are placed on African players, in which football firms place importance on the knowledge of management teams to purchase African players. A study of the origins of the owners of clubs within the English/European leagues reveals an ownership that is still (white) European or American. This challenge can be analysed through Onyeani's (2000) notion of the 'capitalist nigger', in which he suggests that there has been a historical alienation of black African and American stakeholders. For Rhoden (2006), European and American human relationship models exclude black agents. According to the work of Shropshire (1996), they function through a historical cultural deference given to white agents, forged by the political and cultural perceptions of black personnel as lacking professionalism, which has created new legal controls over black players as commodities.

THE BOSMAN RULING: THE ABOLITION OF WHITE SLAVERY?

The Bosman Ruling of 1995 appears to have liberated the freedom of movement for white European players. Article 39 (formerly 38) of the European Community Treaty provides greater freedom to move freely to another club, whilst Article 48 precludes the application of rules laid down by sporting associations under which a professional footballer who is a citizen of one member state may not move to another. However, it has failed to stop the repetition of a particular feature of slavery in sport—the legal control of African players. Article 48 failed to liberate African players from a legal system in which the selling club will only get compensation of up to one year of the player's salary. Bosman, similarly to the abolition of slavery, makes transparent a system of the political dominance of white, male European stakeholders, with an ethnocentric system featured around the legal and financial self-interests of whiteness. The Bosman Ruling has not redressed African representation inside the major European business sectors. African stakeholders have no impact on the complex legal changes implemented by Bosman, the European Union and FIFA. The failure to regulate the political and economic ability of European countries through Free Trade has not led to a redistribution of economic and political power over the transfer system.

Similar to slavery, or the misguided conceptualisation of trafficking or migration, it is difficult to assess the levels at which African players are being bought and sold, despite anecdotal examples. On a statistical level, it has been claimed that there has been a 500 per cent increase in the purchase of African players. The prohibition of the international transfer of minors, aimed to guard against the exploitation of young people under the age of 18, has failed to halt unscrupulous practices to obtain young players. FIFA's social responsibility for coaching, refereeing and administration training has not translated into human rights for African stakeholders. Despite the terms of the Regulations of the UEFA/CAF Meridian Cup in 2006—based on Article 49(2c) and Article 50(1) of UEFA statutes as well as Article 23(11) and (19) of the CAF statutes—Article 2 of the legislation has failed to improve the ability of Africa to develop its own cultural and sporting systems. FIFA policies have not extended equitable political and economic power. Similar to slavery, they appear to have given legal permission to European clubs to develop a better strategic approach to footballing slave labour.

THE BUYING OR APPROPRIATION OF THE FOOTBALL COMMODITY

Poli (2006) suggests that African families release their potential playing talent for as little as €3000–4000. The 2004 Tampere Project aimed at resolving trafficking in football and the UN convention against transnational

organised crime aligned to Article 5(3) of the European Charter have been equally impotent to stop this trend. By the 1990s, 300 African players had migrated to Europe and, by the 1999–2000 season, 118 players had migrated to Portugal alone. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 69 of these were from the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde. Of the 163 Africans in the French League, 59 per cent came from the former French colonies of Senegal, Cameroon and the Ivory Coast. Darby (2007a) offers a descriptive analysis of the ‘exodus of elite soccer African talent to Europe’, suggesting that by 2007, 67 per cent of African players who had played in the African Cup of Nations, were purchased by Europe clubs. Bessoni *et al.* (2010) report that, as of October 2009, 571 African players had been imported into Europe. They were employed by 52 clubs, with the largest percentage playing in France (3.4 per cent) and the largest number imported from Nigeria (113 players).

As white, male, European academics, Darby (2002), Scherrens (2007) and Bessoni *et al.* (2010) provide important data, whilst also contesting the legitimacy of slavery in the recent emergence of the buying and selling of African players. Scherrens’ (2007) emphasis on economic migration—the theory of the “muscle drain”—offers an interesting appraisal of the system, but fails to analyse the scientific rationale. Whilst football trade represents 3 per cent of total world trade, Sepp Blatter’s (2003) claim that ‘Europe’s leading clubs conduct themselves increasingly as neo-colonialists who do not give a damn about heritage but engage in social and economic rape by robbing the developing world of their best players’ reveals the more concerning issues of exploitation.

This ‘social and economic rape’ does not address the secondary trading systems amongst Africans, with claims that there are now 500 illegal football academies operating in Accra, Ghana alone, run with untrained personnel. Furthermore, in 2007, the *New Nation* newspaper suggested that 50 white agents were operating in Africa with their own territory and networks. For example, there are an increasing number of Belgian agents in Ghana. Evidence suggests that young players are offered to countries with lax labour laws such as Belgium by unregistered agents, with players as young as 14 transported to European cities under pretence of a contract, but then abandoned. Belgium represents part of the new slave triangle where over 170 maverick agents exist and Belgian clubs have five satellite clubs in Africa.

According to the *New Nation* newspaper report, African scouts and agents advertise and secure Ghanaian passports for players from Nigeria and Mali. It also speculated that at least 20 per cent of the most talented youngsters in Accra academies are migrants from other parts of West and Central Africa. Whilst these stories have not been substantiated, the report of oil-rich Arabs spending millions of dollars to complete a massive recruitment trawl of 500,000 African boys further reveals the connections between sports science, sports psychology and sports management. The

speculation about trafficking, smuggling or extraction has not, however, addressed whether slavery is featured in the way African players are treated in migrating from Africa to Europe.

RESEARCHING THE SLAVE TRADE AT FIRSTHAND

In observing how football trades African players to European clubs, several dimensions are revealed. Firstly, the scouting methods and transfer systems reveal a racialised sport market in European football. Secondly, the changing patterns of trading that have evolved over a 150-year period and the financial benefits to Europe from intervention into South Africa, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria, among others, represent a new form of European sporting slavery.

This chapter was completed after a visit to the 2010 World Cup, which involved working in several townships and universities, and with the national team, inner-city clubs and local anti-racist projects, around safeguarding and protecting African players. This fieldwork, together with previous personal case studies, interviews and observations of scouting, buying and trading processes, as well as talking to players, families and clubs, reveals how European football reproduces features of the transatlantic slave trade. The exposure of a new type of mission in which European clubs take African boys to other white stakeholders disguises the economic intent of these acts. These acts must be measured against the vast numbers of African players who fail, becoming victims of a European football social welfare model in relation to African communities, through a range of charity projects. To analyse the features of slavery in sport, it is important to calculate the levels of reinvestment matched against profits made from the African football stars in the twenty-first century. It is crucial to examine how African football is kept underdeveloped by a lack of playing resources and funding, and by being continually kept in a paternalistic state of enslavement.

Firsthand personal observations reveal scientific tools used in football to assess and purchase African talent, based on the “four corner” approach: social, physical, psychological and technical. Through interviews in my role as a coach, scout and MBA graduate I established that the football clubs entering Africa for playing resources use a variety of models. Many clubs use a generic feeder model within a global trawl of scouting intelligence based on a Eurocentric talent identification approach that emphasises power, strength, biomechanical movement and intelligence in the search for African footballing labour.

As a scout for Arsenal FC (I am employed to scout young potential footballers in the South London area), their feeder club system appears strategically similar to the early features of the slave trade of the 1500s, with qualified scouts in West and North Africa. Scouts and coaches are recruited

from the centre of Europe, with no interviews or job descriptions, but based purely on contact networks. Coaching personnel have no scientific specification in recruiting African players; assessment is simply based on speed, strength and tactical awareness. The absence of an academy location leads to a system in which African players are taken to feeder clubs in Belgium for performance assessment, legal naturalisation and cultural assimilation before their transfer either into the Arsenal first-team squad or to another club (for a financial profit). The Arsenal feeder system has given the club a strategic capability to get the best marginal return on African players. It enables a wider strategic entry across Africa, reflecting an ethnocentric personnel structure with purely white scouts, managers and coaches, but an Arsenal first-team in which up to 60 per cent of the players possess African origins.

It is apparent that another English club operates contrasting features of slavery. Manchester United's strategic structure represents a satellite colonial system, sponsored from the centre (Manchester United), managed regionally (the Tom Vernon Academy) and without any Ghanaian stakeholder representation. A project visit to the site in 2005 revealed a private limited company, where the main strategic business holder was a white Englishman who leases the location. Boys are recruited from the local community, offered a short-term trial and contract, and placed in a communal room without television or air-conditioning. This model must be conceptualised politically as a major remnant of slavery in the alienation of Ghanaian representation and its social history since its independence in 1957. The Vernon project represents a new trend in European entry into Africa using a very informal, unstructured and strategic "best fit" approach, based on exploiting the economic situation in Ghana.

The second dimension to European entry into Africa is that different models of extracting African players are used by different nations on an economic and political level. In the context of Ghana, a more formalised strategic model is evidenced by Feyenoord's model. On a visit to the centre, the Dutch academy has many features of the slave regime: staff recruitment is informal, whilst paid Dutch coaches and African volunteers use a talent identification system based on a scientific resource-based model that emphasises speed, strength and tactical ability. Cultural negotiations with families operate through local Ghanaian volunteers and are premised on the player's ability to culturally assimilate into the Dutch coaching model. The strategic management centre has a symbolic reference to slavery, with armed guards and a very militaristic approach to African children, whilst features of slavery also operate on a strategic, scientific and management level.

The social and political context of South Africa, both pre- and post-apartheid, sheds light on the model utilised by Ajax Amsterdam in Cape Town. Started in 1999, the first global football franchise attempted to recognise the specific qualities in African football emanating from the performances of Cameroon in the 1990 World Cup and Ghana's World Youth

Cup triumph in 1991. The promise of an investment of \$1.2 million, the merging of Seven Stars and Cape Town Spurs clubs, and the involvement of Greeks and white South Africans with Dutch controlling interest, reveal both an economic and political approach which echoes apartheid in South African football. The mission was to produce a successful professional team with international quality players, develop a fanbase, and build a world-class administrative and marketing service, with endorsements from Nissa, Puma, Telefunken, and Pick 'n' Mix. The term of the agreement was not profit taken out of Ajax Amsterdam; rather, the \$1.2 million represented a loan, in exchange for three players. Ajax continues to possess the first refusal on every player at Ajax Cape Town.

It is important to explain the contradictions inherent to attempts to facilitate equity and liberation as a perpetual feature of slavery. Whilst Ajax Cape Town possess a large black (male and female) fanbase, and despite the growing number of players entering their academy from Congo, Cameroon and Malawi, there are no black directors, and only one black member of the coaching and scouting staff. The Ajax Cape Town model is based on the search for raw material, cheap labour and their role as a "selling club". The transfer of players is determined by Ajax Amsterdam, Ajax Cape Town's "parent club", and a unitary cultural system that might be inclusive of local African coaches, but has failed to make the transition to a multicultural model at the level of administrators and stakeholders.

Tottenham Hotspur Football Academy represents one of the newest European ventures, and is now sponsored by Super Sport, a major South African sports media company. As a coach and scout, I see Tottenham facing a number of political issues in adopting the academy once run by Ajax, in moving from a unitary human resource management model towards a pluralist one to incorporate a more multicultural approach to engaging and working in partnership with African stakeholders, whilst also trying to access the most cost-effective talent. Tottenham's entry into South Africa and their attempt at an international collaboration involves addressing a legacy in training local African staff to scout, train, coach and recruit African players to either change or risk repeating patterns of slavery in sport.

CONCLUSION

The failure of modern sport science to rescue black players from the perceptions of being bigger and faster creates and reinforces ideologies of race and a trading system compatible with the demands of the modern game. In Britain and across Europe, the theorising of the black body has produced a new form of labour demand. It is crucial to deconstruct the powerful ways that the science of race in sport is a social process that leads to interpretive frameworks that create one-dimensional models of African footballers. This generalisation stems from a lack of specifically

detailed biochemical studies to make accurate assessments of the evolving changes of the African body.

Whilst this science has underpinned the foundations of football agencies in making profits from the trade in black footballers, the limited employment opportunities in coaching and management, and the opportunities for black scouts and agents to trade inside global football markets leading up to the World Cup in South Africa is rarely examined. Notions of equity, equality and social inclusion did not emancipate the black stakeholder for the World Cup in South Africa. The exploitation, misappropriation and the behind-closed-doors agreements made by the stakeholders in relation to this tournament showed a resistance to challenge the range of privileges and forms of exclusion of black South Africans. Firsthand evidence through interviews, data analysis and observations of the political, economic and neo-colonial dangers that faced the World Cup in South Africa appear to show a repetition of similar themes of slavery, with the exploitation of black communities and black players' disenfranchisement representing a legacy of the apartheid system in football.

Marcus Garvey (1986) advocated African self-development as a solution to the emancipation of black people, and this is as relevant to football and the abolition of the discriminatory impacts of the football slave trade. The importance of black global self-governance in the move towards political and economic representation needs to reverse the missionary traditions through a new triangle of empowerment. Garvey's notion of the 'Black Star Liner' can be used to suggest that black communities, from Africa to London, should challenge European football to repay, and promote, black coaches and managers at local and international levels. Changes in the practices of science, psychology and management are needed to alter the negative stereotypes of black communities and to challenge the white theoretical voices of the past.

4 Football, Racism and the Irish

David Hassan and Ken McCue

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the prevalence and impact of racism within Irish football. In due course, when focussing on the situation in the Republic of Ireland, it will also outline a response to these issues by detailing the work of Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI), a not-for-profit organisation that seeks to promote social inclusion through the medium of sport. Its achievements in convincing national governing bodies (NGBs), notably the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), of the need to offer an adequate riposte to racism in that country demonstrate the capacity of voluntary agencies to generate meaningful change. In so doing, this chapter argues that there is a specificity to racism on the island. The factors that give rise to its existence in Northern Ireland are different to those that permeate in the Republic of Ireland (McVeigh 1998). Thus, in the former case, racism is partly symptomatic of a society that has been divided in many different ways since its inception in 1922 and which require explanation in order to make sense of racially motivated behaviour in the present day. In the latter instance, there is evidence of an abject denial by some of the very existence of racism, and it appears that the inertia surrounding those who govern and manage sport is only successfully overcome by the energy of highly motivated, socially responsive grass-roots bodies (*ibid.*). This chapter reflects on, and critically engages with, these two situations in the context of an overarching debate around racism in football in modern Ireland.

Of course, the Irish themselves have been subject to racist discrimination, especially in Britain, as well as in other parts of the world (Garner 2004). In such cases, as a minority ethnic group, they have typically been interpreted as homogenous, that is including Ulster unionists, many of whom actually define themselves as British. Indeed, in Northern Ireland, elements of extreme unionist culture reveal a similarity with aspects of racism found on mainland Britain, which can include a particular anti-Irish component (Hainsworth 1998). It is a reminder that the conflict in Northern Ireland was largely about the issue of sovereignty, which in turn had its roots in ethnicity. Yet, for the most part, the focus was on sectarianism, which is

division based on religion rather than ethnicity as a point of differentiation between that country's two communities. This consequently became a contributing factor towards ongoing suspicion of the 'Other'.

Thus, in any analysis of racism within sport in Northern Ireland, the question of whether to include coverage of anti-Irish racism persists. In some sports, notably association football, it is the minority nationalist community that has historically borne the brunt of such vitriol (Hassan 2002). For the purposes of this chapter, however, the discussion profiles the growing number of other minority ethnic groups resident in Northern Ireland, including large numbers of migrants who have moved there following the expansion of the European Union (EU). This is located in the context of an already divided society where the historical dislocate between Irish nationalists and Ulster unionists retains very real significance. What emerges in the wake of such analysis is a society divided on a number of different levels and affected by geography, religion, nationality and myth.

Notwithstanding the presence of macro themes concerning racism within both parts of the island, it is nonetheless legitimate to refer to 'Northern Ireland racism' and 'Republic of Ireland racism' as two largely separate entities (McVeigh 1998). Certainly, racism in the north continues to be structured by sectarianism in a way that racism in the south does not. Moreover, racism in the north tends to be 'Protestant' while racism in the south is principally seen as an issue for the Catholic community (Bell *et al.* 2004). Yet, as has been outlined, there remains a degree of commonality between racism in the north and the south, especially if a wider definition of racism, as one including the two dominant communities in Northern Ireland, is deployed. There have been instances of people from Northern Ireland being identified and verbally abused in the Republic of Ireland because of their place of residency and *vice versa*. Indeed, Fulton's (2005) work on the experiences of fans from Northern Ireland when supporting the Republic of Ireland team is an insightful examination of this phenomenon in the sporting realm.

Moreover, it is apparent that racism in Ireland is not some localised derivative of either British or American racism; instead, Irish racism is predicated upon the strength and efficacy of community (Connolly 2002). In Northern Ireland, this relationship has been conditioned and refined through sectarian conflict and social exclusion. As increasingly homogenised communities sought comfort in their own insularity, "outsiders"—or at least a perceived threat to the integrity of these communities by minority ethnic groups, especially migrant workers—became a source of malcontent for some. In this regard, minority communities are categorised as "alien invaders" involved in "taking jobs from the indigenous people", transient and therefore uncaring, devoid of an interest in integrating (assimilating), and not sufficiently aware of local mores and values. The net result of these crude portrayals and stereotypes is that minority populations have increasingly been subject to all forms of abuse, including physical attack and even enforced repatriation (Fawcett 1998).

Despite the very real presence of these issues, there is comparatively little research into the lives of minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. Instead, the community there, almost by choice, continues to be constructed in binary terms with a majority unionist population and a minority nationalist one. The principle corollary of this has been the denial, from some quarters, of the existence of racism, and when commentators have been forced to engage with the issues they choose to do so in pejorative terms. This means that, in Northern Ireland, racism continues to be understood as a “problem” that has been created by new arrivals into the country and one, in the minds of those affected by such developments, that only emerged relatively recently (McGill and Quintin 2002). Even following a series of high profile and racially motivated incidents in Belfast and elsewhere, many linked to sport and association football in particular, popular discourse has somehow managed to blame the victims rather than the perpetrators of such attacks. The suggestion is that by wilfully transporting themselves into these communities, such “new arrivals” were threatening a well-established way of life (McVeigh 2006).

It is self-evident that racism is a socially constructed phenomenon, which in this case requires consideration of what appear to be simple questions surrounding sport and society in Northern Ireland; yet they provoke incredible paradoxes. One example of this is the co-existence of a commonsense ideological construction on the part of many—there is no racism in Northern Irish football because there are very few minority ethnic players in the Irish League—alongside the reality of the situation, which confirms this view as erroneous.

Proportionally speaking, there is a sizeable minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland. This includes people of South Asian, Chinese, African and Middle Eastern origin, as well as Travellers and Jews. Consequently, there are a small, but by no means insignificant, number of foreign-born players playing in the domestic league of Northern Ireland. Ultimately, however, the situation in Northern Ireland confirms that, like elsewhere, it is not necessary for a given minority ethnic group to exist in a given society (or sports league) for the worst excesses of racism to be apparent. Instead, in a society already conditioned to the nuances of division, it is a relatively minor transposition from difference based upon religion to one cohered around ‘race’. If anything, the latter is a convenient outlet for some people in Northern Ireland seeking to come to terms with the consequences of living there throughout the period of ethno-sectarian conflict. Already suspicious of their overall standing following the end of the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland and effectively left to their own devices to construct some degree of normality, the idea that a new threat to this process may emerge, this time from beyond their own national boundaries, represents an opportunity for some to redeploy the language of division.

This is an important point when examining an exponential growth in racist attacks in Northern Ireland, given the existence of a belief that the

growing population of minority ethnic groups in recent years has somehow *caused* racism (Bell *et al.* 2004). It leads to a clear interim conclusion, which is that when people in Northern Ireland claim that racism is not a “problem”, they actually mean that it is not of concern for the dominant white population. It only becomes an issue when the minority groupings become exasperated living in a racist society, which occasionally spills over into confrontation with the dominant grouping (McVeigh 1998). Whilst this has not happened yet in Northern Ireland, football offers some interesting indicators that such a scenario is not entirely inconceivable. When serious public disorder erupted following an international match between Northern Ireland and Poland in Belfast in March 2009, it brought to the fore many unspoken, if thinly veiled, prejudices amongst the indigenous community of Belfast.

Elsewhere, the assumed relationship between whiteness and “Northern Irishness” is so ‘commonsense’ that in the minds of many it rarely requires articulation (Hainsworth 1998). In recognising this, it is also true that the majority unionist and nationalist blocs are profoundly divided along religious and ethnic lines. In fact, McVeigh (1998) has argued that racism in Northern Ireland should be viewed as a dual majority problem, by which he means that minority ethnic groups experience racism in a particular way precisely because the white majority ethnic bloc in Northern Ireland is deeply divided. However, this conclusion is perhaps overly simplistic and offers a slightly skewed picture of reality. For instance, it implies that both sections of the majority ethnic bloc engage with minorities in the same way, yet evidence does not appear to support this assertion. A survey in October 2006 found that 90 per cent of all media-reported racist attacks over the previous twelve months in Northern Ireland occurred in loyalist (that is, Protestant) areas (McDonald 2006). In other words, if attacks on minority ethnic groups are any indication of where racism is most problematic in Northern Ireland, it is clear that it is a much greater issue within the Protestant community than it is amongst their Catholic counterparts.

Once more, the domestic football scene in Northern Ireland presents evidence to support this view. In common with many divided societies, football clubs in Northern Ireland are patronised and constructed as “belonging” to one side of the community or the other. That said, only one club, Cliftonville FC, could be said to enjoy the support of the minority Catholic or nationalist community whilst the others are representative of various shades of Protestantism, including those of a strongly loyalist orientation (Sugden and Bairner 1993). It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that because football in Northern Ireland is predominantly a Protestant and unionist affair, racism within the Irish League is mostly an issue for the unionist community. Regrettably, there are numerous examples to support this conclusion. In a perverse contradiction, Linfield FC, whose identity is closely linked to loyalism, have had their black players racially abused by opposing fans, including followers of Glentoran FC, the other

predominantly Protestant club in Belfast. In this context, it is not surprising that black players at Cliftonville, whose identity is more Catholic and nationalist, have also suffered serious verbal harassment, notably Englishman Keith Alexander.

Indeed, there has long been an overlap between the British far right and conservative forces in Northern Ireland. Football clubs like Linfield (the name often appearing as LiNField on graffiti posted on walls in the locale, with the letters 'N' and 'F' highlighted to reflect support for the far right National Front organisation) and fellow Belfast club Crusaders FC have sections of supporters who periodically carry fascist and racist iconography, and have links with neo-Nazi groups, including Combat 18. Similar elements were behind death threats in 2006 to two foreign footballers playing with Institute FC based in Derry. In this case, both players had received intimidating phone calls in the month prior to three men with baseball bats arriving at their apartment threatening to shoot them unless they left the city. The club is based in the predominantly loyalist Waterside area of Derry where, in July 2009, the British Peoples Party held a leaflet drop espousing extreme right-wing views and advocating the expulsion of "non-white" groups from the UK.

Previously, Crusaders FC had been the subject of an official complaint to the Irish Football Association (IFA) in January 2005 when two players from Larne FC were in receipt of verbal abuse, principally in the form of "monkey chanting", from home supporters. Similar incidents have been reported in games over the preceding three seasons featuring Dungannon Swifts, Lisburn Distillery and Derry City, the latter of whom play in the domestic league of the Republic of Ireland. So, if these examples demonstrate anything, it is the very real presence of racism in Northern Irish football and the need for a concerted anti-racism campaign within the club game. It also reaffirms a growing belief that racism and sectarianism are closely linked, in particular that the overwhelming majority of incidents involving racism in Irish League football can be attributed to supporters displaying strongly loyalist sentiments.

On the whole then, what is true is that minority ethnic people find themselves struggling for equality against a backdrop of widespread sectarian division in Northern Ireland (Committee for the Administration of Justice 1992). It is also particularly difficult to negotiate a place for minority ethnic identities in a setting where dominant white identities are so strongly contested on account of the deep ethnic and religious division. In other words, the outworking of sectarianism also affects racialised groups in Northern Ireland. McVeigh and Rolston (2007: 5) go further and conclude that sectarianism is indeed a form of racism. They argue that 'acknowledging sectarianism as a racism frees us to apply insight from the analysis of racism elsewhere to an understanding of the north of Ireland'. In their analysis, the state is intricately engaged in sustaining a level of sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland, even following the signing of the Good

Friday Agreement in 1998. They conclude that 'in the case of Northern Ireland, therefore, we see a continuity in relation to sectarianism that is attributable to the nature of the state itself rather than the politics it contains' (ibid.: 7).

Reflecting upon the role of the state in this regard is interesting and relevant when observing sport as a site for racial intolerance. Surprisingly, Sport Northern Ireland, formerly the Sports Council for NI, does not have an official anti-racism strategy in place to tackle this growing problem. Indeed, Sport NI appears to be particularly silent on high profile cases of racial abuse in Irish sport and instead it has been left to individual governing bodies of sport to take action. That said, the work of Carter *et al.* (2003) in tracking the impact of sporting migrants in Northern Ireland did receive the support of Sport NI, where the issue of race and racism is at least recognised (Carter 2005).

The IFA has been one such body that has addressed racial intolerance in its sport, with the Community Relations Unit (CRU) at the forefront of its anti-racism campaign. It was regrettable then that a lot of this good work was undermined following the events of 28 March 2009, when Polish football fans engaged in street battles with supporters of Northern Ireland following a World Cup qualifying match at Windsor Park. That it was Poland that formed the opposition on this occasion was not without significance. Poles represent the largest minority ethnic group in Northern Ireland—approximately 25,000 people in total—and their settlement, particularly in Belfast, has not been without difficulties (Shirlow and Murtagh 2006). Many migrants have chosen to live in the Village area of south Belfast because accommodation is relatively inexpensive, and it is close to the hospitals and commercial premises where most of them are employed. This is a mainly loyalist, working-class community, sections of whom view their migrant neighbours in derisory terms, focussing in particular upon their predominantly Catholic faith. Elsewhere, in May 2006, the home of a Polish migrant couple in Derry was ransacked by a loyalist gang armed with a hatchet. It transpired that their home was attacked because they were identified whilst wearing Glasgow Celtic jerseys, again in the mainly Protestant Waterside part of the city (*Irish News* 12 May 2006).

In the case of the rioting following the international match between the two countries in Belfast, it is important to note that the Polish support was comprised both of members of the Polish diaspora in Northern Ireland and travelling fans. Some of the latter were clearly intent on trouble with certain individuals openly taunting the home support with Irish republican symbolism. On the field of play, the Poland goalkeeper, Artur Boruc—who also plays for Glasgow Celtic—chose an unfortunate occasion to have a poor game and he quickly became the embodiment of a simmering, multi-layered antagonism that sections of the home support held towards what they felt he represented. Not only both a Catholic and a Celtic player, Boruc had also infamously blessed himself during an Old Firm match against Glasgow

Rangers in 2006 and held a particular fascination with the deceased Pope John Paul II. This was more than sufficient grounds for racist vitriol in the minds of some Northern Ireland supporters. Whereas previously this behaviour was contained within the confines of Windsor Park, on this occasion the disturbances spilled out onto the adjoining streets in riots between rival supporters and with the police. Whilst located within the context of a football match, some observers interpreted these clashes as symbolic of much deeper and wider inter-community tensions. As if to add weight to this assertion, following this unrest, a campaign against minority ethnic groups in the aforementioned Village area of Belfast (close to the original trouble) resulted in over forty people fleeing their homes, whilst a further five people left Northern Ireland completely. The figures in question are likely to represent a very conservative assessment as many similar instances went unreported (*Irish News* 30 March 2009).

Again, in certain cases, the reaction to this turn of events has been one of denial. For example, rather than choosing to condemn the attacks stemming from the match, Ulster Unionist councillor Bobby Stoker challenged the figures by understating the number of people who had presented themselves as homeless to the Housing Executive. A more worrying aspect was the perceived identification of Polish migrants with the republican “enemy”—terminology still used by the Northern Ireland First Minister, Peter Robinson. As McVeigh and Rolston (2007), amongst others, have observed, such developments also contribute towards institutional segregation of loyalist and migrant communities. As most Polish migrants claim Catholic heritage, their children will be educated separately from Protestant Northern Irish children. The contribution of separation to creating an ‘Other’, thus increasing the incidence of violence, should not be underplayed. The sectarianism that has been allowed to emerge in some sections of segregated education has the potential to evolve into racial hatred. This conflagration also impacts upon the response of the criminal justice system to racially motivated hate crime. For example, figures show that only a third of members of minority groups considered the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) *not* to be racist (*ibid.*). Despite changes to policing arrangements in Northern Ireland, aspects of civic society are still appropriated by one side of the community or the other, and it seems that in this binary distinction migrants have sided with nationalists and republicans in expressing their resentment towards aspects of state apparatus.

Amid all of this, the response of the IFA to the events of March 2009 has been interesting. Officially, it has been caught between condemning the rioting involving its fans and maintaining an unspoken sympathy with its predominantly unionist following. Of course, condemning incidents is one thing; actually doing something to prevent them happening is an entirely different matter. The IFA’s CRU has identified the issues at the heart of the problem and has sought to do something about them, although the extent to which the governing body can actually lay claim to the activities of its

most proactive department is a matter of some debate. Amongst a range of agendas, its innovative World United programme is a community-driven initiative which breaks down barriers to inclusion in football, proactively encouraging members of minority ethnic groups to play the game in a safe and fun environment. Whilst it is a very commendable development—the side includes players from Portugal, France, Somalia and Ivory Coast, amongst others—there are two obvious issues to highlight. First, this initiative potentially simply side-steps the process of real and lasting integration by isolating the players and removing them from the mainstream. Second, this approach also runs the risk of constructing football involving minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland as “fun”, “non-serious” and peripheral. It is ironic that amid a very genuine and worthwhile development, a latent form of racism still appears to permeate. However, it would be unfair to be overly critical of the CRU, not least because if its capacity to address explicit forms of sectarianism at Windsor Park is any indication of its determination to overcome issues around racism, then it is likely to yield impressive outcomes.

The existence of racism in football, and indeed Northern Irish society as a whole, is an extremely complex matter (Bell *et al.* 2004). Few clubs in the country’s domestic league have been unaffected by racist activity, and the response from the game’s governing body and the government department with responsibility for sport in Northern Ireland, Sport NI, has been far from convincing. It highlights one obvious correlation between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in terms of football governance, that is, the incapacity, even unwillingness, of those with responsibility for the sport to tackle racism in any convincing fashion. As the focus of this chapter now turns to examine the situation in the Republic of Ireland, it details the work of one agency, SARI, which was not prepared to accept the apparent inactivity around the issue by the FAI, and in so doing led a remarkable transformation in the process of tackling racism within sport generally throughout the state.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

In 1979, when the Ghanaian-Irish full-back, Chris Hughton, ran out at Dalymount Park, Dublin to make his debut as the first black player to play for the Republic of Ireland, half the stadium held its collective breath. After Hughton went on to give a man-of-the-match performance and receive widespread acclaim for his contribution, the sense of relief was palpable. In a city where, during the same season (1978–79), young footballers from the Travelling community were subject to racist exclusion by having to collect their “street league” winners’ medals outside a suburban public house, whilst the team that they beat in their final celebrated upstairs, there was some concern around the impact of black players pulling on a green shirt to represent

Ireland. Interestingly, whilst the London-born Hughton went on to win fifty-three caps for his adopted country, and proved to be hugely influential when the Republic of Ireland team qualified for the 1988 European Championships and 1990 World Cup finals, members of the Travelling community were still left outside most doors in the capital city (Fanning 2002).

This situation provides an interesting insight into the nuanced nature of contemporary racisms in Ireland. Hughton, through his sporting prowess, was able to negotiate a space that allowed him to be viewed as making a positive contribution to the Irish nation. The fact that he was of dual-heritage was of less importance than might have been the case were he not so talented in the field of sport. In contrast, members of the Travelling community, many of whom are constructed in a less favourable light, remain excluded and marginalised to this day. Moreover, as a supporter of the anti-apartheid movement, Hughton donated his 1988 European Nations Championship shirt to the African National Congress Youth League and is now a patron of Ghana-Ireland Black Stars FC. Since Hughton's debut, black players have played at every level for Irish international squads, including his own son, Cian, who has represented the under-21 team. When Jack Charlton was appointed manager of the Republic of Ireland in 1986, players that met criteria established under the Irish National and Citizenship Act, and abided by FIFA's stipulations on player eligibility, began to emerge from the most unlikely of places. The colour of their skin gave way to the quality of their footballing ability. Even members of the Italian diaspora, Terry Mancini and Tony Cascarino, were recruited to play as the game in the Republic of Ireland underwent a remarkable transformation.

Another London-born player with an Irish mother—and this time with a Nigerian father—added further diversity to a formerly homogenous, white, Roman Catholic nation by spending his early years in a Protestant orphanage. Paul McGrath, known as the 'Black Pearl of Inchicore' when he signed for League of Ireland side St. Patrick's Athletic in south inner-city Dublin, became a "local" hero when he starred in the 1990 and 1994 World Cup tournaments for the Republic of Ireland (McGrath 2006). McGrath, who was very popular with working-class Dubliners, was an inspiration to other minority ethnic St. Pat's players like Curtis Fleming, who went on to sign for Middlesbrough FC in England and Paul Osam. When Brian Kerr took over as manager of the club, black players knew they had a safe environment in which to perform as Kerr was renowned for his anti-racist stance. Kerr, who is the current manager of the Faroe Islands and a Director of Sport Against Racism Ireland, remains the most successful manager of the Republic of Ireland due to his achievements at youth level. However, during his tenure as manager of the senior international team, he received racist correspondence from anonymous sources regarding his working relationship with the player Clinton Morrison and his assistant coach, Chris Hughton. Kerr reported these incidents to the police, but maintained a very uncomfortable public silence on the issue as

he realised the hurt it would cause to one of his players, as well as to his close friend and colleague, Hughton.

Along with the scourge of racism, Brian Kerr, who is the product of an inter-faith marriage, also had to deal with sectarianism on the terraces of Lansdowne Road, the adopted home of Irish football. In a stadium shared between the FAI and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU), Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter played side by side with an oval ball watched by a religiously integrated crowd. However, when the round ball was kicked in an international football match by a player (or former player) from the Protestant club Glasgow Rangers, sections of the crowd would regularly voice their disapproval. This behaviour, which was orchestrated by a small section of the team's following who happened to wear Glasgow Celtic shirts, continued over the course of three games during the 2002/03 season until action was taken following the relentless booing of the Georgian International, Shota Arveladze, in June 2003. After this particular match, the Rangers player was admitted to hospital suffering from acute stress. Paul McGrath issued a statement condemning the sectarian abuse from the player's bedside. Later, both Celtic and the FAI enacted appropriate, if somewhat belated, action in the wake of the incident that again highlighted the extent of sectarianism in Ireland (McDonald 2003). The former carried out an investigation and publically stated that the behaviour was in violation of their Social Charter. They also threatened to cancel season tickets if it was found that holders were involved in the practice. For their part, the disciplinary committee of UEFA sent a missive of instruction to Merrion Square, Dublin, the headquarters of the FAI. The then Chief Executive of the FAI, Fran Rooney, called a hastily organised media conference, issuing a public apology and condemning the behaviour of sections of the crowd. The immediate printing of pitch-side anti-racism and anti-sectarianism hoardings, along with a match programme message warning about sanctions, was ordered to be in place for the next game against Australia. As it turned out, the Soccerroos, who had two Rangers players in their squad, played the game without the Glasgow-based players.

For the FAI, who had up until then effectively ignored the *Unite Against Racism* campaign promoted by UEFA, to argue that racism did not exist in the game in Ireland was clearly nonsensical. As the European governing body of football now required its member associations to be socially responsible in a new era of accountability, the FAI would have to deal with those promoting division and hatred from wherever it emerged. If the FAI was recalcitrant in its willingness to embrace anti-sectarian and anti-racist policies, then it was the nongovernmental organisation, SARI, that was lobbying hard for a new perspective (Sport Against Racism Ireland 2010).

Founded in 1997, the European Union Year Against Racism, as a community grass-roots voluntary body, SARI successfully organised the annual Soccerfest tournament and worked with community-based local area social partnerships. The Soccerfest event, which is now the largest 7-a-side

intercultural tournament in Europe, gave SARI a high media profile and built capacity within the nation's diverse migrant and minority ethnic communities, and as a voluntary body, it was at the fore in combating racism and eradicating xenophobia. Using a simple formula of cultural integration and social inclusion through sport, SARI advanced its agenda and joined with other like-minded organisations, including UK agencies Kick It Out; Football Unites, Racism Divides; and Show Racism the Red Card, alongside other groups in mainland Europe, to form Football Against Racism Europe (FARE).

Due to their historical development and relationship with the game, many of the partner organisations were confined to dealing with racism inside the stadium and did not include programmes on xenophobia or sectarianism. SARI, on the other hand, had developed a strategic plan to use sport in general and football in particular as a mechanism to tackle racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination from wherever it emerged. FARE set about devising a 10-point Action Plan Against Racism to engage with UEFA through its Corporate Social Responsibility Unit. The plan, which was subsequently adopted by the European Commission, insisted that clubs:

1. Issue a statement saying the club will not tolerate racism, spelling out the action it will take against those engaged in racist chanting. The statement should be printed in all match programmes and displayed permanently and prominently around the ground.
2. Make public address announcements condemning racist chanting at matches.
3. Make it a condition for season-ticket holders that they do not take part in racist abuse.
4. Take action to prevent the sale of racist literature inside and around the ground.
5. Take disciplinary action against players who engage in racist abuse.
6. Contact other clubs to make sure they understand the club's policy on racism.
7. Encourage a common strategy between stewards and police for dealing with racist abuse.
8. Remove all racist graffiti from the ground as a matter of urgency.
9. Adopt an equal opportunities policy in relation to employment and service provision.
10. Work with all other groups and agencies, such as the players' union, supporters, schools, voluntary organisations, youth clubs, sponsors, local authorities, local businesses and police, to develop proactive programmes and make progress to raise awareness of campaigning to eliminate racial abuse and discrimination.

Following the 2001 World Conference on Racism in Durban, the Irish government agreed to develop a National Action Plan Against Racism. In light

of this, SARI and colleagues in FARE convinced the Council of Europe that sport could take a lead role in combating racism and effecting social integration through intercultural dialogue. Once the measure became a directive, SARI set about importing it into the Irish government's National Action Plan Against Racism (Irish Government 2005). Once the new plan had been published, SARI engaged the FAI in consultation around its core themes. It was clear that the FAI was reluctant to move without inducement, so at a joint UEFA-FARE *Unite Against Racism* Conference in Barcelona in 2006, SARI lobbied UEFA for funding to be directed towards the FAI under its 10-point plan implementation scheme. For its part, SARI would provide technical support to the FAI to formulate an intercultural plan and encourage the association to employ a full-time intercultural programme coordinator.

Within a short space of time, a Football Intercultural Advisory Group (FIAG) was formed. Made up of SARI, Show Racism the Red Card (Ireland), representatives from the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the new body worked with Belfast-based consultants New Dialogue to produce the plan. The document, which was launched by Paul McGrath, set out a three-year programme from 2007–2010. In the process of implementing the plan, training modules were prioritised, beginning with referees, stewards and players. Along with the introduction of Rule 73 and Rule 89 (with the same wording) covering players, technical staff and the general public, it concluded that anyone:

who publically disparages, discriminates against or denigrates someone in a derogatory manner on account of 'race', colour, language, religion or any other racist or contemptuous act, shall be subject to match suspension for at least 5 matches at every level (Football Association of Ireland 2008: 6).

Spectators who break the rule will receive a two-year stadium ban. The new rules were also designed to cover banners and flags.

In 2009, there was a successful prosecution under the new rules when the Bohemians FC player, Jason McGuinness, received a five match ban and a substantial fine. Ironically, this player had taken part in a Show Racism the Red Card poster campaign published a few days before the incident that led to his suspension. This case was naturally very embarrassing for the FAI, whilst other flaws in the implementation of the policy are beginning to emerge. In 2008, a referee in Dublin ordered a Sikh boy, Karpreet Singh, to leave the pitch after the player refused to remove his turban. Despite the fact that the intercultural plan covers all forms of discrimination, the referee was not aware that he was acting in breach of its spirit. By the time the FAI made a 'holding statement', the World Sikh Council had spread the story across the world and in so doing attracted further negative publicity to Irish football (McDonald 2008).

Prior to the McGuinness debacle, the rules were tested in the case of the Nigerian-born, Republic of Ireland under-19 international, Chukwuemeka Onwubiko, who claimed that he had been racially abused by two players during a youth cup final. In this case, the player was interviewed by FAI staff, who did not cite the new rules at the meeting. In due course, the player officially wrote to the association formally requesting that it investigate his claim. The FAI replied to the player stating that it could not take the claim forward due to a statute of limitations and the absence of a referee's report. The association also dismissed witness statements from both the player's manager and a spectator as inadmissible as they were not deemed to be independent. The player has subsequently initiated (ongoing) civil action in this case (*Metro Éireann* 2008).

It is unfortunate that this plan, which promised so much, has come unstuck due to a weakness in its implementation. A failure to transform the Football Intercultural Advisory Group into a Football Intercultural Forum, as recommended in the plan, has resulted in lack of clarity and a failure to construct a joined-up strategy amongst stakeholders. Last year, the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) withdrew from the Advisory Group after only one meeting when the FAI could not issue a guarantee that homophobia in the game would be addressed in the programme. GLEN, which had been nominated by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and SARI to join the advisory group, pointed to the strong statement from the CEO of the FAI in the foreword to the plan as evidence that the association was concerned about homophobia in the context of a comprehensive anti-discrimination programme. In the meantime, GLEN has made direct contact with the FARE administration partner, European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation, and in 2010 took part in a delegate conference on sexuality and sport in Barcelona (FARE 2010).

Despite the shortcomings of the FAI Intercultural Plan, SARI's strategy continued to encourage the sub-Department of Integration within the Irish administration to release funding of over €80,000 to the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) to develop its own plan and to employ an integration officer. In turn, the GAA launched its Intercultural and Integration Strategy 2009–2015. This covers the Gaelic games of hurling, Gaelic football (men and women), *camogie* (women's hurling), rounders and handball. Learning from the omissions in the FAI plan, the GAA is tightening up its rules around racism to include more robust penalties and sanctions. It has also moved from a non-sectarian to an *anti*-sectarian stance and encourages participation from people of all faiths (and none) to partake in its activities (GAA 2009). Interestingly, the GAA is soon to launch a Respect programme based on the comprehensive UEFA Respect campaign introduced by Michel Platini in 2008. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this new programme has yet to be adopted by the FAI.

CONCLUSION

The Irish are typically portrayed as genial, fun-loving and welcoming. For the most part, this is a reasonable, if somewhat stereotypical, portrayal of this nation's people. But Ireland is not immune from racial intolerance and the ill-effects of racism. This chapter has examined in detail the genesis and contributing factors that give rise to these issues in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and highlighted the apparent inactivity on the part of those charged with governing sport on the island to enact any meaningful response to what is a growing problem. Indeed, it appears that their activity has only really emerged over the last decade and, particularly in the Republic of Ireland, has been undertaken in part following the intervention of organisations like SARI. The future is less clear, but there does appear to be the basis of a new recognition by NGBs and others concerning the need to provide a credible and strategic response to racial intolerance, which appears to be present at all levels of the sport, from youth football to the domestic leagues and at international level. As migration into Ireland grows on an annual basis, it seems that the capacity of sporting authorities to properly take account of the identities and needs of the "new" Irish will be the defining feature of their activities in the time ahead.

Contested Fields and Cultural Resistance

5 Racisms, Resistance and New Youth Inclusions

The Socio-Historical Development and Shifting Focus of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Football Clubs in Leicester

Steven Bradbury

INTRODUCTION

Research into ‘race’ and football in England has largely focused on the elite echelons of the sport. It has sought to identify and explain the incidence of overt and more institutionalised racisms, and their impact on shaping the parameters of inclusion of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities across all sectors of the professional game. In contrast, issues of ‘race’ and amateur football have been largely under-researched and remain a relatively marginalised area of academic enquiry. This chapter shifts academic attention towards the amateur tiers of the game by offering an analysis of the socio-historical development of BAME clubs in the city of Leicester in the East Midlands of England.

The chapter begins by examining the existing academic literature on ‘race’ and amateur football in England before moving on to provide some local contextual background regarding the social, cultural and political landscape of Leicester. It then contextualises the socio-historical development of BAME clubs as sites of active resistance to racisms and as symbols of positive cultural identity production for BAME participants. The chapter also examines the shifting focus of BAME clubs from male, adult leisure spaces to deliverers of multi-ethnic service provision for local youth populations, and evaluates efforts to build increased coaching and infrastructural capacity to this end. Finally, the chapter argues that the hegemonic whiteness and defensive protectionism embedded within the operational practices of local administrative football governance (see also Lusted, this volume) have undermined the pace of BAME club development, and have limited the general sense of cultural belonging within the sport amongst local BAME communities.

The empirical findings within this chapter are drawn primarily from a two-phase study of amateur football in Leicestershire conducted by the author in 2006. Phase-one yielded questionnaire responses from 246 amateur football

clubs playing competitive football within organised league structures in the region. Phase-two involved conducting more focused semi-structured interviews with club “workers” at 10 amateur football clubs with a strong geographical and cultural connection to the city of Leicester, including five clubs where the majority of participants were drawn from BAME backgrounds. The findings also draw on the author’s substantial ethnographic experiences of local football governance infrastructures and operational practices at BAME clubs, undertaken through a combination of previous research projects, a longstanding involvement in a local football-based anti-racism forum, and regular presence at local community and football events at which representatives from BAME clubs were often present.

The term black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) is used throughout this chapter as a broad descriptive marker to refer primarily to “non-white” communities, inclusive of both “established” and more recent migrant populations to Britain. The term is increasingly employed in public policy, voluntary services and the social sciences in Britain, including research examining ethnicity and sport. In the context of this study, the term BAME is most likely to refer to people of African, African-Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage, as well as people of dual-heritage (see the Local Context of Leicester section later in this chapter). Further, the terms ‘black’ and ‘British Asian’ are also used to denote further ethnic sub-divisions of people of African and African-Caribbean origin (‘black’) and those drawn from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (‘British Asian’) communities.

‘RACE’ AND AMATEUR FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND

It is arguably the case that many of the racisms and discriminatory processes which have impinged upon, and been generated by, professional football culture are also strongly embedded at the amateur level. For example, research focusing on the amateur game in West Yorkshire (Long *et al.* 2000) and Leicestershire (Bradbury 2002) reveals the continued incidence of overt racist behaviour and ongoing racialised tensions between players (and supporters) of different ethnic backgrounds. Both studies also identify tendencies towards the negative conceptualisation and consequent cultural reification of BAME (especially British Asian) players in terms of imagined physiological, psychological and cultural inadequacies. This is similar to the processes of stereotypification utilised by coaches and talent scouts at professional clubs, which have contributed to the under-representation of British Asian players in the professional game (Bains with Patel 1996, Burdsey 2007a).

Findings reported in these localised studies echo the broader concerns outlined in the ‘Eliminating Racism from Football’ report undertaken by the Football Task Force (1998) regarding the extent of—and lack of effective action against—racism in the amateur game, and the unwillingness

of County Football Associations (CFAs) to develop more progressive relationships with BAME clubs. Lusted (2009, this volume) illustrates the marked resistance of CFAs to engage with broader (national FA) race equality initiatives and argues that this institutional insularity is underpinned by a series of historically embedded, deeply conservative (and colonialist) ideologies, and by the relatively autonomous organisational practices of local football governance. Findings here draw interesting parallels with research which alludes to processes of institutional closure within national football governance and at professional football clubs, and the relatively limited effectiveness of local and national initiatives designed to encourage more equitable change in this respect (Bradbury 2001, Independent Football Commission 2003, Commission for Racial Equality 2004, King 2004a, Asians in Football Forum 2005, Bradbury and Williams 2006).

Racisms and embedded processes of racial exclusion in amateur football in England have not gone uncontested. The ethnographic work of Westwood (1990, 1991) and Williams (1994) in football, and Carrington (1998b, 1999) in cricket, has illustrated the social and cultural significance of BAME clubs as sites of resistance to white sporting hegemonies, through their role in offering increased opportunities for BAME sporting participation within culturally distinct and discursively constructed “black” (male) spaces. Sport clubs are positioned as a key sporting and cultural resource for BAME communities, which enable the positive construction and expression of specific ethnic, cultural and neighbourhood identities. Burdsey (2006b: 477) has also located the significance of (male) amateur clubs of this kind in terms of their function in ‘facilitating contingent cultural integration, resisting racism and circumventing the normalisation of whiteness in mainstream amateur football structures’. Further, the contributions of Scraton *et al.* (2005) and Ratna (2007, this volume) in examining the experiences of BAME females in amateur football have helped to broaden debates to incorporate themes of intersectionality, and have offered much-needed and important analyses of girls and women’s interwoven experiences of racial and gendered inequities at the grass-roots level of the sport.

Central to the developing research focus on ‘race’ and amateur football has been a renewed emphasis on prioritising the experiential knowledge, attitudes and opinions of BAME footballers and football “organisers” at BAME clubs. Such approaches are designed to centralise the “authoritative narratives” of BAME research participants and are intended to help overcome the prior silencing and ongoing marginalisation of BAME sporting communities. It is argued here that such narratives are better understood with reference to the locally grounded contexts from which they have emerged. To this end, it is towards providing some contextual background to the local ethnic and racial demography, and political and cultural structure, of the city of Leicester to which this chapter now turns.

THE LOCAL CONTEXT OF LEICESTER

Over the last fifty years, the provincial city of Leicester has undergone a dramatic social and cultural transformation, primarily related to successive waves of immigration from the New Commonwealth. Most significant was the arrival of substantial East African Asian communities fleeing social, economic and political persecution in Uganda and Kenya in the late 1960s and early 1970s. By 2001, Leicester's numerically substantial, and increasingly diverse, BAME communities accounted for more than one-third of the city's residential population of 280,000 people. It includes longstanding Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African-Caribbean communities, as well as newer black African, Kurdish and Iraqi groups, some of whom are asylum-seekers or refugees. Whilst more than four-fifths of the local BAME population are (mainly Indian heritage) British Asian, the city has also historically attracted significant numbers of migrants from central and eastern Europe, including Polish, Ukrainian and Serbian émigrés during the immediate post-World War II period; refugee communities from the Balkans region in the 1990s; and economic migrants from a range of post-2004 European Union accession countries.

The operation of some racially closed practices of public sector housing allocation in the 1970s and the preference amongst former New Commonwealth communities towards accessing affordable private sector housing proximate to developing familial, social and economic support networks has led to the residential concentration of black and British Asian communities in specific locales to the immediate north and east of the city's commercial centre (Singh 2006). The racial demographic of these locales contrasts sharply with the culturally white public sector housing estates which occupy points to the south and western periphery of the city boundaries, and feature prominently on national measures of social and economic deprivation (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2004). However, in a significant cluster of other residential districts in Leicester, there is a much less rigidly defined and more fluid racial (and socio-economic) demographic. These more multi-ethnic districts contain diverse BAME and white communities, including many members of Leicester's fast growing and relatively youthful dual-heritage population.

Over the past thirty years, the city of Leicester has gradually developed an international image as a relatively successful multicultural city. Ethnic diversity in commerce and social life are positively promoted and valued, as evidenced in the very public celebrations of BAME religious and cultural festivals, and the steady development of a strong equal opportunities culture in employment—especially in the public sector—and political representation. The initial driving force behind this “success” was the emergence of a powerful, radical ruling group within the local Labour Party in the late-1970s and 1980s which aggressively pursued a series of racial equality policies designed to impact positively on the way in which local government

infrastructure connected with—and delivered services to—the local BAME population. This leftist political commitment (and political expediency) strongly cemented the power base of Labour in key wards of the city. This has allowed the local authority, in particular, to assume a powerful and pivotal position as the key facilitator of issues of ‘diversity management’ in ways which have arguably prevented the kinds of community dissonance and resultant violent disturbances experienced in the former mill towns of north-west England in the summer of 2001 (Singh 2003).

The steady transformation of Leicester into a so-called model of multiculturalism has also been assisted by the diversity of occupationally based identities in the city, and by the social class and cultural backgrounds of Leicester’s key minority groups. This is most apparent with reference to East African Asian ‘twice migrants’ (Bhachu 1985) whose significant transferable entrepreneurial acumen has helped establish a thriving British Asian business community, involved in the delivery of local, national and transnational service provision. The relative long-term stability of the local economy in Leicester has also arguably promoted the process of integration and local acceptance. This is in contrast to a number of other post-industrial towns in England where the impact of industrial recession has been felt more strongly and where historically embedded and rigidly defined ‘local structures of feeling’ (Williams 1977, Taylor *et al.* 1996) have contributed to shaping more polarised versions of local ‘race relations’.

However, it is also important to recognise that behind the positive public image of “multicultural Leicester” there are some very real inter-ethnic tensions between different BAME groups. There is a significant continuation of openly expressed racist sentiment in largely white enclaves, both in the city and in those wider county locations which remain relatively untouched by patterns of New Commonwealth migration. Further, the complex interplay between processes of institutionally enforced separation and voluntary cultural self-segregation has arguably reduced the potential for—and realisation of—a more conjunctive co-existence between some BAME and white communities in specific locales. It is against this complex and constantly shifting local cultural and political landscape that the lived experiences of Leicester’s diverse local communities have been “played out” in local social and sporting arenas. It is towards the main findings of the study to which this chapter now turns.

LEVELS OF BAME PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL FOOTBALL

Initial survey findings revealed relatively strong levels of overall representation of BAME players (14.9 per cent) at amateur football clubs in Leicestershire: a figure broadly proportionate to 2001 Census data for the BAME population resident across the region (15 per cent). However, this overall figure disguises strongly differentiated patterns of participation across axes

of age, gender, ethnicity and religion. For example, whilst 21 per cent of male youth players were from BAME backgrounds, BAME male adult (11 per cent), female adult (9 per cent) and female youth players (9 per cent) were all under-represented. Further ethnic sub-division revealed a strong representation of black players within each of these sectors of the local game. In contrast, British Asian participation was a markedly male phenomenon. Within this group, Sikh communities featured especially strongly as male adult players, whilst youth participation was much more likely to include players from religiously diverse backgrounds. Survey findings also drew attention to the more general under-representation of BAME qualified coaches (10.2 per cent) and management committee members (6.3 per cent), the majority of whom were male and drawn from African-Caribbean or Sikh communities.

Survey findings also indicated a strongly clustered concentration of BAME participants at just five clubs situated in the city of Leicester. In total, these clubs accommodated 790 registered players, of which 86.8 per cent were drawn from BAME backgrounds. This represents more than one-third of BAME male adult and two-fifths of BAME male youth players participating at all clubs across Leicestershire. Further, almost all coaches (89.2 per cent) and management committee members (98.2 per cent) at these five clubs were from BAME backgrounds: more than two-thirds of the total BAME “workforce” involved in clubs across the region. These five clubs also offered significant opportunities for male adult and male youth football provision, hosting 10 male adult teams, 24 eleven-a-side male youth teams and a further 25 mini-soccer boys teams. Conversely, the relative absence of opportunities for females as players or as part of the football coaching and management “workforce” was notable. Female participation was largely limited to the provision of “domesticated” voluntary support, including the preparation of food and refreshments, kit-washing and small-scale fund-raising activities. Clubs of this kind were clearly male spaces and reflected more broadly the marginalisation of females in the sport and leisure sphere, as well as in other areas of socio-economic life.

There was significant heterogeneity between—and in some cases within—these five BAME clubs in terms of the dominant ethnic make-up and religious denominations of participants, and the assumed cultural identity of clubs. Whilst one club exhibited a longstanding cultural connection to local African-Caribbean communities, the other four clubs drew mainly on participants from Leicester’s diverse British Asian communities: two were Sikh, one was Hindu and one was Muslim. In the latter case, almost two-thirds of all young Muslim males playing the game at clubs across Leicestershire were doing so at this one club. However, the religious make-up of players at this particular club (which focused solely on youth provision) arguably resulted less from any overt forms of religious identification on the part of the club (in contrast to, for example, Leicester’s two

Sikh clubs); instead, it was much more informed by some geographically specific and politically conscious recruitment processes targeting young players in some of the most deprived wards in Leicester, which featured significant Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali communities. It is towards a more contextualised and layered account of the socio-historical development and shifting operational focus of these BAME clubs to which this chapter now turns.

RESISTING RACISMS AND PROMOTING POSITIVE CULTURAL IDENTITIES AT BAME CLUBS

The socio-historical development of BAME football clubs in Leicester (and in other locales in Britain) cannot be divorced from the national political context surrounding New Commonwealth migration to Britain, and the prevailing climate of racial politics within which social and sporting relations have been “played out” at the local level. In Leicester, as in other major towns and cities in England in the 1960s and 1970s, rapidly changing local racial demographics engendered significant expressions of resentment and hostility on the part of white British communities towards newly arrived and recently settled BAME communities. These wider societal racisms and embedded oppositions to racial integration were especially evident within the culture and practice of amateur football in Leicestershire, where club affiliation was (and often still is) deeply rooted within heavily masculinised, and exclusively white, neighbourhood and kinship networks. These socially constructed patterns of organisation within existing amateur football networks contributed significantly to shaping the initial parameters of inclusion into—and exclusion from—the local game amongst young BAME males. They also acted in part as an accelerant towards the formation of clubs from within BAME social networks and local cultural institutions. For example, as one participant stated:

Traditionally, there’s never been much access for Asian people getting into white teams. It limited a lot of players in terms of where they could play and a lot just dropped out. But there was a firm interest in football amongst young people, attached to their sort of gangs, you know, or the Sikh temples and Hindu temples and so on. That’s how it all started (Club secretary, BAME club).

The experiences of BAME clubs have also been strongly influenced by the relatively widespread incidence of overt forms of racist behaviour emanating from opposition players, coaches and spectators. Interviewees reported experiencing racist abuse from perpetrators drawn from a range of social and generational backgrounds, and across distinct local geographies over time. For instance:

At youth level, I do not believe [the situation] has changed in 25 years. Our juniors still experience racist, prejudiced remarks and comments from the opposition (Committee member, BAME club).

We've had a group of supporters behind the goal shouting, "Get on with it Nigger", "You fucking Paki", and so on. It's probably more [the] spectators than players, parents as well as young people. It happens more when we've played out of town, [there's] even more abuse there than when you play in the white inner-city areas (Club secretary, BAME Club).

Some interviewees also alluded to the increasing prominence of a much more subtle, nuanced and codified form of cultural racism, which is designed (and understood) to mark out some contingent parameters of belonging and cultural inclusion within local football and, concomitantly, social relations:

More recently, opposition players have been derogatory and flippant about people's cultural background, about cultural modes of dress and behaviour patterns. Really demeaning and derogatory behaviour. When you have black players involved, they [white players] have that condescending tone (Committee member, BAME club).

Whilst the *perception* of racism on the part of those who experience or witness it is not a necessary or sufficient condition of its existence, it is important to locate the interpretation of its meaning within the contextual layers and local settings in which these racialised actions are performed and acted out (Long and McNamee 2004). In this respect, the behaviour referred to here might be read as a distinctly situated and consciously strategic response by white players designed to reify cultural difference and encourage racialised antagonisms. These behaviours offer symbolic opposition to notions of "progressive" multicultural Leicester, as embodied within the dominant demographic make-up and (multi-)cultural identities of BAME clubs. Against this backdrop, BAME clubs were conceptualised as sites that enabled collective safeguards against the prevalence of racisms within the local game. The realisation of positive group protection was especially marked at BAME clubs that recruited players from districts experiencing disproportionate levels of socio-economic deprivation, and conveyed distinct sporting representations of multi-ethnic neighbourhood nationalisms premised on the complex interplay of 'race', class, locality and the physical performance of youthful masculinities.

BAME clubs also performed an important socio-cultural function for their constituent communities in Leicester. In particular, clubs occupied a discursively constructed and distinctly racialised "symbolic space" within which the positive endorsement and celebration of BAME sporting (and

social) achievement can be read as a form of cultural resistance to white sporting hegemonies and wider societal racisms (Westwood 1990, 1991; Williams 1994; Carrington 1998b, 1999). From this perspective, BAME clubs have come to represent a highly visible cultural resource which has helped facilitate processes of (contingent) cultural inclusion, whilst enabling the positive construction and expression of specific ethnic, cultural and religious identities. The following interviewee offers a powerful analysis of the initial symbolic function and ongoing cultural relevance of BAME clubs in Leicester which conjoins notions of community collectivism with cultural identity production:

It's about the ability of black people to mobilise themselves and to say to the wider world, "Look, we can organise ourselves, we can bring about equality and self-improvement". These clubs set themselves up to create their own identity, to establish themselves as a force and to continue that sort of common purpose. Black people need to have that identity, and all these clubs identify with a specific identity, you know, religious, cultural, a common identity for the community (Vice-Chair, BAME club).

The identifiable respective social, cultural and religious attachments of these local sporting institutions were understood by interviewees to have informed both the initial participation trajectories and sustained organisational commitment of BAME participants. This was especially the case at those British Asian clubs which had strong developmental connections to specific places of religious worship and which offered opportunities for familial and cultural continuity, and faith-based socialisation. The strongly religious identities of British Asian (especially Sikh) clubs have arguably strengthened the cultural and generational bond between existing club members, and have provided an important and historically consistent conduit into the local game for key marginalised communities. However, clubs of this kind have relatively limited wider appeal to potential players and club "workers" from other religious or more secular backgrounds. It is arguably also the case that the continuation of some deeply embedded racist sentiment and residual cultural stereotypes within local white communities has further gravitated against greater sporting integration in this respect.

At other BAME clubs, there was a strong emphasis on providing an ideological and physical space in which the promotion of new, youthful, multi-ethnic identities was positively encouraged. This reflected a wider ethos of multicultural service provision for disenfranchised communities that includes—and goes beyond—football activities. These tendencies were most pronounced where recruitment processes sought to attract ethnically diverse players with a strong connectedness to the everyday lived experiences of some spatially focused urban settings in Leicester. For example:

I think a lot of people like to play for [the club] because it gives them self worth and it's not just about football, it's about family, people unifying themselves, the different races, the different cultures. But that's what we aim to do, give hope basically, you know, to people who may not be able to go to any other club and just walk in there. We develop the person and we give everybody an opportunity. We aren't selective like other clubs (Vice-Chair, BAME club).

These comments also allude to strongly socialistic philosophies amongst key “workers” at some BAME clubs and their commitment to a broader political project of facilitating racial integration and community cohesion, together with increasing the social and sporting capital of marginalised youth communities. It is to an analysis of the shifting focus of BAME clubs towards enabling increased participation amongst youth cohorts to which this chapter now turns.

SHIFTING FOCUS FROM ADULT TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT BAME CLUBS

The BAME clubs referred to in this chapter were all formed between 1968 and 1979. They have since provided an important conduit into the local football scene for adult males from families of first- and second-generation migrants from the New Commonwealth. Many of these early participants have exhibited a substantial organisational commitment to these clubs over time, continuing to play a key role in helping sustain and broaden the developmental capacities of clubs through their positions as coaches and management committee members. Central to the work of these club “organisers” has been efforts to translate the high levels of interest in football within local BAME social networks into valuable and realised football participation opportunities. Accordingly, all BAME clubs had in recent years exercised a marked shift in their developmental focus to provide extensive and structured youth football provision. There has been some significant success to this end: almost 600 young people between the ages of 8 and 18 are currently involved in teams organised by these five clubs. The shifting priorities of BAME clubs over time and the importance of generational and cultural factors in enabling the development of a vibrant infrastructure for youth football provision are discussed here:

When I was young, in the 70s, the only ethnic minority teams that were around were adult teams. You sort of looked at them as though one day you would be joining them. Once those teams had got organised and the players had played out their own careers, it wasn't until the 1990s that there was a big push for the younger teams, on a consistent basis. The concentration now is to encourage young children to take up

football, so all the ethnic minority clubs in Leicester have got lots of teams for the kids. There's a lot more support for it and it's much better organised now than it used to be for us when we were kids (Vice-Chair, BAME club).

Whilst one BAME club had ceased to run male adult teams and now focused solely on youth football provision, other BAME clubs have enabled clear pathways from the youth game into the adult game through the establishment of "transition" teams for older youth players. Here, there was a general sense that the positive sporting (and social) investment in young footballers and the provision of opportunities for structured progression into the adult game would help contribute to the longer term sustainability of clubs. These intentions were borne out by survey findings which indicated that 49 per cent of all present adult players at these clubs had formerly participated as players within club youth sections.

The shift towards focused youth football provision has been significantly aided by the historical rootedness of BAME clubs and the increasing generational embeddedness of the culturally diverse communities resident in Leicester. This has better enabled BAME clubs to build on longstanding familial connections, and encouraged parents to assume coaching and team management responsibilities parallel with their child's involvement in specific teams across an annual shift in age range. The role of parent-coach is relatively commonplace across youth football networks more broadly. It has been better enabled at BAME clubs by encouraging and supporting parents to undertake Level One and further coaching qualifications in return for their volunteer support. Survey findings indicated some initial success on this score: BAME clubs featured 45 qualified coaches, of which almost half had also achieved Level Two and Three coaching qualifications.

The recent efforts of the Leicestershire and Rutland CFA Coaches Association to transfer the delivery of coach education courses from traditional (geographically and culturally inaccessible) venues in the broader region to more community-based venues in neighbourhoods with significant BAME populations was felt to have assisted BAME clubs in this process. The interviewees cited here reflect on the experiences and empowerment of (newly qualified) coaches, and the impact on sustaining the cultural appeal of BAME clubs to youth cohorts:

All of our coaches have done the Level One together at a local college, so they didn't feel isolated or alienated, you know, with a strange group of people. They thoroughly enjoyed it. Now they can brag that they've got this coaching badge and put it to good use by coaching in the community (Vice-Chair, BAME club).

If you see the people at a club and they are all white it can sometimes put the young kids off. [Our club] have black and Asian coaches and

managers. Black and Asian players think, “This is OK, this is for me” (Committee member, BAME club).

Nonetheless, the significant financial costs incurred by coach education courses were felt by interviewees to have disproportionately disadvantaged potential coaches at BAME clubs and consequently to have slowed the intended pace of club development. This is, of course, a significant barrier to potential coaches from all communities but is arguably most pronounced at clubs situated in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. Such clubs are also forced to seek out additional funds to help keep player membership rates inexpensive in order to engage young people from low income families to participate in organised football. The interviewees cited here further articulated some of the financial difficulties faced by BAME clubs and the impact on enabling increased engagement with coach development courses:

Most of the people that we cater for are predominantly from the inner-city and the poor estates. They haven’t got any disposable income, so the club has to subsidise all of that. It means we have to work harder to get it from other places (Vice-Chair, BAME club).

The number one barrier is price. That may be symptomatic of everyone else as well, but it’s certainly the case for the black players at our club (Committee member, BAME club).

The efforts of BAME clubs to increase coaching capacities are part of a broader approach designed to sustain and enhance club development infrastructures, and to provide a more “professional” service to their target client group of culturally diverse youth communities. To this end, all BAME clubs in Leicester have achieved nationally accredited FA Charter Standard Club status and are all actively working towards more advanced ‘Development’ and/or ‘Community’ status awards. This process is felt to have benefited BAME clubs in terms of providing an appropriate framework within which to implement improved mechanisms of support for club “workers”, and to have raised the profile and “respectability” of clubs with local schools and youth agencies. Work of this kind has been greatly assisted by the capacity of BAME clubs to draw positively on the accrued and varied professional skills of management committee members which strongly reflect the diversity of occupational identities in the city of Leicester. This was especially the case with the (mainly East African Asian) BAME club “workforce” drawn from the local business and legal sector, but also in relation to the strong representation of BAME club “workers” drawn from a range of public sector occupations focusing on youth education and community work. For example:

In terms of management, we’ve got a proper accountant, we’ve got a businessman as a fundraiser. We’ve people involved in our club from

social work backgrounds, mental health backgrounds, legal backgrounds and people who are just there to be that extra person, but every little bit counts (Vice-Chair, BAME club).

The extent to which the efforts of BAME club “organisers” have been reciprocated or hindered by the approach and activities of the local governing body is discussed in the next section.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BAME CLUBS AND LRCFA

The work of BAME clubs in Leicester to improve coaching capacities and enhance club development infrastructures to the benefit of young client groups has gathered pace significantly since the 1990s. However, there is a strong sense that efforts on this score have been undermined by the historically problematic relationship with the local governing body. Some interviewees alluded to an apparent lack of ongoing support from Leicestershire and Rutland County Football Association (LRCFA) to help implement and enact procedures embedded within the FA Charter Standard process, and spoke of perceived unequal and discriminatory practices which favoured other (white) clubs to this end. Other interviewees expressed a more targeted discontentment with administrative practices at LRCFA, with particular reference to perceptions of inequitable disciplinary procedures enacted against participants at BAME clubs. This was felt to have overshadowed some more positive examples of collaborative working with the governing body’s club development and coach education sectors.

Findings here refer to emergent structural fissures within the organisational make-up and operational practices of CFAs in England. The work of Lusted (2009, this volume) is particularly instructive in identifying the traditional *modus operandi* of local football administrative structures, and the distinctly conservative and colonialist ideologies of largely older, white males who occupy powerful positions within this voluntary, and relatively autonomous, infrastructure. The culturally defensive and distinctly protectionist hegemonic practices of CFAs contrast sharply with the more egalitarian and reformist philosophies of national FA-funded and newly appointed (and often much younger) Football Development Officers. The latter have a defined professional remit to increase participation and address ongoing inequalities in the game at the local level. The interviewee cited here comments on the apparent unevenness of dealings with the local governing body on this score and the impact on efforts to build capacity at BAME clubs:

Every time one of my managers receives a fine for a disciplinary offence that hasn’t been investigated properly, you then have to balance that against the County FA Coaches Association using [our club] for the first time for a Level Two coaching course so that people locally can tap into it. So you get a positive, like the Coaches Association, and a

negative, in terms of the way in which the administrative and disciplinary process operates (Committee member, BAME club).

The apparent lack of effective action and transparency in dealing with incidents of racism in the local game has also become a constant source of tension between BAME clubs, match officials and the local governing body. These concerns were forcefully outlined by BAME clubs in Leicester in submissions to the Football Task Force (1998) and have been consistently articulated ever since through a local multi-agency football-based anti-racism forum. Whilst this forum has afforded BAME clubs a conduit through which to engage directly with LRCFA, it has arguably engendered little shift in terms of circumventing the often lengthy and unwieldy disciplinary processes and procedures of local football governance. This has led to an increased frustration amongst BAME clubs (and other agencies), and has brought into sharp focus the apparent unwillingness of LRCFA to recognise and adapt present inadequate structures for the effective and equitable governance of local football. For instance:

The disciplinary system is still shocking and appalling. It currently stands that if you are a white player at a predominantly white club and you fall foul of the disciplinary process in any way, then you are far more likely to get a result that benefits you, than you are if you are a black or Asian club and you need to utilise the County FA administration process. A lot of it is to do with the people who administer and manage the game, they are not equitable in their representation, and in their processes and practices (Committee member, BAME club).

These comments highlight the hegemonic whiteness of local administrative football governance structures which has occluded any sense of inward gaze, and has allowed key power-brokers within LRCFA to deny the widespread existence of racism in the local game. In turn, they have “problematised” the ongoing vocal critique by BAME clubs as “rabble rousing”, “trouble-making” and as “playing the race card”. The dominance of older white males in senior positions at LRCFA and their reluctance to “open-up” a series of relatively closed practices of recruitment to local football governance organising committees has further contributed to the general sense of racially-inflected institutional closure apparent within the local governing body. This insular and archaic approach sits uneasily with the broader leftist political model of multicultural Leicester within which many of the BAME club “workforces” have been actively involved—across a range of sporting and social settings—and has hindered a more general sense of cultural belonging in the sport amongst BAME communities. These longstanding cultural inequities are also apparent in the more general interactions between BAME clubs and the local governing body. As one interviewee’s highly illuminating testimony about his heightened sense

of exclusion from local (white) football networks, engendered at an official LRFCFA Annual General Meeting (AGM), demonstrates:

Quite often when we go to AGMs, the way they [LRFCFA] are with English [white] club committee members. We're just standing there in one corner, there isn't any interaction, they don't talk to us. When you see all of that you think—people like us think—you don't want to be a part of this. It's the whole approach, when you walk into their arena, we don't get, "How are you? How's things?". Nothing like that. Not just me, the black people, other Asians, nothing. It's just amazing when they see the other white committee members at clubs, then it's like, you know, years and years of friendship (Committee member, BAME club).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the socio-historical development of BAME clubs in Leicester cannot be divorced from the national political context surrounding New Commonwealth migration to Britain and the prevailing social climate of racial politics within which social and sporting relations have been "played out" at the local level. The sudden volume and relative specificity of migratory trajectories to Leicester from the 1960s onwards engendered significant and openly expressed racial hostilities, from both politicians and indigenous white communities towards the settlement of "new" communities. These racisms and embedded oppositions to racial integration were especially evident within the culture and practice of pre-existing, exclusively white football club networks, and acted as an accelerant to the formation of clubs from within BAME kinship, community and religious networks. These BAME clubs have since provided a conscious physical safeguard against the ongoing realities of overt racist expression and more subtle, nuanced and codified forms of cultural racisms. In doing so, BAME clubs have become a highly visible cultural resource and have operated as a physical and symbolic space in which positive sporting and societal representations of BAME communities have become realised and celebrated. The identifiable respective attachments of these local sporting institutions continue to engender a strong cultural appeal to younger and older BAME participants as sites to engage in opportunities for familial, cultural and religious continuities, and the production of new, youthful, multi-ethnic sporting identities.

This shifting focus of BAME clubs towards becoming facilitators of extensive, structured youth football provision is a markedly recent phenomenon and represents a direct response to strong levels of interest in the sport amongst the numerically increasing cohort of BAME youth communities in Leicester. The positive sporting investment in young footballers and the development of pathways for progression from the youth to adult

game had helped to sustain the longevity of BAME clubs. BAME clubs had also consciously engendered a range of wider beneficial social outcomes through encouraging increased social capital, youth citizenship and civic participation through the medium of voluntary sport engagement. This was especially the case at clubs which had been successful in engaging young people drawn from “displaced” asylum and refugee communities whose marginalisation from local social relations was also informed by their experiences of acute socio-economic deprivation.

BAME clubs also provided sites in which racial integration (rather than cultural separatism) was positively encouraged through the provision of valuable participation opportunities in organised football competition with other (mainly white) clubs and through the targeted recruitment of young people from culturally diverse social networks and residential locations in urban Leicester. This broader focus on facilitating opportunities for racially integrative youth empowerment was significantly informed by the strongly socialistic philosophies of key figures within senior positions at BAME clubs. It drew on their significant professional experiences within a local (and highly politicised) public and voluntary sector concerned with the equitable delivery of services and social provision to local multicultural communities. The varied professional acumen and transferable skills of BAME club “organisers” had also strongly assisted the implementation of mechanisms designed to enhance BAME club development infrastructures to the benefit of participating youth cohorts. These processes were further enabled by the historical rootedness and generational embeddedness of BAME clubs (and BAME communities) in Leicester, and the tendency to encourage and utilise longstanding familial connections within “parent-coach” capacities.

However, the findings in this chapter also suggest that the infrastructural progress of BAME clubs had been undermined by their historically problematic relationship with the local governing body. This was especially the case with reference to perceptions of unequal and discriminatory disciplinary procedures; the apparent reluctance to acknowledge and then deal swiftly, effectively and transparently with incidents of racism; and the problematisation of BAME clubs as complaining and confrontational. These culturally defensive philosophies and practices allude to the deeply embedded hegemonic whiteness and racialised power-base within local football governance. Here, the authority of senior officials to act as gate-keepers to the process of enabling or denying best racial equality practice seems especially strong. This is particularly evident in the apparent inequities of access to local organising and decision-making committees and the limited accountability of such bodies to the national ownership of the game. It is also apparent in the reluctance of LRCFA to engage more equitably and effectively with BAME clubs on a range of issues affecting their involvement in the sport. It is against this backdrop of racially inflected institutional closure and the protectionist, rather than reformist,

practices of LRCFA that the socio-historical development and shifting focus of BAME clubs in Leicester might be better contextualised. To this end, it might be argued that much of the developmental progression of BAME clubs over time has been achieved in spite of—rather than because of—the input of LRCFA. Further, the continued capacity of BAME clubs to facilitate safe and supportive multi-ethnic leisure spaces which enable valuable physical participation opportunities and generate wider outcomes of racial integration, social cohesion and community empowerment, owes much to the skills, commitment and resilience of longstanding (and newer) club “organisers”. Long may their efforts continue, and with wider recognition and more equitable reward.

6 What is Rangers Resisting Now?

‘Race’, Resistance and Shifting Notions of Blackness in Local Football in Leicester

Paul Campbell

INTRODUCTION

As a young black researcher, I sat in my car waiting for the management committee members of local Leicester, African-Caribbean-founded, football club, Highfield Rangers, to arrive for a club meeting.¹ The majority of them were second-generation African-Caribbean migrants who have been attached to the club since its inception 40 years ago. As they arrived, it became apparent that for actors of this generation, much of our prior understanding of sport as a form of resistance may be somewhat outdated. As each member parked their expensive cars around me and took their places at the table in the centre of the clubhouse, in their smart suits—while making their excuses for being late (mostly because, as people of seniority in their respective careers, they were frequently the last to leave the office)—it became clear that I was not observing a group of people who were still socially, economically and geographically confined to Leicester’s poorest areas and worst jobs.

These middle-aged black men were middle-class, successful and well-off people, whose social integration into the broader Leicester community was perhaps best typified both by their suburban homes and dual heritage (grand)children (some of whom were present at the meeting). These second-generation African-Caribbeans appeared to be men who no longer needed sport to circumvent a ghettoised social existence or a “masculine-less” masculinity (Sivanandan 1982, Gibbs and Merighi 1995). This raises the question: in the context of social resistance, what, if anything, does this sporting space continue to offer them today? In short, what is Highfield Rangers resisting now? (field-work journal entry, 12 November 2009).

This chapter offers a snapshot of the development of an African-Caribbean football club, Highfield Rangers, and discusses its dynamic role as a site of sporting resistance in the lives of six second-generation African-Caribbean members, during three different periods of time: 1970–75; 1980–92; and

the present. The overall aim is to contribute to the development of knowledge about the relationship between sport and its continued use value for this generation of men. This chapter does this by empirically demonstrating the diverse and arbitrary meaning(s) (and uses) ascribed to a particular site of resistance in sport; and by providing current and historical data which offer a deeper appreciation of how changes in notions of “blackness” in Leicester at the macro and micro levels continue to impact on what local sport means for members of this particular generation.

BACKGROUND TO THE CHAPTER

Situated just outside of the inner-city Highfields area of Leicester, Highfield Rangers Sports and Social Football Club is undoubtedly the city’s most successful Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) sports club, in terms of longevity, football honours and community accolades. Originally a “park team”, today the club boasts a private eleven-acre ground, two senior teams, and numerous junior and youth teams. In spite of Rangers’ successes, the club’s distinctive feature is its committee and management membership. This consists predominantly of second-generation African-Caribbean men who have been attached to the club since its inception in 1970.

The data presented here were generated between June 2009 and March 2010, mainly using ethnographic techniques. Most of the data have been obtained via semi-structured interviews, participant observation and participant participation as observation (the latter involving me playing for the club). While a full discussion of the benefits of the last technique is outside the scope of this chapter, with regard to ‘watching, listening, enjoying stories, sharing in the joys and sorrows of a game, and recognising the special exchanges and rituals intrinsic to football’ (Burdsey 2006b: 479), not only did the participant participation approach prove invaluable, but it enabled me to establish an empathetic relationship with my team-mates/participants. As a second-generation African-Caribbean male and ex-professional football player myself, entering an African-Caribbean football club meant questions surrounding my possible ethnic incompatibility were not usually apparent (see Williams 1994, Harris 2009). However, question marks over my football ability remained—a somewhat rusty performance in my first training session for nearly two years ended with the changing room banter: “are you *sure* you played professionally?!”. Lastly, the use of three interconnected ethnographic techniques enabled me to obtain a more holistic picture of what the club meant to its members by “making visible” information which did not surface when the participant was inside the interview setting (Burdsey 2006b).

After four months spent immersing myself within the culture of the club, I conducted semi-structured interviews at various settings over a two-month period. The data collected were supplemented by additional interviews

with other local second-generation African-Caribbeans who did not play for Rangers, but who had grown up in the area (often alongside many of the interviewees). The findings here have been underpinned, and consequently shaped, by an interpretative and inductive approach (Farooq and Parker 2009b, Harris 2009), whereby a theoretical label was not employed from the outset, but instead the key themes (and the three periods subsequently explored) emerged from an analysis of the data collated. What is (re)presented here is *my* interpretation of the meanings the interviewees attached to Rangers, in response to the shifting socio-economic and political currents which shaped their wider social environment in the East Midlands area and beyond.

ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN MODERNITY

Modernity, or in Hall's (2000: 146) terms, 'the problem of modernity', has enabled thinkers in the field of British African-Caribbean (BAC) ethnic identity, in particular, to produce a wealth of literature and 'critical' theory (Hylton 2005), which has fractured notions of a homogenous and ahistorical BAC identity, on both the micro and macro planes (see Gilroy 1987, 1993a, 1993b, 2000b, 2000c; Hall 1992a; Mason 2000; Modood 2005; Rutter and Tienda 2005). In the latter respect, Banton (1997) brings attention to important intergenerational discontinuities. He highlights differences between 'primary' and 'secondary' ethnic identities, with the processes of fracturing increasing with each subsequent generation (*ibid.*: 38–39). Consequently, the increasingly byzantine ethnic identities of successive generations of BAC actors can only be fully understood when placed in the context of what both Modood (2005) and Lam and Smith (2009) describe as the "larger picture".

Although intergenerational differences in BAC identities have been widely acknowledged, Gilroy (1993b) reminds us against drawing fast conclusions around this type of ethnic identity logic. He implicitly warns that these identities too often tend to be depicted as (fixed) "things" which are (re)made or pieced together (see also Rutherford 1990, Hall 2000). By contrast, Hall (1990: 22.5–6) suggests that intergenerational identities can be viewed as the first of 'two—interconnected—identity vectors'. The first vector acts as an overarching narrative which *sets the parameters* of a group's social/ethnic identity (forged through shared location, history and parentage). Within this, a second, more discontinuous, evolving and completely localised vector, or narrative, manifests itself; one which, he points out, is far less propagated.

Giddens' (1991) concept of 'life phases' enables us to expand on Hall's second vector. These life phases are the infinite transitions (and subsequent experiences) which take place throughout the individual actor's life. These include passing from youth to adulthood, from single person to spouse, from spouse to parent, and so on—a process which from here I will refer

to as the objective evolution of self.² It should be noted that these transitions are not exclusively social, but are also geographical and physiological. However, with few exceptions, investigations into the impact of the objective evolution of self in relation to BAC social identities (sporting or otherwise) have proved to be something of an academic lacuna (Hall 2000).

SECOND-GENERATION AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN IDENTITIES IN THE SPORTING CONTEXT

Work on minority ethnic social identity formation within sport over the last ten years has assiduously sought either to explore how ‘sporting experiences have generated a range of complex meanings within the context of . . . gender and ethnic values’ (Borish and Gems 2000: 377; see also Burdsey 2006a, 2006b); or to ‘examine the extent to which modern sports represent . . . key sites for the formation of identities’, offering ‘insight in to the detailed nuances of identity construction’ (Harris and Parker 2009: 2). However, they have also tended to focus on how minority ethnic actors use sport to either express intergenerational difference (MacClancy 1996; Back *et al* 1998a, 2001; Burdsey 2006a, 2006b), manage their complex ethnic or religious identities (Back *et al* 1998a, 2001; Carrington 1998b, 2000, 2001; Bains and Johal 1999; Farooq and Parker 2009b; McNeil 2009), or challenge the wider social forces which shape their social realities.

Although all three themes have largely resisted Gilroy’s warnings and Hall’s implicit call to incorporate the impact that his second identity vector has on sporting social identities, it is the last theme which is of particular interest to this chapter. A current lack of contemporary empirical sporting enquiry specifically focused on second-generation African-Caribbeans in Britain may have created a perception that members of this generation continue to use sport as a means of culturally circumventing a routinely ghettoised social existence. Despite a widely expressed view that (sporting) minority ethnic identities are always “becoming” (Borish and Gems 2000, Carrington 2001, Maguire *et al* 2002, Burdsey 2006a, Farooq and Parker 2009b), few have thus far sought to incorporate how structural changes in the construction of twenty-first century “blackness”, and the objective evolution of self, have impacted on what sporting social identities tell us about the wider condition of such communities today. I hope to make some progress on this here.

FOOTBALL CLUBS AS SITES OF RESISTANCE: THE EXPERIENCES OF SECOND-GENERATION AFRICAN-CARIBBEANS

In spite of Williams’ (1994) call for further research, the complex relationship between local grass-roots sports clubs and African-Caribbean second-generation actors, in the context of resistance, remains an

insufficiently investigated area. However, recognising the significant role of grass-roots sport in the local and community context, the 1990s did witness a small wave of academic interest in this field. Subsequently, at least three works of *direct* relevance emerged during this decade. Williams' (1993) oral history of Highfield Rangers established that, like their professional counterparts, the meaning(s) many grass-roots minority ethnic sportsmen ascribed to playing football often reflected their wider social frustrations. In particular, Williams (1994) explicitly (re)positioned Highfield Rangers' games as emblematic of the local African-Caribbean community more widely. His work highlighted a similarity between Rangers' games as a sporting spectacle and Bakhtin's *carnival*. Lastly, Carrington's (1998b) ethnographic examination of the Caribbean Cricket Club in Leeds highlighted the role of local sports clubs in constructing macro and micro African-Caribbean social identities. In the context of the former, he argues that the local cricket club itself was a symbolic marker of the "black community" in Leeds; and that its "clean" appearance and impressive facilities alone stood as a challenge to social (mis)conceptions held about Britain's African-Caribbean communities. The work of Williams and Carrington (and, in the British Asian context, Westwood 1990; Bains and Johal 1999; Burdsey 2006a, 2006b) illuminates how the meanings second-generation minority ethnic actors ascribe to their (grass-roots) sporting social identities often correlate with the structural arrangements and frustrations within their wider social environment.

Notwithstanding this, remaining mindful that (ethnic) identities in modernity are fluid and shaped by the constantly changing wider local and national political climate (Modood 2005, Lam and Smith 2009), the lack of follow-up work on British African-Caribbeans leaves us with an apparently obvious, but nonetheless significant, question on which this chapter hinges: to what extent have the meaning(s) that second-generation black actors ascribe to their sporting sites of resistance changed in the context of wider changes at the political (local and national), social and individual level?

Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter examines local football in the lives of six second-generation African Caribbean sportsmen who have been attached to the same local club for 40 years, during three different periods in their lives. In the first section, I examine how, as schoolboys in the early 1970s, their sporting resistance(s) reflected the challenges they faced in their attempts to access local organised football. The second section charts their widening resort to strategies of resistance as young men in their early 20s, during the 1980s. Particular attention is paid here to the different meanings they then ascribed to the club. In the final section, I examine the issue of sport and resistance in the lives of these men today. The uses and meanings they ascribe to the club during this period are framed within Leicester's contemporary ethnic, employment, social and physical landscapes.

ACCESSING ORGANISED FOOTBALL: C. 1970–75

Outside of the problems experienced in the education system, many of the early frustrations expressed by participants coalesced around the obstacles which impeded their initial attempts to access *organised* football in Leicester. A combination of racially stereotyped notions of “blackness” held by white coaches in particular (Fryer 1984), and an often (un)conscious determination to keep white working-class spaces exclusively white (Holland 1997), resulted in many of Leicester’s African-Caribbeans being blocked from entering the cohort of white football clubs in the city and the wider county of Leicestershire. For example:

Basically . . . no one wanted to play with us . . . They didn’t think . . . we were good enough . . . We were very proud people. We knew what we wanted . . . and basically we went and said, “Ok then, f[uck] you!” (Ben).

The local rejection of black players, however, was not always as explicit as that experienced by Ben (and others). Instead, black players were often subjected to a more nuanced and less overt form of racism. For many, it was the terms under which their existence within such spaces was granted that was equally, if not more, disempowering as not being granted entry at all (C. King 2000, 2004a, 2004b). Contrary to the Eurocentric football model of the qualities needed to be a “good” footballer held by most white British coaches at that time—grit, hard work and endeavour over flair, skill and ingenuity (see Williams and Taylor 1995)—many of Highfield Rangers’ young African-Caribbean players celebrated and embraced their flamboyance as something that was wholly emblematic of what it was to be an (African) *Caribbean* footballer. As ex-Rangers player, ‘Bucky’ explains, ‘people from the Caribbean bring special qualities—pace, skill, and they like . . . to do a few flicks and all that. You can do the flicks and you may be going 10 yards back your way’ (cited in Williams 1994: 172–3).

To “fit in” with white teams, many of the early African-Caribbean players had to sacrifice their enjoyment and how they “naturally” played the game in favour of the Eurocentric football philosophy. In short, gaining an ‘entry ticket’ (Back *et al* 2001: 9) into a white club meant players ‘compromising their blackness in order to play the game’ (C. King 2000: 25–26). Further, to remain in a white club, many black players would often have to: a) accept racialised humour; b) work harder than their white team-mates to get a game (Jones 2002); and c) endure processes of ‘stacking’ which dictated which field and leadership positions they were permitted to access (Maguire 1988). Partly a response to either being denied access to Leicester’s local white clubs or only being granted conditional entry (see C. King 2000), the founding members chose to create their own football club, Highfield Rangers. As Stephen elucidates:

We went to a lot of other clubs, and you never got treated right. [Now we] can come and have a football team and . . . just come and feel free really . . . not walk around feeling that people can judge you and that . . . So at the time we think to ourselves if we did get this club, it's not going to be like that! We gon' make sure that the black community can come and play football without being treated like that . . . so they can just come and play football . . . without fear . . . being called names, or whatever they do at these other clubs.

His point about playing in an environment which felt comfortable is critical to identifying the specific processes these young men were trying to circumvent in forming the club (ones which were continually echoed). The importance of having a space which was free from the structuring gaze of whiteness, where one could be a person *who is black* without having to be a *black person* (Carrington 1998b) appeared to be equally significant as the opportunity to play in organised competition. In this context, Rangers constituted a complex space which simultaneously resisted the structuring 'panopticon' of whiteness (see Foucault 1977), and acted as a vehicle which enabled young African-Caribbeans to compete in local organised football (Williams 1993). However, it is important not to overstate the racial dynamic behind the club's inception. It appears that for many of Rangers' founding members, the formation of the club was not a conscious or *racially* motivated political reaction, as Ben explains:

[Forming the club] was about pride and a sense of belonging I think. That is the key. We didn't know that we were making a political statement. We didn't know that we were doing this thing about challenging racism and all of that, we just wanted to play football, and we wanted to do it in an environment where we felt needed, wanted and we felt comfortable. We didn't want to constantly be called "black bastards" or "nigger" . . . and [run out] . . . for a team that . . . we didn't have no affinity with. That's it! That's basically it.

In the context of resistance, for the participants, Rangers appeared to be founded as a response to being denied opportunities to play organised football in the way *they* wanted, and in an environment in which they felt wanted (albeit because of discursive barriers erected because of the colour of their skin).

RESISTING 'POLITICAL BLACKNESS': C. 1980–1992

Rex (1988) has noted that, politically, blackness during the 1960s was defined by a marginalised existence facilitated by structural barriers in education, housing and employment (see also Fryer 1984, James and Harris 1993, Chessum 2000). From the participant testimonies that follow,

it appears that the structural arrangements and subsequent ‘ghettoisation’ that Rex refers to were still at work during the 1980s. It was these arrangements, particularly in the employment sphere, which the formation of Rangers helped participants to resist “culturally” (Duncombe 2007).

As Everton explained, a lack of control over their employment “choices”, and being institutionally “pushed” into jobs that they did not want was a recurring theme. Once inside Leicester’s predominantly white workforce, many of the interviewees soon found themselves disillusioned and perilously close to complete social disenchantment. This situation was brought about, in part, through a combination of employment ghettoisation and exposure to an unconditional racial (mis)treatment (described by Paul, in the following excerpt, as ‘deep-grained racism’). It was these factors, in particular, which forced Paul, and others like him, to re-evaluate his choice to obtain a living through “conventional” employment:

I worked for a freezer food shop . . . [where] I experienced racism. Probably my first experience of deep-grained racism . . . I went to Manchester [for an inter-company event] . . . one of the managing directors came up . . . to my manager and said, “What are you employing them [black people] for?”. And John [my manager] had a quick word with him, and came and told me, “He don’t like black people.” So he says, “You’ll struggle if you want a career in this”. I wanted a career in sales . . . but you know, I was kept in the back of the shop filling up freezers . . . At first I was into my job, but when that experience happened, the job just became a means to an end . . . I came very close to living life on the “dark side”.

Against this type of experience, playing football, and specifically for Highfield Rangers, provided these young men with a purpose and point to persevering with their dead-end jobs in the legitimate employment sphere. As Peter points out:

I think the reason I went from job to job is because I was never comfortable . . . I don’t think I was out of a job for more than two weeks, tops. I always worked, just any job, *as long as I was playing football* . . . it was what people around [here] . . . knew me for. Yeah I was well-known . . . my football was a source of pride and I loved it . . . Saturday morning I wake up and I’m buzzing . . . *that was the main thing in my life*, the job was secondary. I wasn’t getting anywhere with my career, [but] it was just paying my way.

For Peter, football provided him with an alternative and positive identity, neighbourhood status and helped him endure the numerous dead-end jobs which he flittered between during his youth. For almost all the respondents, work identities were a “sub-plot” whose main purpose was to finance sporting activities. Playing football for Highfield Rangers specifically facilitated

and magnified the social significance of their sporting identities, both by providing the stage, script and audience for the actors to “play out” their identities, and attaching their individualised sporting identities to a group collective or community.

Within the community of the club, players became socially (re)integrated through a combination of on- and off-pitch camaraderie, and informal ties and responsibilities, such as being club captain, or even just being the player who was good for the dressing room spirit. These ties intersected with formal responsibilities, such as committee membership, coach, treasurer and other non-playing roles that the players also became immersed in. Subsequently, Highfield Rangers became a significant physical and social space in the participants’ lives, providing respite from the racialised (mis)treatment experienced in the work sphere. In addition, socially, Rangers (re)integrated its members into a larger collective. At its most rudimentary, the club became a cultural space where the players could socially replenish and recharge at the end of a long day in a job they often did not want to be in, often alongside white colleagues who did not want them there. For instance:

Playing for Highfields, when you’re at work, it’s a funny situation . . . now you’re out in the big world against the adults and men, and obviously they have different ways and different thinkings . . . and then the Highfields . . . you’re with your mates again. You’re playing football and having a laugh (Stephen).

I had the safety net and the comfort of coming back here [to the club] . . . Being a part of Highfield Rangers and being with my friends [helped me in] . . . keeping my sanity . . . Without that? Phfff! I would be coconut bound!³ No doubt (Ben).

Ben’s testimony, however, points to another pivotal role for the club. During this period, Rangers also became a key site where the players’ black *political* identities and perceptions of self were maintained. For the majority of Rangers’ African-Caribbean players, entering Leicester’s employment market was their first time within a specific white dominated space; and they would often be the only African-Caribbean employees. For some, this accentuated the significance of “maintaining their blackness”. This became a central issue for Ben who, when he attended the city’s university between 1982 and 1985, perceived his increased time spent within the white academic context as threatening his ability to keep sight of, and maintain, his “black self” (believing he would become “a coconut”). For Ben, and the other players who shared this view, Highfield Rangers had become a key site for black cultural and symbolical (re)engagement.

For these older players, such as Ben, Stephen and Anthony, the club acted as a space where their blackness was maintained, but for the slightly

younger players such as Paul and Junior, the club was where their black *political* identities were (re)constructed. Many of the younger, second-generation players had been too young to experience first-hand the often violent clashes between local white groups and the black newcomers (which many of the older players such as Anthony had been involved in) that characterised the early years of settlement in Leicester. Through their absence from these conflicts (which had become pivotal—and often exaggerated—moments within the Leicester black cultural imagination), the second wave of second-generation players were unaware of the full, unedited—and somewhat mythologized—history of their own generation. Against this, the Rangers' club (house) inadvertently became a hub of African-Caribbean history, folklore and education. Junior explains that for the younger players, football training soon became as much to do with learning about their heritage as it was about learning the game:

From you just playing football you . . . started to hear some of the history about what some of those guys had to do just to make sure you could just walk in town! Because even when we were growing up, the only place most of us ever knew was just the Highfields area. Most of us didn't venture into town . . . So when I started listening to some of the stories about how, in particular, the Browns had to, as a family, fight their way just so that black people could walk into town . . . that was very powerful.

The stories told by the *older* players largely fell into two categories: what they had done in their youth; and what was currently happening to them (particularly in the work sphere). For the *younger* players, such as Junior, the stories from the first category added another discursive piece to what we might call the younger players' black sense of self jigsaw. A combination of the stories from the second category and their *own* (limited) experience(s) of Leicester (outside of the Highfields area), enabled them to construct—vicariously—a comprehension of the (local) social world in which they were entering (see Brah 1986, Westwood 1991). These sometimes embroidered stories of their older team-mates' lives in the work sphere (or inability to access it) provided them with a deeper political appreciation of the socio-economic frustrations the black community was experiencing, and helped them understand why some of those same team-mates had taken to the streets and, in 1981, briefly burned the shops in their own neighbourhood. Eventually, Junior's maturing and heightened political awareness forced him to reevaluate the fundamentals of what the club stood for, and what the football matches he played were "about":

This was about racism. I think that was a key factor because I then began to look at what Rangers stood for. You find out the reason why a lot of those guys had come together . . . because they weren't getting

any opportunities. That's how [the club] . . . was actually formed . . . It then became, certainly as I understood it when I started playing . . . let's show them what this black team can do! And there began I suppose the challenge . . . *it wasn't then just about football.*

Junior's conclusions identify this period as one where the Rangers players began to perceive the club as a means to *directly* challenge the myriad racisms they were experiencing. Here the club shifted from something which the participants viewed as simply a vehicle to access local organised football to a platform via which one might culturally challenge the processes of racialised marginalisation that shaped their daily social realities.

WHAT IS RANGERS RESISTING NOW?: C. 2010 AND BEYOND

On my way to interview Everton, I found myself parked in a suburban, tree-lined road flanked by grand Tudor-style houses with leafy drives. The road, however, was not only lined with trees, but with Mercedes SUVs and BMWs on either side. Everton's house was no exception (fieldwork journal entry, 19 November 2009).

People have [not] got any signs in the window that say, "No blacks, no dogs, no Irish" [anymore] . . . Today it's a different ball game . . . We've integrated fabulously . . . We have dual heritage children. We have mixed marriages. There's been an understanding and fusion of cultures which has brought out this new black Caribbean community [which] is far more rounded, more flexible (Paul).

Together with my fieldwork extract, Paul's claim that cultural syncretisation and notions of blackness in Leicester today, compared to 25–40 years ago, are a completely 'different ball game', *initially* appear to be very apt. This is particularly the case when one looks at Leicester's contemporary (public) employment and housing sector. As of March 2010, Leicester City Council had workforce representation of the "black community" which stood at 3.8 per cent (Leicester City Council 2010).⁴ When compared to the actual number of black people living in the city (4.3 per cent of the overall population), this is marginally short of a representative workforce. Further, throughout the local council's management structure, British Asian and black groups are represented at every level. Geographically, at the time of the last census (in 2001), nine of the city's twenty-two wards had a concentration of residents listed as black or black British (BoBB)—approximately 1.5 to 3 times greater than the national average, which stood at approximately 2 per cent (see Office for National Statistics 2010). A further four of the city's wards had a concentration of BoBB communities equal to, or above, the national average. Although nine wards had a concentration of

BoBB communities which was below the national average, nowhere in the city was the percentage lower than half the national figure (Leicester City Council 2005: 33). Unlike the picture 25–40 years ago, today there are no longer any wards within the city where (a significant number of) black people do not live. However, by the same token, there is also no longer a singular significant “black space”, or concentrated black presence, left within the city.

This is not to suggest, however, that the Highfields area is devoid of an African-Caribbean presence. It continues to house a significant number of predominantly first-generation African-Caribbean and lower income black families. Indeed, many of Rangers’ managers, coaches, helpers and non-committee members are made up of people from the latter category. Thus, it appears that these actors’ sporting identities continue to play a crucial role in forging an alternative and positive social identity among their peers and family (as it did for the participants in previous years). Subsequently, for those black actors who remain within the Highfields area and within Leicester’s working-class stratum, the extent of the black community’s incorporation into Leicester’s mainstream may be somewhat debatable. Further, despite changes within Leicester’s workforce and population demographics, within the *local* popular imagination the Highfields area remains renowned as a “black space”. Of pertinence here, too, is Giddens’ (1991) recognition that while each transition (at both the socio-political and personal level) often brings a sense of growth or gain, it also brings with it a sense of *loss*. It is within this context of loss that the history of resistance in this section is framed.

The apparent diffusion of the African-Caribbean community from Highfields into the wider Leicester community over the past 40 years threatens to leave the Highfields area with relatively few *obvious* symbolic testaments to their presence and contribution to the history of the area and city. Buildings in the Highfields area which had become significant markers in the Leicester African-Caribbean cultural imagination, such as the Highfields Community Centre and the African-Caribbean Community Centre, along with small businesses, often resemble relics—places neglected by the local authority (whose attention and funds are directed towards more challenging or challenged communities) and increasingly socially irrelevant to the latest generation of African-Caribbean heritage people. Against this, Rangers’ physical and symbolic significance as a ‘site of heritage’ (Everton) for some of the participants has become inflated. For Everton, Junior and Stephen, today Rangers’ facilities represent one of the few remaining symbolic testaments to the existence of a frequently romanticised African-Caribbean community, and importantly, that community’s ability to “take care of its own business”:⁵

[Rangers is] something for the African-Caribbean community. The black community . . . can say, “Okay, at least we’re running something for ourselves” . . . Over the years, we’ve not just had football here.

We had funeral wakes . . . we've had a fun day . . . that's been going 20-odd years now. So [we] . . . don't want to lose that . . . The club is definitely more important to me now (Stephen).

Forty years ago, the black experience in Highfields was atypical (largely brought about by a specific geographic housing dynamic). In other cities with significant African-Caribbean settlement, such as London and Birmingham, African-Caribbeans lived in small pockets across large conurbations. Consequently, migrants might only meet other African-Caribbeans infrequently (often at the weekend's Blues Party). African-Caribbeans in Leicester, however, would see each other daily; the few streets in Highfields were home to almost the city's entire black community. During various conversations, the respondents frequently claimed that such close proximity facilitated a highly insular, tightly knit community. This situation could often lead to romanticised ideas about a sense of community and racialised togetherness. Whether imagined or not, this sense of black community was central to their (re)constructions of self and the club, and, importantly for these men, what Rangers (re)presented.

Today, however, with no single area in the city monopolising a concentration of black people in the same way, the African-Caribbean community, *as the participants remember it*, no longer exists.⁶ The interviewees also acknowledged that their own aspirations, mobility, career trajectories and commitment to their families have contributed to the "disappearance" of largely black neighbourhoods in Leicester. For many of the participants today, the previously simple task of meeting up with their old team-mates (whom they used to see nearly every day) is almost impossible. Subsequently, for Ben, the club is one of the city's last bastions where black people of his generation can (re)construct—albeit in an ephemeral manner (see Carrington 1998b)—the intense sense of community in which his generation grew up. Importantly, it also provides a "legitimate excuse" to see old friends. It is for these reasons that Ben believes that 40 years after they founded the club and 20-plus years after they finished playing football, Rangers is still just as important to the former team-mates:

I've got another meeting here tomorrow night, with Stephen and Courtney, and we get here and it's a chance to meet up again, and Bryan can be here [all ex-players] and we'll talk about things. And we'll argue about things. And then we finish. And then we start talking about fun things . . . *The club is the real latch*. That's what keeps us together! Because I wouldn't see them [otherwise] if the club wasn't 'ere. All of the individuals in this room, I probably wouldn't see all of them. Very rarely . . . It's like a family . . . So the club is definitely a linchpin.

In his work on white working-class subcultures, Clarke (1976) described this sort of process as the 'magical recovery' of an imagined community. While

the strategies employed by the young white men in Clarke's study and my interviewees are markedly different, the essence of his concept is applicable.⁷

During my observation of various meetings, I have watched how, once within the club, these otherwise professional, well-spoken and often reserved black men, exhibit styles of cultural interaction previously locked into a different era. I had not heard or seen such displays of African-Caribbean colloquialism and exaggerated mannerisms since I was a child with my own first-generation African-Caribbean parents (on the rare occasions I was allowed to be in the front room when "big people" were socialising). From the food available, the exaggerated posturing, the jokes told, the social etiquette on display (e.g. *all* the second-generation persons present referred to any first-generation actors as *Missa* [Mr] or *Miss*), socially and culturally the space became reminiscent of the black community which the interviewees had described. Thus, whether by intention or not, when the participants came together in this venue and in this context, they managed—for the briefest time—to magically (re)construct the romanticised sense of black community that *they remembered*.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the fact that although the formation of Highfield Rangers appeared to be in part a reaction to the sporting opportunities explicitly and implicitly denied to the participants because of their racial background, unlike other clubs in the region (see Westwood 1991, Williams 1994), it was not created explicitly to challenge the *overt* racisms directed at them. Indeed, ironically, the creation of the club increased the players' exposure to overt racism in Leicester. This is a crucial distinction. For these participants, at this juncture the club was predominantly a reaction to a lack of local sporting spaces which were not only accessible, but also arenas in which they *felt* they could be footballers who were in every way black, without having to be black footballers (Carrington 1998b). Further, the sporting centrality of their "resistance needs", as a reflection of their wider social frustrations suggests that, as young boys, their politicised black identities had not yet been brought fully into focus. Their limited awareness of their racially prescribed social realities, environment and "blackness" (and consequent need to circumvent such barriers), appeared to be intimately related to their limited exposure to Leicester outside of the Highfields area.

Against this, in the second era, I pointed to a significant new relationship between the members' maturing awareness of their politicised black selves (largely brought into focus by their increased exposure to "white" Leicester) and the changing uses/meanings they ascribed to the club as a site of resistance. Generically, as a social space, Rangers accentuated the participants' sporting social identities. This facilitated resilience and a sense

of purpose, which enabled them to withstand their frustrations born out of their ghettoisation in the labour market and their racial mistreatment within Leicester's largely intolerant work sphere. Additionally, evidence demonstrated the fracturing within the resistance meanings ascribed to the club. The participants' personal experiences and needs influenced their interpretation(s) of *which* forces the club, and its involvement in local football, were resisting. For some, Rangers during this period was a space where black identities were (re)constructed and/or maintained. For others the club provided a platform to legitimately challenge their social and employment marginalisation. However, the impact of the objective evolution of self on the fractured meanings ascribed to Rangers as a site of resistance was perhaps most apparent in the final section.

The last section located the contemporary meanings ascribed to the club within both the actual, and participants' individualised, perceptions of the changing political parameters of twenty-first century "blackness" in Leicester—the latter intimately linked to the participants' own social mobilisation (objective evolution of self). Subsequently, the resistance meanings ascribed to the club here no longer reflect the participants' inability to access organised football, or even their challenges to racialised marginalisation; rather they reflect a cultural resistance to a late modern, multicultural Britain.

What became increasingly apparent here was the interplay between 'race', class/social mobility and the (re)negotiation of self. From my general observations of various members of the club, there exists a class divide, which was evident within the resistance needs expressed/displayed by certain members. For the majority of Highfield Rangers' cohort of managers, coaches and helpers—mainly local working-class parents—their attachment to the club seems to offer a platform to (re)construct an alternative and positive masculine identity, plus a means to acquire local social capital. This was contrasted by the responses from the majority of my largely affluent interviewees.

For these middle-class black men today, the use of their sporting social identities in the manner highlighted here appears to have almost completely diminished. It is apparent that opportunities to satisfy their wider identity needs in the workplace and family settings have meant that their sporting social identities have become relatively less important. As Peter concludes, 'I suppose [I see myself now as a] teacher really . . . Beforehand it would be a footballer . . . But now it's completely changed'. This likewise appears true for their use of Rangers as a site of resistance in the sporting context.

Of course, this is not to suggest that Rangers does not still hold resistance functions for these ageing, and middle-class, second-generation men within contemporary Leicester. It appears, however, that what the club is enabling these men to resist today is the disappearance of a rather romanticised, tight-knit and visible black African-Caribbean community in Leicester (as *they remembered it*). This last point further highlights how the interplay

of class mobility and ‘race’ bears upon the resistance strategies enacted; and, importantly, which forces black persons of the same generation, on either side of the class divide, apparently try to circumvent. Thus, unlike the working-class members who appeared to use the club to circumvent the structural external forces of a ghettoised existence (as the participants had once done), it became apparent that my interviewees also use the club to resist internal forces which had largely been brought about by their own social mobilisation. These testimonies show that black social mobility has not only resulted in black departure from the Highfields area, but it has impacted on opportunities to socially (re)engage with that community.

This final point may go some way to explain Paul’s (possibly overstated) claim that blackness in Leicester today, is a ‘whole new ball game’; a point which appears to largely depend on the black actors’ social, geographic and economic reality. However, more investigation is required into whether the apparent desire for this magical (re)construction of, and (re)engagement with, the “black community” in Leicester points to an actual diminishing of “blackness” in the city (either numerically, socially, culturally and/or symbolically); or whether this perceived disappearance is more closely related to these particular men’s own social and economic mobilisation.

NOTES

1. Throughout this chapter, the terms “African-Caribbean”, “black”, “black-British” and “blackness” are used interchangeably.
2. I use the adjective ‘objective’ because Giddens’ (1991) ‘life phases’ apply to all persons. This is not to suggest that all persons from all cultures experience the same life phases, or experience the same life phases in the same way; but universally *all* persons experience social transitions which, ultimately, have a significant bearing on their identities.
3. The term ‘coconut’ is a commonly used reference by some African-Caribbeans to describe a black person who is perceived to be “white” on the inside and “black” on the outside.
4. This figure included those listed as Black or Black British: Caribbean; Black or Black British: African; Black or Black British: Other Black; Mixed: white and Black Caribbean; and Mixed: white and Black African (see Leicester City Council 2010).
5. The term ‘take care of business’ is taken from Pines’ (1992) work. In his book, Norman Beaton, a highly decorated black actor, voiced similar concerns about the portrayal and public perception of African-Caribbeans as a haphazard group: ‘considering that black people have been *taking care of business* for a very long time . . . what we get on British television is black people who don’t take care of business, and I don’t like that . . . they don’t really reflect our views, our understanding of life, our intelligence, or where we are coming from’ (cited in *ibid.*: 116, emphasis added).
6. Some may also point to the arrival of later—and larger—minority ethnic and migrant communities in the Highfields area as a contributing factor in the apparent “diminishment” of the African Caribbean community (as the participants remembered it).

7. It should also be noted that unlike those in Clarke's (1976) study, who were perhaps not fully aware of the extent to which "their" community was "changing", my participants appear to appreciate—and possibly overstate—the apparent shrinking of their/Leicester's African-Caribbean community.

7 British Muslim Female Experiences in Football

Islam, Identity and the *Hijab*

Aisha Ahmad

INTRODUCTION

“Have you got a first-aid kit or is that a suicide bomb?”

This is just one of the football chants directed at the Egyptian footballer, Mido, by fans in football stadia across Britain and mainland Europe, highlighting that ‘Islamophobic racism’ is an emergent form of discrimination that needs to be addressed. Accordingly, this chapter explores the notion, and extent, of Islamophobic racism—a form of discrimination defined not purely by race or ethnicity, but also by religion (Allen and Nielsen 2002, Allen 2010)—and, in particular, outlines how it has come to influence the footballing experiences and perceptions of British Muslim women.

The present analysis draws on findings from a larger doctoral study which explored the sporting experiences and perceptions of members of the British Muslim Women’s Football Team (BMWFT) (Ahmad 2009). The discussion provides reflections drawn from my “Muslim insider” view, but also highlights “white, non-Muslim outsider” opinions on British Muslim female footballers. The chapter also addresses the emergence of the Women’s Islamic Games (WIG), which have been contrastingly considered as both a safety net protecting participants from Islamophobic racism, and as a form of gender apartheid and the creation of a separatist cage (Feminist Majority Newsletter 1996, Darabi 2004, BBC Radio 2005, Benn and Ahmad 2006).

In order to fully understand the sporting experiences and perceptions of the BMWFT, it is important to first discuss the context of the wider Muslim community in which it is embedded. This entails a broader analysis of dominant perceptions and constructions of Muslims in the West, particularly women, before turning our attention to the field of sport. A social constructionist approach is adopted in order to understand these portrayals of Muslims, and to deconstruct dominant images of British Muslim women in the current political climate, thus highlighting how these notions have impacted on articulations of identity by British Muslim women themselves.

It is important, however, to note that sweeping statements about what the ‘West’ thinks and what ‘Islam’ dictates essentialise diverse worldviews within each category. As Halliday (2002: 14) postulates:

“the West” is not a valid aggregation of the modern world, and lends itself far too easily to monist, conspiratorial, presentations of political and social interaction; but nor is the term ‘Islam’ a valid shorthand for summarizing how a billion Muslims, divided into over fifty states, and into myriad ethnicities and social groups, relate to the contemporary world, each other or the non-Muslim world.

Nevertheless, dominant views are injected into our lives through various media communications, from newspapers to television and radio coverage. It is crucial to acknowledge that the way in which we perceive the world does not imply that the world is indeed that way; rather, it is the interactions between people, through the use of language, that construct Muslims and the West to exist in particular ways. The way we see the world is specific to our time and cultures, and it is important to recognise that there is no such thing as one “reality”; instead, multiple realities exist (Burr 2003). Since knowledge is constructed through language, it is vital to understand the different forms of communication and socialisation processes that form this knowledge base, both in terms of Western portrayals of Muslims in the media and also Muslim portrayals of the West.

FROM RACISM TO ‘ISLAMOPHOBIC RACISM’

Notions of the Muslim ‘Other’

The wider construction of Muslims, especially Muslim women, not only contextualises the following discussion on the BMWFT, but also allows us to position this team within the wider Muslim community, the wider British community and the varying discourses that have shaped their identity.

In the twenty-first century, it is common that the word “Islam” evokes images of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the underground bombings in London (Ferrante 2003). Dominant images of Islam and Muslims since these terrorist attacks illustrate how interpretations of religion, and Muslims in particular, have been socially constructed. Language is essential to these constructions which are presented and reinforced through the media. The Western media often use negative language when covering a story about Muslims, who are portrayed as barbaric, closed-minded terrorists and ultimately against the Western way of life (Abbas 2004). The language used is often violent and insinuates that the actions of Muslims are likewise so. For example, Islamic terms, such as *jihad*, which originally signified a broad sense of struggle, are now interpreted in the popular imagination as a war waged against the West from Islamic extremists. Marranci (2004: 111) states that ‘Muslims are perceived not only as “aliens”, but also as dangerous, even if they were born in the West, or have been in [Britain] for several decades’. The loyalty of British Muslims is often questioned in the media and weighed up against the

level of traditionalist attributes they possess. Importantly, Marranci (*ibid.*) points out that it is not simply the *individual* Muslim who is perceived as dangerous, but also their wider Islamic culture and identity that are considered to be a threat. Muslims who appear to be integrated into the “British” way of life are considered “good”, whilst those who appear culturally and Islamically traditional are portrayed as “bad” (Malik 2006). One example that illustrates this point is the murder of a Sikh man in the United States on 15 September 2001, whose killer mistook his victim to be a “religious” Muslim, from his turban and long beard.

Malik (*ibid.*: 91) argues that ‘identities are embedded within a matrix of social relationships and are socially constructed through a complex process of negotiation’. She argues that young British Muslims are often constructed through dominant social discourses that impact on their social identities. This suggests that not only does Islam have negative violent images attached to it externally (Wood 2008), but that these also impact on individuals’ self-perceptions. British Muslims are therefore often met with the challenging situation of being forced to choose between their British and Islamic identities, and their loyalties to Britain as their homeland and Islam as their faith (Abbas 2004). This precarious situation is exacerbated when some members belonging to the Muslim faith, such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (global Islamic political party) reiterate this division, claiming that it is not possible to be both Muslim and British (Afshar *et al.* 2005: 262). However, as Afshar *et al.* (*ibid.*) highlight:

even elected representatives of constituencies with large Muslim communities such as the Leicester MP and Foreign Officer Denis MacShane declare that it is “time for the elected and community leaders of British Muslims to make a choice” between being British or Muslim.

In particular, it is Muslim *women* that have appeared at the forefront of debates about integration, mainly because of issues around the practice of veiling. Contemporary discussions on Muslim women are not only centred on the issue of wearing the *hijab*, but also gender segregation (Mernissi 1975, 1991; Odeh 2003; Bullock 2007). Although there is no explicit mention of sex segregation within Islamic foundational texts, and only minimal reference to *hijab* within them (*Qur’an: Surah Fatir* and *Surah An-Nur*), to outsiders it has formed the sole focus of the identity of Muslim women, where they have been *constructed by the hijab* (Mernissi 1975, Wadud 2000).

The *hijab* has also been a big concern to Western feminists, who view Islam as a system preventing the liberation of women and as a tool that maintains women’s oppression and disempowerment. Western feminists’ perceptions of the *hijab* have, over the years, filtered through the Western media, aided by the terror attacks of 2001 (in the United States) and 2005 (in London), and have formed—and at times legitimised—common arguments used against it. Following 9/11 and 7/7, those that wear the *hijab*

are portrayed as wanting to conduct *jihad* simply because the *hijab* is a visible expression of Muslim identity (Bullock 2007). In Britain, it is seen as both a sign of the oppression of Muslim women and, more importantly, of Muslims' unwillingness to integrate. This disposition is evident in the comments made by the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, in 2006, when he suggested that he would ask veiled Muslim women to remove their veils before visiting his political surgery in Blackburn because he considered it a 'visible statement of separation and of difference' (cited in BBC News 2006). Many Muslim women who *choose* to wear the veil argue against this oppressive interpretation of the *hijab*, and view it as a symbol of femininity and liberty (Bullock 2007).

In 2010, a new veil ban was introduced by Northern League mayor, Massimo Giordano, in Novara, Italy. Under the move, Muslim women "caught" wearing the veil (something which 'prevents identification by the police') face an instant fine. A Tunisian Muslim was fined \$500 under the law. Supporters of the ban have used the common argument that the 'veil goes against public security and denies the dignity of women' (Walker 2010). Again, here is the portrayal that Muslim women are victims of the Islamic way of life (Wilson 2006). Other European countries have followed suit. For example, the lower house of parliament in Belgium approved a demand to ban the veil and France has seen similar debates, particularly in the context of state schooling (Bowen 2007). Muslims across Europe have been angered by these laws and leaders of the Muslim community have criticised the ban, stating that such laws could lead to discrimination against Muslims. Afshar *et al.* (2005: 262) stipulate that Muslim women that choose to wear the *hijab* or veil are making a political choice, where 'they are publicly branding themselves as Muslims at a time when such a label carries the potential fear of making them vulnerable to open hostility'. Zine (2006) states that this form of discrimination against Muslim women is, in fact, not only Islamophobia but also 'gendered Islamophobia' (see following section). Nevertheless, it is evident from this discussion that the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks have perpetuated the negative construction and treatment of Muslims which have, in turn, contributed to racist abuse and discrimination towards them (Abbas 2004, Poynting and Mason 2007).

Islamophobia: Under the Umbrella of Racism?

Abbas (2004) states that racialised minorities within Britain have been transformed from being defined in terms of colour (in the 1950s), race (1960s to 1980s), ethnicity (1990s) and religion (current time). This is reflected in 'race relations' legislation, namely the Race Relations Amendment Act (in 2000) and the Racial and Religious Hatred Act (in 2006). However, despite these amendments, whilst members of the Jewish and Sikh faiths are still protected by the Race Relations Act—because they are defined as *ethnic* communities—other religions have been overlooked. There is no specific

protection for Muslims against discrimination and abuse either within the Race Relations Amendment Act or the Racial and Religious Hatred Act. This is in spite of the fact that there have been numerous research studies that have detailed the existence of Islamophobia, and outlined its different forms and features.

In particular, the Runnymede Trust's (1997) report on Islamophobia has been widely adopted as a starting point from which to begin discussions. Islamophobia has been defined as 'an unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs' (ibid.). Common assumption places it as a recent phenomenon, as a direct consequence of the terror attacks of 9/11 and 7/7. However, Islamophobia—defined as the fear of, or hatred towards, Muslims—is a concept that has been around for centuries (Poynting and Mason 2007). For example, Abbas (2004) dates the tradition of hatred for Muslims back to the genesis of Islam in 622, where perceptions towards Muslims within Europe were largely negative. The Runnymede Trust (1997) report suggests that Islamophobia links with xenophobia in that it is a dislike of all things foreign, whilst others have postulated that the rise and spread of Islamophobia is specifically related to Islamic cultural and religious signifiers. It is viewed as a distinct form of racism, with Marranci (2004) arguing that stereotypes are created from the religious features of Muslims rather than corporeal characteristics. He states that 'it is not through the stereotyping of physical characteristics that Islamophobia spreads, but through the misrepresentation of the Muslim world, and the representation of their life-style as alien from Western society' (ibid.: 105). For example, as seen from the previous discussion, Muslims have been constructed in a negative light, more so since the events of 9/11 and 7/7. Images of black shrouded or veiled women, portrayed as oppressed victims of their Islamic faith, and bearded Muslim men, seen as barbaric misogynists, representing a community set in their own traditionalist ways and unwilling to integrate into the British/Western way of life, are all common features in today's mass media.

Though the label 'Islamophobia' refers to the dislike of Islam, in actual fact the dislike and hatred is primarily towards the followers of Islam as opposed to the religion itself (Halliday 1999). Halliday (ibid.) thus suggests that the term 'anti-Muslimism' should be adopted, though Marranci (2004), on the other hand, postulates that the term is not merely hatred towards Muslims, but is a phobia of multiculturalism, and is therefore a form of cultural racism (see also Modood *et al.* 1997, Worley 2005). Afshar *et al.* (2005: 262) point out that 'Islamophobia creates a wide gap between the Muslims' perception of who they are and the ways in which they are viewed by the host society'. Furthermore, whilst the *hijab* ban in Italy and France is not only direct discrimination against Muslims, and so Islamophobia, but it is also direct discrimination against women, and so *gendered*

Islamophobia. As Nye (2001) argues, it is not enough to allocate a space for the ‘Other’ in the creation of a multicultural society; it is necessary to accept the transformations and cultural interchanges that come with it. This leads onto the question of where Islamophobia is positioned within the arena of sport, and more specifically within British football.

British Muslims, Islamophobic Racism and Football

Little academic research has been conducted on the experiences of British Asian women in football (for exceptions see Scraton *et al.* 2005; Benn and Ahmad 2006; Ratna 2007, 2010, this volume), with literature focusing on ethnicity and racism in football largely concentrating on the experiences of men. When focusing more specifically on British Asian Muslims, the sporting experiences of both males and females are under-researched (Burdsey 2007a). For example, little attention has been paid to the effects of Ramadan on the performance levels of Muslim athletes. In a notable exception, Zerguini *et al.* (2009) found that fasting had a significant deteriorating effect on athletes’ performance, with a decline in agility, speed and endurance. Given that the London 2012 Olympics will take place during the month of Ramadan, little thought appears to have been given to what effect this will have on Muslims, not just globally, but also the large number in the area of east London where the Games will be held. This arguably represents a case of ethnocentrism or institutional discrimination against Muslims, where they will not be given a fair chance at competition compared to their non-fasting counterparts. Another befitting example is that of British Muslim Olympic boxing champion, Amir Khan. In September 2008, he lost a fight for the first time in his professional boxing career to the Colombian, Breidis Prescott. After twenty-four fights, and eighteen successive wins, Khan lost his nineteenth fight during Ramadan.

More specifically, within football, there have been cases of Islamophobic abuse towards Muslim professional players. For example, the “Mido incident” in August 2007 witnessed Newcastle United fans chanting that Middlesbrough’s Egyptian forward, Ahmed Hossam Hussein Abdelhamid, or Mido as he is more commonly known, was a terrorist bomber. The incident was followed by a Faith Summit, the first of its kind in football, which included a meeting between the National Association of Muslim Police, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Metropolitan Police and the Football Association (FA) (Butt 2008). A policy was proposed for league point deductions for clubs whose fans were guilty of this type of abuse yet, like other threats from the authorities about punishing clubs for racism in their stadia, it has not so far been implemented. Alex Goldberg of the Board of Deputies of British Jews stated that:

there is no such thing as friendly banter, it’s abuse, and this action plan is a long time coming. There need to be more effective mechanisms

when dealing with anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and we want strict liability, with clubs being held responsible for the actions of supporters (cited in Millward 2008: para. 8.1).

Millward's (2008) research into discussions on online message boards among both Newcastle and Middlesbrough fans following the incident found that one poster 'uncritically conflates Muslims with terrorists and even when challenged, fails to see how this attitude is wrong by arguing that it "sounds worse than it was meant to be"' (ibid.: para. 6.9). There is also the assumption amongst a large percentage of fans that the Islamophobic abuse hurled at Mido was nothing more than friendly rivalry between the two clubs. Mido was not able to change the perceptions of his fans, which suggests that Islamophobic dispositions are deeply rooted within them. In response, Millward (ibid.) calls for 'cultural intervention programmes' not specific to football, but in wider society to overcome this type of abuse.

It is noteworthy that Newcastle United issued no statement condemning Islamophobia, the fans went unpunished and the only person to be disciplined was Mido who, after scoring a goal, ran up to the jeering opposition fans with his finger on lips, for which he received a yellow card. The incident revealed offensive attitudes that shrugged off Islamophobic abuse as friendly rivalry, banter and a way of winding up the opposition. This lack of disciplinary action following the Mido incident makes a sharp contrast to fans that have faced long bans for abusing black players, and the coverage given to the anti-Semitism experienced by former Chelsea manager, Avram Grant (Kuper 2007).

Identifiable Islamophobia in English football is a recent phenomenon which has received relatively little academic attention (Burdsey 2007a). If nothing else, the Mido incident has brought the concept of Islamophobic racism in football to light and to the attention of the British public. However, Islamophobia is most common in, or towards, local amateur clubs, especially those with a large percentage of Muslim players. Islamophobic abuse in football is also not confined to players, for even when Muslim fans pluck up the courage and visually show their support for professional clubs, they are accused of being potential terrorists, as was the case with the North African and Iraqi Kurdish men who were arrested when they went to watch a Manchester United match in 2004. They were later released when it was realised that they had bought tickets to watch the match and were not trying to bomb the stadium (Kuper 2007). Piara Powar, former head of Kick It Out, suggests that people are more likely to "shrug" at Islamophobic abuse, which is not taken as seriously as, for example, racism towards a black player. This is influenced by the fact that Muslim players do not make up a significant percentage of professional players in British football, with the general assumption that Muslims cannot fit into the culture of British football (ibid.).

MUSLIM WOMEN IN FOOTBALL

Restrictions on the *Hijab*

The previous section highlights the experiences of Islamophobia by Muslim males in British football, but what about the experiences of Muslim women? In 2008, a survey found that 1.1 million girls and 260,000 women play football in England (Football Association 2010), but what percentage of these players are British Asian and/or Muslim females? Unfortunately, the demographics of female players are not differentiated within statistics, so the percentage of Muslim female players remains unknown. Since racism is still prevalent in football today and, given the previous discussion on the emergence of Islamophobia in football, the question that remains to be answered is: where are British Muslim female footballers positioned within these discourses?

The most powerful and befitting example that not only illustrates the position of Muslim women in football, but also highlights institutional Islamophobic racism in operation, can be seen through FIFA's introduction of a ban on the *hijab* in March 2007 (Blatchford 2007). The issue of the *hijab* being worn by female football players was brought into question at the International Football Association Board's annual meeting in March 2007, following the case of eleven-year-old Asmahan Mansour in Canada, who was ordered off the pitch by a referee for not removing her headscarf. Consequently, the Chief Executive of the Football Association in England, Brian Barwick, stated that:

if you play football there's a set of laws and rules, and law four outlines the basic equipment . . . It's absolutely right to be sensitive to people's thoughts and philosophies, but equally there has to be a set of laws that are adhered to, and we favour law four being adhered to (cited in World of Football 2007).

Here it is categorically stated that the *hijab* cannot be worn due to safety reasons. In addition to the case of Mansour, there are several other such cases in the UK. For example, Heba Al-Naseri, a university student in London, was banned from playing in a football match because of her headscarf (*Muslim News* 2007), whilst Ansar, a predominantly Muslim women's football club in Glasgow was also prohibited from competing in matches because of the *hijab* worn by some of their players (Ratna 2010). The *hijab* ban has illustrated how FIFA have exercised their power as a global sports body to restrict Muslim women competing in football. Indeed, the Iranian women's youth team were banned from competing in the inaugural summer youth Olympic Games in August 2010 because their *hijabs* were regarded as breaking the laws of the game. The outcome was a "compromise" with the team competing in caps (Mackay 2010).

Contrary to the FIFA *hijab* ban which explicitly discriminates against Muslim women, the ‘Accept and Respect’ declaration in 2008 by the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women declared the need to accept the dress code of Muslim women (Benn and Koushkie-Jahromi 2008), and demonstrated collective power in developing more integrative and collaborative strategies to address the needs of Muslim women. However, in order to play football, some Muslim women have to compromise their religious obligations, and are ultimately having to make the choice between football and their religion. The number of Muslim women competing in football is limited, and the *hijab* ban will only contribute to making this community more insular through reinforcing the marginalisation of Muslim women from mainstream sports. For such reasons, alternatives such as the Women’s Islamic Games are beneficial in providing Muslim women with an opportunity to compete in sport at international level, without compromising their religious beliefs (Benn and Ahmad 2006).

Women’s Islamic Games

The Islamic Countries Women’s Sports Solidarity Games, which took place in Tehran, Iran in 1993 and 1997, initially started for women in Islamic countries regardless of nationality. In 2001, British Muslim women competed for the first time, becoming the first Western, non-Muslim country to be invited to take part. That year, the Games were re-named the Muslim Women’s Games. They were again revised as the Women’s Islamic Games in 2005, with the competition opened to ‘non-Muslim women who wished to share solidarity with Muslim women’ (Benn and Ahmad 2006: 125). In 2005, the British team competed for the second time alongside participants from various other Western countries, including Germany and the United States.

The Games were instigated by Faezeh Hashemi, a member of the Iranian parliament and daughter of the President, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Hashemi stated that the aim of the Games was to create international competition for athletes from Muslim countries that is denied to them in “mainstream” competition because of the clash in dress codes (Hargreaves 2000). Since their emergence in 1993, the Games have undergone consistent growth, with an increase in participating countries,¹ athletes and also the number of sporting disciplines in each round of the Games. The 2005 Games celebrated the largest participation figures, with 1,600 athletes competing in 18 different events.

Although the International Olympic Committee (IOC) supports the Games, and statistics illustrate that opportunities for Muslim women are increasing because of them, Atlanta-Sydney-Athens Plus—a campaign that began in 1992 to pressurise the IOC into barring countries such as Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Yemen that fail to send female athletes to the Olympics—has been critical of the WIG, arguing that the IOC should not be

showing their support, as the games contravene the Olympic charter on the basis of gender discrimination (Feminist Majority Newsletter 1996, Moore 2004). This critique overlooks the multitude of women that have taken part in the WIG, who otherwise would have had limited opportunities to compete on the international stage due to their personal interpretations of the *hijab*.

British Muslim Women's Football Team

In 2005, Britain competed in the WIG for the second time. The selection process, funding opportunities and media coverage of the BMWFT provide an interesting comparison with “parallel” events such as the Olympics. The selection process for international competition usually involves numerous factors, which ‘take young people with potential from the early stages of talent identification, through complex processes of nurturing and training and much medical and scientific screening, with sponsorship support’ (Benn and Ahmad 2006: 119). In contrast, the 2005 BMWFT received no medical or scientific support, and were restricted to poor facilities and limited funding, whilst sponsorship came from the *Muslim News*. Members of the BMWFT trained on a weekly basis in London, financed their own flights to Tehran and the Iranian government paid for accommodation (*ibid.*).

The following data derive from several key members of the BMWFT in 2005, whose experiences and perceptions shed light on the role of the team. Data collection involved a triangulation of methods within an interpretivist paradigm (Burgess 1988, Denscombe 2003). Data collection spanned five years, including participant observation with the BMWFT prior, during and post WIG; and 16 semi-structured interviews with participants, coaches, observers and organisers at the 2005 Games. Documentation relating to the 2005 WIG, especially British involvement, was also collected to illustrate a wider picture of the WIG and the BMWFT. The rationale for using document analysis was primarily due to the valuable dimension that this type of data can add to a study, where dominant ideologies are reflected in the media, and where the media serve to construct and further reinforce mainstream values, which often marginalise females, especially minority ethnic and lesbian/gay athletes (Wright 2004). Documentation included newspaper and magazine articles, radio footage, television coverage and internal WIG publications produced by the Islamic Federation of Women's Sports. For the purpose of this chapter, I will primarily draw upon interview data and media coverage of the Games. Pseudonyms have been adopted to retain the anonymity of the participants (for a more detailed discussion on methodology see Ahmad 2009).

Identity Crisis? Negotiating Football and the *Hijab*

The majority of the participants in this study were *hijab* wearers who participated in British football, both for the BMWFT, and for university and

local football clubs in the UK. The *hijab* formed an important part of their identities, as demonstrated by Shamim's experience of football:

I tried to join a women's football team, and the coach told me that I'd either have to take my scarf off and play, or I wouldn't be able to play. The coach was male so obviously that was impossible. I was clearly as good as a lot of the people in the team. I felt frustrated because it wasn't my football that was being considered, it was something completely irrelevant to me playing the game.

In this context, Shamim was prohibited from playing football by the coach because of her *hijab*, yet for her, the *hijab* was something highly significant which could not be compromised in order to play football. Sport and physical activity is a basic human right, as stipulated in the Olympic charter, which should not be denied to Muslim women that make up one-quarter of the world's female population. The only option Shamim felt she had was not to play, although this does not imply that it is right to make a Muslim woman choose between her religion and football, and ultimately deny her human rights.

Muslim dress is undergoing major transformations and it is being shaped by issues of faith, fashion and identity, amongst other factors, and there is huge diversity amongst British Muslims and their relationships with the *hijab* (Tallo 2010). Nahid, a non-*hijab* wearer, for example, made the choice to play football and not wear the *hijab*:

More recently I was thinking, shall I wear a *hijab*? But then . . . my way of life, I'd wear the scarf and then I'd wear short sleeves all the time, and it's just hard, I mean I don't know whether I'd be able to do the rest, and it just would not make sense . . . I think in the latest stages of my time at college it [the *hijab*] influenced whether I should continue playing football or not. There was an issue of whether I should wear shorts and play or . . . how I would go about whether I wanted to join a club . . . It was an internal sort of thing, it was like do I decide to stop playing?

Nahid recognised that the *hijab* was not just about the covering of the hair, and felt that the ethos behind the *hijab* also included the covering of the arms and legs. Nahid felt that she could not wear the *hijab* if she wanted to join a football club as it would not be compatible with wearing shorts, so she would have to stop playing if she wore it.

On the other hand, Anjim did not have to negotiate football and the *hijab* in the same way as Shamim or Nahid did, but she did recall experiences of being forced to justify her actions in wearing it:

I mean the only experience I've really had that's not normal is, for example, in one of the university games a referee started questioning me about

my *hijab* and not in a bad way, but just sort of being interested, seeing how I play, will I be too hot and all that, will it get in the way safety-wise? So that's the only real thing, I think everyone else just sort of looks at you for a second and thinks, "Ok, let her get on with it", basically.

Anjim explains that whilst some people ignore the *hijab*, the referee in this instance questioned her about it. However, she was able to use this opportunity to educate him about the *hijab*.

Islamophobia Interlocked with Racism

This brings forth the concept of "selective blindness": where for Anjim her *hijab* was acknowledged, some Muslim women in this study felt invisible within football clubs, as they were not acknowledged by referees or team-mates. Mariam played for her university football team as a *hijab* wearer and recalled her experiences of alienation:

Sometimes you think, you know, there's some people who are just generally stuck up or moody, yeah, but if they don't chat to you, you think, you know, she might have if I had my hair out and looked a bit pretty, do you get me? . . . And I just found that when I started playing alright and then they picked teams and stuff I never used to get picked, do you get me? But I slowly got used to it, I never felt like I actually clicked with any of them, because I just didn't feel like part of the team in that sense.

Although Mariam felt she was as good as the rest of the players in the team, she recalled how her team-mates did not talk to her, and how she was not picked for teams. She said that although she was part of the team, she didn't really *feel* like part of the team, but she slowly got used to it. Similarly, other Muslim women expressed how team-mates did not want to be their partner in training drills and how members of the team would not pass them the ball in training. These experiences of *hijab* wearers lead to questions about the reality of Islamophobia in British football and whether it is better for a Muslim *hijab* wearer to be acknowledged and forced to justify their actions in wearing it, or to remain invisible in the football teams they are part of.

Neelum, for instance, felt that some members of her football team were racist:

Like some of the girls generally you know I feel (they) . . . are a bit, you know, unconsciously racist I'd say, you know what I mean? I shouldn't really say that. I think some of them, they don't understand (the) scarf, I don't think it's their fault, but they just don't know the reason we wear it and they think we're different.

Here she demonstrates her reticence in speaking out about racism, demonstrating an assumption that having to cope with racism to play football is part and parcel of the British game (see Burdsey 2007a). Her choice is somewhat different; one between playing football and becoming a victim of racism, or not playing football and therefore not having to cope with racism. Neelum's experience of football illustrates that religion and ethnicity are closely aligned, and that Islamophobia and racism are often inseparable (Weller 2006). She felt that her team-mates were racist because they did not understand why she wore the *hijab*, so confirming the common assumption that racism and particularly Islamophobic attitudes develop out of ignorance about Muslims (Halliday 2002).

Amina experienced a more overt expression of Islamophobia, which supports earlier discussions that Islamophobia is most evident within local amateur football clubs:

You get shouts from the sidelines, like, "Where is Bin Laden?" or just crap like that, and at the end of the day I'm lucky that I'm in a team who stand up for me, even though I didn't really particularly care what they said. I'm in a team that care and they stood up straight away and told the ref . . . and had them chucked out or whatever.

Amina firstly states how she is 'lucky' that her teammates had supported her in this incident, but then later declares that the comments did not bother her and that she did not care. So because Amina did not expect her team-mates to support her, she felt grateful that they had, yet the comment almost seems irrelevant for her because the support of her team sort of "softened the blow". Accordingly, she felt 'lucky' because in everyday life comments like these tend to go unnoticed.

The BMWFT struggled in finding a female football coach; several came and went in the space of just a few weeks. Laura stayed, however, to coach the team and also went out to the Games in Iran. She commented on why she felt many coaches did not want to coach a Muslim football team, referring to Islamophobic dispositions within the British public where there is a stigma attached to non-Muslims being associated with Muslim groups:

I think they feel a little bit intimidated by the scarves, because [they think] you're hiding something. I don't feel that at all, they're like different people, the majority of people need not be so intimidated, because I think a lot of people are intimidated . . . I think a lot of people—with the way terrorism is at the moment—if they think they're linked to, erm, a Muslim group, it's almost like, "Oh, you know, they might bomb us!". It's ridiculous, but I think, erm, that's probably got a lot to do with it, and it's just people not being educated, I think.

So not only did the women face hostility and alienation in playing football, but they also faced discrimination in finding a football coach. Is this merely coaches' personal preferences or is it a case of Islamophobic racism?

Mariam displays sadness when contemplating the lack of Muslim and British Asian girls in British football, and argues that if there were more Asian Muslim females playing the game they would all feel more comfortable:

Well, to be honest with you, like right now, it makes me think that I wish I'd carried on playing football, do you get me? But, you know, I don't let it bother me or anything, but I wish that there was more Asian girls and more Muslim girls that were participating in these sports, do you get me? 'Cos then I'm sure the way I'm feeling, loads of other girls feel . . . And if we're all playing together we'd mix with them [non-Muslims] as well, you'd feel more relaxed.

Mariam suggests that she would have continued to play if there were other women that were sharing her experience of being British Asian and/or Muslim footballers. She felt alone in her struggle to compete as the only British Asian Muslim female, which ultimately meant that she stopped playing, but then felt regret that she had not been strong enough to cope with the tensions.

This discussion challenges the common assumption that to be visibly Muslim implies that one is Islamically traditional. *Hijab* wearing footballers challenge misconceptions that Islam breeds extremists and that Muslim women are oppressed victims of the Islamic way of life. Equally, the experiences of these women have highlighted that "visible" Muslim women are integrated in British society through their love for football, and that this group of women did not want to bomb Britain, but saw it as their country and homeland—a country which they felt honoured to represent at the WIG. The chapter has highlighted some pertinent testimonies from British Muslim women who are trying to find a space to compete in British football, which is by no means made easy for them through institutional discrimination, but also the inherent perceptions of the Muslim 'Other' within local football teams.

NOTES

1. The exception is the 2001 Games, where the number of participating countries remained the same due to safety concerns after the invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan.

‘New’ Ethnicities and Emergent Football Communities

8 Flying the Flag for England? National Identities and British Asian Female Footballers

Aarti Ratna

INTRODUCTION: DIVIDED LOYALTIES ON AND OFF THE FIELD OF PLAY?

In the 2002 movie *Bend it Like Beckham*, the storyline implied that young British Asian¹ females faced divided loyalties, torn between their desire to play sport and their wish to become “good” daughters (Giardina 2003, Dwyer 2006, Walseth 2006). In this filmic representation of British Asian culture, it is suggested that older generations of parents universally prefer their children to observe religious and cultural norms and values rather than play sport (Ratna, forthcoming). However, if this was the case, how can the (at least) 70 British Asian girls and young women that are known to be playing the game in this country (see Ratna 2008) be accounted for?

Rather than being an exception to such cultural orthodoxies, evidence indicates that the popularity of the game amongst British Asian females is indeed growing, in terms of the numbers playing the game and the rise of mixed-ethnicity women’s football clubs in England (Asian Football Network 2010). Many British Asians (male and female) do not see their desire to play the game and their cultural heritage as a simple divide; they are proud of their religious and ethnic identities but, at the same time, view their involvement in the game as a significant marker of *who they are* (Burdsey 2007a, Ratna 2008). Notwithstanding this, despite the opinions of British Asian players themselves, their interest and involvement in the sport continues to be seen by many people as an example of them being ‘torn-between-two-cultures’ (Ballard 1994, Burdsey 2007a, Walseth 2006, Ratna forthcoming). In other words, playing sport is represented as antithetical to British Asian culture. This perceived antagonism is frequently interpreted as further “evidence” of the differences between “them” and “us” (Modood and Werbner 1997, Ålund 1999, Werbner 2000, Fortier 2005, Ali *et al.* 2006, Parekh 2006). In such popular discourses, it is unquestionably maintained that British Asians should aspire to, and assimilate into, the norms and values of an imagined British template.

The nature and extent of British Asian people’s integration (often prescribed as assimilation) in England is often seen to be reflected in supporter

allegiances in sport; choosing to fly the flag for England (primarily men's sports teams) or not. Whilst according to some political and media commentators, British Asians should relinquish their support for teams from the Indian subcontinent in favour of proving their loyalty to sports teams from the UK, this has caused consternation amongst academics who point out that national and social identities are multiple and fluctuating (Werber 1996, Marqusee 1998). The simplistic notion of being "for us" or "against us" is hugely problematic as it neglects the complexity of social relations that shape the lived realities of young British Asians (Bagguley and Hussain 2005, Kalra *et al.* 2005).

As Bhabha (1994) argues, the term 'multicultural' is important here for it disrupts the idea of a homogenous nation of people, signalling that the nation is made up of a number of people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In the British context, according to Parekh (2000: 205), a multicultural society should not question the "divided loyalties" of people within the "home" nation, as they should have the power and right to embrace dual and even multiple identifications if they wish to do so. However, it is often the case that dominant representations of nation are monopolised by a minority of those who, claiming to represent the interests of the nation as a whole, may argue otherwise. For example, through the lens of men's football, the inclusion/exclusion of different ethnic groups has been analysed with commentary about how the national community is variously perceived (Back *et al.* 1998b, 2001; Carrington 1998a; Bradbury 2001; Burdsey 2006a, 2007a; Millward 2007).

Unsurprisingly, considering the dominance of men's football in this country, the involvement of *women* as players of the game is relatively unexplored. In the context of this chapter, this is compounded by the fact that the involvement of black and British Asian women in sport more generally is also under-researched (Scraton 2001, Hargreaves 2004, Scraton *et al.* 2005, Ratna forthcoming). In order to fill this gap in knowledge, I specifically aim to analyse issues around national identity from the perspectives of British Asian female players. Hence, women's football is seen as a lens to further explore notions of 'race', ethnicity and nation. The chapter comprises two parts: first, I outline the intersections between 'race', nation and gender; and, second, I then address the nuances of British Asian female football experiences.

IMAGINING THE NATION: CONNECTING 'RACE' AND ETHNICITY WITH GENDER

In Smith's (1991) classic work about national identity, he essentially defined it as being linked to notions of citizenship and belonging. He suggested that 'nation' could be further viewed as comprising 'civic' citizens who were legally bounded to the country and/or 'ethnic' groups whose

heritages were rooted to the nation in question. Smith does not view these concepts as unrelated, but argues that ‘civic’ nationalism is heavily based on assumptions about ethnicity; more precisely, assumptions about the ‘dominant *ethnie*’ (Kumar 2003: 26). For instance, English people are predominantly “white” in terms of their ethnicity (*ibid.*). On this basis, some ethnic groups are positioned and/or position themselves as more legitimate representatives of the nation than others. Yuval-Davis and Werbner (1999), however, argue that citizenship should not just be about birthrights, the colour of one’s skin or carrying a passport; it should be about *feeling* part of a local, ethnic, national or global community. Since their arrival in Britain, many British Asians have undoubtedly both been excluded and *felt* excluded from the national community. For example, research about the early experiences of South Asian migrants documents how they faced myriad forms of institutional and everyday experiences of exclusion and discrimination, in terms of access to education, employment, and health and welfare services (Ballard 1994, Brah 1994, Modood *et al.* 1997, Visram 2002, Wilson 2006).

In terms of the “national project”—state policies and practices orientated towards meeting the needs of a nation—again, women’s views are generally less heard than men’s (Walby 1992). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) and Walby (1992) have been keen to stress that women are not absent bystanders to the national project; they have participated in a number of national, economic, political and military struggles for power, control and social justice, such as the campaigns for nuclear disarmament at Greenham Common in the 1980s (see also Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999, Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002). However, as previously noted, in the sociological research about sport and national identities, much of the debate has focussed on *men’s* experiences (Marqusee 1994; Carrington 1998a; Burdsey 2006a, 2007a). When minority ethnic women are visible in sporting discourses, they are often seen as tending to domestic duties whilst the men play sport (Carrington 1998a).

Arguably, the general invisibility of women in such debates has occurred for two main reasons. First, because gender differences are marginalised in debates about ‘race’, the false premise is constructed that the experiences of men and women are the same, and that men *can* and *do* speak on women’s behalf (Walby 1992). Second, and related to this, because women are seen as a homogenous group, their experiences of social life are viewed as essentially tied to cultural patriarchy. Therefore, similarities and differences between women in terms of ‘race’ and ethnicity as well as other markers of social identity are ignored. Moreover, the situated-ness of social differences are not recognised, as women may share similar “ethnic interests” to men but, in other contexts, may seek solidarity with other women across boundaries of ‘race’ and ethnicity (Collins 1991, Brah 1994, Brah and Phoenix 2004, Yuval-Davis 2006).

FRAMING THE RESEARCH

Bhabha (1996: 58) notes that exploring the perceptions of those who may find themselves located on the ‘outside of the inside’ of the national community—in this case, British Asian women—helps us to understand how forces relating to belonging and exclusion operate, and how various forms of negotiation and contestation are used to bridge the gap from being ‘outside’ to being ‘inside’ the national and local imagined spaces of a country. The sport and leisure sphere offers an important lens to analyse such cultural politics, as the dynamics between insider-ness and outsider-ness are often played out on and off the field of play (Carrington and McDonald 2001, Ansari 2004).

Collins (1991) particularly advocates utilising the unique position of ‘the sister outsider’ to make visible the histories, experiences and identities of women who find themselves on the margins of social life and, additionally, of social research. Furthermore, she emphasises the usefulness of research that provides a critique of the ‘centre’ from the position of being on the ‘margins’, helping to unpack cultural norms and taken-for-granted assumptions about that space. In this case, the centre refers to the predominantly white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual spaces of women’s football. Therefore, this research centralises the “voices” of British Asian women who have an active engagement with football. Whilst the voices and experiences of African-Caribbean women are equally worthy of consideration, and have begun to be examined elsewhere, it is not part of the remit of this study (for further discussion, see Ismond 2003, Scraton *et al.* 2005).

British Asian women should not be treated as a homogenous group as there are various similarities and differences between them. Mindful of such differences, I especially focus on British Asian female footballers’ experiences as multiple and diverse. The research findings for this chapter are based on the oral testimonies of 19 British Asian female football players. Fourteen of them had played, or were playing, for teams that competed at various levels of the women’s football pyramid (the elite structure of women’s football in England). One of these players had actually played for the England women’s under-16 football team. Another player had also played football for England at student level. In a different international setting, the other five girls and women had represented, or were representing, the UK futsal squad at the Women’s Islamic Games in Iran (see also Ahmad, this volume).² Hence, some of the British Asian females that I interviewed played at international level, whilst other research participants had aspirations to play at a high level of competition. The age range of participants was between 14 and 32 years of age, and they constituted both second- and third-generations of British Asians living in England. Geographically, most of the players resided in urban parts of England, with the majority of participants living in the south and Midlands. However, a small number of the players had lived/were living in the north of England. I do not suggest that

the testimonies of the players included in this study are representative of *all* British Asian female football players, but that their particular views and experiences can be used to unpack the complex relationship between ‘race’, ethnicity and national identities.

In this chapter, I denote each research participant as Player 1, Player 2, Player 3, and so on, as many of the British Asian young women and girls who I spoke to specifically asked to be defined as “players” of the game rather than in terms of their South Asian heritage and ethnic identities. Moreover, due to the complexities and meanings associated with the naming of children of South Asian descent, pseudonyms could cause offence if randomly applied and/or used incorrectly, ignoring differences pertaining to religion and gender in that naming process (see also Ratna 2008).

KICKING FOR ENGLAND

Many of the British Asian footballers included in this study assert that the ultimate pinnacle of a football career is to represent the national side. Player 1, a girl of Sikh-Indian origin born in the UK, considered the proudest moment of her life to be when she was selected to play for the England under-16 team. She had been playing football since she was 5 years-old and from an early age she was earmarked as a potential star by another former England player. Player 2, also of Sikh-Indian heritage, felt the same way when she played for England at school and student level. The first British Asian woman to play for England, Player 1 suggests that ‘race’ was not a prominent factor in her career, claiming that:

I have always just wanted to play football like a number of other people in the game. It never really affected me being one of the only Asian players in the game. I just concentrated on improving my own game. Now that I am older, I would really like to help to encourage more British Asians to play. With Michael Chopra³ and me playing for England, hopefully the Asian community can see that they can achieve in football. Any barriers that may or may not have existed are now broken.

The notion that barriers to participation in the game have been removed is contentious (Ratna 2008). Yet Player 1 reproduces this idea, inferring that racism and other forms of discrimination are a thing of the past. Put simply, it is perceived that anyone with the right talent and determination will eventually rise to the top, regardless of their ‘race’ or ethnicity. Reinforcing the meritocratic ideology of football, she suggests that talent, rather than ‘race’, counts on the field of play and hence the game is essentially “fair” (see Back *et al.* 2001, Ratna 2008, Lusted 2009).

There is nothing to suggest that the Football Association directly excludes ethnic minority ethnic groups. Furthermore, through its Equality Standard

charter mark, it claims it is institutionally responsible for challenging racism in the game (Lusted 2009). As Carrington and McDonald (2003) note, it would be wrong to argue that sports governing bodies are simply racist as they have significantly improved their actions in terms of tackling racial inequalities on and off the field of play. However, there is evidence to suggest that barriers are far from overcome and that British Asian female footballers do experience racism, amongst other forms of discrimination, at various levels of the game (Burdsey 2007a, Ratna 2007). The potential to represent one's country may not, therefore, be as straightforward as maintained by Player 1.

In the case of Chopra, many British Asians have argued that because of his dual-ethnicity—he has a white mother and an Indian father—he has been able to make the grade, whereas many other young British Asian men, whose parents are both of South Asian heritage, have not (Burdsey 2004b). This view implies that his entry and inclusion into the spaces of football is relatively unproblematic; he is familiar to/with the “white”⁴ cultural environment of football because he has been socialised into the norms and values of such a space at home. However, Burdsey (ibid.) argues that Chopra's membership of the England team and participation at elite levels of football may be more complex. He goes on to explain that for many dual-ethnicity players, their involvement in the game may require them to minimise, consciously or unconsciously, aspects of their identity which are most antithetical to “white”, professional football, whilst acting up sensibilities as “one of the lads” in terms of appropriating certain subcultural and sartorial codes.

In the case of British Asian women who have played at the highest levels of the game, including the England national team, it becomes apparent that they also seek to promote their similarities with the identities of white team-mates, whilst simultaneously downplaying their South Asian heritage (Ratna 2007, 2008). Fanon (1967) suggests that donning a ‘white mask’ is a dramaturgical device used by minority ethnic people to conform to a “white” template that is not habitually “theirs” (see also Puwar 2004). Player 2 further explains that through subtle processes of “acting white”, such as wearing Western clothes, going to discos and socialising with young men, she could marginalise her British *Asianness*. Similarly, Player 3, another participant who has played at the higher levels of the women's game, explains that as a British Asian female who is Catholic, she is to some extent assimilated into British society due to a shared cultural and religious identity with many white, British people.

With reference to other British Asians, whom she sees as significantly different to her, I interpret her articulations as follows:

In her jovial criticism of British Asian “rude gals” and “rude boys”,⁵ she is at the same time distancing herself from them by suggesting she speaks “proper” English. In fact, she seemed to be placing herself in

a superior position to them. This is revealed by her comments about her distaste for the area where she lives. She prefers to socialise in predominantly “posh” areas. The “rude boys” and “gals” tend to go out locally, which she believes is “dirty” looking and where there is nothing to do.

[taken from fieldwork diary]

Through her comments about speaking English “properly” and socialising in “posh” rather than “dirty” areas, it becomes apparent that she is strategically performing an identity that distances her from the image she has of other British Asians who may also be residing within her local community. Other references to Player 3’s social preferences further serve the purpose of aligning her identity to the cultural sensibilities of white women, who also play football. She does this by emphasising going out with her teammates at the weekends and after matches for (alcoholic) drinks. As noted by Burdsey (2004b) about British Asian men, the social drinking culture associated with football can be viewed as problematic for some who, on the premise of religious preferences, do not drink alcohol. For Player 3, this was not an issue, but it is for other British Asians for whom, due to religious reasons, playing it “white” (Back *et al.* 2001, King 2004b) is an unattainable position. However, this is not to say that those who are able to gain contingent inclusion in “white” footballing spaces are guaranteed total and unequivocal acceptance.

For some of the British Asian players who did play at higher levels of the game, they nonetheless felt, in reflection, that appropriating identities that were similar to the “white” culture predominant in women’s football would not be as important to subsequent generations of British Asian women. By this, they meant that Asianness would become an unremarkable feature of contemporary British social life. Player 2 explains how, in contrast, when she was growing up this was not the case and it was not “cool” to be British Asian (see also Huq 1996):

I think it would be very good being a Brit- . . . Asian at the moment because a lot of our culture is celebrated quite a lot, so it is quite cool. But when I was growing up it wasn’t cool, I still noticed big differences.

Although Asianness may be deemed more “cool” than it was in earlier times when first- and second-generation British Asians were growing up in Britain, younger third-generation British Asian players have not necessarily attained automatic acceptance within the spaces of women’s football. British Asianness may be celebrated by the mass media and through other forms of popular culture, but this does not mean that the spaces of women’s football are anti-racist and/or socially inclusive (see Carrington and McDonald 2003). The compelling imaginary construction of England as representing white people and their “culture” continues to influence the

way football is seen by those in power and followers of the sport, as well as those British Asian women who play, or wish to play, the game.

REPRESENTING “HOME”?

For a variety of reasons, the majority of British Asian female players had not played at the higher echelons of the game. However, they still reinforced the popular conceptualisation of England as being synonymous with “whiteness”, and as racialised bodies they felt that they would not be seen as representative of the country. For example, one British Asian player of Hindu-Indian descent, who played for (and was considered one of the most talented members of) a predominantly British Asian team, argued the following:

AR: Would you consider playing for England?

Player 4: I would love to but I don’t think it would happen.

AR: Why do you think that?

Player 4: ‘Cos at the end of the day we’re Asian and we don’t fit . . . just ‘cos we’re Asian *they* think it’s not *our* country.

AR: Is that how you see things?

Player 4: Yeah . . . I am just an Asian person living in Britain. This is *my* country but I just can’t see an Asian person playing for England.

Sadly, several other players also felt this way. For example, a young woman of Muslim-Indian background, who also played for a predominantly British Asian team, expressed similar sentiments:

AR: Would you want to play for England?

Player 5: Yeah, but I wouldn’t make it . . . you’d be seen differently.

AR: What do you mean “seen differently”?

Player 5: Y’know because we’re Asian, what are *we* doin’ playing for England? You don’t see it, even with the boys. I mean, if I was good enough then I would love to play football . . . some of the girls play for the County and they say people look at you twice as you’re an Asian.

As Fanon (1967) points out, minority ethnic bodies can instantaneously be positioned as ‘Other’ via the dominant visual gaze. Importantly, these interview dialogues also illustrate that, contrary to the meritocratic ideology of sport, variables such as talent, commitment and passion for the game are perceived by some British Asians to be secondary to racial or ethnic affiliations. Of course, the multicultural realities of English communities mean that many men and women—of all ethnic backgrounds—do not fit an imagined representation of an Englander either. Yet, regardless of being born in this country, the British Asian players use the terms “them” and “us”, recognising

that those in power of picking the national sides and other fans, players and media commentators of the sport, to various extents, would see them as different to white English people. Hence, it is no wonder that they feel that the likelihood of representing the nation is, at best, slim.

Interestingly, many of the younger British Asians girls passionately argued that they would forfeit playing for England if it meant, in Player 4's words, 'selling out', implying that unlike some of the older generation of players previously mentioned, who had made the grade at higher levels of the game, they would not wear a 'white mask' (Fanon 1967) or de-prioritise markers of their racial and ethnic identities (Ratna 2010). For example, in reference to racism and the high proportion of white people involved in the game, Player 5 explained the following:

If you look at (female) sport now, there aren't many Asians in sport and all the football girls are white British, you don't see any Asians, you don't see many blacks, they're all white. The newer girls play a lot of basketball and they tell us 'bout the racism in that. I don't like it. But they help us handle it, so we do the same as them. But I can never get used to it. Y'know, there will be racism but it makes us stronger in a way that we're all together and no one can knock us like that.

Despite Player 2's earlier thoughts that things may have changed for younger generations of British Asian women, the whiteness of women's football has not altered and, for these younger women, racism is a harsh reality of their football participation (Ratna 2007).

PLAYING FOR YOUR "HOME AWAY FROM HOME"?

For other British Asian footballers (men and women), although they would love to play for England, some would consider playing for their (grand-)parental country of birth. Whilst countries such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan do have national (men's and women's) sides, they are relative minnows in world football. Majumdar and Bandyopadhyay (2005) specifically argue that women's football in India is in a dismal state compared to the health of the women's game in England. Burdsey (2006a) further illustrates this point in reference to the men's game, stating that the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi national teams have all been comprehensively beaten by British *club* sides. Hence, for British Asians (men and women), playing for their (grand-)parents' home country offers little opportunity for international success, prestige and/or an avenue to develop their playing careers. It is unsurprising though that in regard to the "whiteness" of women's football in England, playing for their "home away from home" team in order to perhaps engineer a sense of belonging for themselves, where they may actually feel they belong and fit in, is a viable option for them.

However, playing for your “home away from home” is neither straightforward nor guarantees social acceptance from those running and playing for those national squads. As becomes apparent from the oral testimonies of those who have played for, or are thinking of representing, national teams from the Indian subcontinent, questions about legitimacy, culture and identity continue to be central to their feelings of acceptance and belonging. For example, Player 2, who has played for England at student level, had ambitions to play for the Indian women’s football team. She recalls that for a long time she had emphasised her British sensibilities to be accepted by her predominantly white team-mates (see earlier discussion). Yet, towards the end of her playing career, when she had become established in the game, she no longer felt the pressure to play the “identity game”, and she could develop a sense of Asianness to show others that although she was born in England, she was also of Indian heritage. As she explains:

The whole India thing was more to do with [the fact that] around that time I hadn’t been “Indian”. When I was younger, we lived in an English area, I didn’t wear the (Indian) clothes, didn’t want to go to the *gurdwara*, didn’t want to do any Indian stuff as it wasn’t cool. I think you just get to the point in your twenties when you suddenly think you’re happy to be you, and actually you are also Indian. It was more a reflection of me finding my culture again, and when the opportunity came up I really wanted to do it because I thought everybody knows I’m British, and actually I wanna show them I’m also Indian.

Player 2, like many other participants in this research, refers to a sense of Asianness as relating to speaking one’s mother tongue, wearing “traditional” clothes, and adopting South Asian cultural pastimes, such as playing the *tabla*, watching Indian films and listening to Hindi music. Also important to this sense of Asianness is religious identity and, as noted by Player 2, going to places of religious worship, like the Sikh *gurdwara*. Despite Player 2’s renewed sense of Asianness, she is quick to position herself (as a British citizen) as markedly different to other “Asians” from the Indian subcontinent.

In her testimony, although wanting to play for India evoked a sense of pride for her, she felt that as officials were disorganised, in terms of making the arrangements for her to travel to, and play for India, her ambition to represent the country was never realised. In addition to this, reproducing popular cultural stereotypes about South Asians being deceitful (see Searle 1993), she felt that they mentioned significant changes to her citizenship rights, as a British passport holder, in a conversation as if they meant nothing. Representing India at the time was subject to relatively specific legislation: only passport holders of the country were able to represent the national team. Dimeo (2002) argues that the All India Football Federation (AIFF) tried to maintain a stringent policy on selection. In order to promote

nationalistic sensibilities, AIFF selectors emphasised “Indianness” ahead of sporting successes and did not allow non-nationals or dual-nationals to represent the country. This was a departure from FIFA regulations that stipulate that players can be selected for national teams if a grandparent was born in the country in question (Burdsey 2006a). For this reason, Player 2 was asked to change her passport from a British one to an Indian one:

With Indian people it’s just, “Yeah, yeah, yeah, come over, come over” and then, “Actually, no, you need to change your passport, you need to have an Indian one”, which is quite a big thing actually, and they would just slip it into the conversation.

Although she wanted to re-find her Indian “roots”, she views the organisers of the team as “typically Indian” and “too Asian”, inferring negative connotations in the process.

Asianness is, of course, a label that identifies a range of identities and fluid subject positions. Yet, the manner in which Asianness is utilised by Player 2 and others involved in the research reproduces a narrow, dichotomous representation of South Asians as either modern or backward. Player 6, of Muslim-Pakistani background, who played for the UK futsal team in 2005, further explained the reproduction of a modern/backward, British/Asian dichotomy:

I think if I played for this country (England) they would see me as an outsider as I’m Asian and, if I play for my parents’ country which is Pakistan, they would also see me as an outsider because I’m not really Pakistani, I’m British. I probably can’t relate to their culture or their experiences or anything like that . . . I mean, I’m Pakistani because my parents were born there but I wasn’t born there and I haven’t lived there . . . I’d probably be more *cultural* if I was brought up there.

This player views herself as different from people born in Pakistan, in part because she believes that there are traditional cultural dogmas in Pakistan that restrict the freedoms of other Muslim girls and women. Being “cultural” is seen in a negative light. I would argue that the perpetuation of this stereotype may result as an unintended consequence of trying to work within the parameters in which Muslim women are popularly represented in British media, public and political discourses.

Furthermore, having grown up in England, Player 6 clearly sees herself as being British and “modern” in terms of both her citizenship and her cultural identity. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily mean that this is how she is viewed by others (Ratna 2009). She goes on to say how representing the UK futsal team was significant; it was the first time that, as a Muslim woman, she could legitimately represent the UK as a *bona fide* British person. Although this was a positive move for her and many of her

team-mates, other aspects of their testimonies highlight that in Iran, the venue for the World Islamic Games, members of other national teams did point out to them their own tenuous position within England and the UK. The following dialogue illustrates this point:

AR: You were talking about [military involvement in] Afghanistan when you first went to play football. What impact do you think this had on you?

Player 7: I would like to say that the two were a bit divorced but I don't think they were because Afghanistan did send a team and we did meet them and we did talk to them. A lot of the comments they came up with actually were, "Why's *your* country doing this to us?" (emphasis added).

Though many of the Muslim British Asian players suggested that they were proud to play for the UK, they felt guilty about "their" country invading Afghanistan. Hence, playing for your "home away from home" is clearly not straightforward. It is evident that players are wary that their insider-ness and belonging both at "home" and at their "home away from home" is not a given.

FLYING THE FLAG FOR THE NATION: "WHITE-WASHING" IDENTITIES?

This chapter has demonstrated that British Asian female footballers are proud of living in Britain, and they have ambitions to play for England, which they see as their "home" country. To date, only two players have achieved the honour of representing the country—at under-16 and student levels. It would be wrong to argue that the representation of British Asian women at this level of play is evidence of the meritocratic ideology of football, and that racism is a thing of the past, and it becomes apparent that the complex construction of identity has been influential in the career progressions of these women. As racialised bodies, British Asian players must negotiate the boundaries of Britishness and Asianness accordingly. Similarly, Puwar (2004: 150) explains that for racialised minorities in the elite spaces of Parliament and Whitehall:

whilst they have to accept that skin colour is a permanent feature of their bodily appearance, they can change or slowly "whitewash" bodily gestures, social interests, value systems and speech patterns . . . Adherence to the norms and values of this hegemonic culture is almost a condition of entry.

In the testimonies of the older generation of players, it is clear that they act, behave and think—both consciously and subconsciously—in ways that

may help them to forge a sense of acceptability within women's football at this level of play. However, for these players, they are aware that members of their own ethnic group may see them as a "sell out" and hence, in other spaces, they may be viewed as outsiders in relation to their own ethnic communities (Ratna 2010).

For many of the younger generations of British Asian players, who have not played the game at international levels but aspire to do so, they felt that because they are not white they will not be seen as legitimate representatives of the nation. Moreover, in their testimonies, they claim that they would rather forfeit playing for England if it meant compromising their British *Asian* heritage. They refuse to play the "identity game" and unlike the two older players previously mentioned, having grown up in a predominantly South Asian area of England, to various extents they do not necessarily have the habitual familiarity to pass as an insider, even if they wanted to.

Interestingly, some of the British Asian players claim that playing for a country from the Indian subcontinent is also not straightforward; citizenship primarily determines their rights to play for these countries. Moreover, whilst some of the players assert that the opportunity to play for India is important to them as it (re)locates their cultural heritage, at the same time, they stress how playing for a "home away from home" country would be impossible due to the tensions that may exist between them and people from the Indian subcontinent. The majority of British Asian players actually suggest these tensions are about cultural identities; they reproduce the binary of people from Western nations being superior and "modern" compared to the inferiority and "backwardness" of people from the Indian subcontinent.

CONCLUSION

In his study about the boxer Amir Khan, Burdsey (2007b) argues that as he may be aware of his position as a representative of both Britishness and Asianness, he articulates his public identity in a way that embraces both positionings, for example, wearing boxing shorts emblazoned with both the Pakistani and Union flags. Indeed, the culturally hybrid nature of Khan's identity allows the British media to depart from the popular image of young, Muslim men as terrorists by focusing upon non-Islamic markers of his identity, for instance, his fashion, speech and dress. This chapter similarly reveals that belongings and non-belongings are carefully negotiated in a manner that signals the hybrid, multiple and changing nature of modern, British Asian (female) identities. Nayak (1997) further highlights that negotiating blackness (or Asianness in this case) with whiteness is tricky—becoming black enough or white enough, from one situation to the next, facing the possibility of being accepted and/or rejected by various groups of people. Therefore, the ability of British Asian footballers

to access, manipulate and perform particular aspects of their identities is significant, informing their sense of inclusion and belonging within the national community, local spaces of “home”, and the institutional spaces of women’s football. Moreover, British Asian women accommodate, negotiate and resist “whiteness” and Asianness in similar as well as different ways, rejecting and challenging some ethnic identity markers and embracing others. In doing so, they are contributing to the making and shaping of Britishness and Asianness through such identity performances, leading to the development of new forms of identification where it may be possible for them to indeed belong within the boundaries of a “white” national (sporting) community.

NOTES

1. ‘British Asian’ is the label used to categorise people whose ancestry stems from the Indian subcontinent. In this chapter, the research participants also use ‘Asian’ and ‘South Asian’ interchangeably with ‘British Asian’ to denote their racial and ethnic heritage. I suggest that whilst ‘British Asian’ is used to mark their identities and citizenship as essentially rooted in the UK, in other contexts, the research participants use ‘Asian’ and ‘South Asian’ to demarcate those who are citizens of, and also reside within, different parts of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
2. This female-only competition occurs every four years and is an alternative to the Olympic Games. The UK team—at that time the only non-Muslim country involved in the Games—competed for the first time in 2001.
3. Michael Chopra is one of the most prominent players of (part) Indian heritage currently playing at professional level in British football.
4. “White” should not be viewed as a homogenous marker of ethnic identity, but as a heterogeneous array of identity positions that encompass a wide group of people.
5. British Asian “rude gals” and “rude boys” identify with an attitude, sense of fashion, musical tastes and use of language that are commonly associated to the identities of African-Americans and Jamaicans. Gilroy (1993a) argues that the “rude gal” and “rude boy” “street” style is appropriated by some British Asians in order to assert their political and cultural resistance to life issues and experiences of everyday racial discrimination in the UK.

9 Mixing Up the Game

Social and Historical Contours of Black Mixed Heritage Players in British Football

Mark Christian

INTRODUCTION

As the world comes to terms with the reality that the most powerful man on earth, President Barack Obama, is of African-American (mixed heritage) background, it is evident that multiracial heritage has become a popular subject matter. Yet much of this interest stems from the fact that history has been made in terms of a person of colour holding court in the most powerful office in the world. That stated, the social world of mixed heritage persons continues to be one of mixed fortunes. In relation to football, however, there is little doubt that the emergence of players of mixed heritage is palpable in the English Premier League and England team set-up.

This chapter primarily focuses on the socio-historical experiences of black mixed heritage¹ footballers within the context of British society. What qualifies me to write on such a subject as black mixed heritage footballers in the UK context? In the world of social science, my social background and academic training would probably be deemed “organically connected” to the phenomena under scrutiny. Indeed having been raised in the city of Liverpool in the 1970s and 1980s, I am acutely aware of both British football and institutional racism. Moreover, my black British heritage and intellectual interests have intersected with my love for the beautiful game and the experience of black British players in general.

Additionally, I played for over a decade in the amateur football scene in Liverpool during the 1980s in predominantly black mixed heritage teams based in Toxteth/Liverpool 8, winning league titles and cups on a regular basis. During the 1980s, both of the city’s professional clubs, Everton and Liverpool, had very successful teams, yet it was rare to see a black face on the pitch or on the terraces. Racialised relations were rather poor, and it was difficult for local blacks in the city to go beyond the boundaries of Toxteth/Liverpool 8, where the majority resided, without incurring physical threats to one’s life. Moreover, the city council also had an appalling

record of discrimination in employment against its local black population (Gifford *et al.* 1989).

Most importantly, beyond the structures of institutional racism in Liverpool, I know what it is like to be called a “black bastard” while playing a game of football. Indeed, racism was rife in amateur football on the pitch and in the professional game on the terraces. I recall John Barnes making his England debut in 1983, and later the chants of the England supporters: “there ain’t no black in the Union Jack, Johnnie Barnes, Johnnie Barnes”—a chant that would lead the academic Paul Gilroy (1987) to coin the phrase for his bestseller *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*.

In Liverpool, on one occasion during an amateur game in the Huyton District Sunday League in the mid-1980s—the area where the England and Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard was born and raised, and where 16 year-old Anthony Walker was murdered in 2005 for being a black person in the “wrong place”—a vociferous white crowd supporting the opposing team, spent most of the game spilling out their hatred of “niggers”, “coons” and “wogs”. I remember tackling for the ball, winning it, but leaving an opponent in pain. From the crowd I could distinctly hear the phrase: “you dirty black bastard!”. Having had recently heard the great African-Caribbean cricketer Vivian Richards deal brilliantly with such a situation while he was playing cricket in England, I marched over to where the obscenities derived and stated, paraphrasing Richards’ response to racist cricket supporters: “I am black, but I am not a bastard, I know my mother and father were married before I was born”. I remember thinking as I marched toward this crowd of mainly white men and teenage boys that it could be dangerous, but it is also common knowledge that racists are cowards. In fact I was correct in my assumption of cowardice as they looked rather timid up close when I confronted them.

No one from the crowd countered my comments that day. My team, Saana FC, went on to win the game 1–0, and it was me who scored the winning goal. Yes, a black mixed heritage team from Toxteth won yet another game in an area renowned for not welcoming people of colour. Indeed I know what the visceral experience is to be of black mixed heritage, and the reality of racism in British football has been an unwelcome companion in my life growing up in Liverpool.

A caveat for the reader: this chapter aims to merely highlight the racialised experience in relation to black mixed heritage British footballers. A contention here is that the increasing numbers of “mixed race” footballers is a sign of both changing demographics and an improvement in equal opportunities within the British football scene at the professional playing level. However, somewhere in this social fact lies a major contradiction that is often overlooked by the academic voyeur of racialised phenomena. The answers to this conundrum can be found via a cursory consideration of the history of population settlement in the UK over time.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BRITISH MIXED-NESS

Britain has a long history of amnesia in what could be deemed a “racialised mongrelisation” memory loss. After all, it is a state that has historically “mixed” with many cultural groups. To be sure, since the earliest times of British history, peoples with varied ethnic backgrounds, beliefs, languages and cultures have settled in Britain; from the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages (5000 BC-100 BC) to the Roman Britain era (55 BC-410 AD). Briefly, the Picts, Celts, Romans, Saxons, Angles, Danes, Jutes, Vikings and Normans are key historical cultural groups that led to the “normative” white ethnic category now described homogenously as “white” and singular in authoritative government census surveys.

In point of fact, in a report by the Office for National Statistics (2009a) examining trends in the changes to the British population based on ethnic affiliation, the categories of “White British” and “White other” stand out as unhelpful in realistically dealing with the historical racialised mongrelisation of the white British population. It is erroneous and misleading to depict whiteness in Britain as unsullied or pure (Rothenberg 2008). This only gives ammunition to the essentialist far right British National Party that is currently having a revival of sorts in British politics.

Apart from the ancient aspects of British racialised mongrelisation, writers such as Peter Fryer (1984) add to the white European-derived settler groups an African presence dating back to the Roman era of the third century AD. Yet it was not until the period between the 1500s and the 2000s that this black presence in Britain was deemed problematic for the “white nation” to bear. Indeed there has been an approximately 500 year history of racialised antagonism that involves various histories of people of colour in the UK context.

Britain’s involvement in the European enslavement era, colonisation and the cultural hegemony of Empire at its height in the nineteenth century has largely led to the contemporary formation of racialised relations in the UK (Christian 2002). With the British Empire came the dichotomous notion of superior/inferior “races” and cultures: European white culture being depicted most often as the apex of civilisation, while African and Asian peoples were erroneously designated as inferior human stock in comparison to their European counterparts. Hence, any idea of miscegenation was frowned upon by the British establishment, and any product of unions between “whites” and blacks, for example, was labelled in derogatory terms such as “half caste”, “half breed” or some similarly negative term (Christian 2000, 2008).

One aspect of miscegenation that was particularly taboo related to the partnership being made up of a black man and a white woman. Most often such offspring before the twentieth century were derived from a white male exploiting an enslaved or colonised black female. In contemporary times, however, it is more common for a partnership between a black male and

white female making up the “mixed heritage” union. Although space does not allow a discussion of this specific topic in detail here, I recommend a reading of Anton Gill’s (1995) *Ruling Passions: Sex, Race and Empire* as it relates to the intricacies of European sexual intimacies and racialised conquests during the British Empire.

This occurred during a time when science began to consider the idea of “race” being something to be studied and categorised. Fortunately for humanity, much of what was produced as scientific knowledge in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries turned out to be discredited pseudo-scientific racialised theories after World War II (Fryer 1984). Nevertheless, much damage had been perpetrated in terms of the development of socially ingrained stereotypes that still live on today in relation to persons of mixed heritage (Ifekwunigwe 2004, Christian 2008). One such damaging stereotype perpetuated through time is the erroneous notion that all “Liverpool blacks” are the offspring of white female prostitutes and African seamen. Ridiculous as this seems, it has endured in the historical folklore of Liverpool. Just to enlighten the reader with one example that defies this stereotype, my father was one of the 300 Jamaican technicians that arrived in Britain during World War II. He met my mother while they both worked in a munitions factory in Liverpool. They had a middle-class lifestyle in terms of house ownership, with another property in Wales owned and used for summer holidays. Very few black families met the racist fiction, but stereotypes live on through time. Other enduring myths include: mixed heritage persons are infertile, lazy, low in IQ and promiscuous.

Therefore, to contemplate the black mixed heritage person in the British context is to consider a historically stigmatised social being (see Christian 2000). Yet, as time has passed, much like with anything built on racism and false ideas, the mixed heritage person in 2010 is a shadow of the formerly dysfunctional and pathologised human being portrayed by the academic communities in the UK and United States particularly (Christian 2000, Ifekwunigwe 2004). Indeed there are predictions of this being the modern and common phenotype with the growing rates of mixed heritage persons, of which many have ambiguous ethnicities: not being clearly black or white. The UK census of 2001 indicated that the fastest growing minority group in Britain at that time was persons of mixed heritage.

Significantly, when we consider the issue of black mixed heritage footballers in the UK it is important to put the subject matter in its rightful historical context. Otherwise there is a propensity toward viewing the phenomenon as a move toward racialised harmony when in fact there has always been contention between, and within, interracial unions and their offspring. The reality of white supremacy and its foibles is at the heart of what could be deemed a Eurocentric racial hegemony. Without a comprehension of the enduring legacy in racist social engineering, on what it is to be human, we cannot expect to understand contemporary matters such as the growing reality of mixed heritage footballers in Britain. The very

existence of this topic, and this book in general, indicates that we still have much to learn, and contemplate, regarding what it is to be of mixed heritage or connected to blackness in the British context.

BRITISH FOOTBALL AND BLACK/“MIXED” PLAYERS

The first acknowledged black footballer to play for England is said to be Viv Anderson, who made his debut in November 1978. I state the “first acknowledged” because it is my educated guess that someone else before him with black blood probably played, but his phenotype may not have been distinctly black. Likewise, many of the uninitiated in racialised imagery today may not realise that Leon Osman and Jack Rodwell of Everton FC both have black heritage. In this sense, if one searches judiciously through the annals of England’s history of players it is more probable than not that a player with black ancestry would have played for England *before* the acknowledged Viv Anderson. Indeed it is most likely that a Leeds United defender of black mixed heritage, Paul Reaney, could take that glory when he played for England in 1968.

Nevertheless, officially the history of England’s black international players begins in 1978—not a long time ago by any means. Viv Anderson appears to have broken open the door, for others have followed in his path rather consistently. Among the black players to soon follow him into senior England squads were Laurie Cunningham, Cyrille Regis, Luther Blissett, Des Walker, John Fashanu and John Barnes. Close on sixty black and/or mixed heritage players have played for England since Anderson made his senior debut.

In terms of black mixed heritage players, a glance at the England World Cup squad of 2006 shows that six out of the twenty-three-man squad were of black mixed heritage: Ashley Cole, Rio Ferdinand, David James, Jermaine Jenas, Aaron Lennon and Theo Walcott. Add Sol Campbell (a “full black”) and it was a squad made up of more than 25 per cent of players with black heritage. The 2010 England squad continued to have a strong presence of black and black mixed heritage players: David James, Aaron Lennon, Glen Johnson and Ashley Cole making up the black mixed heritage players; and Emile Heskey, Ledley King, Shaun Wright-Phillips and Jermain Defoe making up the “full blacks” in the twenty-three-man squad. A total of nine black heritage players and, within that group, the majority being of black mixed heritage. Moreover, a high proportion of black mixed heritage players proliferates in most squads in the domestic professional leagues in England. Clearly this is a scenario for presuming improved racialised relations?

Overall, in line with the 2001 census data and later population reports from the Office for National Statistics (2009a), black mixed heritage persons as a cultural grouping grew from 2001–2007 at a rate of just under

5 per cent. On the contrary, the “white British” category has declined by 0.1 per cent over the same period. In short, the white population is declining, while black and other minority groups are experiencing a growth rate. This may have something to do with the increasing numbers of black mixed heritage footballers.

The higher representation of black mixed heritage players has occurred in tandem with the repercussions of the 1999 Macpherson Report.² Institutional racism was an acknowledged fact in the findings of the report, and no major institution in British society could escape the question: “what is being done to improve black and other cultural minority inclusion?” The full impact of the report may not yet be determined. I am aware that Doreen Lawrence is not fully pleased with the rate of improvement in terms of equal opportunities based on ‘race’ related phenomena. Given the fact that the murderers of her son, Stephen, are still free at large, it is understandable that she would write that ‘the world for me is still out of balance’ (Lawrence 2006: 217), due to the non-conviction of these racist killers.

Therefore, we exist in a world where the rate of black mixed heritage players may be increasing in the England squad, even throughout the professional leagues, yet racism continues to be a major problem in British society. Likewise, as this collection demonstrates, racism is still a problem throughout football. In this sense, academics and whoever else writes on the issue of black mixed heritage player representation ought not to come to the conclusion of a commonly, and erroneously, described idea of growing racial harmony via the black mixed heritage paradigm. Yes, black mixed heritage persons may well be a distinct feature in football, but that does not necessarily mean racialised progress is taking place in the broader society.

A study of Liverpool, Cardiff or other places in the UK with both long-standing and large black mixed heritage populations will show that it is a misplaced analysis to associate interracial offspring with racialised progress (Small 1991; Christian 2000, 2008; Brown 2005). Liverpool as an example is far from being the cosmopolitan city that was projected during its Capital of Culture year in 2008. Those that know the city well and whom have connections to the black experience would counter that it would have been more appropriate to call it the capital of *mono*-culture. There is certainly more truth than fiction in such a statement.

Yet in terms of football, Liverpool FC stands today as the most successful club in the nation. With regard to black presence in its teams, my friend Howard Gayle was the first Liverpool-born black player to play for Liverpool FC; he signed in 1977 and made his first team debut in 1980. Although he would only make five appearances for Liverpool’s first team, he did have a powerful impact in the 1981 European Cup semi-final second-leg game against Bayern Munich, running the German defence ragged for an hour and helping Liverpool secure victory.

However, Everton FC was the first team in the city of Liverpool to have a black mixed heritage player in their ranks—Mike Trebilcock, who

joined the club in 1965. He is famous for scoring two goals in Everton's 3–2 FA Cup Final victory over Sheffield Wednesday in 1966. However, erroneously, most often Cliff Marshall, who made his debut for Everton a decade later in 1975, is given the “honour” of being Everton's first black player. This, I believe, is due to Mike Trebilcock's ambiguous black mixed heritage, whereas Cliff Marshall has an unambiguous “full black” phenotype. The irony of blackness is actually embedded in this example of black player representation at Everton. Taken in context, it is an example of how racialised classifications are never safe in defining a person's ‘race’ or cultural background. One can be black of mixed heritage and look “white” in appearance (Leon Osman of the current Everton squad and Luke Young of Aston Villa are good examples). That stated, it is fair to assume that many “black” players play(ed) while passing for white. This is very possible and therefore one cannot be certain about who should be designated the “first” black person in any walk of life, never mind in the football world.

Due to the socially inferior status of people of colour in British society it is of no surprise that there would be some individuals of colour back in the 1960s and 1970s that would choose to “pass” as white, if they indeed could do so, due to having an ambiguous phenotype. Nevertheless most black persons of mixed heritage could not as there are many who actually have a “full black” appearance (e.g. Chelsea's Ashley Cole, Zat Knight of Bolton Wanderers or the former Manchester City player Trevor Sinclair).

Regardless of the history of black mixed heritage players in the ranks at Liverpool and Everton football clubs, racism was something always associated with them both (see also Williams, this volume). Apart from the usual verbal racism, a frequent hassle for players was dealing with bananas being thrown at them from the crowd. Even though the great John Barnes would eventually turn out to be a legend at Liverpool, at the outset of his career many Liverpool supporters detested the thought of him playing for them. This was often mirrored by opposition fans. One memorable chant heard at Anfield from the visiting Everton supporters, during a Littlewoods Cup clash, when John Barnes first joined Liverpool in 1987 was “Niggerpool, Niggerpool, Niggerpool” (repeated), along with “Everton are White!” (Hill 1989). In the same year there was also a famous incident at the Everton versus Liverpool league derby game played at Goodison Park when John Barnes nonchalantly flicked up a banana thrown from Everton supporters and back-heeled it to the sidelines—pure class from a class player. But what a price these players had to pay to play the beautiful game.

SOCIOLOGICAL REALITIES OF BLACK MIXED HERITAGE PLAYERS

What does the growth in black mixed heritage British footballers mean in a sociological sense? It can represent a number of things: first, as with all societies, that minority cultural groups are gradually being assimilated and

absorbed into the dominant group. Therefore, given that the black British presence in greater numbers goes back to the 1950s, we are in the third generation of black Britons, and the black mixed heritage group is growing due to the inevitable interracial unions occurring. Second, British football is not producing enough home-grown white players that are good enough to keep out these black mixed heritage players that are presently prominent in the current England squad. Third, the passage of time has inevitably relaxed certain aspects of racism. The end of apartheid in South Africa with the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994 and the election of the African-American President Barack Obama in the United States in 2008 have dealt a severe blow to white supremacy and its attempt to pathologise both blackness and black mixed heritage persons *per se*. Fourth, we cannot underestimate the power of hip-hop and associated urban youth culture in bringing young black, white and other cultural groups together. Collectively, these are issues that can attest the relative opening up of opportunity for black mixed heritage players to emerge in the twenty-first century as a force in British football.

The founding of the European Union and the Premier League in the early 1990s has not fully stamped out xenophobia, but obviously one should acknowledge that most clubs now have less incidences of it compared to the 1970s and 1980s. Regardless of the fact that racism continues, one cannot underestimate the impact of the influx of foreign players into the game in terms of improving racialised relations. For example, Arsenal FC in the twenty-first century could represent the United Nations as an example of international diversity. The foreign element may have something to do with why black mixed heritage players have gained in performance level and confidence. For example, they may have a feeling of not being the only minority in the team. I am sure, for example, that Ashley Cole, when playing for Arsenal in the early 2000s, must have gained personal confidence playing with the likes of Patrick Vieira, Thierry Henry and Gilberto Silva, knowing that they were also men of black heritage, yet foreign born too. More research will certainly emerge on this issue in due course as this is fundamental to notions of belonging, culture and identity. However, therein is the irony of racialised classification. Had, for example, Patrick Vieira, Thierry Henry and Gilberto Silva, along with Ashley Cole, been with Stephen Lawrence that fatal London night in April 1993, they too would have all been called “niggers” and attacked by those white racist thugs. Yet they represent different nations, heritages and social backgrounds.

What am I stating here? Simply that regardless of any “mixed” blackness in a person, most often in the social world the racist does not care if you are “full” or “mixed” in terms of racialised characteristics. The racist will account for all as being “niggers” and attack on that basis alone. As crude and banal as this sounds, it is “keeping it real” with the social reality of how racism operates on the ground. Yes, we can pontificate in our ivory tower academic world about the complexity of ‘race’ and racism(s) (Gilroy 1993b, 2000), but the average football fan in British society could not tell

whether Ashley Cole has a white parent in the mix of his family tree, nor would the average racist give a hoot. Take the incident on BBC radio in October 2009 when Mark Collett and Joseph Barber, the BNP's publicity director and manager of their Great White Records label, respectively, stated that Ashley Cole should not play for England as he was not "ethnically British", even though he was born and raised via a white mother in London, England (Davies 2009). At bottom, Ashley Cole would be deemed a "nigger" or a "wog" or a "coon" just as the "full black" footballers like Sol Campbell, Emile Heskey, Ledley King or Jermain Defoe would be. Racism is, after all, not particularly nuanced in its everyday manifestation and operation in the British football world, nor has it ever been. This historical social fact should be at the heart of any critical comprehension of contemporary racialised Britain.

The Enoch Powell syndrome of racism is embedded within the mindset of the everyday racist in British society (Christian 2005). In most liberal intellectual circles, Powell is regarded as a racist, still we should keep in mind that in 2002 the BBC made a programme titled the *100 Greatest Britons* and Powell came in at number 55 (BBC News 2002). Let us not be naïve here, British racism is deeply rooted in its folklore and as common to the British Isles as John Bull himself. So to suggest that a plethora of black mixed heritage footballers in the England World Cup squad in 2010 is an omen for good times and an end to racism in football is not necessarily correct.

Indeed, it is a postmodernist fantasy to correlate the growing black mixed heritage British population with racialised harmony. The numbers are too small for such a fantasy to hold. Moreover, it may well be useful to the academic who is "looking always for the novel" to suggest racialised progress is at hand. All it adds to is the "politics of difference" when in fact it is merely a shifting sameness. Racism should always be comprehended from the bottom up, from the vulgar to the nuanced.

The sociological reality remains that British society has endemic racism. Those talented black mixed heritage footballers making their way into the England national scene are there due to skill, speed and expertise in the craft of playing football to a very high standard. They have succeeded in their careers no doubt in spite of the racism found in British football. Often one may hear the footballers in interviews stating that "you just have to get on with it" when it comes to racist jibes being thrown at them while they play. The black mixed heritage professional footballer, just like the black mixed heritage professional in any walk of life, has to develop a mindset to withstand everyday assaults on their racialised being (King 2004a). That has been the case it seems since time immemorial.

CELEBRATING ONE'S BLACK MIXED HERITAGE

Although I am representing the reality of black mixed heritage being closely linked, if not almost the same, to the "full black" experience of

British footballers, this does not mean that a black mixed heritage player cannot or should not celebrate his multiracial identity. Of course individuals should define themselves how they want to, and many may prefer to lean toward the whiteness of their heritage and even detest the blackness. This is to be comprehended as personal preference over societal, yet while noting that there are also various social pressures that would influence one's predilections—both consciously and unconsciously. The contention here is that regardless of one's personal point of view, British society will deem a black mixed heritage person most often as “non-white” and therefore the person is automatically subjected to the various caprice forms of racism found in the broader society (Small 1992, Christian 2000).

Ashley Cole, for example, may well prefer a white girlfriend or wife, white cuisine and white culture in general, but he will still be booed at home and overseas while playing for England due to his black mixed heritage phenotype. That is, he cannot be white himself as the social reality of being black and/or mixed in a society that labels and categorises will not allow for that to happen. Regardless of what he may think about himself on a personal level, the odds are very strong that he will be subjected to the derogatory terms that any “full black” footballer would normally encounter from a racist opposition supporter. This has been proved many times from watching the England team and the booing of its black and black mixed heritage players at Wembley and overseas.

Consequently, the celebration of “both worlds” in terms of black mixed heritage persons has always been problematic in relation to it being a rather superficial exercise, limited to one's inner circle of family and friends. It is pretty obvious that most persons of black mixed heritage will hold a deep love for a parent that happens to be white, yet to suggest that having a white parent alone can mean having a stake in whiteness does not hold true with the historical and contemporary experiences of racism. So why is this “best of both worlds” promoted? Maybe because it is a way to bring racialised groups together? Yet often it can actually further divide. For example, it is common knowledge among transracial adoption agencies that children of black mixed heritage are over-populated in the foster care system (McVeigh 2008). Does this not give an indication that black mixed heritage persons are not particularly popular when born? Maybe, or it could be that the experience of some white parents of black mixed heritage children is so difficult that they have no choice but to give them up for adoption. This again leads us to the notion that racialised harmony is a myth when it comes to analysing the growth of black mixed heritage persons as being synonymous with racial progress in society. Somewhere in this espoused perspective lurks an insidious anomaly, especially when we consider the socio-economic plight of black communities throughout the UK as still largely suffering higher levels of unemployment and discrimination compared to their white counterparts.³

BLACKNESS AND MIXED HERITAGE IN THE UK IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

There is little doubt that over the next twenty-five years there will be greater phenotypical ambiguity among “mixed heritage” persons. Indeed it is likely that the dominant white ethnic groups will continue to absorb the “blackness” in much of the current black mixed population. For that reason, most likely, but with some exceptions, the children of black mixed heritage footballers who have white partners will no doubt be “lighter” and their blackness will not be as apparent. Let me be bold here and state that I am 100 per cent confident that the majority of the current members of the England squad who are black mixed heritage have a white partner or wife. The following question is rarely something openly discussed: “why do black and black mixed heritage footballers predominantly tend to choose a white partner?”. There is not space to fully explore this question here, but it is something that should be researched in order to gauge more readily the social psychology of black and black mixed heritage footballers when it comes to choosing a partner.⁴

The 2001 census data and later reports by the Office for National Statistics (2009a) reveal that growing interracial unions will inevitably increase the black mixed heritage population. Moreover, if this social fact is inevitably impacting on British football *visibly*, it is only likely to be short-lived due to the propensity of black and black mixed origin footballers to have partners outside of their racialised selves. Therefore future generations will be more racially ambiguous whereby the average person of black mixed heritage will probably not be even questioned as having black parentage. To put it another way, the phenotype of the future generations will eventually be “whitened” and therefore will not be an issue for obvious discussion. I would expect, for example players to look most often like a Luke Young of Aston Villa, rather than an Ashley Young of the same club. This of course is speculation but based on the knowledge of migration and assimilatory patterns.

CONCLUSION

I have endeavoured to situate this chapter within the context of my biography and comprehension of having had experience of this subject as a younger man in the 1980s in Liverpool. In addition, much of my research over a period of almost two decades has dealt with the topic of black mixed heritage actors and the concomitant racism that goes with such life experiences. One could put such a perspective within the realm of human agency and postmodernist discourse. That stated, there has been an effort to remain within the confines of academic etiquette and scholarship (Christian 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008).

Thinking about this theme in terms of historical specificity is important. We should not lose sight of how racialised Britain has also a long history of mongrelisation and mutation of different peoples and cultures. The major difference with the modern patterns of immigration is the addition of melanin into the British social fabric. Indeed “white ethnic groups” such as the white South Africans, white Zimbabweans and others assimilate pretty easily into the dominant white British culture. However, the black and South Asian cultures stand out more readily, and are therefore not as easy to assimilate into the majority culture. Crucially, Britain has never quite been “pure” in its origins. Many ancient Britons had little in common and they were certainly not a homogenous people.

It has only been since the 1500s that “colour” emerges as a human signifier and subsequent demarcation symbol for European racists down the centuries. There can be substantial understanding of racism in contemporary society by looking closely at the foibles of “race speak” in English and European (and North American) circles, especially during the height of the plantation economy era in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is here that the idea of “race mixing” or miscegenation is depicted as a biological anomaly. The hierarchy of ‘races’ leads to the stigma of mixed heritage persons, especially those of African and European ancestry.

The reality of black mixed heritage players in the professional realm of British football is an interesting topic to discuss sociologically, but not without it being firmly comprehended within the context of broader racialised relations in British society. If we consider the pattern of the black British experience since the 1950s it is not too surprising to find the game having black mixed heritage players. What may be a little intriguing, apart from the overall growth in black mixed heritage players in all the professional leagues, is that over the last five or more years there has been an emergence of a particularly strong England cohort: Ashley Cole, Rio Ferdinand, Theo Walcott, Ashley Young, Jermaine Jenas, David James, Glen Johnson, Gabriel Agbonlahor, Joleon Lescott and Aaron Lennon have made the presence of black mixed heritage footballers a rather salient feature of the senior England camp.

This can only benefit racialised relations in the nation. The more we see blackness represented in the centre of British society—and you cannot get much more central than the England football team—then there will be influence on society, especially its younger population who will undoubtedly find heroes in one or more of those black mixed heritage footballers. Yet, as stated earlier, this will not be a long-lasting scenario. Or rather, there is unlikely to be a time when blackness in Britain will be forever visible due to the low numbers of blacks and the trickle of newcomers from Britain’s former colonies. The doors to Britain are guarded by stringent immigration laws that state in coded language “whites only” may enter. With effectively a closed door policy toward people of colour, it is inevitable that the current black populace will continue to blend into the white

one as census data currently signify. There will eventually occur a “dying off” of the Windrush generation,⁵ and with that the second- and third-generations will inevitably lessen the tensions that existed between black and white communities.

The Macpherson Report (1999) will need to have its recommendations taken seriously in combating institutional racism. In terms of the British football managerial scene at the highest level, it is just Paul Ince, a black British man with a white wife and mixed heritage family, and the London-born former Irish international Chris Hughton, who have become Premier League managers. Both were sacked from their positions, Ince at Blackburn Rovers and Hughton at Newcastle United after six months and one season, respectively.⁶

Crucially, this chapter has merely scratched the surface of the issue concerning black mixed heritage footballers in Britain. It is a largely untapped research area that demands further attention as there are many more themes and perspectives that need to be considered that go beyond the scope covered here. This chapter is more concerned with the historical context of British racialised relations and how black mixed heritage footballers fit into that cultural history. It is hoped that what has been sketched out here can be taken further, critiqued and used for future research.

Certainly it can be confidently predicted that if current social trends persist, in Britain the black mixed heritage population will eventually be absorbed into the majority white cultural groups. This is not too bold an assumption when one considers the current popularity of interracial unions amongst the younger British population. Nevertheless, it would be facile to run with the notion that this means an end to racialised discrimination. Liverpool was described by the academic Stephen Small (1991) as a harbinger for other cities back in 1991, due to the longevity of a black mixed heritage population. More importantly, he explained the social reality of racism meted out to the “light-skinned blacks” of Liverpool. Given the history of racism in Britain, it is not too far out to suggest that being a “light-black” will not be too much dissimilar than being a “darker” shade of black. Black mixed heritage footballers, I am sure, know this now.

NOTES

1. The term “black mixed heritage” is preferred over “mixed race” as it refers to the reality of having African heritage as the dominant social determinant in one’s overall identity. Moreover, I am referring in this chapter to persons with African and European heritage in terms of the “mixed” aspect of one’s cultural make-up. The term is not perfect, but much of the nomenclature surrounding racialised classification is problematic. ‘Race’ itself is a socially constructed idea, and to speak of “mixed race” is to implicitly suggest that there are distinct racial types, and this is not the case in a biological sense.

2. Stephen Lawrence was a young black man who was murdered in London in April 1993 by five racist white youths, who are known to the police authorities but escaped justice and walk the streets as free citizens in British society. Stephen's parents, Doreen and Neville Lawrence, campaigned vigorously for justice, and eventually a public inquiry and subsequent report acknowledged police negligence and that institutional racism was rife in the British police force.
3. A BBC survey conducted in 2002 found that there are still varied forms of perceived and experienced discrimination in British society, regardless of the finding that Britons are now more "tolerant" when it comes to interracial couples (see Cowling 2002).
4. Future research certainly requires a qualitative approach that could consider a number of questions and the list here is clearly not exhaustive: a) why is there a propensity for black and black mixed heritage footballers to choose a white partner?; b) does the dominant white cultural sphere of football over time negate the minority cultural groups?; c) what are the personal and professional dynamics between black and black mixed heritage footballers? Do they view each other as "one" or do the latter consider themselves as coming from a different cultural group, i.e. encompassing "the best of both worlds"?; d) how do black mixed heritage players get treated within the professional world compared to "full black" players? Are there privileges associated with having a lighter complexion?
5. The Windrush generation relates to the 1948 ship that brought migrants to England from Jamaica. It is viewed symbolically as the outset of the influx of African-Caribbeans who came for work and a better life in Britain, which needed their labour to help rebuild the post-World War II economy.
6. There have been only two other black Premiership managers: Ruud Gullit and Jean Tigana.

10 ‘Tough Talk’, Muscular Islam and Football

Young British Pakistani Muslim Masculinities

Samaya Farooq

INTRODUCTION

This chapter builds on, and extends, my previous research which explored the manufacture of various “religious” masculinities amongst British-born Pakistani Muslim males living within the confines of Dar-ul-Islam—an all-male Islamic independent school situated in England (Farooq and Parker 2009a). Centralising pupil testimonies, the article explored key features of British Pakistani Muslim (“religious”) masculinities and the mobilisation of sport and religion in resolving tensions around the contested ‘self’. Findings outlined the extent to which physical education and school sports provided strategic sites in, and through, which young males could embody “idealised” Muslim masculinities and engender broader religious ideals (Farooq and Parker 2009b). Recognising the ‘fluidity, instability and situatedness of Pakistani Muslim masculinities’ (Dwyer *et al.* 2008: 117), in *this* chapter I explore boys’ and young men’s complex identity politics and examine their dynamic processes of selfhood un/re-making in, and through, the more specific arena of school-based football. As such, the chapter is not about football *per se*, but about how it is mobilised in young men’s identity work.

The present analysis highlights the extent to which the boys and young men not only talk “tough” to bolster their sense of tarnished masculinities, but also turn to football to engender (read: make real, visible, explicit) “tough talk” etiquettes of their valued masculinities on and off the football pitch. These processes are theorised as a ‘muscular Islam’, which begins for some as a philosophy of dissent against rising Islamophobia and contentions of crises around Muslim males. This is itself underpinned by an assertive identity politics that is both relational in context and responsive to global and local discourses pertaining to a ‘moral panic’. On the football pitch, it is further envisioned as an embodied (individualised) resistance whereby young Muslim males mobilise their physical and social bodies to thwart stereotypes and infiltrate the polemics of public and political discourses that deny such men integrity and dignity. At a time when Muslims are staunchly placed at the forefront of public and political debates about religious extremism, such discussions may provide the means from which

to ‘probe further’ (Werbner 2002: 270) in order to understand ‘subaltern (identity) politics’ (Birt 2009: 219). Overall the chapter delineates how collective expressions of resistance or opposition are simultaneously influenced by the socio-cultural and political specificities within which one lives.

PAKISTANI MUSLIM MASCULINITIES: THE MORAL PANIC

Antagonistic relationships between “Islam” and “the West” are rooted in historical, colonial legacies, yet the rising backlash against Muslims today is often directly attributed to the events of 9/11 and 7/7 (Modood 2009). In Britain, Muslims have been publicly condemned for pursuing a ‘global Jihadi agenda’ (Afshar *et al.* 2005: 62), with policy makers and politicians alike expressing their concerns at the presence of ‘inward-looking Muslim cultures and disaffected Muslim youth’ (Archer 2006: 57). In media and policy debates, Muslim males are often positioned as ‘dangerous social problems’ (ibid: 55) or stigmatised as ‘terrorist warriors’ (Salih 2004: 998). Pakistani Muslim masculinities, in particular, are pathologised as *militant* (Goodey 2001), *rebellious* (Macey 2002, 2007), *patriarchal* (Alexander 2004, Ramji 2007), *deviant* and *violent* (Hussain and Bagguley 2005). Louise Archer (2009: 75), for instance, acknowledges the ‘sensationalised dichotomous’ framing of Muslim masculinities that positions British Muslim young men in, and through, ‘homogenised and stereotypical representations’ as ‘dangerous and angry fundamentalists’ and the ‘archetypal “outsiders within”’. Indeed, reverberating images of “angry” or “fundamentalist” Muslim masculinity are often juxtaposed against stereotypes of “passive”, “controlled”, “oppressed” ‘Muslim femininity to further accentuate the notion of Muslim men as quintessentially problematic (Alexander 2000).

Against this backdrop, there is certainly evidence to suggest that one’s ethnic, cultural or religious heritage is viewed in the dominant imagination less as a ‘legitimate source of identity’ (Werbner 2004: 906) or ‘defiance and pride’ (Alexander 1996: 7) and more a source of attrition. Across Western Europe, for instance, Islamic affiliation serves almost as a point of demarcation defining the boundaries of ‘insider-hood’ and ‘outsider-hood’ (Salih 2004: 998). Perhaps unsurprisingly then, younger generations of Muslims are said to feel increasingly ‘mixed up . . . and confused’ from occupying a ‘contradictory location between conflicting “majority” and “minority” cultures and identities’ (Archer 2001: 82). “Everyday” Muslims, and men in particular, are often expected to explain their identities, to justify their allegiances, or to ‘take up either “anti” or “pro” positions’ in order to reclaim their status as moral citizens (ibid. 2009: 74). Since Islam and religious observance has become almost conflated with orthodox Muslimness, those who choose to display/observe their religious and/or cultural identities (by wearing mosque hats, *salwar kameez*, robes or headscarves) find the post-9/11 climate especially traumatic (see Hopkins 2007a, 2009).

MASCULINITIES IN THE RE-MAKING

Masculinity (as a specific gendered identity) can be understood as being emergent in action and always in process. Research within the sociology of sport has contributed to, and diversified from, these discussions highlighting how masculinity is both a social process and a set of material practices reflecting what males do with, or to, their bodies (Swain 2006). That is, boys and young men are viewed as embodied social agents who experience themselves simultaneously “in” and “as” their bodies (Lyon and Barbalet 1994: 54). The physical body is, in fact, believed to be an integral part of boys’ and young men’s self-identity, operating as an anchor for socially defined roles and behaviour (Synnott 1993, Shilling 2003). In fact, providing a medium through which the social self (habits and behaviours) can be inextricably connected with visible aspects of the physical self (bodily appearance), the physical body is believed to be a site of interaction, expression and appropriation for the social self (i.e. the psyche) (Kirk 2002).

The work of cultural theorists and post-colonial writers facilitates an unpacking of the essentialism surrounding the “Muslim male” subject. In particular, the assertion that migrant selfhoods are negotiated in relation to one’s multiple and often conflicting authenticities, histories and identities is useful (Bhatia 2002). Under this premise, it is reasonable to assume that Muslim males may, for instance, negotiate and perform the gendered, racialised and religious aspects of their overall “under-classed” identities in, and through, a range of discourses relating to what it means to be male, Muslim, a “foreigner” and so on (Hopkins 2007b, 2007c). That is, performing or engendering a Muslim masculinity is said to be constituted by ‘flow across texts and contexts’, constructing and performing identity work that sustains or de-stabilises hegemonic discourses (Wetherell and Edley 1998: 165, see also Hopkins 2009). Yet, in as much as an outward environment might influence one’s selfhood, one should not overlook how the ‘positionalities, responsibilities, politics and ethics’ of individual subjects may also shape their overall identity work (Brah and Phoenix 2004: 84). Hence, Muslim masculinity should be understood as being ‘produced interactionally’ and ‘relationally’ in, and through, the discourses from which one embeds their identity politics, or at least constructs or negotiates their understanding of who they are or should be (Anthias 2001: 633).

MUSCULAR ISLAM: SPORT, ISLAM AND MUSLIM MASCULINITIES

Although discussions of sport, Islam and Pakistani Muslim masculinities are generally limited (c.f. Farooq and Parker 2009a, 2009b), the concept of ‘muscular Islam’ was first used by Nauright (1997) in his exploration of masculinity and ‘Coloured’ rugby in Cape Town, South Africa. Exposing how ‘Coloured’ men utilised rugby to bolster their subordinate position

during apartheid, his work alludes to the important roles of sport and religion in restructuring the contours of demoralised masculinities. Nauright (ibid: 189–90) conveys how ‘Coloured rugby’ was used to embody etiquettes associated with the Islamic faith (such as a “culture of discipline” that allowed for ‘inferior, passive’ men to exert ‘significant violence’ [read: power]). This notion is, of course, inherently tied to the notion of ‘muscular Christianity’—an ideology known for embodying the pedagogy and ideals of Christian Socialists who sought to reconfigure troubled Christian masculinities amongst the Victorian bourgeoisie (Mangan 2001, 2006). Central to this philosophy was a privileging of physical and moral strength, courage and aggression above sentimentality, reflection and gentility in men (Watson *et al.* 2005, Kidd 2006). That is, hegemonic interpretations of “being Christian” were conflated with hegemonic discourses pertaining to being young men (MacAloon 2006). Images of a muscular Jesus and stories celebrating the physical strength and moral purity of Moses, John and Paul were crafted with a view that young Christian men would internalise ‘being good disciples of God’, by transforming their ‘weak bodies’ into ‘fitting temples for God’s Holy Spirit’ (Garnham 2001: 401). Organised sport played an instrumental role in the crafting of these new forms of manliness: physical activity was imagined as a religious duty so that participation itself came to engender ‘glorifying and consecrating’ one’s body in God’s service (Putney 2001: 12, see also N. Watson 2007). Against this backdrop, sport offered those men (who were publicly codified as inferior and politically appropriated as the under-class) a real, material space from which to physically challenge aspects of their subordinate status. Religion not only legitimised the need to re-craft problematised masculinities, but in effect carved out the contours of that reconstruction (i.e. determined the form that “new masculinities” should take).

CONTEXTS AND METHODS

The following data discussed in this chapter were generated during the spring and summer of the 2005/2006 school year at Dar-ul-Islam, an all-male Islamic independent school situated in the West Midlands of England.¹ Located on the outskirts of one of the UK’s most deprived urban areas, Dar-ul-Islam serves a largely Sunni Muslim clientele of predominantly Pakistani origin. At the time of the fieldwork, the school had 1,300 pupils on roll, aged between 11–23 years. Like many British Muslim schools, Dar-ul-Islam seeks to provide a secure and stable learning environment alongside a conventional Islamic ethos (Sarwar 1994). Although the school delivers the core National Curriculum subjects across the 11–16 age range, after age 16 Islamic education assumes a core feature of schooling. Arabic lessons, Qur’anic classes and teachings of the *Shar’iah* and *Hadith* took place every day, including weekends, the central purpose of which was to prepare

pupils both for life here on earth (*Dunya*) and after death (*Akirah*). The purpose of this is to equip pupils to follow the 'path of the Right (*al-Haqq*) and the Light (*an-Nur*)' and abhor 'ignorance (*al-jabiliyyah*) and darkness (*az-zulumat*)' (Sarwar 2001: 5).

The empirical data presented are taken from interviews conducted with 16 British born Pakistani Muslim males aged between 14–19 years, all of whom were boarders at the school and had attended for between 3–6 years. Gaining access to the school proved challenging with both teachers and parents concerned about the welfare of pupils. In the first instance, against the backdrop of 9/11 and the more recent events of 7/7, police raids on Islamic schools and *madrasas* that had preceded the data collection phase had left many parents suspicious of researchers, despite me being Muslim. Following various negotiations with the school, teachers and parents, access was granted. Letters outlining the research aims (including consent forms) were distributed to a random sample of fifty families whose sons had been boarding at the school for more than three years. In total, sixteen pupils volunteered to participate in the study. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews were utilised to explore the day-to-day lives of pupils. Despite me being a female interviewing males, shared religious and ethnic/racial identities coupled with the similarities in language, cultural belief systems and the lived experiences of difference facilitated the data collection process. As fundamental parts of social structures, social relations and consciousness, these elements reinforced the stance of 'interviewer as friend' and 'insider' as opposed to an impersonal professional (Reinharz 1992), enabling me to better achieve rapport and closeness with participants. This is exemplified by the fact that all participants referred to me as "sister". The need for reflexivity was recognised, hence vigilance in addressing the participants' personal adversity and developing an empathetic understanding of their commitments/beliefs were taken into consideration (see Farooq and Parker 2009a for further discussion on the methodology involved in this study).

In the following discussion, I begin with an analysis of the boys' and young men's complex identity politics to contextualise how they make sense of their unsettled selfhoods in post-9/11 Britain. Such a focus is essential given that I am focusing on the identities of a social group who are frequently misrepresented in dominant discourses. Centralising *their* voices in understanding how they make sense of their identities provides a means to unpack and reconstruct essentialised knowledge about the "Muslim male" subject, especially as he relates to "orthodox" Muslims. It is anticipated that this can in turn facilitate social researchers to move beyond discriminatory attitudes and 'representational violence' against such individuals (Archer 2009: 75). Following this discussion of boys' and young men's self-negotiations, I then centralise key aspects of their relationships with school-based football participation and their overall identity work within this space.

MORAL PANICS, IDENTITY POLITICS AND YOUNG MUSLIM MEN

During interview discussions, it was clear that pupils' senses of self were interplayed, indeed conflated, with personal and political discourses relating to what the "Muslim male" subject represented. Certainly, their testimonies alluded to the various ways in which their religious observance and identities as Muslim males were understood and the messages they conveyed to different audiences. That is, the boys' and young men's self-negotiations of *who they were* both as males and as Muslims oscillated in-between polarised discourses: namely, those within the school that privileged Islam as a justifiable and reasonable lifestyle and identity versus those publicly and politically constructed discourses which they identified as vilifying their religious affiliations with Islam.

For instance, on the one hand, pupil testimonies exposed the centrality of Islamic religion, law and culture in shaping their day-to-day experiences and realities as believers. A strong spiritual connection with God permeated their self-consciousness and many internalised Islamic pedagogy taught within the school as legitimate and immutable. Ramzan, for example, envisioned Islam at Dar-ul-Islam as a 'way of life' facilitating in turn the development of idealised characteristics, etiquettes and mannerisms deemed integral to boys' and young men's schooling and nurturing the construction of a valued "Islamic masculinity". This became clearer through Naveed's self-identification as a Muslim, which was mapped around what appeared to be a fixed set of beliefs pertaining to the superior principles of Islam. He stated that:

we're taught to be servants to God . . . Being a Muslim here isn't like . . . just kind of saying, "I'm a Muslim", it's more about how you follow, what you believe, what you identify yourself as . . . not everyone who's born into Islam is a proper Muslim, you have to work for it . . . you give your life to worshipping God, you pray . . . you [work to become] closer to God, [you fight to] keep *Shaitan* (Satan) out of your heart [and] your head.

Implicit in Naveed's testimony is the extent to which Islam as engendered within Dar-ul-Islam entailed unquestionable servitude to God. Following this kind of Islam encompassed the "Right Path" for Naveed, since he believed it always kept him 'close to God' and facilitated in turn his chance of salvation in the *Akirah* (life after death). Perhaps because of this view, Naveed also implied that an identity recognisable as a "proper Muslim" had to be actively worked for through remembrance of God, fighting *Iblis* (Satan) and resisting sin. That is, being a "proper Muslim" was about appropriating Muslim identity politics in the day-to-day aspects of one's existence, as opposed to assigning an arbitrary generic label of "Muslim". Fundamentally it was also about resistance (in this case to temptations) and discipline (to God's will).

Indeed, a number of pupils alluded to this point, with Jameel asserting that "proper Muslims" were those individuals who were always engaged in servitude through struggle with their own self to stay on the right path. Within the school site, pupils' identity politics thus manifested around the notion of a *Mujahidin*—someone who actively 'struggles with himself', and exerts himself not only for the sake of God but also to 'submit himself to God' (Khan 2002: 14). Put simply, a *Mujahidin* devotes his/her life to fulfilling the duties of *jihad*. Contrary to popular understandings, this does not entail a combative fight against non-believers, but comprises an everyday struggle against all aspects of one's life that might otherwise prevent a believing Muslim from observing the will of Allah.²

Pupils' sense of struggle to construct an identity as a "proper Muslim" did not, however, manifest solely around internalising the pedagogic teachings of Islam within Dar-ul-Islam. They were certainly distressed about the extent to which discourses of political Islamism and terrorism had been conflated with an "authentic" Islamic identity. Bilal, for instance, was concerned about how the politics, ethics and sensibilities of an "Islamist masculinity" had come to be publicly confused with what he identified to be a *genuine* "Muslim masculinity". The difference between the two identities, he argued, was that the former was increasingly rooted in, for instance, taking aim at an 'imperialist West' and rising Islamophobia, whereas the latter was centred on mobilising Islam as a valid source of one's selfhood in order to make him a 'better person'.

Yet, despite their concern about the largely negative depiction of Muslim males, and contrary to previous research, the young men did not appear to have developed a self-consciousness that was plagued with resentment against a dominant culture that frequently trivialised their existence (see e.g. Moghissi 2003). Nor did they construct, or indeed narrate, an understanding of themselves through a victimhood mentality. Rather they took the onus in snubbing discourses pertaining to an anachronistic and problematic Islam using the interview process to carve out a firm distance between their own religious affiliations (with an internalised, valued Islamic rhetoric) and the 'misguided' (as Ramzan put it) beliefs of men possessing terrorist tendencies. Mohammad, for instance, associated the brutality of 9/11 and 7/7 not with an Islam that he knew or embodied, but with 'a contradiction between the ideals' embedded in a 'true Islam' and those beliefs held by 'some men claiming to follow Islam'. In so doing he implied that social, cultural and political anarchy arose when certain Muslims had lost their way and became 'misguided' from a 'true Islam'. They were thus viewed as 'not really Muslim' (Abdul) or even less 'proper Muslims' (Shazad). Speaking of this, Amir stated that:

[the] majority of young men who call themselves Muslim are not even proper Muslims . . . They think wearing a mosque hat or keeping a beard makes them Muslim . . . but they're so lost . . . Islam isn't in here

(patting his chest), *Iblis* is . . . That's the real crisis isn't it, with yourself, against *Iblis*? He's the (real) enemy.

Like Amir, Usman also stipulated that a 'true Islam' offered him a pathway to remain 'good' and sincere 'in the heart', poignantly reflecting perhaps how both boys and young men viewed a transgression or diversion away from Islam as messing up young men's senses of self as believing, or "proper", Muslims (see Archer 2001, Hopkins 2007b).

Boys' and young men's frustrations thus stemmed not necessarily from an inner conflict regarding their self but from being essentialised as (potential) "home-grown terrorists" simply because they chose to observe their religious sensibilities more stringently (Mahboob). For Amir, asserting such distance was important. It helped him to differentiate between what he understood to be his own legitimate Islamic identity (as a controlled and disciplined Muslim able to fight off evil) and those in crisis who he believed were only interested in wearing Islam on the exterior (as opposed to internalising it in their psyche, or even in their heart). For Mohammad, it enabled him to separate an understanding of himself from 'failing Muslims' (read: those in conflict, in confusion, in crisis).

These testimonies reveal the extent to which the interview process provided ample opportunity for boys and young men to establish themselves as "spokespersons" for matters relating to "proper Muslims" (Archer 2006: 67). This is reflected in how they used these discussions to (re)define themselves outside of derogatory discourses, to oppose the 'sharp bifurcation of British Muslims into loyal moderates and disloyal radicals' (Birt 2009: 223) and to centralise alternative (and, in this case, oppositional) discourses from what they were taught to embed and situate their sensibilities and identities as "true" Muslim males. *Rejection* and *distancing* were thus important strategies encompassing both an act of resistance and the projection of a more assertive Muslim identity politics. Within the parameters of this research, it functioned as "tough talk" that bolstered their kudos at a time when many claimed to feel under personal attack and criticism (Archer 2006). In Louise Archer's (ibid.) research on Muslim adolescents in Western Europe, "tough talking" enabled young men to stand up for themselves by reacting against white racism. Hence even when Islamophobia and external negative discourses were entangled with my participants' emotions and ethics as young Muslim males, "tough talking" manifested around reclaiming their integrity, dignity and masculinity as "real" Muslims whilst simultaneously feeling increasingly powerless, marginalised and excluded as nothing more than, for instance, 'violent fundamentalists' (Imran).

It was indicative therefore of boys' and young men's 'ongoing search for control' over an Islam that shaped the contours of their very existence and underpinned their sense of self (Alexander 1996: 191). Under this premise, their identity politics were rooted in constructing reactive and proactive selfhoods or, at least, "tough" performances of these in the interviews.

This is what I conceptualise as the origins of muscular Islam within the confines of Dar-ul-Islam. The reference to "muscular" here is metaphorical of the boys' and young men's gutsy (read: "tough") attempts to both oppose derogatory meanings which demoralise their gendered religious selfhoods and restructure the aesthetics of an Islam crafted in and through a climate of fear. Although during the interviews this muscular Islam (as "tough talk") entailed a re-imagining of Muslim men as vocal and politically attuned citizens, on the school football pitch it was engendered; that is, made real, visible and explicit.

BODY POLITICS, MUSCULAR ISLAM AND FOOTBALL

Many of the boys and young men featured in this study viewed participation in football as both cathartic and conducive to regaining a sense of rationality in their lives. Imran reasoned that after 'a hard game of footy . . . [his] mind and body [felt] refreshed' because he was able to get rid of (his) bad feelings'. This, in turn, enabled him to focus more on God. Whilst this was also an important aspect for many others, Jameel reasoned that it was not necessarily the 'violent aspect of sport' that led him to regard it as a lifestyle priority, but the 'importance of following rules'. He inadvertently stumbled across this point, stating that:

the rules of sport are all about controlling yourself . . . controlling, disciplining your *nafs* (the psyche or negative urges) as opposed to letting it control you by getting angry and punching or kicking someone . . . this is important if we wanna be good Muslim men, 'cos Allah rewards discipline.

Jameel's comments implied that sport, and in this case football, had the potential to control and regulate his body, enabling him to tame or curb his negative tendencies, as opposed to releasing them in less appropriate ways. On the football pitch, he was better able to restrain his physical body from exerting aggression and violence because the rules of the game pushed him to always consider alternatives to this type of conduct (such as goal setting, task mastery and learning to control his anger). In turn, he reasoned that immersion into rule-bound activities not only gave him 'peace of mind', but also instilled 'peace in [his] soul'.

Although football provided both Imran and Jameel with a physical and social space through which to strengthen their spiritual connection with God, for Jameel it also provided an ideal means through which he could engender etiquettes associated with a more valued identity. Yet whilst Jameel sought to be more controlled and disciplined because he believed these characteristics would accrue him reward, the underlying rationale for cultivating self-control was itself ultimately tied to reclaiming power over

his tarnished sense of gendered and religious selfhood. This desire became explicit when he stated that he wanted to become a “good” Muslim man, yet he did not identify participation in football as awarding him this status. Instead, he viewed football as a vehicle through which he could actively and consciously become “good” (read: better), in part because it was a disciplined and rule-bound activity. He explained:

doing a sport . . . sort of gets you used to a routine so that eventually you become that routine . . . So if . . . we need to be strong and disciplined to show everyone that we’re not savages, we have to . . . show that we are everything it means to be disciplined.

Of course, embedded in Jameel’s testimony is the view that sport and physical exercise of any kind are simply mechanisms that facilitate the production of strong disciplined physical bodies (perhaps because he believed it took a controlled and disciplined regimen to build and construct such a body). What Jameel’s body image said about him (and equally what it did not) certainly mattered to his own sense of self and, more fundamentally, to his peace of mind as a young Muslim man. His body politics, that is the relationship fostered between his identity, physical body and bodily image, clearly manifested around wanting to reshape his aesthetic religious masculinity. Participation in football, it seems, better enabled him to achieve this. On the one hand it allowed him to adjust himself in relation to a climate of fear and suspicion towards Muslim men. His muscular Islam on the football pitch was thus not necessarily about constructing a muscular body, but more about performing an embodied act of resistance that was itself orchestrated to bolster his character and re-structure the public messages that were conveyed about him. This was at every step tied to what he believed was acceptable in Islam, conveying therefore how his Islamic self-consciousness dictated the contours of his re-imagined selfhood.

Against this backdrop, football was thus an opportunity for some boys and young men to physically and visibly undo public claims that they were, for instance, nothing more than ‘savages’ (Jameel). With many seeking to actively reconstruct their selfhoods in more positive ways, the football pitch itself became a space where boys and young men could comfortably mobilise their assertive identity politics. That is, they could literally appropriate their muscular Islamic ethos by engendering the responsive Islam they passionately communicated to me in the interviews. For those like Imran and Jameel, this was reflected in how football provided a space within which they could make real and exhibit bodies that exuded control and discipline. For Jameel at least, this better equipped him with a novel form of self-expression; one that he believed enabled him to fashion a more desirable, and what he perceived to be a socially acceptable, form of masculinity (read: ‘less of a brute and savage . . . and more of a calm collected brother’). Although this was, in part, about embodying a reactive and proactive

response, which could salvage boys' and young men's (ruined) integrity, it did also serve to offset their own underlying sense of powerlessness because of their overall under-classed status.³ Nevertheless I was curious as to why they valued football as opposed to other forms of sport which many would claim are perhaps more well-suited to engendering self-discipline.

“KEEPING IT SAFE”: “TOUGH TALK”, MUSCULAR ISLAM AND FOOTBALL

Football was a valued part of Dar-ul-Islam's school curriculum. A range of physical activities and organised sports were emphasised during physical education (such as hockey, basketball and cricket), yet football, it seemed, was afforded high priority. Whilst many of the boys and young men unquestionably accepted football's place in their school life, it was Ali who invested considerable time and effort pondering over why a school so infused with Islam did not offer physical activities that he perceived to be more connected to Islamic history. During the interview, for instance, he tried to reason why, in his opinion, football was prioritised over and above those sports encouraged by the Prophet (such as archery, wrestling and swimming). He stated that:

I sometimes wonder why we do football instead of, say, activities that our Prophet or [his companions] liked . . . because we're always told to look to them for inspiration on how to live our life . . . but then it always hits me . . . that it's safe . . . for . . . us bearded men to play football [rather than], like, archery, do you get what I mean?

Replying that I did not fully understand what Ali meant, I encouraged him to explain why he reconciled football as 'safe'. It was the hesitancy with which Ali constructed his particular response and the almost hushed tone of his voice that struck me. At first he reluctantly drew upon narratives reflecting the Prophet's love for activities such as running, horse riding, archery and wrestling. He then reasoned that in some cases these pursuits were adopted to prepare Muslim men physically and mentally for various wars and battles. Whilst sport has always been, and continues to be, an important vehicle in training soldiers for war across the world, Ali's mumbled references to the use of sport to train Muslims to fight in historical battles against their aggressors uncovered his sense of paranoia. In part this was fuelled by the fact that some scholars have indeed adopted these contextual narratives as legitimate indicators for Muslims to partake in sport in order to prepare for warfare (see Ismail 1999, Walseth and Fasting 2003).

Further support for this premise has been drawn from an *ayat* which many claim alludes to Allah's wish to have strong Muslims who are ready to fight for their religion: "Against them make ready all your strength to the

utmost of your power” (Sura 8: 60). Although the Qur’anic text itself provides neither an explicitly “anti” nor “pro” sport stance, and this verse is the subject of protracted controversy,⁴ the mere presence of such discourses in the public domain unsettled Ali, especially in terms of his sense of religious authenticity. There was no denying that the post-9/11 climate had certainly contributed to his fears, causing him to experience what Archer (2009) calls a ‘forced telling of the self’. This was perhaps more pronounced because his body occupied a space that was openly depicted in negative ways. I refer here to the prejudices against Muslim-run schools; a point confirmed by Ali’s comment that ‘studying in an Islamic school is enough to get you arrested these days’.

Hence, whilst Ali justified his acceptance of Islam on the one hand, he simultaneously called for a more pragmatic contextual appropriation of some of its principles in the here and now of his life. Selecting football instead of archery was, for him, but one example of adjusting one’s approach to Islam. Indeed, its implementation within the school curriculum suggested to Ali how the school-based pedagogy was influenced by the contemporary political context. Everything, he argued, was carefully scrutinised and analysed so as to protect young believing Muslims from victimisation as ‘suspicious terrorists’. Teachers were described as assessing both the benefits and risks which could befall on the school and its pupils should ‘something dodgy, like archery or wrestling’ be offered as a school sport. Ramzan also alluded to this point, stating that:

This is a school . . . with a timetable and rules like any other . . . but it’s not just any other school, is it? It’s an Islamic school and one for boys at that . . . it’s hard being here, full stop. You throw bad boy activities like archery in here and God only knows what would happen!

Implicit in both Ali and Ramzan’s testimonies is how the moral panic around Muslims had tarnished the aesthetics of Islam and Muslim masculine identities. Indeed it is against this backdrop of fear and panic that Ali came to envisage football as being a focal point in the curriculum. He reasoned that it was strategically weaved into the curriculum because it was neutral. Here he alluded to the extent to which football, despite being mobilised to promote nationalisms of varying kinds and evoking divided allegiances, continues to be regarded as the “beautiful game”. It is commercialised and commodified as bringing people together and, for Ali, it was perhaps this particular image of the game that made him identify it as more attractive and appealing as a “safe” space within which boys and young men could renegotiate and reaffirm the aesthetics of their religious affiliations.

For some, participation in football promoted a sense of belonging, not necessarily to Britain *as home* (as is often assumed), but to Britain *as trustable citizens*. That is, football enabled some boys and young men to feel more like ‘normal people’ because they were doing ‘what everyone else

does', as opposed to always 'being different' (Shazad). Although participation in football was about moving beyond an outsider status, it was nevertheless tied to accruing self-respect for their demoralised masculinities. In these instances boys' and young men's muscular Islamic ethos was much less about making a stand against rising scepticism towards Muslims (i.e. the gutsy approach to re-imagining masculinity), and more about 'just fitting in' and 'getting on with life' (Mahboob).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has documented the complex identity politics of young Muslim males living within the confines of Dar-ul-Islam and examined the dynamic processes of selfhood un/re-making in, and through, school-based football. To begin with, I provided a contextual overview of the boys and young men featured in this study and the various ways in which they made sense of their selfhoods amidst the unsettling conditions of post-9/11 and 7/7 Britain. This focus exposed the extent to which their understandings of *who they were*, both as males and as Muslims, were conflated with personal and political discourses relating to what the "Muslim male" subject represented. Yet, despite their self-negotiations oscillating in-between school-based discourses (privileging Islam as a legitimate source of identity) and mediated discourses (which frequently vilified Muslim religious affiliation), they found sanctuary in Islam. The chapter thus detailed boys' and young men's courage to strengthen their religious identification (as "proper Muslims") at a time when being Muslim continues to be seen as problematic within dominant discourses. On the whole, this appeared to be a relational process whereby the participants were engaged in a 'constant, delicate negotiation' between their marginalised and subordinate status in Britain, and as Muslims possessing valued morals, principles and ethics (Archer 2001: 83). By privileging the latter status in their own self-identifications, the boys and young men used their religious affiliations to challenge and oppose derogatory representations of Muslims. Hence the processes of un/re-making aspects of racialised, religious and (under)classed masculinities (otherwise popularly codified as problematic) manifested themselves as a self defensive mechanism against racisms, powerlessness and marginalisation (see e.g. Ross 1998).

Within the interview process this strategy surfaced as a kind of "tough talk", centred on breaking clichés of a demonised Muslim male existence. It was compounded by an assertive identity politics rooted in becoming more vocal and politicised, as well as becoming responsive and reactive to local and global issues (as opposed to remaining neutral, silent citizens). Conceptualising this self-defensive "tough talk" as a kind of 'muscular Islam', I revealed the extent to which this type of self-narration (or performance of self) was operationalised as an 'articulated response to structural

inequality (by) subverting dominant definitions of power and control' (Alexander 1996: 137). Hence for some, a "tough talking" muscular Islam entailed a philosophy of dissent which many believed could both facilitate the construction of alternative discourses pertaining to the "Muslim male" subject and assist the reconfiguring of existing ones. In addition to bolstering (toughening up) their sense of tarnished masculinities, it also led many to believe that it could restructure both the aesthetics of Islam and representations of boys' and young men's gendered and religious selfhoods.

Football played a central role in these overall processes of self-(re)configuration, yet it was clear that different individuals used this space in different ways (i.e. they individualised muscular Islam, making it *their own*). For some, it provided an environment deemed more conducive towards enabling them to contingently (re)-negotiate such identities. That is, football was a site through which they could actively assume, and consciously embody, principles of their muscular Islamic ethos. Boys and young men like Jameel and Imran, for instance, valued football as a heuristic tool through which they could engender idealised Islamic etiquette (discipline, self-control, rationality and so on). Indeed the strategic use of their bodies conveyed how "tough talk" became much more of an embodied act. It was at once an act of resistance enacted on the football pitch and an inscription of Islamic etiquette onto the body. It thus made real and visible some aspects of their valued masculinities, which some claimed would thwart stereotypes that deny such men integrity and dignity as "moral" people. As a form of bettering the physical self, muscular Islam on the football pitch was not necessarily a process of self-aggrandisement (it was not really about building a muscular physique), but rather a means to an end; that being character-development, ethics, morals and devotion to God.

Meanwhile, for others, including Mahboob and Ali, football was essential to their muscular Islam because it was deemed to be a "safe" physical and social space within which they could adjust, regulate and normalise their religious masculinities. For them it was about fitting in as normal citizens providing in turn a discourse for 'solidarity and identification' (Hall 1992b: 255), and an agenda for social and political resistance (Saeed *et al.* 1999). The tough talking muscular Islam, underpinned by a far more assertive British Muslim identity politics, transpired into a movement that was both responsive and attuned to global and local discourses of moral panic and the "Islamic peril". Of course, by dedicating a significant amount of time to the study of Islam and by prioritising physical education and sport, Dar-ul-Islam itself influenced boys' and young men's attempts to reconfigure their religious selfhoods. It authoritatively and selectively regulated the cultural resources available to its pupils and, in turn, necessarily shaped the contours of their identities. Further in-depth analyses of such institutions and their pupils may facilitate nuanced discussions about how Muslim males utilise Islam and sport in their identity work, broadening the contexts within which Muslim masculinities can be framed.

NOTES

1. The names of the school and the pupils in this research are all pseudonyms.
2. A *Mujahidin's jihad* may, for instance, relate to a struggle to resist selfish or ego-driven desires to serve only one's interests in order to better him/herself. It might also be a fight to resist temptations or obstacles that thwart their worship, or entail struggling against jealousy or idle gossip.
3. I describe boys' and young men's assertive identity politics as being a simultaneously "reactive" and "proactive" response because we witness them reacting against hegemonic discourses about them as "terrorists", whilst also mobilising a self-consciousness that allows them to do something about their demonised position. It is the latter response which I describe as being proactive since boys are not merely passive victims, but active agents in their lives.
4. Khan (2002) alludes to the extent to which the processes of translating this verse from Arabic into English have resulted in different interpreters inserting what they believe constitute acceptable examples to contextualise its meaning and application in contemporary society. This is evident in Al-Hilali's translation of the Holy Qur'an where the exact verse reads: "And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war (*tanks, planes, missiles, artillery, etc.*) to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy" (emphasis in original). For believing Muslims who accept that an "authentic Islam" (as revealed by God) does exist, not only is this "authentic" message lost through translation and interpretation, but the verse itself becomes distorted by a single person's assumption of what God acknowledges as legitimate servitude.

The Cultural Politics of Fandom

11 The Limits to Cosmopolitanism

English Football Fans at Euro 2008

Peter Millward

INTRODUCTION

It is the evening of 21 November 2007 and the much-maligned England football team coach, Steve McClaren, is standing under his now infamous blue and red umbrella, watching his team lose by three goals to two against Croatia in front of a capacity crowd at Wembley Stadium. I am not at the stadium but sitting at home watching the match on television as the commentary retreads lines about “more years of hurt” and the England football team’s underperforming “golden generation”. As a consequence of this defeat, England has failed to qualify for the following summer’s European Championships (Euro ‘08).

Yet one country’s disappointment presents a researcher’s opportunity, and as I sat watching the television my mind turned toward asking myself the following questions: what type of English football fan might travel across to Switzerland and Austria (where the Euro tournament was held) to partake in the tournament? What might be their reasons for being there? Despite the English media regularly presenting the English national team as either the best or the worst football team in the world, the truth is that they have very rarely (if ever) been either: the last tournament England had previously failed to qualify for was the 1994 World Cup (held in the United States), although they also failed to qualify for the 1984 European Championships. This meant that researching English fans in Switzerland and Austria presented an unusual opportunity to gain insights into those English football fans that would travel to the host countries during the tournament. This chapter provides an analysis of these insights, positioning them within frames of ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘everyday’ xenophobic attitudes amongst fans.

THE UEFA EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The UEFA European Championships is a quad-annual tournament, open to all of the confederation’s member countries. It was first held in France in 1960. Since then, there have been thirteen championships, including the Euro ‘08 finals. The first European Championships, then called the European Nations Cup, involved just four finalists after only seventeen countries

entered the qualifying rounds. For the 1968 tournament, the finals of which were held in Italy, the competition was rebranded. The change in name was introduced because the qualifying rounds saw preliminary leagues replace the previous “knock-out” format. Subsequently, Euro ’80 saw the finals expanded from four to eight teams, whilst Euro ’96, hosted by England, elongated the format by allowing the entrance of a further eight teams.

One of the competition’s most interesting stories emerged at Euro ’92 (held in Sweden), when Yugoslavia were refused entry to the finals, despite winning their qualifying group, on account of the civil war which was taking place. Instead, group runners-up Denmark were awarded qualification a few weeks before the tournament began. Despite this, Denmark caused a major surprise by defeating a newly unified German team (West Germany were also current FIFA World Cup champions) in the final to lift the trophy. Since inception, when the tournament was threatened with closure due to a lack of international interest, it has become increasingly prestigious, as evidenced by Giulianotti’s (2004) claim that Euro ’04 winners Greece gained £13 million prize money.

Sociological issues which have emerged in relation to the Euros largely focus upon both playful and carnivalesque expressions of national identity (see, for instance, Giulianotti 1994, 1995a; Bradley 2002, 2003; Fox 2006), and elements of hooligan behaviour, which some scholars have argued to be exaggerated—or even invented—by the media during the tournament (see, for instance, Weed 2001, Crabbe 2003, Stott and Adang 2004, Poulton 2005). At the heart of such research findings are supporter feelings of patriotism and, arguably, jingoism, which have become a distinctive feature of international sports tournaments.¹ This ought not to be surprising given that Hobsbawm (1992: 143) reasons that sports teams can make an ‘imagined community of millions . . . [seem] more real as a team of eleven named people’. However, England’s failure to qualify presented a research opportunity of a different type: to explore the reasons for English fans to travel to Austria and Switzerland, despite England’s absence, and to establish whether they can be characterised as ‘cosmopolitans’.

‘COSMOPOLITANISM’

‘Cosmopolitanism’ is arguably one of the most slippery terms in the social sciences (recognised by Hannerz 1990; Zolo 1997; Calhoun 2003; Delanty 2003, 2006; Fine 2007). However, it seems as if there are at least two distinct varieties of the cosmopolitan condition. These need to be differentiated. First, there are those who see cosmopolitan rights as principally located in the cultural sphere, such as football and other *everyday* practices.² The key concerns for this group include processes and experiences of cultural diversity, hybridisation and communication within and between national societies. Second, there are the Kantian cosmopolitans, who have

greater concerns with the way legal and political ideals have developed beyond the boundaries of the nation-state.³ Although there are common, broad themes in differing definitions of ‘cosmopolitanism’, such as a concern with an allegiance to a world community of humankind and “openness” toward non-local ‘Others’—which is usually defined in contrast to exclusionary prejudices such as nationalism and xenophobia (Delanty and O’Mahony 2002)⁴—there is little doubt that ‘cosmopolitanism’ is a contested term and its use is unclear in the sociological canon.

Indeed, there are two main problems with the existing literature. First, if ‘cosmopolitanism’ is to be a truly useful social scientific concept, it must become more empirically useful. That is, an understanding of how to successfully capture it—and its limits—must be gathered. In doing so, the following questions must be asked: 1) does it exist in binary opposition to cultural racism/xenophobia or are there ‘grey’ areas, where the same individuals, even when performing the same roles, can be almost simultaneously cosmopolitan *and* xenophobic?; and, 2) do such attitudes exist at extreme or non-extreme levels? Second, excluding work by Werbner (1999), Lamont and Aksartova (2002), Nava (2002), Skrbis and Woodward (2007) and Pichler (2009), most (empirically based) literature on cosmopolitanism focuses upon social elites and upper-class societies. This leads us—perhaps wrongly—to believe that cosmopolitanism is only for those with significant material and/or cultural resources.

COSMOPOLITANISM AND FOOTBALL

Whilst it is not my intention to suggest that football is an exclusively working-class game (with working-class supporters),⁵ football does, however, provide a clear arena where cosmopolitan values may be able to be captured. This is not least because *foreign* stars are often signed to *local* teams, creating a sense of cosmopolitanism, where representatives of the ‘cosmos’—in this case the world—come together in the distinctly local ‘polis’ of the club. In the contemporary era, it is not unusual for a club side from one country to be comprised of players of many nationalities. Indeed, Kuper (2002) highlights that, in the late 1990s, the English Football Writers’ Association chose a continental European as Player of the Year for four consecutive years (1995–6 to 1998–9 seasons). Since Kuper’s argument, the same body have awarded the distinction to Arsenal’s French players Robert Pires (in 2002) and Thierry Henry (three times, in 2003, 2004 and 2006) and Portugal’s then-Manchester United forward, Cristiano Ronaldo (twice, in 2007 and 2008), giving further credibility to the claim. In this sense, “foreign” football idols may be eroding national—and potentially culturally racist—stereotypes by sending out messages that nationally defined ‘Others’ can be “one of us” (through belonging to a local club). In this context, Marks’ (1999) discussion of the impact of France’s 1998 FIFA World Cup winning

team on the wider French society is noteworthy. In this essay, he draws attention to the racial problems which had been encountered within France throughout the 1990s and points out that the national football team—with many of its star players coming from the country’s former colonies—helped to give rise to a new French society which celebrated vibrant multiculturalism.⁶ Indeed, in previous research which explored cosmopolitanism and European identification during the 2004 European Championships, Levermore and Millward (2007) found that Liverpool fans were declaring themselves to have “soft spots” for the Czech Republic, on account of club players who also played for that country, whilst English-based Arsenal supporters viewed their French players as assimilated into their specific club cultures and some were even supporting France over England.

Of course, this acceptance does not mean that the same groups of fans—collectively and individually—cannot express mildly “everyday” xenophobic opinions. For instance, in the UK, the media often tell readers that French football players are prone to “diving”, German players are efficient (if unexciting) and most (European and non-European) foreigners are less hard-working than their British equivalents. Furthermore, during major international tournaments, such as the European Championships, the same media sources cast a favourable light over the English team by arguing that *our* players *play fair*. Of course, this is reactive to foreigners who are assumed to *not play fair*. When the English national team is eliminated from such tournaments, it is consistently argued that young English players are not of a high enough quality because the international football transfer market has meant that foreign players (who are denigrated because they are assumed to play in the UK because of the high earning potential—a factor which apparently does not influence the British players’ choice of employer) have blocked *our* players’ route into their clubs’ first teams. Essentially, sport becomes an avenue in which even the liberal media are prone to argue that foreigners are in *our* country taking *our* jobs (see Rydgren 2003 for a discussion of regularly used culturally racist frames across Europe). These messages transmit into many supporter cultures and help to develop the ‘commonsense’ or ‘everyday’ values upon which other forms of contemporary racism can be sold (Essed 1991, Fekete 2001, Sivanandan 2001). It is assumed, in both commonsense and academic discussions, that racism/xenophobia and cosmopolitanism are binary or oppositional dispositions. It is particularly held that the same individuals do not tend to be both “cosmopolitan” and “racist/xenophobic” but this has not really been tested in any social scientific research. This chapter attempts to do just this by drawing upon the attitudes and views held by English football fans in Geneva during Euro ’08.

Academic research that has explored cosmopolitanism, in any sense of the concept, in football is rare. Two such examples are found in the books by Back *et al.* (2001) and Giulianotti and Robertson (2009). The former, in their excellent exploration of both banal and more extreme forms of

racism in English football, dedicate their final chapter to exploring notions of diaspora and cosmopolitanism in football. They view cosmopolitanism as being symbolised by the increasing acceptance of black players in the English football team, and non-French born or minority ethnic players in the French team, by the media and the majority of fans in those countries. This definition of cosmopolitanism is not entirely unproblematic; as earlier discussed, cosmopolitanism is not usually seen as the absence of cultural racism, but it does leave us wondering if the term could be more usefully utilised to, perhaps, highlight its limits. On the other hand, Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) demonstrate a subtle approach to understanding cosmopolitanism in football, which they see as a discussion point in the cultural 'globalisation' of the sport. Indeed, they recognise cosmopolitanism as having 'thick' and 'thin' variants in football. The former refers to, for example, the forms of football media that give detailed coverage to the game in other national societies, whereas the latter forms are found in those media that give "convenient" coverage to non-British teams when leading sides from other countries (at club or national team level) are due to face teams from the host society. Viewed in this way, the material analysed by Levermore and Millward (2007) around Euro '04 is clearly a form of 'thin' cosmopolitanism. Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) also recognise that cosmopolitan values have differing levels of immersion at the individual level, from the banal to the more deeply rooted—a point which will be returned to later in this chapter. Nevertheless, their study is made less powerful by the anecdotal evidence which is given in their book to illustrate their points. I hope to garnish some of their ideas in this chapter, which can be thought of as an empirically-led illumination of their interesting points.

METHODOLOGY

The chapter's data were gathered in Geneva at Euro '08, during the tournament's launch (7–8 June 2008), and were principally collected using a participant observation method (including interviews). Williams *et al.* (1984) argue that a major difficulty faced when studying crowd behaviour stems from the problems experienced in monitoring enormous groups of people. This was a problem in Geneva given that a relatively small but uncountable number of English football fans travelled to the city. Participant observation is a common way of capturing behaviours and performances, and has been used—solely or partially—in many studies that have explored the issue of football supporter cultures, such as hooliganism. This may form part of a wider ethnographic study (as with Marsh *et al.* 1978; Armstrong and Harris 1991; Giulianotti 1991, 1995a, 1995b, 2007; Armstrong 1998; A. King 2000, 2002 [1998], 2003; Sugden 2002) or in a less prolonged manner (as with Williams *et al.* 1984 and Crabbe 2003). Undoubtedly, longer ethnographies potentially allow researchers to gain richer qualitative data. Yet, this is

not to say that shorter term participant observational data does not also have its advantages. For instance, Armstrong and Harris (1991) (and Armstrong 1998) have been accused of ‘going native’ by Dunning *et al.* (1991), Moorhouse (1991), Hughson (1998) and King (2002 [1998]), whilst Giulianotti (1995b) is alive to the fact that there were times when this almost happened to him in his research on Hibernian and Aberdeen football “casuals”.⁷ This was less likely to happen in this research because personal bonds with the participants were not formed over a longer period of time. I simply watched fans in the public spaces—the airport, fan zone, pubs and nightclubs—over an intense 36 hour period. I wanted to explore the activities that English football fans undertook throughout their experiences, so I deliberately did not book into any accommodation so that I could observe the activities of those fans who roamed the streets after the games had finished and the nightclubs had shut their doors for the night. However, I did not informally interview any fans after 11pm, as at such points many were intoxicated.

English football fans were identified through a variety of ways: first, and most obviously, as a researcher I listened carefully in the city, fan zone, bars and nightclubs for English voices and often approached such people to take part in the research. Second, although the English Premier League—and, to a lesser extent, the English national team—has a globalised fan base (see for instance, Ben-Porat 2000; Hognestad 2006, 2009; Kerr 2009), I watched for supporters wearing English football club/national team attire and approached them to ask if they would stop for an informal interview. It was noticeable that more English football fans wore club shirts than England national team shirts—a point which will be addressed in the next section. Further, despite claims that supporters of English football are increasingly likely to be female (at least when compared to previous decades), it was noticeable that almost all English supporters who were present in the fan zone, bars and nightclub in Geneva were (white) men.

The research was largely conducted in an overt fashion: I readily told all respondents that I spoke to that I was conducting research on the activities that they were partaking in during the day, making clear my role as a sociologist rather than a journalist. Fieldnotes were recorded at 30 minute intervals out of the sight of those who I had talked with. This measure was taken because it was thought that many supporters would be put off if notes were taken as we spoke, as this may reduce the rapport between myself and the football fans I was, quite often, just “having a chat” with. In the context of this, the identities of those I spoke to have been changed with the use of pseudonyms.

FINDINGS

In general, there were not a great number of English football fans in Geneva.⁸ However, it was noticeable that there were pockets of Scottish,

Welsh and Irish nationals in Geneva who were proudly wearing flags and replica team shirts. Similarly, there were groups from Holland, Germany, Sweden, Italy, the Czech Republic and France, likewise displaying their colours. In contrast, the English fans in attendance wore “everyday” clothes rather than English colours and there were no St. George or Union flags. Those English fans who were questioned as to why they did not wear England attire gave mixed responses to my question. Some, such as James, a 22 year-old Liverpool fan, argued that they ‘didn’t give a fuck about England’ (a regular trait amongst some supporters of internationally leading English clubs in the new consumption of football; see A. King 2000, 2003; Millward 2009a). Others instead felt that in the context of the tournament they deliberately wanted to showcase a cosmopolitan outlook and that the English had too many football and non-football rivals/enemies to do this. For example, Dave, a Manchester United fan, stated that ‘everybody hates the English. I don’t want to be hated and have the shit kicked out of me’. Alternatively, a third group of opinion suggested that supporters had no reason to wear England regalia, given that the English national team had not qualified for the tournament. Those who I spoke to that had travelled to Geneva tended to have done so because they had taken advantage of low cost air travel from a local airport in the UK, and would have travelled elsewhere in Austria or Switzerland had transport there have been cheaper or more convenient.

Urry (2005 [1990]) influentially coined the term the ‘tourist gaze’, which covered the ways in which tourists had culturally defined, preconceived ideas about what they were viewing on holiday and made sense of their temporary environments using such schemata. On the basis of this, cultural industries made provisions to further develop the gaze (and develop profit). He also elaborated that tourists may display several ‘ideal-types’ of gaze according to the holiday setting, such as a thirst for nostalgia or ‘natural’ environment (Urry 1995: 191). The idea of football gazes—that is, ways of viewing football matches, events and tournaments, and how the various cultural industries develop provisions to deepen such gazes—potentially holds a useful key to understanding football fan behaviour, and here it is suggested that English football fans in Geneva had individually (there appeared to be no common “English fans abroad” collective identity) developed ‘cosmopolitan gazes’. To elaborate, Urry (2003) develops a two-dimensional model for understanding cosmopolitanism, which effects how people see the world. First, he suggests that an extensive mobility, where people can travel corporeally (or virtually), and consume places may produce a sense of cosmopolitanism. This happened in Geneva, as the English fans saw themselves as playing a part in a football mega-event (c.f. Roche 2000), and consuming not Geneva itself, but the tournament and the coming together of fans from across Europe.

Key evidence, which would substantiate this idea, came from my time spent in the English-themed ‘Lady Godiva’ public house,⁹ where I met three

men who had travelled out together. All were in their mid-20s and white: Chris, Robert and Mark. Chris and Robert were both from Liverpool, whilst Mark was from Gillingham. The men were university graduates and former student housemates: Chris and Robert follow Liverpool FC, whilst Mark attends most Gillingham matches. The three men explained their reasons for coming to Geneva:

Chris: We just came for the *craic*,¹⁰ take part in it all, meet a few football fans—maybe a few women—and have a few beers, y’know?

Mark: We didn’t know it’d be so expensive though!

Chris: Yeah, we’re on a mini tour around Europe. We started on Tuesday [3 June] and we’re out ‘til next Saturday [14 June]. We’re gonna be in Munich for Germany’s game tomorrow and in Amsterdam for Holland’s game on Friday. We’re just travelling about for the tournament.

Mark: We came over to Geneva because my cousin lives here and she offered us a few nights free accommodation, but we’re getting the train to Germany at 10am tomorrow. We didn’t really have any other reason than that, we didn’t especially want to come here. We’re football tourists, rather than real tourists.

It is interesting that the three men differentiated themselves from “real tourists”, and did so by making clear that they were principally in Geneva to embrace, and take part in, the football tournament rather than deliberately visit other tourist attractions. It did not matter to them whether the tournament was held in Austria and Switzerland or anywhere else in Europe (or beyond) as there was a placelessness connected to Geneva which was seen as a football hub during the tournament. In doing so, they defined their tourist activities as masculine adventures, similar to what King (2003) found amongst Manchester United fans on their European travels (the *craic*, alcohol, the pursuit of women and watching football as a group). Their collective mobility was based upon the football tournament, and indeed, when I asked them if they saw themselves as ‘cosmopolitan’ as a result of this, all agreed that they did, and labelled themselves as such.

Second, Urry (2003) argues that cosmopolitanism may arise from such mobilities when individuals have a curiosity about places, peoples and cultures, and are prepared to embrace this with openness to others. This was hugely apparent in the peaceful—and very well run—fan zones where, although grumbling at not being able to take in their own (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) drinks, fans bought and sampled cuisine from other countries.¹¹ For instance, one group of English fans I spoke to in the fan zone were very pleased that they could buy Portuguese *piri piri* chicken; their opinions were not unusual. Additionally in UEFA’s fan nightclub, which was open until 4am, fans sang *each others’* national anthems: a point which is entirely consistent with Crabbe’s (2003) findings at the 1998 World Cup.

The type of cultures that developed in Geneva tended to be ‘thin’ forms of cosmopolitanism which were ultimately reducible to loyalties based upon identifications fans showed toward, or against, players employed by English clubs, or favoured styles of play—something which the temporary suspension of national loyalties (notwithstanding some fans’ claims that they did not follow the English national football team) potentially allowed. For instance, Liverpool fan, James, told me that he ‘didn’t give a toss about England’ but:

We’re [him and his friends] just out here to have a laugh, try to get to tonight’s game and have a drink. I’m thinking of going to put a big bet on to give it some interest. If not, I’ll support whoever I sit with. I don’t care who wins because I don’t hate no one here, apart from Ronaldo!

James’ dislike of Cristiano Ronaldo is interesting. At that time, Ronaldo played for Liverpool FC’s national rivals Manchester United. James’ laid back attitude, something he told me was not the case during the club season, only broke when he expressed his dislike of the Portuguese winger—a change based on strong club loyalties. Such values are the facilitators and destroyers of cosmopolitanism at tournaments such as Euro ’08, when the fan shows only ‘flaneur’ level loyalties (see Giulianotti 2002) to national teams; they can build loose affiliations to national teams, whilst also developing dislikes. Even at tournaments such as Euro ’08, club loyalties continue to preside. This was also found to be the case amongst Chris, Robert and Mark (previously discussed) and Chelsea fan (and Portugal scarf wearing) Jack, when they were asked who they were supporting during the tournament:

Robert: I’m supporting Spain because of [Fernando] Torres.

Chris: So am I.

Mark: I support whoever Gillingham sign, but Portugal looked pretty good tonight.

Jack: I do support England, but it’s not relevant when I’m here and they’re not playing. It’s a bit like saying I don’t support Chelsea here. I do, but they’re not playing. But having said that, the reason why I’m supporting Portugal during the tournament is [Ricardo] Carvalho, who I want to see win the tournament after [Chelsea] missed out on the Champions League [title].

So, whilst there are supporters like the young English fan I met in the fan zone who told me ‘I support football, not any team’, who may express ‘thicker’ cosmopolitan values (Dobson 2006),¹² it does appear that the values of English fans showed only real commitment to fan hedonism and the following of club players at the Euro ’08 finals, with some—like James—actively searching for ‘some interest’. In short, if a ‘football gaze’ exists, that is, a way of exploring and understanding the social world from the

lifeworld of a football fan, fan enjoyment (such as hedonistic activities or even winning) and strong loyalties to football teams (including rivalries, which make sense of ‘out-groups’) might shape this view.

Earlier in the chapter, the assumption that cosmopolitanism and xenophobia (or other forms of cultural racism) could be seen as in direct opposition was problematised. Although I did not personally see or hear any extreme forms of racism, it was noticeable that many of the supporters who were seemingly viewing the tournament through a ‘cosmopolitan gaze’, also showed signs of ‘everyday xenophobia’. To elaborate, Essed (1991) argues that the day-to-day realities of racism in everyday citizens’ lives are often overlooked. She suggests that this is unfortunate, because everyday experiences are a rich ground for demonstrating how social reality, including its convergent dimensions and systems operate concurrently. She adds that everyday experiences present an arena in which important but overlooked ‘everyday’ inequalities may emerge, and consequently introduces the idea of ‘everyday racism’. Crucially, this counters the view that racism is an individual problem relating to an idea that social actors are, or are not, “racist”. ‘Everyday racism’ refers to the ways in which discrimination is ‘systematic, recurrent [and] familiar [in] practices’ (ibid.: 3) and describes a level of racism which tends to exist without stigma. This type of prejudice is often also referred to as ‘commonsense’ racism (see, for instance, Nairn and McCreanor 1991, Leuridijk 1997, Schuster 2003) and forms the type of discriminatory discourses and actions which, rather than being challenged, are legitimated and therefore imprinted into societal values (Lawrence 1982). Such notions of racism are not hermetically sealed and unchanging, but in the context of xenophobia are unsurprising given that Gotsbachner (2001) argues that we live in a ‘xenophobic normality’.

During the day, I was told lots of “jokes” about “foreigners” by English football fans, perhaps offering anecdotal evidence that the cosmopolitan environment provided the scenery for disparaging comments about others to be made. One such example was given by Mark:

We were at the fountain and I wanted my picture taken with it. We decided that we’d all have our picture taken. So there was this Turkish bloke there in his shirt, so I said to Chris that he should ask him. He said “no”, ‘cause he said that the dirty Turk would rob him. So I asked [the Turkish man] and he said “yeah, fine”. We were surprised that he spoke such good English, until he told us that he was from London and had lived there all his life. We asked him if he heard what we said and he said he had, but he was alright.

Mark’s stereotype about the “dirty Turk” is not extreme xenophobia. However, it does carry a level of insult. My intention here is not to castigate Mark (or even a wider body of football fans) or label him as a hard-core ‘xenophobe’. What I would like to point out is that he—and many of the

other football fans at the tournament—showed evidence of internalising a prevailing culture of ‘xenophobic normality’ (Gotsbachner 2001). This shows that even those who act and ‘gaze’ in cosmopolitan ways (Mark had, just a few moments before, labelled himself as ‘cosmopolitan’, whilst talking about his experiences through the day) can also be xenophobic. Of course, this is non-extreme behaviour in both cosmopolitan and xenophobic senses, but it hints at the multi-faceted approach that must be adopted when attempting to understand the products of identification, such as prejudice, discrimination and anti-discrimination. Different ideas may have been held had Mark—and the other football fans—been hardcore racists, or more deeply committed to cosmopolitan “ideals”. Yet the reality is that most people are probably a little like Mark, highlighting the inadequacy of the forced theoretical division between ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘racism’ (in its cultural or scientific; or “new” and “old”) guises. There is a need for social scientists to carefully define complex terms such as ‘racism’, ‘xenophobia’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’, and think through their uses and potential analytical limits.

CONCLUSION: COSMOPOLITANISM AND ENGLISH FANS AT EURO ‘08

This chapter has presented a discussion based upon data collected in Geneva from English football fans at the opening stages of Euro ‘08. Earlier in the chapter, a potential weakness of the ‘cosmopolitan’ interest in the social sciences, namely that it is empirically difficult to capture, was highlighted. I stand by that claim and garnish it by arguing that it must develop conceptual limits: if we look hard enough for cosmopolitanism, like varying levels of racism, can we fail to find it? The ‘cosmopolitan gaze’ (drawing together two of Urry’s ideas, 2005 [1990] and 2003) is a potentially useful tool: football fans certainly saw themselves as spatially mobile football tourists, showing a ‘thin’ sense of cosmopolitanism. Yet this was based upon the enjoyment of a fan/tourist experience and was even partially the result of no historically embedded cultural attachment to any of the teams that were playing. It also did not negate the possibility that racism, in its mild, “everyday” forms might still occur. Quite obviously, loose, ‘thin’ cosmopolitanism and mild xenophobia or cultural racism can clearly exist, as the material presented here from the English football fans in Geneva demonstrates.

NOTES

1. A few examples of strong ‘Others’ in European football include: England v Germany (Blain and O’Donnell 1994, Maguire and Poulton 1999, Beck

- 2003, Polley 2004); England v Turkey (Evans and Rowe 2002); Scotland v England (Bairner 2001); and Germany v Holland (Kuper 1994).
2. For further examples, see Beck (1996, 2002), Pieterse (2001), Delanty (2001, 2003, 2005, 2006), Calhoun (2003), and Delanty and Millward (2007).
 3. Examples include Kögler (2005) and Fine (2007).
 4. For further discussion, see Papastephanou (2002) and Roudometof (2005).
 5. See, for instance, stylistically contrasting accounts by Malcolm *et al.* (2000) and A. King (2002 [1998]) which both suggest that football fans do not solely come from one socio-demographic group, and that throughout the 1990s, there were increasing numbers of middle-class supporters.
 6. However, this whole notion must be problematised, not least because Jérôme and Jérôme-Speziari (2003) point out that just four years later (after France had also won the 2000 UEFA European Championships) Le Pen's Front National achieved a second place finish in the first round of the French presidential elections.
 7. The "casual" can be thought of as a subcultural group of (typically young) male football fans who wore expensive European designer clothing, rather than club colours. The first wave of football casuals—which began in the late 1970s—were involved in hooligan activities. However, as the movement matured throughout the 1980s and 1990s, this was no longer necessarily the case as other fans adopted their clothing style. The group of casuals which Giulianotti (1995b) researched were involved in hooligan subcultures.
 8. This may be due to both the recession which had hit the UK and the expensive cost of living in Switzerland, as well as England having not qualified.
 9. Lady Godiva's was the public house where most English fans congregated. The pub was packed and sold a wide range of beers, ranging from those readily available in the UK to many which were not. Inside Lady Godiva's, English football fans—alongside people from Switzerland—danced to British music, much of which comprised of non-contemporary "pop classics" from the 1970s onwards. People danced, sung and there was no sign of any violent trouble. Perhaps surprisingly, there did not appear to be any Scottish, Welsh or Irish (either from the north or the Republic) in the pub.
 10. *Craic* is a term that refers to fun, entertainment and enjoyable conversation or experience.
 11. The organisation of the fan zone ran in stark contrast to my experiences of similar provision in Manchester for the UEFA Cup final one month earlier (see Millward 2009b). Inside the Swiss fan zone, the atmosphere was very jovial but people were not overly drunk. This may have been partially due to the expensive drink prices of 7CHF (£3.50) for a small can of Carlsberg lager.
 12. Thick cosmopolitanism is, for Dobson (2006), a more enduring commitment to world values than 'thinner' variants.

12 ‘Wot, No Asians?’

West Ham United Fandom, the Cockney Diaspora and the ‘New’ East Enders¹

Jack Fawbert

USING MY SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION: FROM MY “PRIVATE TROUBLES” TO A “PUBLIC ISSUE”

My matchday ritual starts with a drive from my Suffolk home, usually with three mates, down to the end of the M11 motorway. I then turn clockwise on to the North Circular Road until I turn off at the junction signposted ‘East Ham’. As I emerge from the roundabout under the flyover and turn onto the Barking Road, I enter Newham, the London Borough that will be the venue for the 2012 Olympic Park. Almost immediately to my right is the Barking Road recreation ground. This always reminds me of my youth when, as a teenager in the 1960s, I played competitive football there.

Although now I rarely see competitive games being played there, invariably as I pass in my car, there are large numbers of young people having a “kick about” on the park. However, there is something much more significant than the fact that it is not an organised game that I see taking place since those halcyon days of local East End football contests; the overwhelming majority of the faces on that park are now black or, mostly, brown, rather than almost exclusively white. This seemingly, and at least anecdotally, disproves that old chestnut that “Asians don’t like football”.

I park my car in a side street and, with my matchday mates, I begin the one mile long trek along the Barking Road to the Boleyn Ground in Upton Park, home of my favoured team, West Ham United, stopping at a local “watering hole”, *The Miller’s Well*, along the way. I notice that in this shiny, postmodern pub, there are pictures of Labour Party and trade union pioneers Will Thorne and Keir Hardie adorning the walls. The significance of this will become apparent.

After refreshment, we proceed past Newham Town Hall and through the East Ham shopping centre where we pass a veritable array of people from different racial backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures: black, brown, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish; women in *saris*, *burkas* or *hijabs*; men with Afro hairstyles, or wearing *thobes* or *fezzes*. There are shops selling minority ethnic foods, *halal* butchers, kebab shops, African-Caribbean greengrocers

and Indian clothes stalls. This seems like a truly multicultural community, an observation that I will later discover is borne out by official statistics.

When we arrive at the ground, there is always that exhilarating feeling of “coming home”, where, as a cockney (traditionally, someone who comes from the East End of London and was born within the sound of the bells of Bow Church), I feel I ought to be. Yet the other thing that always strikes me as I enter the stadium is the almost total “whiteness” of the near 35,000 fans. As a fan I interviewed for earlier research said to me, ‘we might all wear the same shirt, but it’s easy to spot which ones are the players—they’re the ones with the black faces’ (Fawbert 2007).

What C. Wright Mills (1959) called one’s ‘sociological imagination’, that is, connecting my everyday, personal experiences with issues of public concern, goes into overdrive. Notwithstanding the fact that fanbases in this postmodern, globalised age are far more dispersed than in the past, how can it be that such a high-profile FA Premier League football club seems so unrepresentative in terms of the ethnicities of the community in which it is located? My ‘sociological imagination’, however, requires that I check my ‘commonsense’ observations against more rigorously collected data.

COLLECTING THE DATA

The National Census in 2001 revealed that, at 59 per cent, the London Borough of Newham had a higher percentage of minority ethnic groups as a proportion of total population than any other area in the United Kingdom. Of these, 13.1 per cent were Black African, 12.1 per cent were Indian, 8.8 per cent were Bangladeshi and 8.7 per cent were Pakistani. In terms of religion, 24.3 per cent were Muslim, 6.9 per cent were Hindu and 2.8 per cent were Sikh. It was the first Census area ever to be composed of a majority of minority ethnic groups (Office for National Statistics 2009b).

Yet the FA Premier League Fan Survey revealed that the percentage of minority ethnic fans who attended first team matches at the Boleyn Ground, Upton Park, in the same year the National Census was taken, was just 0.6 per cent (Williams and Neatrou 2002: 8). Anecdotal evidence and casual observations when attending matches at the Boleyn Ground suggest to me that there has been little or no change since.

However, the “local” community is more than just Newham, as the club has traditionally “represented” the East End of London *as a whole*. For some, the East End is defined narrowly. For example, Dench *et al.* (2006)—who for the practical reason of comparing the results of their ethnographic study with Young and Willmott’s (1957) earlier study of the area—view it as coterminous with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. For others, the East End ‘is an amorphous term that has been used by generations of historians, sociologists and welfare workers’ (Korr 1986: 213).

As London increasingly spread out along the Thames gateway during the twentieth century, Korr (*ibid.*), amongst others, employed a much wider definition of the East End as ‘the vast area that lies east of the Aldgate Pump and stretches out into rural sections of Essex’, whilst O’Neill (2001) remarks that:

nowadays the East End seems to include not only Hackney, Newham, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham but much of urbanised Essex as well. It once seemed odd to hear broadcasters referring to Romford as East London . . . But claims to being from the East End now come from people as far apart as those that live in the shadow of the Tower [of London] itself and Essex cockneys right out in Southend.

However, it is generally agreed that, *culturally*, the area between Bethnal Green (on the western boundary of Tower Hamlets) and Dagenham (to the east of Barking) constitutes what most people traditionally think of as the East End (Farrar 2008). Newham is about half-way between these extremities and West Ham United’s ground is at the centre of this borough, forming the traditional focus for the football loyalties of East Enders as a whole.

Indeed, the fans identify the East End in general, rather than just Newham, as West Ham United’s traditional constituency. This is reflected in songs and chants, such as, “Oh East London is wonderful . . .” (which, in its entirety, is an extremely sexist chant); “East, East, East London . . .”, and “One-nil to the cockney boys . . .”. Thus, any analysis of data about the local population should include data on Tower Hamlets to the west and the borough of Barking and Dagenham to the east as well as Newham.

With regard to the latest available figures for minority ethnic groups attending matches at Upton Park, the Summary Reports of the FA Premier League annual surveys no longer give such figures for supporters at each club. Consequently I thought I would try to find out what the latest fan survey had established by contacting the FA Premier League directly. After some initial problems, they forwarded my request to Tara Warren, the Marketing Manager at West Ham United, who responded to my enquiry. Each club in the survey is given a report on their own fans by the FA Premier League. Tara Warren was most helpful, asking David Ashton, Senior Research Executive at the research company Populus, to supply me with the information that I required; something that he duly did.

Table 12.1 certainly shows an improvement on the 0.6 per cent of fans from minority ethnic backgrounds in the 2001/2 survey, but it still falls far short of representing the national percentage of minority ethnic groups in England and Wales of 8.7 per cent, let alone the local picture where, in Newham, 59 per cent of people are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

As can be seen from the table, the most under-represented group of all are Bangladeshis. They make up 8.8 per cent of the residents of Newham and over a third of those in Tower Hamlets, yet zero per cent attended a FA

Table 12.1 Ethnicity and match attendance

	Minority ethnic	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other	Rather not say
England and Wales *	8.7%	1.8%	1.5%	0.5%	n/a	n/a
Newham *	59%	12.1%	8.7%	8.8%	n/a	n/a
Tower Hamlets *	48.6%	0.2%	1.0%	33.4%	n/a	n/a
Barking and Dagenham *	14.7%	2.3%	2.2%	1.0%	n/a	n/a
Attended a game in 12 months up to November 2008 #	2%	0.8%	0.1%	0%	1%	2.9%

Source: data marked * are taken from Office for National Statistics (2009) and those marked # from Populus (2009)

Premier League match at the Boleyn Ground in the 12 months to November 2008 (Populus 2009).

“ASIANS DON’T LIKE FOOTBALL ANYWAY, DO THEY?”

It has traditionally been argued that increasing the numbers of minority ethnic fans is difficult for the club to achieve because British Asians do not like football; they prefer cricket. My observations of British Asians playing football in the park on my way to games seem to suggest otherwise. Furthermore, research has consistently shown that young British Asian males (and, increasingly, females) of all cultures and religions are interested in, and play, football just as much as their white majority counterparts (Bains with Patel 1996, Asians in Football Forum 2005, Burdsey 2007a).

As Burdsey (2007a: 87) states, there is a ‘widespread, yet erroneous, belief that football is an insignificant leisure and social activity for young British Asians’. This does not simply apply to playing, but to fandom as well. For instance, an *Eastern Eye* newspaper survey in July 2004 ‘found that nearly a third of [British Asian] respondents were interested in becoming season ticket holders at professional clubs’ (cited in Asians in Football Forum 2005: 9). Yet, in that same year, the Independent Football Commission’s (2004: 37) annual report stated that:

that there has been virtually no growth over the years in the number of ethnic minorities attending football matches does not chime with

the growing interest in football among the current generation of ethnic minorities, nor the direct evidence of the growth and popularity of football in areas where there are large ethnic minority populations.

Indeed, in a piece that could have been written about the situation at West Ham United, the Asians in Football Forum (2005: 5) pointed out that:

We . . . see a smattering of British Asian faces in many major English football stadia today—though it remains a smattering, even in towns and cities where British Asian communities show a very substantial presence . . . change in the active fan base in England has been painfully slow and so, we must conclude, it seems to be a low priority—if a priority at all—for some in the English professional leagues.

However, in order to begin to understand what is going on beyond simplistic assertions of institutional racism in the game itself, we need to understand a number of factors that continue to contribute to the social exclusion of the local, and national, British Asian population from West Ham United fandom, not least the historical context of the club and the area from which the club traditionally draws its support.

THE EAST END AND THE “COCKNEY SUBCULTURE”

West Ham United is located in what was once the ‘ideal typical’ working-class community, or to be more precise, *communities* of the East End of London. One whole quarter of London was overwhelmingly working-class (Young and Willmott 1957), due to the biggest docks complex and associated factories the world had ever seen. It was an area that for over 100 years had been marked by extreme poverty and deprivation.

However, these communities also included strong bonds of working-class solidarity, and loyalty to trade unions and the Labour Party. From the “Dockers’ Tanner” strike in the nineteenth century to the “Battle of Wapping” over media mogul Rupert Murdoch sacking print workers in the 1980s, the area was the main stage where struggles between capital and labour were played out; hence, the pictures of Labour pioneers Will Thorne and Keir Hardie in *The Miller’s Well*. At one time, every constituency in the East End returned a Labour MP with a massive majority and it is from here that the last Communist MP, Phil Piratin, was elected.

The people were ‘loyal and valued comradeship’ (Belton 1998: 11) and the East End was characterised by a keen sense of ‘territoriality’ and a ‘fierce local pride’ (Clarke 1976). This was manifested in the notion of “the East End family” and the collective “spirit of the Blitz” that pervaded the whole community. Support for the extended family was expected and flourished, and people who were evicted because they could not pay the rent were often taken in by neighbours (O’Neill 2001). These values were

manifested in support for West Ham United. The football club thus had ‘political overtones’ (Korr 1986: 213) and:

has touched the lives of tens of thousands of people in ways that have nothing to do with what happens on the field. The Hammers have been part of something much larger than the club, the League, or even the game of football (ibid.: 207).

However, the East End has changed. Indeed, it has been changing for many years.

FAREWELL TO THE EAST END? TOPOPHILIA AND THE “COCKNEY DIASPORA”

During World War II, because of the importance of the docks for the Allies, the East End took the brunt of the Blitz and thus became almost totally a bomb site. Reconstruction and the introduction of a modern welfare state with “homes fit for heroes” was the least that was expected from the first majority Labour government after the war. As a consequence, those slums that had not been demolished by the *Luftwaffe* were pulled down. New council homes were built on “green field” sites outside the East End, such as “new towns” and estates at Harlow, Basildon and Harold Hill. Later, privatisation policies led to the large scale sale of local authority housing. After buying their council homes many “cockney émigrés” later sold up and moved even further afield.

This was often enabled by post-war educational reforms that created opportunities for the first time for the working-class to take O Levels and A Levels, and to go to polytechnic or university. The consequent upward social mobility accompanied and fuelled geographical mobility. Yet there were “push” as well as “pull” factors for the educational “failures”: de-industrialisation and the restructuring of capitalism (Lash and Urry 1987, Crow and Allen 1994, Massey 1994) meant that unskilled manual work gradually dried up with the closure of the docks, and the relocation of many factories. This led to the destruction of the strongly integrated communities of the East End associated with capitalism’s more organised ‘Fordist’ phase.

Through upward social and geographical mobility, the old white working-class were and are much better off materially. However, although nostalgia is replete with historical amnesias, especially about the more unpleasant aspects of the old East End (such as poverty and deprivation, racism and Oswald Mosley’s fascist Blackshirts), these former, almost exclusively white, cockneys have experienced a deep and profound sense of cultural loss. This is accentuated by racially fuelled resentment that the area has become home to migrants, from Bangladeshis to Eastern Europeans, who

have “taken over” the area. Yet, the breakup of the traditional East End did not lead to the terminal decline of the old “cockney subculture”; rather, it led to its *displacement* which, subsequently, has created and increasingly sustained a sense of ‘topophilia’ (Tuan 1974, Bale 1991) and working-class pride in the old East End.

As a consequence, community persisted as “communion”, symbolically expressed for some through their support for West Ham United and the fortnightly ritual of travelling to Upton Park. For some cockney émigrés, support for West Ham United represents what Clarke (1976) calls a ‘magical recovery of community’. This was particularly evident amongst one group of predominantly cockney émigrés: the *Northern Hammers* group of West Ham United supporters (Fawbert 2007). Commitment to the club as a form of ‘serious leisure’ was also particularly evident amongst this group (Fawbert 2006). The majority had first attended a match at Upton Park as children and were now passing on the oral traditions of the East End to their children and grandchildren. Most had supported the club for more than twenty years; the average length of support was twenty-three years. Eighty-five per cent described themselves as ‘long-time fans’, whilst less than 5 per cent described themselves as ‘new’ or ‘returned’ fans. This latter figure compares to ‘around one-quarter’ of all Premier League fans (Williams and Neatrou 2002: 9). Over 60 per cent said that West Ham United was either ‘one of the most important things in their lives’ or ‘very important’, compared to 55 per cent across all Premier League clubs (ibid.:12).

RACISM AND RESENTMENT TOWARDS THE “NEW EAST ENDERS”?

At the same time that the exodus of the old, white working-class was taking place, new waves of migrants, particularly from Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent moved in—a trend that continues today, albeit with an even more diverse migrant population. In Newham, in particular, the white population fell from 58 per cent in 1991 to 41 per cent in 2001 (Office for National Statistics 2009b).

One of the repercussions of this is that amongst some local, white fans of West Ham United, as well as within sections of the cockney diaspora that continue to go to games, there is now a deep racist sentiment, particularly directed towards the British Asian populations in the area. Amongst other factors, this is partly borne from a sense of grievance and perceived betrayal of post-war local authority promises, particularly with regard to housing policies (Hewitt 2005, Dench *et al.* 2006). Using research from the 1950s to the 1990s, Dench *et al.* (ibid.) address this issue of resentment as ‘a political idea’ as it was felt by the white population of Tower Hamlets and directed towards Bangladeshi settlement in particular. Their research ‘found a receptive audience for its ethnographic description of a

deeply felt and collective sense of betrayal by those in power' (Ware 2008: para. 2.1). The overall attitude to Bangladeshis from the white population in Tower Hamlets was that 41 per cent were hostile, 18 per cent expressed mixed views, only 11 per cent were positive and 30 per cent were indifferent (Dench *et al.* 2006: 241).

On the face of it, this seems to replicate earlier reactions to other newcomers over the last four centuries, for example, French Huguenots fleeing religious persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (which is my ancestry), Irish leaving the severe consequences of the Famine in the nineteenth century and Jews escaping the pogroms of Eastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century—'the last ones off the boat syndrome' as one respondent in O'Neill's (2001) research called it.

However, there is a significant difference with the new East Enders. Until the 1950s, because of its over-riding whiteness, the population of the East End was perceived to be relatively homogenous in terms of ethnic and class make-up. The local feeling was and is 'that the fifties was some sort of a Golden Age' (Gavron 2006: 12). This nostalgia for the 1950s is replete with selective histories though. For many of those who moved out, the 1950s is 'that space after history ends and biography begins' and where 'nostalgia trumps history' because such a 'memory' of 'whiteness crumbles under even minimal scrutiny' (Keith 2008: para. 2.2). Unlike previous migrants, the majority of new post-war migrants were not white. For some, "whiteness" has become the basis of identification as a "true cockney" and has 'conferred some sort of guarantee of belonging and entitlement' (Ware 2008: para. 6.1). Wemyss (2006) suggests that there has always been a 'hierarchy of belonging' related to a dominant discourse of "whiteness" in the East End where tolerance of those at the bottom of the hierarchy can either be conferred or withdrawn at any time.

At its extreme this is manifested in the feeling, articulated most notably by the British National Party (BNP), that London has been "ethnically cleansed". The party have found a ready ear in some areas, such as Barking and Dagenham, where they now have 12 local councillors. As New Labour abandoned its traditional constituency, the far right stepped in to blame the new migrants for the problems of the East End that had really been created as a consequence of the reconstruction of capitalism in its post-Fordist phase. Herein lies the problem with Dench *et al.*'s (2006) research—it simply appears to endorse respondents' descriptions of their grievances and hostilities towards the new East Enders without explaining them; something that only a Marxist, materialist analysis of the consequences of the restructuring of capitalism can do to truly counter the BNP threat.

For some fans, the cockney tradition of support for West Ham United acts as a bulwark against what is perceived as a "foreign culture" and as a last outpost against what they regard as a "foreign invasion" (Panayis 2006). Despite legislation to outlaw it, such as the 1991 Football (Offences) Act (see Gardiner and Welch, this volume), resentment towards the

“newcomers” sometimes manifests itself in racist chants and songs in the stands at Upton Park. For example, when the club play their North London rivals, Tottenham Hotspur, some West Ham United supporters sing, “I’d rather be a Paki than a Yid” in reference to Spurs’ large Jewish following. Also, to the chant “Oh East London is wonderful . . .”, some groups have been heard to sing, “Oh East London is like Bengal . . .”, with subsequent words making highly derogatory references to the area’s British Asian community. In 2007, 21 per cent of West Ham United fans polled in the Evening Standard London Football Report said that they had witnessed incidents of football-related racist abuse either inside or outside the ground (Football Fans Census 2007).

Probably the most telling event in recent years came when West Ham United signed Lee Bowyer in January 2003. Bowyer had already accrued a reputation for racist tendencies, with an assault on a British Asian worker at a McDonald’s restaurant whilst he was a teenager playing for Charlton Athletic (Burdsey 2007a), and culminating in a high profile criminal trial in 2002 after he was charged (along with some of his team-mates) with viciously attacking a British Asian student outside a Leeds nightclub. Although he was acquitted of the charges made against him for the latter offence, he was widely criticised for his involvement in the incident, not least by the judge in the case who stated that his police interviews had been ‘littered with lies’ (cited in Burdsey 2007a: 45).

When Bowyer made his home debut for West Ham United, an anti-racist demonstration was hastily organised by Graham Bash, a West Ham United fan for forty-five years, outside the main gates of the ground, under the banner ‘West Ham Fans United against Racism’. My own observation was that, although many fans supported the demonstration, many more attacked it and some tore down the banner. Others observed that some fans spat at protestors, whilst some labelled them ‘white Pakis’ (ibid.: 46). Scuffles broke out and the police had to protect the demonstrators from an angry mob chanting ‘Lee Bowyer, Lee Bowyer . . .’, by moving them across to the other side of the road. Despite Bash’s long history as a West Ham United supporter, in on-the-spot television “voxpops” many fans accused the demonstrators (of which I was one) of not being “real” West Ham United fans or being “newcomers” (I have been a West Ham United supporter for over fifty years). These observations were confirmed by independent sources (Burt 2003).

Such behaviour surely reinforces the view that local British Asians have of West Ham United fans as a threatening gang of white, racist thugs. From the local British Asian perspective, the match-going ritual may be viewed as ‘a fortnightly “invasion” by thousands of predominantly white football fans’ (Burdsey 2007a: 41). British Asian residents in many areas where football grounds are located report experiencing ‘discomfort, fear, verbal abuse, intimidation and violent assault’ from the fortnightly invasion (ibid.). Even where British Asians are football fans themselves, Burdsey (ibid.) goes on

to chronicle numerous reported examples of such fans being attacked at or near football grounds.

However, what the Bowyer incident demonstrates is that rather than West Ham United fans simply being totally imbued with a thoroughgoing racism, it is symptomatic of a long history of struggle for the hearts and souls of the club's fans. There have been many other instances where large numbers of long-term, committed fans have stood up against racism and argued that local British Asians should be made more welcome. For example, when a British Asian seller of the highly popular fanzine *Over Land and Sea* was racially abused outside the ground, the editor, several writers for the fanzine and many other traditional supporters totally condemned the abuse and called upon all "decent" supporters to do likewise. The attitude of the vast majority, including many ex-hooligans, was, "If he's West Ham, he's one of us, and we look after our own regardless of their race"—a manifestation, in a very different way, of the traditional "East End family" culture.

This incident, however ephemeral, seems to chime much more with the picture of 'community cohesion' recognised by local government watchdogs as opposed to what Keith (2008: para. 2.2) terms the 'unremittingly downbeat narrative of racial antagonism' of Dench *et al.*'s (2006) portrayal of neighbouring Tower Hamlets. Indeed:

the simplifications of Dench and Gavron's *The New East End* cast this narrative in a plot characterised by the betrayal of the white working class. The demonisation of the people of Barking found in some liberal commentary acts symmetrically; the white working class becoming the lumpen residue of reactionary sentimentality. In truth both accounts simplify and caricature (Keith 2008: para. 4.3).

Nevertheless, more recently West Ham United were charged by the FA with failing to stop their fans racially abusing a Millwall player, Jason Price, during a highly charged Carling Cup fixture on 25 August 2009 (Ley 2009). The match was also marred by serious hooliganism both inside and outside the ground. Although the racial abuse came from a very small minority of fans and the FA later dropped the charge, this further contributes to feelings amongst the local British Asian communities that the Boleyn Ground is not a place in which they will be made welcome.

"THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM": ARE THE CLUB RACIST?

Judging by the frequent articles on their official website, the club—including the manager and specific players—are constantly trumpeting their social inclusion and anti-racist credentials with 'Statements on Social Responsibility' and support for the Kick It Out initiative, primarily the annual 'One Game, One Community' week of action. However, at the same time,

they either do not notice, deliberately ignore, or hope that others do not notice “the elephant in the room”, i.e. the glaringly obvious evidence that on matchdays it is very difficult to pick out many black or brown faces in the crowd. The club seems to be in total denial that there is even an issue to be addressed here as it is never mentioned on their website. Enquiries I made to the club and the FA Premier League were treated with extreme caution and, in the case of the latter, some hostility. Journalist David Conn (2006) comments that ‘strangely, clubs have often bristled when these, their own figures [on minority ethnic fandom], are pointed out to them. They find it hard to accept their grounds are not carnivals of diversity but mostly dominated by middle-aged white blokes’.

Certainly there was, at the very least, gross insensitivity shown towards the local British Asian community by the club with the signing of Lee Bowyer. The club insisted that they were simply buying a good player. They flatly refused all requests to either condemn Bowyer’s past racist misdemeanours or to insist that Bowyer himself do so and declare his opposition to all forms of racist behaviour, even though every fan that had publicly condemned the signing had said that this would satisfy them. The club never mentioned the controversy or local opposition on its website. As anti-racist campaigner and long-time West Ham United fan, Graham Bash, said at the time of Bowyer’s home debut, ‘what is happening today makes me very sad. Signing Lee Bowyer has done enormous damage to the relationship between the club and the local community’ (cited in Burt 2003). Others, such as Suresh Grover, chair of the National Civil Rights Movement, echoed Bash’s fears about the damage that Bowyer’s signing would do to the club’s relations with local British Asian communities, suggesting that it would undermine years of good work with local partnerships (Brodkin 2003). Similarly, journalist and West Ham United season ticket holder, Shekhar Bhatia (2003), said that ‘West Ham will risk consigning years of good work in furthering relations with Newham’s Asian community to the dustbin’.

Many other British Asian fans of the club also condemned the signing of Bowyer, regarding it as a form of ‘symbolic exclusion’ (Burdsey 2007a: 46). However, it has to be said that this was not universal, suggesting that struggles were going on in British Asian communities as well as white ones as to appropriate responses to the Bowyer signing. Returning to the arguments raised earlier in this chapter, importantly it also ‘allowed racist elements of the West Ham support a new platform to celebrate their white, cockney identities’ (ibid.).

Furthermore, because of a staggering lack of cultural awareness, the club have often been inadvertently culturally racist. For example, until relatively recently, application forms for season-tickets asked for ‘Surname’ followed by ‘Christian name’. The club seemed oblivious to the problem of asking for ‘Christian names’ until it was pointed out to them that, notwithstanding people of other and no faith, 3.1 per cent of people in England, 24 per cent in Newham and 36 per cent in Tower Hamlets

are Muslims (Office for National Statistics 2009b) and therefore do not have ‘Christian names’.

In addition to these demographics, West Ham United persist with two Anglican chaplains, Archdeacon Elwin Cockett and Deacon Alan Bolding, as the club’s only faith representatives. Although they state that their messages apply to people of all faiths and none, what does this signify to the local British Asian and, in particular, Muslim population? Positive action, such as that carried out at Blackburn Rovers FC who have provided a prayer room for Muslims, would show that the club are serious about welcoming the new generation of East Enders. In a phrase quoted from the Macpherson Report, the Independent Football Commission (2004: 38) stated that institutional racism ‘can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through *unwitting* prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people [emphasis added]’.

Having said that, the club have made great efforts in recent years to encourage the local British Asian community to become involved with the club. Their *Asians in Football* project, run by Mick King between 1998 and 2007, was particularly successful. King continues his good work for the club, as the CEO of the West Ham United Community Sports Trust. Notwithstanding this, it must also be recognised that whilst ‘on the one hand the club has made strides in grass roots initiatives working with a diverse group of local youngsters . . . on match days it attracts a relatively tiny number of black and Asian fans’ (Singh 2008).

GENTRIFICATION AND THE AGEING OF FOOTBALL FANDOM: THE “UNWITTING”(?) EXCLUSION OF MINORITY ETHNIC FANS

If the club are attracting so many British Asians to its football coaching programmes, why is this not translated into numbers through the turnstiles? Perhaps another reason to those discussed previously in relation to racism, either by the club or its fans, relates to what has happened to elite football in recent years; something which suggests that the problem might be influenced by social class as well as ethnicity. If football used to be the “Labour Party at prayer” then the Boleyn Ground was its High Temple for the working-class. Now there is a greater representation of middle-class fans.

In 2008, whilst 74 per cent of Premier League fans who attended matches came from the middle classes (social classes A, B and C1), only 9 per cent of match-going fans were from social classes D and E (Sportswise 2008: 8). This latter figure has been falling consistently over the last decade. Although this does, to some extent, reflect the changing nature of employment more generally, it does seem to be changing faster than the change in the occupational make-up of the population. This is not surprising. At the time of abolition of the standing terraces in 1993, the cheapest ticket to see a top-

flight game at Upton Park was £8. The cheapest seat for the 2009/10 season was either £35 or £45, depending on the opposition—a price increase that has far outstripped inflation. As a consequence of gentrification, football fandom has become a leisure activity for the middle-classes, of which a majority of the old East Enders are now a part. Their average incomes are much higher than those of the local population: Tower Hamlets, Newham, and Barking and Dagenham were all in the top ten of the most deprived local authority populations in the Economic Deprivation Index every year from 1999 until 2005 (Noble *et al.* 2009: 18). The Bangladeshi residents in the East End, in particular, have the lowest incomes of all minority ethnic groups in England (Office for National Statistics 2009b). It is arguably no surprise then that they are the most under-represented minority ethnic group amongst match day attendees.

In addition, when we look at the new East Enders on a number of key indicators of deprivation, they tend to be worse off than the population of England and Wales in general (see Table 12.2). Taking into account the fact that some of the new East Enders are very affluent young (white) professionals drawn into the area as the control functions of capitalism shifted to the refurbished Docklands in the 1980s, then the new migrants who belong to minority ethnic groups, tend to be as, if not more, economically deprived as the old East Enders once were.

It is thus unrealistic to believe that many of them can afford £35 or £45 for a ticket for a single game. In contrast, as older fans who have experienced inter- and intra-generational mobility, and are now perhaps freer from commitments to younger children, the old East Enders have more disposable income. As discussed earlier, the old East Enders who left were not only geographically mobile, but also were inter- and intra-generationally socially mobile as the two processes tended to fuel one another.

Table 12.2 Deprivation by area

	Unemployment	Long-term unemployment	Owner occupation	Over-crowding	Lone parent household with dependent children
England and Wales	3.4%	1%	68.9%	7%	6.5%
Newham	6.7%	2.1%	43.6%	26.3%	11.9%
Tower Hamlets	6.7%	2.2%	9%	29.3%	7.1%
Barking and Dagenham	4.5%	1.4%	55.9%	12.4%	10.4%

Source: Office for National Statistics (2009)

With the *Northern Hammers* supporter group, for example, the majority came from manual working-class backgrounds and 73 per cent of them had not been to university (Fawbert 2007:128); higher than for fans in general of all FA Premier League clubs (Williams and Neatrou 2002). However, two-thirds of them now have non-manual occupations, with a high proportion of them earning very high salaries (Fawbert 2007: 129). As a whole, West Ham United fans earn, on average, £46,000 a year, with only Chelsea fans amongst Premier League clubs earning more (Sportswise 2008: 9). The cockney diaspora can clearly afford to attend matches far more easily than the new East Enders.

It might also be suggested that age is a contributory factor. The average age of Premier League fans has been increasing year on year and in 2008 stood at 42 (Sportswise 2008: 6). As Figures 12.1 and 12.2 show, the age profiles of people in Newham and in Tower Hamlets tend to be younger than the national average. A similar, though less-pronounced pattern is evident in Barking and Dagenham (see Figure 12.3). This is characteristic of migrant and minority ethnic communities generally who, through a combination of ethnicity, age profile and (lack of) disposable income, may thus be excluded from the social mobility that will enable them to watch live games.

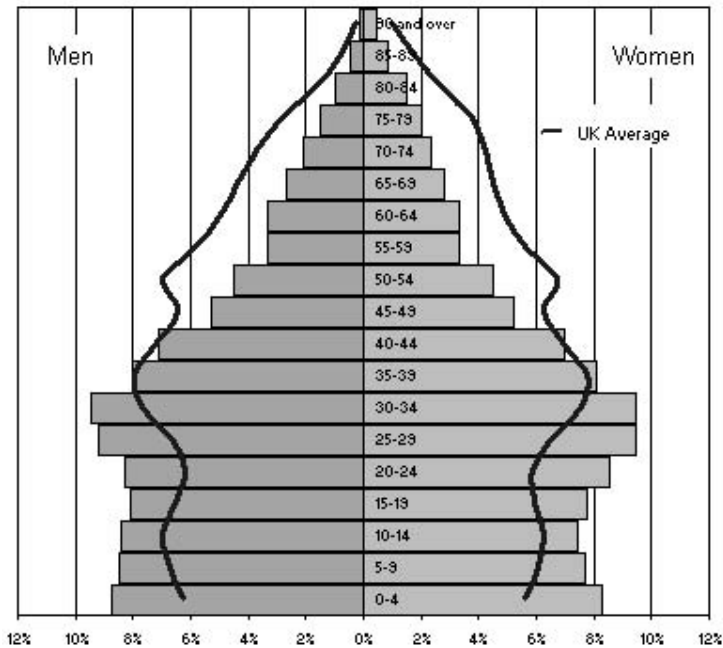


Figure 12.1 Age profile for Newham—Census 2001.

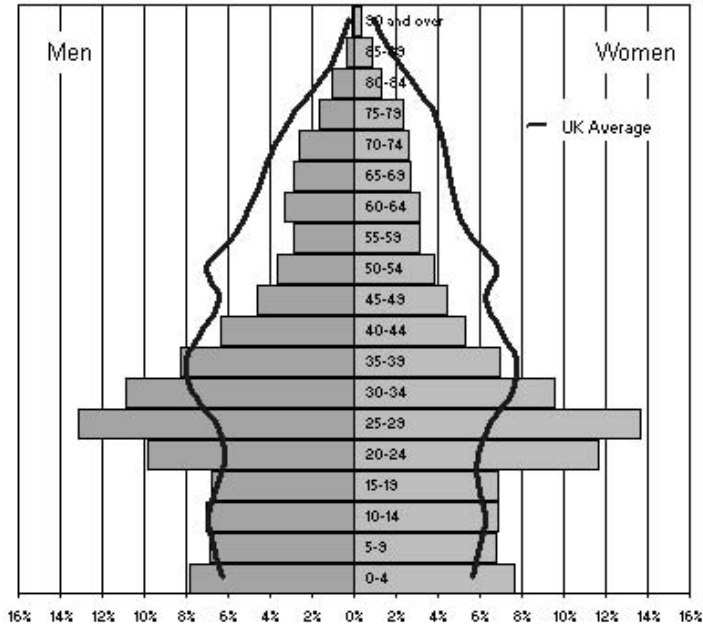


Figure 12.2 Age profile for Tower Hamlets—Census 2001.

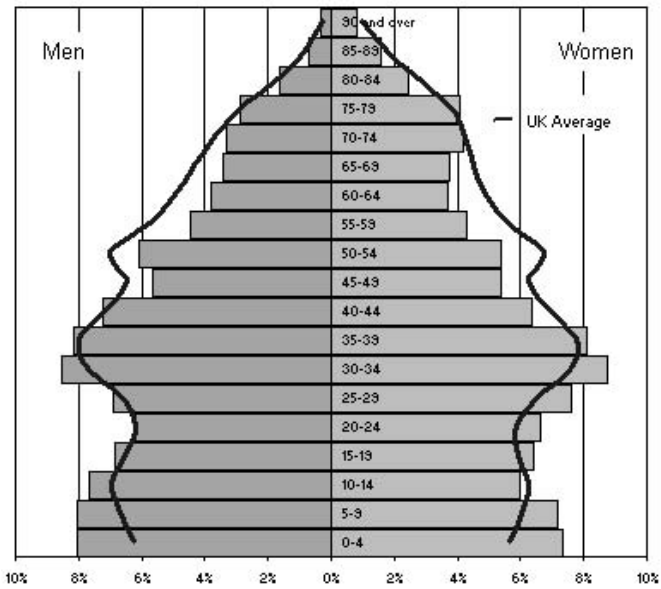


Figure 12.3 Age profile for Barking and Dagenham—Census 2001.

In terms of addressing the problem of affordability, West Ham United have introduced various ticket price reductions for different groups, although recent measures seem to have been motivated more by trying to maintain support during the economic recession than to attract local minority ethnic communities.

CONCLUSION: THE WIND OF CHANGE?

Mick King suggests that:

the fact is that it takes time for the migration patterns to take effect and a lot of the Asians came here in the seventies, so they are still playing catch-up . . . The third generation, which we're into now, are very much into their football (cited in Lovejoy 2007).

Indeed, Ian Tomkins, Head of Public Relations for Newham Borough Council, claims that local British Asian communities are beginning to come together with the “traditional” cockney community through West Ham United. Citing the example of a parade made by players through the streets to celebrate promotion to the Premier League in 2005, he reports that ‘we had Asian women out there in claret and blue saris’ (cited in Panayis 2006).

In conclusion, whilst institutional and cultural racism play a part in the under-representation of minority ethnic groups as fans at the Boleyn Ground, it is too simplistic to suggest that this is the only, or even major, reason. Indeed, the club and many of its fans, though sometimes misguided in their efforts, have tried to shrug off this image for many years. If anything, it is cultural insensitivity and a lack of cultural awareness at times that has not helped. As this chapter has argued, issues such as history (of the club, the East End and immigration), social class, social and geographical mobility, the gentrification of football fandom, age and family responsibilities all need to be taken into account. Indeed, any analysis of the processes of racialisation of football fandom needs to be located within an analysis of class issues in particular.

This does not mean to say that anyone should sit back complacently, do nothing and wait for change in the class system to happen, or ignore the very real issues that need to be addressed by the fans, the club and the FA Premier League. The wind of change may seem to be blowing across the Boleyn Ground but, unless more positive action is taken, it is set to be more like a very cool breeze rather than a hurricane for some time to come.

NOTES

1. Figures 12.1–12.3 figures are reproduced under the terms of the Click-Use licence.

13 ‘They Sing That Song’

Sectarianism and Conduct in the Informalised Spaces of Scottish Football

John Flint and Ryan Powell

INTRODUCTION

Although the behaviour of football fans has a sense of the carnivalesque, it may also comprise animosity and loathing (Giulianotti 1995a, Giulianotti and Gerrard 2001) and the distinctions between these elements are often blurred. Although supporters of the Scottish international team have actively constructed a non-violent identity (Finn and Giulianotti 1998), domestic club football in Scotland has long been associated with sectarianism and disorder (see Murray 1984, Dunning *et al.* 1986b, Bradley 1995, Devine 2000, Burdsey and Chappell 2003, Bruce *et al.* 2004). Consequently, when the Scottish Executive made tackling sectarianism a key priority, a particular focus was placed on domestic football and more specifically the ‘Old Firm’ of Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers (see Scottish Executive 2006a, 2006b; Flint 2008; Flint and Powell 2009). The Scottish National Party (SNP) Scottish Government has reaffirmed its commitment to tackling sectarianism, including undertaking work with the Promoting Citizenship Through Football Partnership, greater use of Football Banning Orders and tackling abusive behaviour at marches and parades (Scottish Government 2009). The behaviour of Rangers supporters, in particular, has received prominent attention following the disorder at the 2008 UEFA Cup Final¹ in Manchester and controversies over the singing of ‘The Famine Song’. Directed at supporters of Celtic (a club strongly linked to the Irish community in Scotland), the song makes reference to the potato famine in Ireland in the 1840s and includes the line ‘why don’t you go home?’ (see BBC Sport 2008). The problematisation of sectarian chants has a long history, with a police officer in 1934 indicating that an incident of disorder in Glasgow had been caused by Rangers supporters: ‘they sing that song—The Billy Boys’² (cited in Davies 2006: 215).

In this chapter, we use the work of Norbert Elias to examine the informalisation of conduct within the particular spaces of Scottish football (Elias 2000, see Dunning *et al.* 1986a for an application of Elias’ theories to football hooliganism). We describe how the spaces of football are conceptualised as affecting the conduct of spectators, and examine historical and

contemporary manifestations of sectarian behaviour at football matches and Loyal Order parades.³ We argue that social class is an important determinant of how conduct is judged and regulated. We explore how the spaces of Scottish football are also used for more formalised expressions of identity and dissent; the emergence of new informalised spaces for sectarian expression; and new forms of regulation related to the wider “civilising” of football spectatorship. We also suggest some areas for further research which could enhance understanding of the relationship between sectarianism, group identification and public space. In conclusion, we establish that, far from being merely sites of incivility and bigotry, the informalised spaces of Scottish football should be understood as arenas where identities and values are expressed and contested around hostilities established in non-football contexts. In this regard, football provides the stage for the expression of sentiments not widely viewed as being socially ‘respectable’ (Dunning *et al.* 1986a).

INFORMALISATION, CONDUCT AND SOCIAL CLASS

The concept of informalisation was first developed by Cas Wouters from the work of Norbert Elias and refers to ‘the trend towards diminishing formality and rigidity in the regimes of manners and emotions and towards increasing behavioural and emotional alternatives’ (Wouters 2007: 8). Its development is built upon Elias’ seminal work *The Civilizing Process* and informalisation should be understood as a complex process taking place *within* the longer term and more gradual civilising process.⁴ Space here does not permit an in-depth discussion on the origins of Elias’ extensive theory (Elias 2000, see also Kuzmics 1988, Mennell and Goudsblom 1998); suffice to say that the theory of civilising processes links changes in human behaviour and habitus—towards a more refined standard of conduct and greater self-restraint—to the growth in social interdependencies, and competition within an increasingly complex and differentiated society. While civilising processes presuppose a stricter and more rigid control over emotions and conduct, as certain public behaviours become sanctioned as inappropriate and are removed behind the scenes of social life (e.g. the bodily functions, expressions of aggression and violence), these are long-term societal trends taking place over many generations, and implicating complex and gradual processes of socialisation and ‘psychologisation’ (Elias 2000). These behaviours gradually become associated with feelings of shame and embarrassment which serve to keep an individual’s behaviour in-check as increasing social interdependence ‘forces people to behave with greater consideration of the feelings and interests of more people for more of the time’ (Wouters 1986: 11). Informalisation processes, on the other hand, bring about a relative relaxation in the standards of self-restraint and can take place over a shorter timeframe. Wouters (2007) points towards discernible ‘waves of

informalisation' that took place in the 1890s, the 'Roaring Twenties', and the permissive era of the 1960s and early 1970s. According to Wouters, all these periods witnessed a *relative levelling* in terms of power relations between groups within society (the sexes, parent-child relations, teacher-pupil relations),⁵ and a related decrease in the regulation of conduct, allowing for the freer expression of alternative emotions and identities. As Wouters (*ibid.*: 3) notes of the permissive era:

many modes of conduct that had formerly been forbidden were now allowed, particularly in matters of sexuality, and conduct and emotions became less formally regulated in such spheres of behaviour as the written and spoken language, clothing, music, dancing, and hairstyles.

The theory of informalisation, then, is concerned with changing behavioural expectations and standards of conduct linked to changing power relations between different generations, groups and sexes within society. It should not, however, be viewed as a reversal of the civilising process—a *decivilising* process—whereby the structuring codes of society have been eroded such that it falls into disorder and destruction (Mennell 1990, Fletcher 1997). Elias (2000) first referred to this process as the 'controlled decontrolling of emotional controls'. Though rather cumbersome, this term captures the idea that informalisation is *part of* the overall, long-term civilising process, but at the same time represents a counter-current through which the rigid formalities and regimes of previous generations and elites are challenged. As is discussed next, in relation to football and the governance of sectarianism in Scotland, these challenges often implicate and involve complex identifications (and by extension disidentifications), and their interplay with symbolic expressions of national and religious affiliations.

To date, the theory of informalisation has been applied at a society-wide level (Elias 1996) and, while there have been studies exploring national differences (e.g. Wouters 2007), little attention has been given to specific spatial correlates in which processes of informalisation appear to manifest themselves more clearly. That is, while there is a wealth of evidence to support the propositions of Elias and Wouters from the point of view of general societal trends (Kranendonk 1990, Wouters 2007), few studies have explored differences *within* societies or across different social spaces. We would argue that a spatial appreciation of the theory has much to offer research on differing standards of behaviour and the governance—both self and social—of conduct, with football spaces being one such example.

The spaces of football are ascribed the power to alter the behaviour of 'respectable' (middle-class) individuals. Curry (2007: 195–7, our emphasis) describes Victorian-era reports of a referee being 'grossly assaulted by those who should certainly have set a better example to the *lower order*' and an incident involving a '*respectably dressed individual*'. In a contemporary example, the journalist Graham Spiers (2009a, our emphasis) describes an

individual engaging in sectarian singing at Ibrox as ‘in every other way quite a *respectable-looking* bloke’. In these cases, it is the social dynamics within the particular spaces of a football ground and the loosening of social constraints that are believed to lead to a *temporary* transformation in conduct. Thus, in 1934, a Glasgow Sheriff described perpetrators of sectarian disorder as being ‘from good homes’ and suggested that ‘the spirit of faction frequently *carries away* people who are *otherwise respectable*’ (cited in Davies 2006: 218, our emphases). Similarly, the Scottish Executive (2006b: 6) stated that ‘fans sometimes go along with [sectarian singing and chanting] without really considering the effects of what they are saying’.

These perspectives resonate with Elias’ theory of established-outsider relations (Elias and Scotson 1994) which focuses on the importance of group membership and identity in the control of behaviour, and deviance from it. For Elias (1994: xli), the ‘self-regulation of members of a closely knit group is linked to the internal opinion of that group’ which suggests that the internal group dynamics of crowds and spectators are an important consideration in understanding the conduct of supporters. The notion of group identity in a non-football context is also relevant and, whereas Dunning *et al.* (1986b) argue that football can provide an arena for the renewal of hostilities between the lower working-classes and the police, this can also apply to authority in a wider sense. Football can provide an arena for the rejection of respectable values disseminated throughout society in other social settings. The idea that otherwise ‘respectable’ fans simply ‘go along with’ sectarian singing therefore implies a normalisation of these practices within the specific context of the football ground (see also Müller *et al.* 2007).

In these journalistic and policy accounts of respectability and sectarianism, some individuals are viewed as being out of place in such arenas. One football-related example of this occurred when the vice-chairman of Rangers FC, Donald Findlay, was forced to resign in 1999 when he was caught on film singing the ‘Billy Boys’ song, containing a line about ‘being up to our knees in Fenian blood’, at an end of season supporters’ party in Glasgow. In his resignation statement, Findlay acknowledged that he had made ‘a serious misjudgement’, although he also stated that ‘it was euphoria . . . when you sing that, you don’t think of what the words mean’ (cited in Deveney 1999). Findlay stated that ‘*even at such a function* [i.e. a Rangers supporters’ party, our emphasis] my conduct was not acceptable’, which suggests that this conduct was more tolerated in such social situations and would be unremarkable amongst less prominent individuals from a different social position (Deveney 1999, see also O’Sullivan 1999). Both a former director of Celtic FC and a prominent Celtic supporting lawyer claimed that Findlay was not a bigot and that for him to be portrayed in that way for singing at a private party was unfair (Deveney 1999). What appears to be noteworthy about this discourse was the condemnation around someone in Findlay’s position being ‘pictured belting out obscenities like a *yob* in the

stands' (ibid., our emphasis). As O'Sullivan (1999, our emphasis) argues, 'these events, *polite society* seems to have concluded, are about football, a mad tribalism that rages briefly on a Saturday afternoon. Such events are dismissed as merely the death throes of a Neanderthal age, best forgotten'.

Such views are symptomatic of what Cummings (2007) terms the elitist prejudices towards working-class Rangers supporters (and, indeed, those of Celtic and other clubs). This may be framed within the longer historical judgements of the conduct of football spectators, and on occasion players, being aligned with a wider portrayal of working-class behaviour. Since the Victorian era, football has always been viewed as a disorderly influence, with the conduct and language of the players and spectators being problematised and attempts made to 'domesticate' the game (Pearson 2009).⁶ Curry (2007: 197–8, our emphases) reports descriptions of football crowds in Victorian Sheffield as comprising 'scores of excited and vengeance-threatening individuals of a *somewhat rough appearance*' and in another incident as being '*not too refined*'. The social conflict in 1930s Glasgow was related by one judge specifically to the working-class as 'football and religious prejudice mixed up in the minds of the *particular class* of people with whom we are dealing' (Davies 2006: 212, our emphasis). Historical and contemporary concerns about the behaviour of football supporters are part of a wider imagining and defining of the characteristics of lower class status with specific subcultural practices, real and imaginary (Nayak 2009, see also Hume 2008 on the disorder involving Rangers supporters at the 2008 UEFA Cup Final in Manchester). Reflecting the close association between football and (working-class) religious-political identities, Loyal Order parades, involving the mobilisation of large numbers of (often boisterous) young men, are also conceptualised as being 'a blight on society. The drunkenness, the litter, the anachronistic swagger and the nasty, spoiling for a fight atmosphere of it all . . . is an unedifying spectacle' (Garavelli 2009). Particular attention is given to the 'rag tag group of men and women who follow the parades and named the "blue bag brigade" after the off-licence bags they carry their alcohol in' (Hamill 2008).

What emerges here is a social distinction between the *temporary aberration* of conduct of otherwise respectable (middle-class) individuals in the informalised spaces of football matches, and the *permanent* and *normalised* problematic behaviour, appearance and social values of some working-class groups which are also manifested in such spaces. Reflecting on criticisms of Loyal Order (primarily Grand Orange Lodge) parades in Glasgow, the prominent Scottish historian Tom Devine argued that 'although there is still a bourgeoisie element within Scottish Orangeism . . . it's almost entirely a movement of the *underclass* . . . which provides a social environment for its membership' (cited in Braiden 2009a, emphasis added). Similarly, Bruce *et al.* (2004: 173) claim that urban Scotland has a problem with incivility in which 'some . . . thugs sometimes use religion and ethnic origin to divide their impoverished world into them and us'. As McKenna

(2009) points out, empathy is missing from both these ‘underclass’ accounts and Scotland’s governing elites’ aim of ‘eradicating every vestige of tribal behaviour and every trace of religious and cultural division’. Such accounts also limit explanations to specific forms of conflict amongst working-class groups, rather than locating the social roots of these conflicts across classes (Dunning *et al.* 1986a). In so doing, these accounts also downplay the importance of a group identification related to the collective sense of belonging experienced at football matches and parades (discussed in more detail next).

CONDUCT AND REGULATION IN THE INFORMALISED SPACES OF FOOTBALL

It is useful to situate the governance of sectarianism in the spaces of Scottish football within the wider context of the regulation of conduct at football matches in the UK. It could be argued that football spectatorship in general has been the target of a ‘civilising offensive’ (see van Krieken 1999, Flint and Powell 2009). This term refers to the ‘active, conscious and deliberate projects of powerful groups’ (van Krieken 1999: 303) aimed at bringing about long lasting shifts in the standards of behaviour and cultural orientations of “lower classes”. This offensive has been aimed at altering the conduct of supporters within football grounds, and has been given particular impetus and public support as a result of a perceived rise in hooliganism, a series of tragic football disasters (e.g. Heysel, Hillsborough) and intensive media coverage of football-related disorder. Football as an informalised arena has often been appropriated for the expression of political and social views, and perceived as a setting where existing societal antagonisms (e.g. of class, disaffected youth, race, religion) are brought to the surface. For instance, there are links between some football clubs and the extreme far right in England, such as Chelsea FC and the well-documented support for the group Combat 18 among a small minority of its supporters.⁷ As with sectarianism in Scotland, this has invoked responses which conceptualise these problems as problems *of* football or the working-class when in fact these are mirrored across wider society, albeit behind the scenes of social life and therefore less clearly discernible.

Football stadia in the UK and beyond have undergone a transformation over the last 25 years as part of this ‘civilising’ project, as the sport has become more commercialised and sought to become more inclusive. Recent years have seen heightened surveillance of football fans, numerous anti-racism campaigns, the introduction of all-seater stadia, prescriptive written codes of conduct by football clubs, improved amenities and increased disability provision, to name but a few. Thus, football has been the subject of sustained attempts at sanitising and improving the fan experience, and the Scottish Government’s attempt at tackling sectarianism can be seen as the

latest of these endeavours. In some cases, these governance and civilising projects have been met with organised resistance on the part of spectators in response to the increased commercialisation and corporatisation of the game (Taylor 1971), which is seen as detrimental to the fan experience by curtailing some of the passion and atmosphere valued by supporters. For example, the Safe Standing campaign, supported by the Football Supporters' Federation in England and Wales, was established with the expressed goal of bringing back terracing to stadiums in the top two tiers of English football, which have been all-seater venues since the Taylor Report recommendations in the wake of the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 (see Football Supporters Federation 2007). Similarly, the Stand Up Sit Down campaign encourages supporters to stand in designated seating areas and fans often resist the calls of stewards and club officials to take their seats. Thus, despite this increased regulation and surveillance in recent years, football spaces appear to be more resilient to the governance attempts of authorities and wider society. That said, neither are they spaces of self-abandon or total liberation from the codes of conduct governing social life.

In his account of the disorder at the 2008 UEFA Cup Final in Manchester, Millward (2009b) describes the temporal dimension to crowd behaviour, with increasing levels of alcohol resulting in 'discriminatory overtones becoming normalised' as anti-Celtic and anti-Catholic banners and songs became more visible and audible as the day progressed. Likewise, Dunning *et al.* (1986a) identify that alcohol, through lowering inhibitions, acts as a facilitator or agent of disorder. This account highlights that, far from being unregulated spaces of individual freedom, football crowds are governed by shifting informal and self-regulated definitions of legitimacy and appropriateness, and that individuals perceive conduct which is not usually permissible in other social settings as becoming more acceptable in a crowd situation.

These dynamics are equally present in other collective gatherings focused on ethnic and religious identity in Scotland—for example, the significant increase in street drinking, common assaults, assaults on police officers and racially or religiously aggravated conduct related to Orange Order parades (Braiden 2009b). Research has shown that police officers regulating matches believe that football supporters are "normal people" outside the ground but once they enter they become different (O'Neil 2005). For example, a Rangers fan was found guilty of a Breach of the Peace aggravated by religious and racial prejudice after singing the Famine Song at a match between Kilmarnock and Rangers on 9 November 2008, and in May 2009, a Celtic fan was banned for life by the club after waving an Irish Tricolour with "IRA" written on it at an Old Firm game at Rangers' Ibrox Stadium.

The reactions to these incidents highlight debates about the form and limits of conduct at football matches. During the Rangers supporter's appeal, Donald Finlay QC argued that a football match was 'an organised breach of the peace' and for many supporters 'an exchange of pleasantries

in the form of abuse is part and parcel of going to the game' (cited in BBC News 2009a). Similarly, the Rangers Supporters Trust (2008) characterised the singing of the Famine Song as a 'mocking response to Celtic fans' (see also Henry 2008, Rooney 2008). However, the Appeal Court judges argued that 'presence inside a football stadium does not give a spectator a free hand to behave as he pleases. There are limits', and the Court found that the song was racist and 'displays malice and ill-will towards people of Irish descent living in Scotland' (cited in BBC News 2009a).

The media accounts of these incidents repeat the themes of the perpetrators being "louts" and "thugs", and highlight the "shame" and "embarrassment" for other supporters and the football clubs. Indeed, the Celtic fan involved blamed 'drunken stupidity' (Angove and McAulay 2009). In these examples, behaviour is viewed as regrettable and shameful, a temporary error occurring within the informalised context of football matches involving the Old Firm. However, as we will see in the following sections, football also provides the space for more formalised expressions of identities and is subject to increasingly formal mechanisms of governance and regulation.

THE REGULATION AND DEFENCE OF IDENTITIES

The most prominent examples of conflict over legitimate social expression and values within the spaces of football are protests linked to official commemorations. At the Scottish Cup semi-final between Celtic and Hearts at Hampden Park in April 2005, a minute's silence to commemorate the memory of Pope John Paul II had to be curtailed after being disrupted by a section of the Hearts support, six of whom were subsequently charged with sectarian offences. Although the disruption was perceived as sectarian, the complexity of this disorder is illustrated by minor instances of dissent towards the silence occurring at the previous semi-final between Hibernian and Dundee United, two clubs with a strong Irish heritage (see BBC Sport 2005).

In November 2008, the Association of Irish Celtic Supporters Clubs and other groups under the umbrella of Celts Against Imperialism staged a protest against Celtic FC's decision to include a poppy on their players' strips to commemorate Remembrance Day. The protest involved a group of supporters, estimated to number between 100 and 500, walking out of the Parkhead Stadium after 10 minutes of a match against Motherwell and congregating at the statue of Brother Walfrid (the principal founder of Celtic FC) to continue their objection. In November 2009, a very small number of Celtic supporters remained outside Falkirk's stadium and sang a protest song during the Remembrance silence being held in the ground prior to the match between to the two sides.

These incidents illustrate how football may provide arenas for the vocal and visible expression of dissent and values that are constrained in other social settings, and how conceptualisations of clubs' "legitimate" identities

are themselves contested. Each of these incidents were characterised by disputes within the support of the clubs involved, both during the incidents and subsequently through fans' forums and fanzines. The incidents also highlight how football clubs' attempts to define and regulate required conduct and "legitimate" signifiers of identity may be challenged. Rangers FC has stated that supporters should refrain from singing the Famine Song (Spiers 2009b). Similarly, Celtic FC subsequently sought to take action against supporters involved in the poppy protest. Likewise, the Grand Master of the Orange Order in Scotland stated that the 'enjoyment of music and pageantry in a carnival atmosphere' should 'not be spoiled by the antics of boozed-up foul-mouthed followers' as 'there is no place in our celebration for public drinking, abusive behaviour or offensive chants'. In addition, the police stated that 'sectarian behaviour' would not be tolerated at parades (cited in BBC News 2009b).

However, according to the Rangers Supporters Trust (2008), that the Famine Song continued to be sung despite appeals by the Rangers Chairman and Chief Executive was evidence of the absence of meaningful relationships between the club's senior leadership and the wider support. Those involved in the poppy protest at Celtic argued that it was 'time to reclaim our club from those who would prefer to wrap it in the Union Jack rather than the Tricolour' (Association of Irish Celtic Supporters Clubs 2008). Interestingly, these groups attempted to emulate the official mechanisms of the civic society widely hostile to them, through the issuing of media "position statements" (ibid., Rangers Supporters Trust 2008). It is evident that, for these supporters, football and parades provide an opportunity for formalised and organised expressions of ethnic, religious and/or political identity. The authorities have often sought to minimise the visibility of these identities—for example, Rangers FC proscribing legitimate banners such as Union flags and Saltires (Rangers FC 2003), a Glasgow City Council ban on the sale of sectarian paraphernalia and the reduction in the number of Loyal Order parades in Glasgow. These actions have a long historical precedent with attempts being made in the 1930s to prohibit supporters taking flags, banners, rattles, bugles and whistles into stadiums and the police confiscating banners, scarves and flags from brakists (Davies 2006: 209–10).⁸

NEW SPACES AND NEW FORMS OF REGULATION

It is important that an examination of conduct in football-related spaces is located within the wider context of other urban arenas of social interaction and conflict within the daily lives of cities. Gallagher (1987: 2–3) makes the crucial point that 'in an overcrowded Glasgow informal mechanisms of restraint emerged which prevented the city from being engulfed in sectarian warfare'. This highlights the need to understand the daily informal

and normalised mechanisms and conventions of restraint that situate the behaviour and reduced social constraints of football crowds as in themselves extraordinary or remarkable. One feature of Glasgow is the relative lack of ethnic or religious residential segregation (Pacione 2009), and the lack of visible differentiation inscribed upon the bodies and voices of (white, Christian origin) residents (in terms of skin colour, accent or religious clothing). This enables the anonymity of most individuals' ethnic or religious affiliation as they move through urban space in the city.

It is, then, the very visibility and explicit demonstrating of allegiances at Old Firm matches or Loyal Order parades that provide a particular focus and context for crowd behaviour. In this sense, the *relative* seclusion from open sectarian sentiment in other social contexts has a bearing on the emotional experience of sectarianism (for both participants and observers) at football stadia or parades. The opportunity for an expression of identity can appear as a challenge to order expressed through a collective identification with particular cultural or national signifiers (e.g. an Irish tricolour or a Union flag). One of the key components of sectarianism in the spaces of Scottish football and Loyal Order parades is the fact that these identifications are, by their very nature, dialectical: they are expressed in opposition so that an identification with Rangers and Protestantism is at the same time a disidentification from Celtic and Catholicism. These identifications are then invoked and maintained through the teaching of history and common memories of past glories, most notably in the sectarian chants and songs which refer to these past events. Given that for many Old Firm fans these religious affiliations are so closely bound up with the identities of the football clubs to which they feel a sense of belonging, the eradication of public expressions of sectarianism appears an ambitious endeavour. As Davies (2006) notes, academics have disagreed as to whether the Old Firm rivalry should be understood as a cause of ongoing sectarianism in Glasgow (Moorhouse 1984) or merely ritualised, yet ultimately benign, abuse intended purely at "winding-up" rival supporters (Bruce *et al.* 2004).

Parallels can be drawn here with abuse directed at other football supporters in England, such as anti-Semitic sentiments expressed towards Tottenham Hotspur supporters (the club has a large Jewish fan base) and homophobic songs and chanting at matches involving Brighton and Hove Albion (situated in a city with a large and prominent lesbian/gay community). The question as to whether supporters participating in these chants and songs can be considered sectarian, anti-Semitic or homophobic in their everyday lives, or whether it is a "wind-up" reference to the stereotyped image and identity of the respective places and clubs, represents an area for further research. What is again clear, however, is that these supporters exercise looser self-restraint within the spatial context of the football ground.

That is not to say that other urban spaces do not provide arenas for the manifestation of sectarian identities, including graffiti and a public house that lost its licence after allegations of sectarian singing (Braiden 2009c).⁹

However, it is the removing of anonymous identities that often results in visible and physical changes to daily behaviour. New spaces of informalised or ritualised behaviour have often emerged through developments in public and private transport (Curry 2007, see also O'Dochartaigh 2007). For example, Davies (2006: 208) charts the links between sectarian disorder in the 1920s and 1930s in Glasgow with the growth of "brake-carts" that transported rival sets of Celtic and Rangers supporters to matches 'festooned with flags and banners proclaiming allegiance to the rival causes of Britain and Ireland'. Davies (*ibid.*: 202) describes how 'neither set of supporters moved anonymously through the city—they flaunted their teams colours, sang "party songs" and shouted abuse and threats at passers by suspected of belonging to the rival faith'. Routes to and from football matches and Orange walks were lined with hostile crowds and flags. Contemporary examples include disorder along the route of a Royal Black Order parade in the Gallowgate area of Glasgow in August 2009 (Braiden 2009b). European club football competition provides further spaces for the articulation of sectarian behaviour, as in Manchester in 2008,¹⁰ whilst regulation of conduct also extends across national boundaries, with Rangers fined by UEFA for sectarian singing by their supporters at away matches against Villarreal and Osasuna in Spain.

Football clubs have extended their attempts to regulate the conduct of their supporters on public transport and in the community at large (Rangers Football Club 2003), along with the local authorities and police, evidenced by the fining and banning of a St. Johnstone fan for singing a sectarian song on a train. Glasgow City Council is currently attempting to reduce the number of Loyal Order parades by 90 per cent from the current annual total of 247, re-routing parades away from the city centre and ending the concept of return parades where individual lodges and bands return to their local area from a main demonstration. The remaking and intensified regulation of the spaces of football is also evident in the creation of 'fan zones' supplying entertainment, food and drink, and big screens, as in Manchester for the 2008 UEFA Cup Final (Millward 2009); and the use of 'exclusion zones' by Glasgow City Council whereby street traders must abide by licensing conditions prohibiting the sale of items with a sectarian content. Within these spaces, the conduct of supporters and followers is more intensively regulated by new mechanisms including Football Banning Orders, the use of racially aggravated offences, fixed penalty notices and the "blacklisting" of some bands from Loyal Order parades (Braiden 2009a, Scottish Government 2009).

In this context, an emerging space for informalised sectarian conduct is the Internet. The Internet provides public access to those who would normally be excluded from conventional mass media and provides a free online environment for the articulation of sectarian sentiment (see studies by McMenemy *et al.* 2005, O'Loan *et al.* 2005). Online interaction is often associated with boundaries and lines of conflict, and as a location where

communication with an imagined audience becomes possible. This serves to marginalise more moderate voices in the process (O'Dochartaigh 2007). New media technologies also change the coverage of disorder and create new spaces for the presentation of conduct, for example the use of CCTV images at the 2008 UEFA Cup Final in Manchester, or the sanitisation of coverage, with Sky television using its ability to 'mute any chants or songs which could cause offence', to reduce the sound of chanting outside the stadium during the Remembrance Day silence at the Falkirk versus Celtic match discussed earlier (Mathieson 2009).

CONCLUSION

The behaviour of Scottish football supporters is regulated within a framework in which the Scottish Government (2009) states that 'sectarianism is never acceptable, never excusable'. Implicit in this regulation is the understanding that the informalisation of conduct in the spaces of Scottish football, and the loosening of the social constraints within them, provided opportunities for the articulation of sectarian sentiment that would not be tolerated elsewhere. As Dunning *et al.* (1986a: 264) describe, 'at a football match, they [spectators] are able to act in ways that are frowned on by officialdom and much of "respectable" society, and they can do so in a context that provides relative immunity from censure and arrest'. Thus, the Scottish Government (2009) seeks to ensure that Football Banning Orders are used 'on every occasion that sectarian abuse, violence or disorder occurs'. It is evident that Old Firm football matches and Orange Order parades do provide spaces where 'informal mechanisms of constraint' (Gallagher 1987) are realigned for some supporters and result in verbal and physical conflict and disorder.

There are, as Elias (2000) argues, class and social position dimensions to how this conduct is perceived. Partly, these spaces are conceptualised as temporarily transforming the conduct of otherwise "respectable" individuals, involving drunkenness and "meaningless" abuse. Partly, the spaces of football are viewed as one manifestation of a more permanent problem of incivility and bigotry within (largely) working-class groups. There are, however, still many gaps in our understanding of the prevalence of this conflict and disorder across different groups and social strata. There is therefore a need for empirical research which examines the involvement in, and extent of, sectarian expression in public spaces by gender,¹¹ across generations, and across different areas and urban spaces within Scotland. However, what we have sought to illustrate in this chapter is that football and parades also provide arenas for more formalised expressions of identity, including the ritual expressions of hostility (Damer 1990) which continue even as spaces are transformed and intensively regulated. This may not extend to a form of working-class

resistance or alienation (as argued by Taylor 1971 and Clarke 1978), but it does reflect the continual defiant articulation of sentiments increasingly problematised by governing elites.

Crucially, these attempts to regulate football in Scotland occur within a civilising offensive (Elias 2000, Flint and Powell 2009) based on a conceptualisation that 'what was acceptable [in relation to sectarianism and football] in the past is becoming untenable now' (see Braiden 2009b). Rather than being limited to regulating the temporary aberrations of supporters in the context of a sporting event, the governance of sectarianism, Old Firm football matches and Loyal Order parades in Scotland is also about positioning some of the identities expressed through football as being 'an anachronism', 'Neanderthal' or a 'cultural backwater mired in its own past' (O'Sullivan 1999, Garavelli 2009). Formerly tolerated behaviour becomes out of context in the 'new Scotland' (Devine cited in Braiden 2009a) or 'modern' Glasgow (Braiden 2009a).¹² However, rather than sectarian behaviour being 'a deliberate attempt to reawaken old antagonisms' (Garavelli 2009), it is also a manifestation of contemporary social tensions in Scotland around identity, ethnicity, religion, class and culture. Millward (2009) is right to say that the class and religious positions of fans are important in understanding football disorder. These positions are also important to the fans themselves, in their daily lives as well as the informalised spaces of Scottish football.

NOTES

1. It was estimated that 150,000 Rangers fans travelled to Manchester for the 2008 UEFA Cup Final. Serious disorder broke out in Piccadilly Gardens when a large screen due to show the game failed. Thirty-nine police officers were injured, including some who were seriously assaulted and 39 fans were arrested. There were also widespread complaints of drunkenness, vandalism, littering and urinating in public (see Manchester City Council 2008).
2. The Billy Boys is a song sung by some Rangers supporters, which contains the line "We're up to our knees in Fenian blood, Surrender or you'll die". The song is now banned from Ibrox stadium.
3. The Loyal Orders, including the Grand Orange Lodge, the Royal Black Institution and the Apprentice Boys of Derry, are Protestant fraternities. They have a significant presence in Scotland, and have strong linkages to the Protestant history and identity of Rangers Football Club.
4. It is important to note that Elias was concerned with changes in manners and the standards of conduct over the *very long-term*, and charted these developments from the medieval period onwards.
5. This is of course a general trend across society as a whole and we recognise the heterogeneity of contexts, situations and social positions.
6. Interestingly, Pearson (2009) describes how participation in football was also viewed as a means of providing discipline to working-class young men.
7. These links received particular attention in the wake of a 1999 BBC documentary by the investigative journalist Donal MacIntyre, evidence from which resulted in several arrests and convictions (BBC TV 1999).

8. 'Brakes' were clubs of supporters named after the horse-drawn carriages and subsequently motorised charabancs used to transport supporters to matches (Davies 2006).
9. The Kick Out Bigotry website (www.kickoutbigotry.org) reprints this story under the heading 'Glasgow football bar condemned for sectarianism' thereby linking the pub to the sport.
10. In another interesting example, Hamburg fans displayed an enormous Union flag and 'No Surrender' banner during their home Europa League tie against Celtic on 4 November 2009. 'No Surrender' is a reference to the widely used phrase within Loyalism in Northern Ireland. This incident may be linked to the close connection between Celtic and Hamburg's city rivals FC St. Pauli.
11. We are grateful to Gordon Dabinett and Aiden While for raising the issue of the gendered nature of sectarianism in Scotland.
12. The Orange Order in Scotland has sought to realign itself with these trends by rebranding the traditional July parade as 'Orange Fest' involving a 'week long cultural festival and tourist attraction' (Hamill 2008).

Equity, Anti-Racism and the Politics of Campaigning

14 Negative Equity?

Amateurist Responses to Race Equality Initiatives in English Grass-Roots Football

Jim Lusted

INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the millennium there have been some significant policy developments aimed at tackling racial inequalities in English football, perhaps most notably in 2002 when the Football Association (FA) approved its own *Ethics and Sports Equity Strategy* (hereafter E&SES). High on the agenda of this new strategy was a range of statements about race equality and encouraging the involvement of minority ethnic participants in all aspects of the English game. Despite the longer standing anti-racist campaigns in football such as Kick It Out, this was the FA's first internal commitment to equality, and the first to directly cover the grass-roots level of English football.¹

The overwhelming focus of research on anti-racist and race equality initiatives in English football has been on the professional game; we know much less about what is going on at the local, grass-roots football governance organisations known as County Football Associations (CFAs). These bodies have, until very recently, largely avoided any direct interaction with broader campaigns such as Kick It Out (Long *et al.* 2000). Previous research has identified some difficulties in implementing race equality, particularly at the grass-roots level of sport (see Horne 1995, Swinney and Horne 2005, Spracklen *et al.* 2006). While an anti-racist discourse has emerged within English football structures and cultures, the actual adoption of race equality policies—particularly those that call for institutional changes and positive action—appears to be much more problematic (see Back *et al.* 2001, Bradbury this volume). In some cases, claims have even been made that these relatively new race equality initiatives are actually creating a range of *new* problems and tensions (Long *et al.* 2003, Lusted 2009). This chapter attempts to make some sense of the early reception of race equality initiatives in grass-roots football, specifically from CFA Council members—voluntary members drawn from the local football population who sit on a range of important decision making CFA committees.

Very few people from a minority ethnic background are involved in running and organising British sport. Recent research found that 40 per cent

of sports organisations said they had no minority ethnic staff (or did not collect figures on such issues), while 68 per cent could not identify any minority ethnic coaches and 76 per cent could not identify any minority ethnic officials in their sports (Spracklen *et al.* 2006). In grass-roots football, the lack of diversity is even more striking; the FA's own research (Football Association 2002) has identified 99 per cent of Council members at national and local level as white, a finding supported more recently by my own survey of CFAs (Lusted 2008).

I will be drawing upon some of the qualitative data I collected from interviews and participant observation at five case study CFAs across England between 2004–2007 to help identify some of the key generative mechanisms behind the widespread scepticism towards race equality policies in the grass-roots English game. So far, resistance of this kind has invariably been analysed within the paradigm of 'whiteness' and white privilege (Long and Hylton 2002). Elsewhere, I have tried to show how some of this resistance draws upon ideas of 'race' (Lusted 2009), broadly in line with the whiteness thesis but also the concept of colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 2006). I want to extend this analysis here by attempting to identify some of the broader ideological conditions that appear to inform resistance to the core principles of the FA's race equality objectives within the E&SES. Central here is the notion of amateurism—invariably a term used to describe British sport's past rather than its present (Allison 2001). I suggest that amateurist ideology is an enduring feature of the structures and cultures of grass-roots football governance in England. In particular, some central components to amateurism—namely its claims to the inherent fairness of sport and the rejection of political interference—appear to directly clash with the nature of the FA's race equality objectives within the E&SES.

The chapter is structured as follows: firstly, I provide an overview of the formation of the E&SES, particularly the role of the New Labour government in driving the equity agenda in British sport. Secondly, I summarise the existing evidence around the reception of race equality policies in British sporting organisations, including those in English football. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to outlining the sustained presence of 'amateurist' ideology at CFAs, and the ways in which these ideas offer a contradictory understanding of race equality objectives for CFA Council members that nonetheless remain integral to their implementation.

THE POLICY CONTEXT: THE EMERGENCE OF RACE EQUALITY POLICIES AT THE ENGLISH FA

Formal attempts to challenge racism in English football emerged in the 1990s, predominantly targeted at football supporters of professional clubs (see Garland and Rowe 2001). At the grass-roots level of English football, anti-racist activities have been much more sporadic and disorganised. The

leading anti-racism campaign in football, Kick It Out, only began to venture into some grass-roots activities in the late 1990s (Garland and Rowe 2001). It is certainly hard to find evidence of any meaningful engagement with race equality in grass-roots football from the governance organisations of English football (including the FA) until the formation of the E&SES in 2002. This seems remiss when placed next to testimonies we have of the often *more* brutal, frequent and unchallenged forms of racism evident in the grass-roots game from the 1970s onwards (Bains and Johal 1999, Long *et al.* 2000, Burdsey 2004a, Bradbury this volume, Campbell this volume).

Since 2000, ‘sports equity’ has become an increasingly familiar term among those who work and volunteer in British sport (see Shaw 2007). Like all national governing bodies of British sports, the FA have been compelled to formulate their own strategy for tackling inequalities in their sport, including those derived from ideas of ‘race’. While we should not underestimate the lobbying of key individuals within the FA² with an interest in promoting equality in English football, there are much wider sources of influence behind the emergence of the race equality initiatives contained within the E&SES. Some of the central organisations involved here are illustrated in Figure 14.1.

Undoubtedly, the key driver of policy developments in grass-roots British sport has been the changing relationship between government and sport. The 1997 election of New Labour represented an ideological shift to a ‘third way’ which significantly extended the emerging interest in sport

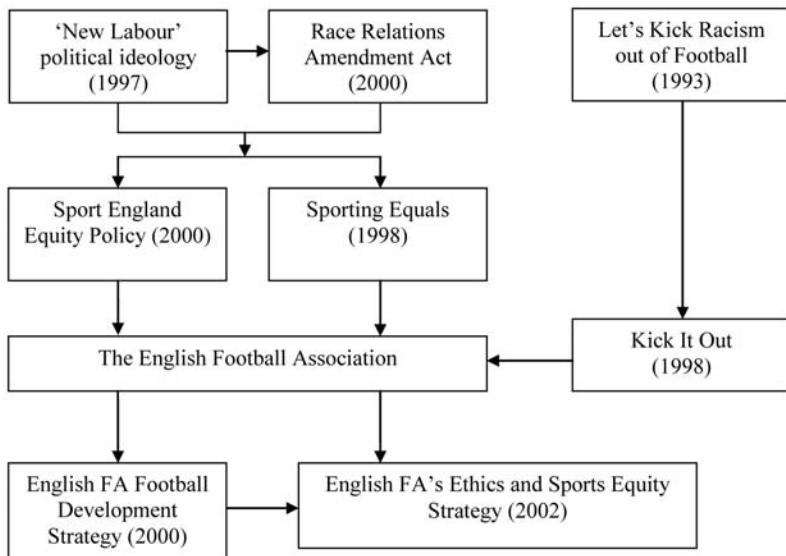


Figure 14.1 Key drivers behind the emergence of the FA's race equality initiatives.

developed by the previous Conservative government (Houlihan and White 2002). The wider implications of this changing political stance on sport have been examined in detail elsewhere (Collins 2004, Coalter 2007, Lusted and O’Gorman 2010). What is important for our purposes here is that one of the uses of sport by New Labour was to promote social inclusion and community cohesion (Levitas 1998, Lusted and O’Gorman 2010). At the same time the Race Relations Act became strengthened in 2000 to compel public bodies to actively promote race equality rather than simply tackle discrimination. The role of Sport England³ has been central to this process. The formation of Sport England’s Equity Policy in 2000 (Sport England 2000) marks the first attempt to bring together all the disparate activities in grass-roots sport aimed at tackling the various forms of discrimination. This reflects a broader trend in government policy to provide a holistic approach to tackling social exclusion, as seen in the formation of the umbrella organisation, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), in 2007 which replaced the Commission for Racial Equality (as well as the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission), alongside the passing of one overall Equality Act in April 2010. As such, race equality now forms part of the wider equality agenda, in both policy and legislation in the UK.

New Labour began to offer national governing bodies (including the FA) substantial amounts of public funding in return for support in delivering a range of political policy objectives, including social inclusion and equity (Collins 2004). This funding came with a range of evidence-based targets upon which to measure the “value” of such investment, in line with New Labour’s funding requirements in other areas of the public sector (Newman 2001). The formation of the FA’s first Football Development Strategy in 2001—a strategic document outlining the key priorities and targets for the game’s growth—highlights some of the consequences of this new government involvement in sport, instigating a process of *professionalisation* of sport governing bodies such as the FA.

Rather than a strategy originating and emerging internally, the FA’s E&SES should thus be seen largely as a *reaction* to government changes in attitude to sport, enforced by Sport England. There are obvious similarities between the E&SES and the Sport England Equity Policy document from 2000, indicating the extent to which it was derived from broader government objectives for sport. The document itself identifies four key elements to the equity strategy: race equality, women and girl’s football, disability, and homophobia. The introductory paragraph of the strategy document outlines the key principles to the equity approach. It is worth recounting in full as a number of clauses contained in it directly relate to the discussion that follows:

Ethics and sports equity is about fairness. It’s about football for all. It’s about doing things properly. It’s about making sure everyone has a chance to be involved in football, regardless of ability, race or religion.

It's about encouraging and increasing the involvement of groups at all levels of football by recognising that inequalities exist and taking steps to address them. It's about making opportunities available where currently there are none. It's about using the power of football to build a better future (Football Association 2004: 3)

At first glance, this statement may appear relatively uncontroversial. There is certainly nothing particularly new in British sporting cultures that appeal to both an inherent fairness in sport and the sense that sport has the capacity to bring about social change—what Coalter (2007) describes as sport's mythopoeic status. A statement like this also seems congruent with the FA's wider strategic developmental objectives to expand the game by increasing participation at the grass-roots. In light of this, it may appear surprising that it took such direct government intervention to prompt the FA into forming its own equality policy. It may also appear anomalous to find that previous research that has investigated race equality initiatives in sports organisations has found widespread scepticism and some resistance to its implementation. I want to identify some of the ideological origins of this resistance, but before this it is necessary to briefly outline what we know so far about this scepticism towards race equality in sport.

THE RECEPTION OF RACE EQUALITY IN BRITISH SPORT

Research evaluating sport policy has generally focused on attempts to evaluate the impact or “success” of recent interventions on sport and society (see Henry 2001, Green 2006, Coalter 2007, Tacon 2007); a much smaller pool of research has focused on the *reception* of policies, particularly those associated with race equality in sport. Horne (1995) conducted research on local authority sport provision in relation to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, which was followed up some ten years later (Swinney and Horne 2005), and traced some of the consequences of recent changes in race equality legislation and policy to sport provision and race equality activities. Elsewhere I have outlined some of the early responses to the FA's E&SES, notably in the ways in which ideas of ‘race’ are activated by key stakeholders at CFAs (Lusted 2008, 2009). By far the most in-depth analysis regarding attitudes to race equality policies in sport comes from research on the Sporting Equals body (Long *et al.* 2003, 2005; Spracklen *et al.* 2006). This work focuses on the impact of the *Sporting Equals Charter* and *Standard* on sporting organisations in England over a period of several years, beginning in 2002. The similarity of findings from all these reports indicates a number of important commonalities about the reception—and limitations—of race equality initiatives in English sporting organisations.

The earlier-mentioned studies found that a number of concerns were raised about the necessity and nature of race equality intervention advocated by Sporting Equals. As the authors suggest:

we should not exaggerate resistance to the project of the Standard, but there is some around principles, process and priorities. Not all subscribe to the need to combat racism and promote racial equality; some who do are not persuaded that the Standard is the best way to achieve this, and among those who are, many feel that other problems should be addressed first (Long *et al.* 2005: 55).

The reports identify a broad sense that racial equality is relatively low on the list of priorities of sports organisations, based around the failure to acknowledge the need and importance for such interventions in sport: 44 per cent of organisations surveyed reported that there was no significant discrimination in their sport (Long *et al.* 2003: 16–17). This notion of the denial of racism has been explored further elsewhere by Long (2000), and in English football in particular (see Burdsey 2007a, Lusted 2009, Bradbury this volume). Such claims about the absence of racism tend to be rooted in the assumed meritocratic nature of sport—the “level playing field” that offers anyone the chance to get involved, perform and become successful (Long 2000). With regard to ideas of ‘race’, this ‘colour-blind’ sentiment actually serves to reproduce and consolidate racialised exclusion rather than challenge it—a process that Bonilla-Silva (2006) has termed ‘colour-blind racism’.

These findings suggest a broader unease with the way that sport is increasingly perceived to be used to promote racial equality. Sixteen per cent of respondents felt that national governing bodies for sport do not even have an obligation to promote racial equality, while 40 per cent felt the same about national sports organisations (Long *et al.* 2003: 47). Whilst there was widespread agreement that racism is wrong, its roots and causes were often *externalised* to the wider society and certainly outside of the organisations that govern British sport (*ibid.*: 22), something encouraged by early anti-racist initiatives in football that emphasised the deviant hooligan as the source of racism (Back *et al.* 1999). Some respondents also voiced discomfort with the way that they saw sport being used as a form of “social engineering”, which was seen as inherently unfair: ‘a concentration on race would encourage segregation through making some people a “special case” or ‘I don’t like separate action plans—it looks like we’re giving preferential treatment’ (Long *et al.* 2003:31). All these issues contributed to the lukewarm reception of the Sporting Equals Standard and were seen to provide barriers to its introduction and use (Long *et al.* 2003, 2005; Spracklen *et al.* 2006).

The Sporting Equals research also looked into the different *levels* of such organisations, including national bodies, and their local and regional branches that are specifically responsible for the grass-roots of their sports. This is particularly relevant, of course, in the case of the national FA and

its rather fractious relationship with the CFAs (see Lusted 2009). Here, it becomes very clear that there is some disparity in opinions on racial equality between the national organisations and their local counterparts:

While the [national] organisation is committed to action on race equality at national level and is actively disseminating policy delivery downwards through its intermediary structures, they feel it is as yet too early to assess the impact locally, even implying that they were encountering some resistance (Long *et al.* 2003: 25).

National sports bodies appear to be the driving force behind addressing racial equality issues in their sports, providing the strategic framework from which local associations are expected to follow. This is certainly the case with the FA's E&SES which was formed by the national FA and then rolled out into the regional CFAs. There was evidence of different levels of uptake across the grass-roots game, dependent on a range of factors that included personal commitment, local expertise and local demography. Other studies have shown that some of the resistance to racial equality policies—and indeed evidence of racial discrimination—is more entrenched at the local levels of English sport such as cricket (Carrington 1998b), rugby league (Spracklen 2001) and football (Williams 1994, Long *et al.* 2000).

Perhaps because race equality is seen as a low priority, actually “doing” race equality seems to have been a strongly instrumental process for those involved. Reaching its requirements and following due process (including ticking the appropriate boxes) seemed more important to many than any particular long term outcome. This emphasis on following due procedure rather than anticipating and implementing long-term, sustainable outcomes on race equality has been explored in detail elsewhere (see Horne 1995, Hylton and Totten 2001, Swinney and Horne 2005) and appears to be characteristic of the long-standing commitment to equality of opportunity and *access*, over and beyond any particular commitment to equality of *outcome* (Horne 1995, Houlihan and White 2002, Swinney and Horne 2005, Coalter 2007). Perhaps because of this strongly instrumental approach to race equality, research has also identified a distinct lack of local ownership of racial equality policies and plans. Some respondents felt that because of this emphasis on the process, rather than on the outcome, much of the race equality work involved was essentially ‘gestural’ (Spracklen *et al.* 2006: 301) and tokenistic (see Horne 1995 for further discussion).

THE ‘AMATEURIST’ ORIGINS OF RESISTANCE TO THE E&SES: FAIR PLAY AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

The research summarised previously provides us with a description of the ways in which race equality is received in sport, but we know much

less about what it is that informs the broad resistance to such initiatives. The remainder of the chapter attempts to identify some of the ideological origins that might inform the components of this resistance just outlined. Specifically, I want to explore the ways in which ideas derived from Victorian sporting amateurism continue to provide important mechanisms to oppose the implementation of race equality policies in grass-roots football. The concept of amateurism is invariably used to describe an aspect of British sport's past rather than its present (see Allison 2001); I want to revive its utility to help explain *contemporary* sporting phenomena. The findings outlined next suggest that the proposals for change regarding race equality that are contained within the E&SES appear to fundamentally clash with some of the long-standing amateurist principles that inform the structures and cultures of CFAs. This section makes two claims: first, I show how specifically amateurist ideas of fairness directly clash with the specific components of the E&SES, particularly those around ideas of 'race'. This rather narrow conception of fairness articulated by CFA Council members renders activities such as positive action to be an inherently unfair development for grass-roots football. Second, I briefly discuss how race equality is perceived by some to be part of an increased politicisation of grass-roots sport. Given the strongly held apolitical sentiment associated with Victorian British amateurism, this political intervention is largely unwelcome; the E&SES appears to symbolise this broader process of change that many in the grass-roots game are uncomfortable with.

Protecting the Inherent "Fairness" of Grass-roots Football

Given the widespread resistance to race equality policies in sport organisations, it may appear rather odd to suggest that fairness remains a central guiding principle to those who govern grass-roots English football. By calling upon the concept of amateurism (see Allison 2001), we can begin to explore the apparent paradox around a strong support for fairness in grass-roots football being combined with a rejection of policies that advocate social equality. Victorian British sporting ideals about fair play and sportsmanship were an important component in the formation of modern sporting codes including association football, later becoming an ingrained feature of prized amateur ideologies, particularly when faced with the rising challenges of professionalism in team sports (Holt 1989, Mason 1989, Allison 2001). This legacy of fair play continues to frame the actions and outlook of those controlling grass-roots sport in Britain. A common response in my interviews and observations with key CFA personnel—particularly when discussing the E&SES—was to emphasise the need to treat their local football population *fairly*. The ideal of fair play was used not only as a benchmark that one must continuously work to maintain—what football *should* be like—it was also used when describing a fundamental component of

existing grass-roots football culture—what the game *has been* and *is* like. Ideals of fairness were regularly called up to describe how the grass-roots game is governed, both in the past and in the present. Indeed, its centrality was often proudly espoused:

I think that equality is the essence, as far as I'm concerned, of football, of sports. Local football, sports in general. Everybody should be allowed to play football; women, girls, whatever (President, CFA 1, 2005).

When disciplinary [reports] come in here, I'm not bothered whether it's a disabled footballer, a black footballer, a woman footballer, a West Indian or whatever. They get dealt with in exactly the same way (Disciplinary Manager, CFA 3, 2006).

This fair play rhetoric—strongly ‘colour-blind’ when related to ideas of ‘race’—was evident in many of the interviews I conducted. People pointed to the obvious benefits of wanting to increase participation in football regardless of people’s backgrounds; after all, any team would want to have the best players playing for them, regardless of their particular background (see Long 2000 for further discussion). In addition, respondents would also point to their strict adherence to rules and procedures in treating their local football population fairly and equally, seemingly comfortable in the more traditional equal opportunities approach to race equality.

Part of the central rhetoric of English amateurism—despite its associated forms of social exclusion—is the idea of meritocracy. The notion of the “level playing field” of sport is a common assertion in British sporting cultures, and, interestingly, it is particularly common in debates around race equality (Long 2000, Long *et al.* 2000, Long and Hylton 2002, Long and McNamee 2004, St. Louis 2004). In this sense, British sport, but perhaps particularly English football, has often been viewed as a site where the best players can achieve the highest rewards, regardless of ideas of ‘race’ (see Cashmore 1982). Indeed, the achievements of prominent athletes from minority ethnic backgrounds—particularly black professional footballers—are often used as evidence to demonstrate the essentially meritocratic nature of British sport (Allison 1997, Hoberman 1997, Jarvie and Reid 1997). This emphasis on the inherent meritocracy of grass-roots sport is a rhetoric which is central to the rejection of the core tenets of positive action. Competitive sport *must* be meritocratic because, above anything else, sporting clubs want to win and to be successful. As the following respondents argued:

We've got Shabaaz in the first team, Hussein, who's a local lad, plays for the first-team, Ali plays for the third team. Came along to the club with some other friends, he's made it and that's it. If you're good enough you'll

play and it doesn't matter who you are. At the end of the day football teams have to pick people on [whether they are] good enough to play, not on the fact you must have two Asians in your team. You can't do that, can you? It's a competitive game (Council member, CFA 4, 2006).

Don't forget this. One team [local club] was two white lads and all the rest coloured, West Indian. Now we took them in our league and sure enough we got them promoted to the Senior League, where they are now. So I mean there was no bias in the way of them (Council member, CFA 2, 2006).

These meritocratic pretensions invariably have the effect of denying not only the need for positive action, but also that there are any real problems of discrimination or exclusion in the game at all. In its essence, football is open and accessible to all, and to suggest otherwise simply goes against the core principles of grass-roots football—the striving for success and achievement. This attitude reflects not only the make-up of clubs and local league competitions, but also representation on the CFA:

We've got a black Afro-Caribbean member here. We've got a lady, and I would say that's about equal to the proportion involved in it. So, you know, within the county. You know [black member] is one twentieth of [this] FA and it's probably one twentieth of the players in [this county] that have black and ethnic backgrounds (Council member, CFA 4, 2007).

Debates around fairness became rather more complex in discussions around understandings of *difference* in grass-roots football derived from ideas of 'race'. When asked about the involvement of people from minority ethnic backgrounds, the fairness rhetoric was often powerfully deployed:

I get on with everybody and there is no reason why you can't. And that don't matter—coloured kids, everything (Council member, CFA 2, 2006).

There's no such thing as black footballers. They're footballers who happen to have black skin, that should be the start of it all. We are all equal under God's eyes as far as I'm concerned (Disciplinary Manager, CFA 3, 2006).

Football has been for all. As I said, my club has taken everybody from any ethnic background over the years. There's no question mark. If you can play football, you play for the club. And [I] would say every other club in the town and county does exactly that same policy (Council member, CFA 4, 2007).

For those responsible for governing the grass-roots game in England, there is an immutable sense that being unbiased and committed to fairness already underpins all their duties. This expressed long-standing commitment to being unbiased and fair helps us begin to understand why many within the grass-roots game remain unconvinced that a new equity strategy is actually *necessary*. Elsewhere I have discussed what can happen when this rather narrow, ‘colour-blind’ version of fairness is activated in the local game (Lusted 2009). Importantly, the articulation of these ideals of fair play is deployed by those in control of the grass-roots game to deny the existence of racialised inequalities. At the same time, such ideas are also used to legitimize people’s own positions of authority, by resisting any challenges to their power associated with accusations of racism (*ibid.*). In the latter case, claims of “playing the race card” were often made when accusations of bias or preferential treatment were made by minority ethnic participants towards CFAs. Those who accused CFAs of discriminating against minority ethnic participants—perhaps in the handling of a disciplinary case against a player—were seen to be illegitimately bringing ideas of ‘race’ into a supposedly colour-blind, non-racial environment (see Bonilla-Silva 2006 for further discussion).

One way of making sense of the different interpretations of fairness—those derived from amateurist ideology and those that inform the E&SES—is to consider the different interpretations of social stratification as either ‘horizontal’ or ‘vertical’ (St. Louis 2004). St. Louis discusses this in relation to what he terms ‘multicultural common sense’. The version of diversity that is viewed horizontally is strongly egalitarian, in the sense that groups—in this case groups defined by ideas of ‘race’—are viewed, in relativist terms, as equal and judged on their appropriate merits and pitfalls. This ‘horizontalism’, which St. Louis identifies as an important component of contemporary multiculturalism, fails to recognise the vertical ordering of such groups, avoiding any consideration of previous and existing power relations. These responses represent this horizontal version of difference, whereby each group or collective has an equal opportunity of success—hence the “level playing field” analogy (see Swinney and Horne 2005 for further discussion). This also avoids having to acknowledge the barriers and constraints—historical and contemporary—that might place some groups and collectives at a disadvantage to others. Whilst this ‘verticalism’ does seem to be acknowledged in the E&SES—recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them—those at CFAs adopt a much more horizontal interpretation of difference. This marks an important and unresolved tension between these recent race equality policy interventions and the longer-standing structures and cultures of grass-roots English football.

The E&SES is thus seen by some as an unwelcome and mechanical attempt to *replicate* dominant values of fair play; values that are already ingrained in the day-to-day activities of CFAs. As a result of this, we should not be surprised to find the idea that there is simply little need for a race

equality policy in this setting. Taking this one stage further, we might already begin to predict how race equality *positive action* plans contained in the FA's E&SES would be received. Positive action requires organisations to acknowledge that inequalities exist *within* their own structures, and that they must take proactive steps to address them (Football Association 2000, 2004). This is something that many CFA respondents found extremely hard to understand or accept. Adopting a 'horizontal' interpretation of difference—associated with amateurist ideas of meritocracy—inevitably leads CFA Council members to interpret equity as giving an unfair *advantage* to one group over another. With no appreciation of the need for such preferential treatment, equity is seen as an inherently *unfair* policy—one which logically must privilege some (in this case, minority ethnic) participants over others.

Because issues such as the under-representation of minority ethnic groups at CFAs were rarely identified as being the product of exclusionary practices, it appeared to some as if the E&SES itself was *causing* new problems and difficulties in the grass-roots game, being both divisive and counter-productive. The following quotations suggest that the E&SES is perceived as making grass-roots football less fair and more discriminatory:

I think that the fact that they take some of these things [E&SES practices] on board makes things more divisive than what they were before. It divides the community rather than brings it together (Council member, CFA 4, 2006).

With a lot of the, shall we say, compulsory legislation and things that are coming in now, the object is to attract people into football to play the game, to referee the game, to administrate, to be a workforce supporter. A lot of these things, I'm afraid, are going to have the opposite effect (President, CFA 5, 2007).

An example may help illustrate this point. At one CFA I visited, a positive action initiative had been instigated in an attempt to increase the diversity of its Council membership. A local referee from a minority ethnic background was co-opted onto the full Council, bypassing the rather convoluted procedures involved in becoming a Council member (through nomination and election). He became the first minority ethnic member of the Council. This had caused some resentment, particularly from members of the CFA who had volunteered for many years, who suggested the position was achieved illegitimately by not going through the due process for election:

[Someone from a minority ethnic background] can become a member of the County FA providing you serve an apprenticeship on a district. You can't just say to a guy walking down the street, you play football,

do you want to join the County FA? I mean they're actually highly prized, the places on the [Council] (President, CFA 3, 2006).

Similarly, at another CFA, I discussed with the President ways to encourage a more diverse membership of its Council. His response reflects the discomfort in allowing people to bypass the traditional procedures for election on Council:

If you're not careful, any that do come forward are the more outspoken that don't want to go through the system, but want to break into having a platform for themselves (President, CFA 2, 2006).

The sense here is that that the traditional structures and procedures of grass-roots football governance—such as the recruitment of new Council members—are seen to be already strongly meritocratic and any attempts to bypass them are seen as not only unfair but risking the election of members who may not be seen as suitable or “fitting” the supposed requirements of the organisation. One can see how this process can become racialised to protect the forms of white privilege that are said to be prevalent in this type of setting (Long and Hylton 2002, Bradbury this volume).

Finally, positive action interventions were regularly treated with scepticism because of their supposed connection to a cruder political mission. They were seen to contravene key amateurist tenets of sporting fairness in favour of a politically manufactured tokenism:

I'll be honest . . . I think it's perceived as a token gesture. And I'll be perfectly honest, I would see it as a token gesture. And I do see it as a token gesture . . . I think it's wrong, to be perfectly honest (County Development Manager, CFA 3, 2006).

There are obvious connections here with Horne's (1995) analysis of the uptake of race equality policies as being merely “gestural” rather than producing any real structural or cultural change. Some of the local discomfort surrounding the E&SES was derived from its perceived political associations—something we can again highlight as being problematic in a setting informed so strongly by British amateurist sporting ideology. Polley (2006) shows the importance of political neutrality within amateur sport at the turn of the twentieth century—with both those running sport *and* government officials going to extreme lengths to protect the political neutrality of British sport. The emergence of political interest in grass-roots football—in this case through Sport England and the equity agenda, as I outlined earlier—was treated with real suspicion amongst CFA Council members. The sense here was that sport was being rather crudely used as a political tool to enforce an agenda onto a setting perceived by its members to be not only strongly meritocratic but also *politically neutral*. The association of race

equality with political correctness was a common theme in the interviews with CFA representatives. The formation of the E&SES was seen by many local administrators as simply a representation of a reactionary political correctness not only in sport but elsewhere:

Not just football is doing it . . . Local councils having to employ people from ethnic minorities, people with disabilities. It just seems to be that everybody is trying to force people to do things and I just don't think it's right (Council member, CFA 4, 2006).

For some then, the E&SES was no more than a political stunt—one that, at best, might provoke tokenistic, yet essentially meaningless and short term change. This view actually reflects much wider concerns that equity activities such as these are motivated less by any real commitment to change but more because they tick certain requirements that are usually attached to meeting government targets and securing future funding (see Lusted and O'Gorman 2010). In addition, one can see how an essentially volunteer workforce would become increasingly sceptical of attempts to professionalise what has, for most of its history, been a predominantly amateurist organisational setting (O'Brien and Slack 1999, 2003; Skinner *et al.* 1999).

CONCLUSION

Race equality policies for the grass-roots game in England are still in their infancy. It would be naive to expect dramatic changes to organisational settings that have effectively been run as private members clubs and enjoyed relative autonomy in decision making for the vast majority of their 100-plus year histories (see Lusted 2009, Bradbury this volume). On the other hand, both Sport England and the national FA appear to have paid little attention to the difficulties that would be faced in implementing race equality policies into grass-roots sports organisations such as CFAs. One has to question whether CFAs—in their current guise at least—are realistically the best organisations to be responsible for delivering the types of radical changes related to race equality and the involvement of minority ethnic groups in the grass-roots game. While we know that there is some scepticism towards race equality policies in grass-roots sport, there has been much less of an attempt to make some sense of *why* this resistance has emerged. I have suggested here that in order to understand this resistance to race equality, we must know much more about the structural and cultural conditions that underpin such organisations. Specifically I have tried to identify some of the possible ideological roots of the rejection of race equality. I have suggested that any initiatives that advocate the use of positive action as a mechanism for race equality can be seen to clash with longer-standing amateurist interpretations of fairness that remain hegemonic in grass-roots

football. These notions of fairness rely on rather narrow conceptions of meritocracy, equal opportunity and colour-blindness. Because of this, the FA's E&SES is seen by some to be actually the cause of new inequalities and difficulties in the game. These tensions are unlikely to be easily or hastily resolved. In identifying the underlying rationale behind such resistance, we might, however, begin to work out more appropriate strategies to challenge and transform such resistance into something towards a progressive adoption of race equality principles in grass-roots English football.

NOTES

1. The term 'grass-roots football' is used in this chapter to refer to all the FA-affiliated football that is governed directly by local County FAs. This excludes the national leagues—professional, semi- and non-professional—and some regional leagues that play across several county regions (usually relatively high up the pyramid of English football). Grass-roots football is dominated by adult male teams playing primarily for recreation.
2. Notably Nic Coward, former Company Secretary, and Director of Corporate and Legal Affairs, and who briefly acted as joint Chief Executive of the FA from 2002–2004 following the resignation of Adam Crozier.
3. Sport England is the body that is responsible for distributing government and National Lottery funding for sport in England. It is often referred to as a 'quango'—a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation—that claims some autonomy from government control but remains heavily shaped by government policy and, in this case, funding (Bramham 2007).

15 Football, Racism and the Limits of ‘Colour Blind’ Law

Revisited

Simon Gardiner and Roger Welch

INTRODUCTION

It is around ten years since the authors examined the intervention and engagement of the law with manifestations of racism within English sport, most notably football (Gardiner and Welch 2001). The two main areas of intervention that were examined concerned firstly the criminalisation of spectator racism and secondly the anti-discrimination provisions that operate in the football workplace which provide civil law remedies, including damages. The success or failure of these measures was viewed in the context of the related legal measures found generally in society. A major contention was that in dealing with this phenomenon of racism in sport, the argument that “more law” will alleviate the problem is often misplaced. The law does have a role to play, but it is vital not to reify its role.

This chapter can be usefully read alongside that earlier work. The theoretical argument developed then was that within a pluralistic model of regulation, the law has a part to play alongside other mechanisms and social policies. Additionally, the contextual argument was that much can be learnt about the role of law in sport in engaging with the issue of racism, and more general hate speech and discrimination, by considering how the law engages generally with this issue in society. These contextual arguments will not be replayed at any length here; rather, the main focus will be on whether ten years or so later, this legal intervention has been successful and, if so, what changes have occurred. Specifically, the chapter will address racism and connected hate speech by spectators and workplace colleagues.

The dominant discourse within liberal democracies has centred on the values that the Rule of Law and procedural justice demand of individuals to be treated no differently on grounds of race, ethnicity and nationality. This discourse of equal opportunities predicated by a ‘colour-blind law’ (P. Williams 1992, 1997), has been increasingly questioned regarding whether it is an effective tool to bring about a society where “colour doesn’t matter”. A more fundamental critique has emerged in recent years from the interaction between legal theory and race studies which has given birth to the Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement (Hylton 2009).

Growing out of the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement in the 1980s, CRT shares a common iconoclastic challenge to the liberal status quo and structures of power supported by the liberal legal systems, and represents a rejection of the grand narratives of liberal and Marxist theory. CLS itself emerged as a movement in the 1970s with roots in the American Realist Legal movement, with its emphasis on the contingency of law, in that law cannot be reduced to a set of rules and that legal decisions are a complex amalgam of the application of rules to facts, political values and judicial activism. The critical theory discourse of the Frankfurt School has also been influential, providing a neo-Marxist view of society recognising the iniquitous power relations that exist in liberal society and have supported the overarching political nature of law (Unger 1976, Kennedy 1982). Although charges of the nihilistic nature of CLS have been made, it has provided legal scholars with the tools to suggest radical responses to issues such as the structural nature of racism in sport specifically and in society generally.

CRT was specifically developed because of concerns that the CLS movement had failed to fully take account of issues of race and ethnicity in its epistemology. Hylton (2009: 22) views CRT 'as a framework from which to explore and examine the racism in society that privileges whiteness as it disadvantages others because of their blackness'. The work of a number of theorists, notably Hylton (*ibid.*), has made calls for a sports-specific version of CRT to emerge from the sports and leisure studies movement. In the context of the law's role in engaging with racism in sport, these theoretical positions support challenges to dominant ideas about, for example, the fetishism with criminal law intervention and consequential punishment as the formal response to spectator racism. The extensions to the law on workplace harassment discussed next could be more easily accommodated but, as it is argued, the law needs to provide wider remedies. Additionally, as a response to workplace discrimination, CRT supports radical affirmative action provisions that enforce concepts of substantive justice. Radical constructions of law need to be considered, but overwhelmingly this needs to be in concert with progressive social policies.

One significant development that has occurred in European football since our original contribution is that patterns of intra- and inter-national player migration have become more complex and frequent. The 1995 European Court of Justice case in *Bosman* was a pivotal point in the relationship between the European Union and sport. It has had an immense impact upon professional team sports, most notably football, in terms of liberalising the transfer system and the movement of players between clubs. In many European leagues this has created a significantly more cosmopolitan makeup of teams. A fundamental question is the impact this has had on the identification of those who are different in terms of nationality and ethnicity: in other words, the extent to which the "fear of the Other" is still prevalent.

REGULATION OF SPECTATORS

Racist speech and chanting have been a frequent occurrence at football matches since the 1970s. Racist—or the term used in the legislation, *racialist*—chanting at professional “designated” matches has been a criminal offence in England and Wales since the early 1990s. Specifically, the Football Offences Act 1991 (FOA) created a number of offences that supplement normal public order laws that can be used. Subsequent legislation with the Football (Offences and Disorder) Act 1999 (FODA) has augmented this regulatory framework with Banning Orders that empower the courts to ban spectators from attendance at future football games when individuals are convicted for football-related offences including racist chanting. Current official statistics concerning criminal conduct around designated football matches show that in the 2008–2009 season, 3,752 people were arrested for disorder connected to matches with an aggregate attendance of over 37 million people. Other statistics highlight that 67 per cent of matches were problem free and resulted in no arrests; and that 60 per cent of football-related arrests took place outside or away from the grounds. Thirty-six of the arrests in 2008–09 were for racist chanting—an increase of thirteen from the previous season, which had seen the lowest figure on record (see Table 15.1).

However, to make sense of these figures, process issues such as developments in policing strategy (both at a national and, more importantly, local level), the role of match stewards and prosecutorial discretion around this offence would need to be considered. Section 3 of the 1991 Act (indecent or racialist chanting) has been little used, suggesting that it has been employed primarily in a symbolic capacity as an official indication that “something was being done”. As Chambliss and Seidman (1982) argue, one way to identify legal symbolism is to measure the levels of enforcement. If the latter are low, symbolism is likely. The “policing” of the offence involves complex interaction between club stewards and private security officials, police officers and

Table 15.1 Convictions Under s.3 Football Offences Act 1991

2002-2003	78
2003-2004	63
2004-2005	51
2005-2006	55
2006-2007	41
2007-2008	23
2008-2009	36

Source: Statistics on football-related arrests and Banning Orders, Home Office

surveillance images produced by closed circuit television cameras, used to aid identification of perpetrators during matches. There is evidence that spectator racism has been conflated with other manifestations of disorder by hooligan groups rather than recognition that racism in football is a more pervasive phenomenon across the game as a whole (see Back *et al.* 2001).

The offence was individualised with s.9 of the FODA amending s.3 of the FOA. Beforehand, the offence had required the racist chanting to be 'in concert' with others. The effect of the amendment is that an individual who engages in such chanting *on her/his own* can commit the offence. It seems, however, that the offence still must amount to chanting, albeit by an individual. A single abusive shout will not suffice (Greenfield and Osborn 2000). So s.3 of the FOA (as amended) provides that it is an offence to engage or take part in chanting of an indecent or racist nature at a designated football match. Subsection 2 provides that chanting means the repeated uttering of any words or sounds, whether alone or in concert with one or more others; and 'of a racist nature' means consisting of, or including, matter which is threatening, abusive or insulting to a person by reason of her/his colour, race, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origins. The offence is based on strict liability with no need to prove any intent to be racist on the defendant's part.

Guidance as to the words used that may be seen as contrary to the offence was provided by the courts concerning an unfortunately common chant in games between certain clubs. In *DPP V Stoke on Trent Magistrates Court* (2004) 1 Cr App R 4, the trial court acquitted the defendant, who admitted taking part together with a number of other Port Vale supporters, in the chant, "You're just a town full of Pakis", directed at Oldham Athletic supporters, in a match between the two clubs. He was tried and acquitted on a submission at the end of the prosecution case that the words used were not of a racist nature. The District Judge's reasons included that the phrase had been 'mere doggerel' and amounted to no more than aimlessly stating, 'our town is better than your town'. On appeal by way of case stated against an acquittal, the appeal was allowed and case remitted to the District Judge with a direction that he should, on the evidence, convict the defendant of the offence.

It was held that the words 'of a racist nature' meant, as provided by section 3(2)(b) of the FOA, that the chant consisted of, or included, matter that was threatening, abusive or insulting to a person, by reason of her/his colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins. It was immaterial whether persons of the racial group referred to in the alleged offending words were present so as to hear them or, if so present, were offended or affected in any way by them. The word "Paki" was in most contexts racially offensive. It went beyond a convenient and/or affectionate abbreviation of a description of a nationality such as "Aussie" or "Brit". The use of the word had to be looked at in its context on a case-by-case basis. On the facts found by the District Judge, there was no doubt that the defendant and his

fellow Port Vale supporters were using the word as part of their chant in a racially derogatory or insulting sense. The defendant's admitted behaviour fell squarely within the definition of racist chanting in the FOA.

If convicted, the courts have additional powers to fine the defendant, and to impose a Banning Order from attending football matches both in this country and abroad for a period of between two and ten years. Precise conditions can also be imposed on a case-by-case basis. Breach of a Banning Order is punishable by a maximum penalty of up to six months imprisonment.

CRIMINALISATION OF OTHER FOOTBALL-SPECIFIC HATE SPEECH

The FOA has also been used to prosecute those involved in 'indecent' chanting under s.3, including chanting seen as homophobic. This notably occurred in response to homophobic chanting targeted at the former Tottenham Hotspur player, Sol Campbell, during a match between his then team, Portsmouth, and Tottenham in September 2008. Five spectators were cautioned and four more pleaded guilty. Two other individuals charged, one adult and one teenage boy, were convicted and given three-year Football Banning Orders. These two were convicted on the finding that they had allegedly shouted "gay boy" at Campbell. In an appeal hearing at Portsmouth Crown Court in September 2009, the convictions were overturned when the Court heard arguments that it could not be proved beyond reasonable doubt that either of these two were using the alleged words, and that in fact those words did not constitute indecent chanting. The judge concluded that:

we can hear the crowd, we can hear the words "gay boy" . . . We can't be sure that those words came from Mr Trow's mouth, we can't be sure that those words came from the boy's mouth . . . Even if they did come from either or both mouths it was a very brief intervention indeed and we can't be sure that what they did would be sufficient to be properly described as engaging or taking part in chanting (cited in *Telegraph* 2009).

Under British law generally, a hate crime is any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility or prejudice based upon the victim's disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and/or transgender status. In British (although mainly Scottish and Northern Irish) football, another significant area of hate speech involves religious sectarianism between Catholic and Protestant affiliated teams (see also Flint and Powell, this volume). Sectarianism became a 'hate crime' in Scottish law under section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003. This does not create a specific new offence but aggravates existing offences so that where an individual commits an assault

or public order offence, such as breach of the peace, the courts are able to give a stiffer sentence if the act was motivated by religious hatred—just as it would be with racial hatred. Under section 74, an offence is aggravated by religious prejudice where the conduct is aggravated by some form of malice or ill-will based on the victim's membership, or perceived membership, of a religious group (see Roden 2006). Conviction can also lead to a Football Banning Order, which were introduced in Scotland under the Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY

The issue of hate speech in football has also been engaged with in an international context. In particular, FIFA's Article 55 sets down the framework for non-discrimination in world football. If spectators display banners bearing discriminatory slogans, or are guilty of any other discriminatory and/or contemptuous behaviour at a match, the appropriate body will impose a sanction of at least CHF 30,000 (equivalent to around US\$30,000—a sum many would argue is a woefully low amount) on the association or club that the spectators concerned support and force it to play its next official match without spectators. If the spectators cannot be identified as supporters of one or the other association or club, the host association or club will be sanctioned accordingly. Member associations who fail to implement or enforce these minimum requirements in a satisfactory manner face possible banishment from international football.

Within Europe, UEFA's Articles set out the sanctions that may be imposed on clubs competing in UEFA competitions where their supporters are found guilty of discrimination. Offending clubs will incur a minimum fine, with the possibility of further sanctions including playing games in closed stadiums with no fans, overturning results and exclusion from UEFA competitions. UEFA action has shown that sectarian chanting comes within the scope of the code and that it will not be tolerated. For example, in 2006, UEFA fined Glasgow Rangers £13,300 (again a woefully low amount) after finding their fans guilty of discriminatory chanting at both legs of the Champions League tie against Villarreal (BBC Sport 2006b).¹

Claims can be made that the general regulatory framework of legal intervention and policy has succeeded in terms of reducing overt racist fan behaviour in football stadia in the UK, albeit there is evidence that it has been displaced to other surrounding locales such as pubs (see Back *et al.* 2001). The Kick It Out campaign has been a crucial component in promulgating education and attitude-changing initiatives. However, in a range of countries across continental Europe—both in Western European countries, such as Germany, Austria and Spain, and in those in the east, such as Slovakia—there are some indications that the problem may be more persistent. For example, in one survey, 20 per cent of German fans reported sympathies with

the neo-Nazi movement (Frosdick and Marsh 2005). A number of initiatives modelled on the UK campaign have been launched across Europe, including *When Racism Wins, The Sport Loses* in the Netherlands, *No al Razzismo* in Italy and the Council of Europe initiative, *All Different—All Equal*. The umbrella organisation, *Football Against Racism in Europe* (FARE), is dedicated to fighting racism and xenophobia in football across Europe by bringing together all those interested in combating discrimination in football.

The European Union has adopted a robust attitude to all forms of violence in sport including hate speech, particularly forms of racist and xenophobic attitudes (European Union 2007). The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is a body of the European Union, which in 2010 published a report after a lengthy project concerning racism and ethnic discrimination in sport in the EU (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2010). The aim is to inform policy-makers, sports associations, athletes and the general public. The main project themes are: diversity management, equality and discrimination in national and international sports associations, sports clubs and fan associations; manifestations of racism and discrimination in the context of sporting events; and positive initiatives by political actors concerning prevention of racist violence in sport.

Additionally, the Council of Europe's 'European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance' seeks to ensure that legislation aimed at preventing and sanctioning racist offences in the field of sport is effectively implemented, and to this end:

provide clear elements and guidelines for the identification of racist acts; have clear mechanisms in place for reporting and dealing with racist behaviour; establish monitoring and data collection systems; offer targeted training to persons involved at all levels of the justice system; take steps to encourage victims of racist acts to come forward with complaints and to monitor the follow-up given to such complaints; ensure the existence and effective functioning of an independent anti-discrimination body competent, *inter alia*, in assisting victims in bringing complaints of racism and racial discrimination (Council of Europe 2010).

Spectator hate speech has therefore clearly been on the policy radar of a range of pan-European bodies. However, much of this discourse seems to be rhetorical and how effective these initiatives have been in engaging with such behaviours is questionable. Those movements and organisations that are closer to the problem and more fan-based, seem to have more impact (see van Sterkenburg *et al.* 2005).

RACISM IN THE FOOTBALLING WORKPLACE

The other significant social field for racism in sport is the workplace, where differential work opportunities for minority ethnic groups have long been

identified. In Britain, over 25 per cent of professional footballers are of African-Caribbean or African origin. However, the glass ceiling of structural barriers continues to obstruct the ability of those from minority ethnic groups to rise into positions of influence and power in football administration and management. Moreover, there continues to be the widely held perception within professional football and, to a lesser extent, the British Asian community itself that the game does not provide a suitable career for British Asians (Burdsey 2007a).

The display of racist attitudes by white players and coaches to black team-mates is thankfully becoming a thing of the past. The most likely context in which black players will be subject to racist abuse by other footballers is on the field of play and, as discussed next, this is most likely to be by members of the opposing team. However, it would be wrong to conclude that racism within all clubs has disappeared. Thus, the issue of racial harassment at the workplace—both on and off the field of play—is one that this chapter must address.

In the latter part of the 1990s, incidents involving Bobby Gould and Kevin Ratcliffe revealed how racist cultures within clubs may lie dormant until a particular incident is made public. The former concerned the decision of black striker, Nathan Blake, to refuse to play for Wales after the manager, Gould, had made racist statements about opponents in the dressing room. This incident was particularly revealing, as initially Gould was incapable of understanding that he had voiced racist sentiments, or, at least, why this should upset one of his own players (see Mitchell 1997).

Even more disturbing was the case of *Hussaney v Chester City FC and Kevin Ratcliffe* in 1997. James Hussaney was an apprentice at Chester and had played for the youth and reserves teams. On one occasion, when he was due to play a reserve match against Oldham Athletic, he was called a “black cunt” by the first team manager, Kevin Ratcliffe, who was also due to play in the match. Hussaney had put the wrong sized studs into Ratcliffe’s football boots. Hussaney made a formal complaint to the club. Shortly after this incident, Hussaney was informed that he would not be offered a professional contract. The club agreed that Ratcliffe made the alleged racial abuse, but denied it amounted to racial discrimination. Ratcliffe made some attempts to provide an apology to Hussaney. An employment tribunal held that the abusive language amounted to racial discrimination, contrary to the Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976, by both Ratcliffe and the club, and made a compensatory award of £2,500 for injury to feelings.

This case illustrates how, as is the case with any employer, a professional club will be directly liable for acts of racist abuse on the part of those in managerial positions. The case also highlights the difficulties of establishing whether decisions are racially motivated albeit unconsciously. Hussaney brought a second claim against Chester City, stating that he had been victimised contrary to the RRA for bringing the claim against Ratcliffe.

The victimisation consisted of the decision by the club not to offer him a professional contract. The tribunal rejected this claim as it found that the decision was made ‘purely on footballing grounds’. In January 2001, the Employment Appeals Tribunal upheld Hussaney’s appeal on the basis that the tribunal had provided insufficient reasons as to why it had reached the conclusion that there was no unlawful unconscious motivation. The tribunal had over-relied on the club’s view that Ratcliffe had simply utilised his experience as an assessor of footballing skill in recommending that Hussaney not be offered a contract.

One of the consequences of the *Bosman* ruling (see previous discussion) has been the influx of overseas players into the British game. This, combined with the number of black British players now employed in the domestic game, has contributed to a marked reduction of racist chanting and abuse in football stadiums. Whilst racist sentiments can still be overheard in conversations between football supporters, there is an inhibition against voicing racist attitudes more audibly because of the adverse impact this would have on players in the supporters’ teams. One of the disappointing consequences of proposals by UEFA and FIFA to reintroduce player quotas, based around their nationality, into squads and teams is that it reinforces attitudes that are ultimately linked to racism through blaming “foreign” players for ruining the domestic game and jeopardising the fortunes of the national team (see Millward 2007).

Moreover, football supporters who harbour racist attitudes may not express these directly, but conceal them through using other forms of abuse reflecting homophobia or religious prejudice. The aforementioned abuse of Sol Campbell by sections of Tottenham supporters during an away game at Portsmouth’s Fratton Park is a good example of this. The situation concerning Campbell is of particular interest as there were claims by Tottenham fans that no racism was involved, but *merely* homophobic abuse. Quite apart from the fact that homophobia in football should be treated in the same way as racism, this raises the issue of coded racism where some other basis for attacking a black player is used but the abuse is in fact motivated by racism. The best and arguably most disturbing illustrations of this are chants or songs linking all Muslims with terrorism. Alternatively, references to asylum seekers, or chants such as “I’d rather be a Paki than a Turk” still seem to be perceived by some supporters as “acceptable” expressions of racism (see Fawbert, this volume), even if the more vile and extreme forms of racist abuse, often accompanied by Nazi salutes, are things of the past—in the British context at least. Marches by the English Defence League (EDL), during the course of 2010, in places such as Birmingham, Bolton and Stoke-on-Trent to protest against what they perceive to be the “Islamification” of British society are alarming examples of how religious prejudice in the form of Islamophobia is increasingly meted out to people who are—or are perceived to be—of Middle Eastern or South Asian origin.²

REGULATING RACIAL HARASSMENT

In its advice to professional footballers about players' employment contracts, the Football Association (FA) specifies that racial harassment is a disciplinary offence. This is defined as including 'physical abuse, offensive language or jokes, offensive graffiti or posters and enforced isolation on the grounds of an individual's colour, race, ethnic or national origin, or nationality'.³ Moreover, as a result of EU law, the RRA was amended in 2000 to include a statutory definition of racial harassment. It is also of relevance to note that there were similar definitions in the Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief Regulations 2003 to render abuse unlawful where it concerned an individual's sexuality or religion (or lack of one). The Equality Act (EA) 2010 replaces these statutory provisions and now prohibits harassment with respect to a number of specified protected characteristics including race, sexual orientation and religious belief.

Under these provisions, a person (A) harasses another (B) if s/he engages in unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, and the conduct has the purpose or effect of:

- a) violating B's dignity; or
- b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for B.

In deciding whether conduct has this effect, each of the following must be taken into account:

- a) the perception of B;
- b) the other circumstances of the case;
- c) whether it was reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

On the basis of this definition, and in light of the incidents/cases referred to in this chapter, it is now the case that any racist abuse perceived by the victim to be "degrading" or "offensive" will constitute racial harassment, contrary to the Act, even if this was not the actual purpose or intention of the perpetrator.

The provisions in the former RRA contained a major gap in the law as a result of the decision of the House of Lords in *MacDonald v AG for Scotland* (2004) in the context of sexual harassment. The Law Lords stated that harassment is only unlawful sex discrimination where an employee is treated differently by reference to her or his own gender. This view of the law applied equally to the statutory definition in the RRA and would prevent a harassment claim if, for example, a white or British Asian player was offended by racist abuse directly aimed at players of African or African-Caribbean origins (or *vice versa*). The new definition overrules *MacDonald* as the words 'on the grounds of' have been replaced with the words

'related to'. Thus, today, if a white player followed Nathan Blake's example (see previous discussion) in objecting to racism directed at an opponent, he would be able to bring a personal claim under the Equality Act.

VICARIOUS LIABILITY

It has long been clear that a sustained campaign of verbal and/or physical racist harassment designed to force a player to leave a club would have constituted an unlawful harassment under the RRA. The *Hussaney* case notwithstanding, if such behaviour was to occur in a club then, as in any other field of employment, it is more likely to come from team-mates than the club management. A club is potentially liable in such a situation by virtue of the imposition of statutory vicarious liability. Under s.32 of the RRA, anything done by a person in the course of her/his employment was to be treated for the purposes of the Act as done by her/his employer as well as by her/him, whether or not it was done with the employer's knowledge or approval.

Under s.32(3), an employer was able to avoid vicarious liability if disciplinary codes prohibited acts of racial harassment, the rules were properly communicated to employees and complaints of harassment were investigated and otherwise properly acted upon. This defence has been re-enacted in the EA, and it is clear that clubs which recognise the importance of tackling racism, were it to occur within the club, and display a practical commitment to doing so are likely to receive the protection of this statutory defence.

However, another important gap in the law, which again resulted from the House of Lords decision in *MacDonald*, was that clubs could not be liable for third party harassment. In reaching this decision, the Law Lords overruled the decision in *Burton v De Vere Hotels Ltd* (1996), which held that an employer would be directly liable if its degree of control over a situation is such that it can take steps to protect employees from third party racist abuse and fails to do so.⁴ As the law stood, the employer could only be liable for third party harassment where the failure to protect the employee was itself racially motivated. The factor of control was no longer in itself sufficient to establish employer liability.

Under the Equality Act, it is once again possible to make the employer legally liable for third party harassment. The employer will be liable where the employer fails to take such steps as would be reasonably practicable to protect the employee from third party harassment. However, this will only be the case where the employer knows the employee has been subjected to third party harassment on at least two other occasions, although it does not matter that the acts of harassment were carried out by different persons.

It is also the case, as decided by the House of Lords in *Majrowski v Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust* (2006), that under s.3 of the Protection

from Harassment Act (PHA) 1997 an employer will be vicariously liable for an employee who harasses another, be that other a colleague or any other person. In the context of this legislation, the employer's knowledge is not necessary to establish liability. The victim can sue the relevant employer for damages providing, in accordance with s.1 of the Act, there is 'a course of conduct' constituting harassment (which does not have to be linked to, for example, race) in that (again) it has occurred on at least two previous occasions. The perpetrators of such harassment can also be sued for damages and made subject to a court injunction to prevent the harassment from being repeated.

In professional sport, the issue of third party racist abuse is most likely to arise during a match. Such abuse will either come from spectators or members of the opposing team. Clubs, of course, have less control once its players are on the field of play. However, with respect to racist chanting or racist abuse of individual players by spectators, it seems that, in the light of the new provisions under the EA, a club could incur liability if there is a failure to implement efficient stewarding operations to clamp down on such behaviour. This is also the case with respect to chants involving homophobia or Islamophobia. Under the PHA, a player could take matters into her/his own hands by seeking a court injunction providing it is possible to identify individual culprits from CCTV and the like. This would be in addition to any other measures that have been taken such as the granting of a Football Banning Order.

However, the provisions on harassment contained in the PHA and the EA were not drafted with the world of professional sport in mind,⁵ and it is a case of applying the law in a sporting context to the extent that it makes sense to do so. This creates a serious practical problem for football, or for any other professional team sport, in that on the field of play, any racist abuse is more likely to come from an opponent than a team-mate.⁶ Moreover, the motive behind such abuse may not even be hardcore racism so much as a cynical and calculated act of "gamesmanship" to wind up an opposing player to put her/him off his game, and/or provoke her/him into committing a foul or offence which results in the victim of racism, rather than its perpetrator, being sent off.

The law does not, and cannot, adequately deal with this situation. The only effective measure a club could take to protect its player would be to substitute her/him, and this would be self-defeating from the perspectives of both player and club, and indeed would be tantamount to giving in to racism.⁷ Rather, this issue demonstrates a major gap in the RRA and now the EA, as the legislation does not require employers to take disciplinary action against employees who engage in racist behaviour towards individuals outside of the employing organisation. There is the possibility of liability under the PHA if one player racially abuses an opponent more than once during a match. Moreover, it would be preferable to develop the law so that even a single act of racist (or homophobic, etc.) abuse could constitute

a new tort (civil wrong) of racial harassment so that the opposing player's club could then be rendered legally responsible for any racist behaviour by one or more of its players during a match.

However, even if the law was changed in this way, on-pitch racism demonstrates the limits of the law in combating racism in professional sport, as a legal claim would only be heard long after the relevant game had finished and the "punishment" would only be an award of financial compensation that most clubs would find relatively affordable. Thus, the law can neither provide an immediate solution to, nor meaningful penalty for, racism on the field of play. This is a context where regulatory action on the part of a sport's governing bodies has the potential to be much more effective. The Football Task Force has proposed making racism a red card offence and incorporating anti-racist clauses into players' and managers' contracts (see Gardiner and Welch 1998).⁸ These measures should be implemented as they would operate in a two-pronged and mutually reinforcing manner. First, referees will be obliged to send off players who are guilty of racism during the course of a game. Second, clubs can regard such players as having acted in breach of their employment contracts and can take disciplinary action against them accordingly.

The fact that the player committing the offence has been sent off and consequently damaged her/his team's prospects of success will, hopefully, encourage her/his club to subject her/him to disciplinary proceedings. A further consequence is likely to be a growing consensus against on-pitch racism as clubs will begin to demand that referees are consistent in treating racism as constituting a red card offence. Anti-racist clauses in managers' contracts will also deter the more cynical manager (should she/he exist) from encouraging her/his players to engage in racist "gamesmanship". These measures would be very significantly reinforced by current proposals to deduct points from clubs that fail to take effective action to combat racist abuse.⁹

CONCLUSION: LIMITS OF THE LAW

This chapter substantiates the perspective derived from CRT that the law cannot, in itself, resolve the problem of racism in society or the consequences of it. This applies to sport in the same way that it does to any other social and economic sphere. Law will only ever be a blunt instrument for eradicating racism as it operates on a case by case basis, and it cannot define in advance all instances in which racist behaviour can occur. In particular, law cannot eliminate racist attitudes, and racism will always find outlets in both overt and covert forms. The Islamophobia of the EDL, rooted as it is in racism, is a contemporary illustration of this. However, this chapter also demonstrates that law has played a useful role in contributing to an anti-racist culture which is shared by many more British football fans than was

so ten, let alone twenty-five, years ago (when fascist groups were openly organising and recruiting on the terraces).

Similarly, the law will provide instances of redress in specific situations, as demonstrated by the *Hussaney* case. Thus changes to the law that strengthen the regulation of racist harassment are to be welcomed and we have demonstrated how these changes can be applied to racism in the footballing workplace. However, again, CRT reminds us that the law is at its most effective when it operates as part of a wider progressive and pluralistic social regulatory framework. In the sporting context, this can take and should take the form of sporting rules which are more flexible and can have a greater generalised impact than is the case with legal rules.¹⁰ Hence, we have argued in support of the introduction of anti-racist clauses into players' and managers' contracts, and for the designation of on-pitch racism as a red card offence.

Both authors of this chapter have had the misfortune of seeing their clubs relegated as a result of points' deductions due to financial mismanagement on the part of those who have run their clubs (Leeds United and Portsmouth). In such cases, supporters are punished for behaviour for which they have no responsibility and are unable to exercise any control. Preventing racist abuse on the terraces is, however, something which supporters can contribute to. If going into administration can lead to a club being relegated, then it can be argued that this is an appropriate punishment for clubs and its supporters who, on a regular basis, engage in or permit racist, Islamophobic or homophobic chanting in their grounds, or indeed do so as visiting supporters in the grounds of other clubs. In the final analysis, it will be action taken by footballing authorities that will have a far greater impact than can be the case with legal measures—particularly given the immediate and potentially longer term financial consequences for a club where the loss of a key player and/or points results in relegation. Damages or fines can be paid; relegation may even send a club out of business.

To conclude, although the law's role needs always to be located in wider progressive social policies, the authors contend that, over the first decade of the 2000s, legal provisions have contributed to the reduction of racist hate speech and abuse both by football spectators and the actors in the football workplace. However, potentially the law can do more and some proposals have been outlined to this effect. Yes, these are only likely to be realised if built upon a more explicit, critical theoretical understanding of the interstices of law, race and sport.

NOTES

1. It has been argued that referees should have ultimate powers to stop a game and lead the players off the field when there is explicit racist chanting. A number of players have said that unless this occurs they would themselves walk off during the game (see BBC Sport 2006a).

2. The link between the EDL and football “firms” is overt, as demonstrated by the websites and Facebook pages that supporters of a significant number of British (not just English) clubs have set up to promote their “EDL Divisions”. Almost as obvious is the link between the EDL and the fascist British National Party (see Taylor 2010).
3. See page 12 of the FA Code of Practice and Notes on Contract.
4. In this case, the hotel management failed to protect minority ethnic staff from racist “jokes” by Bernard Manning by, for example, withdrawing them from the function during Manning’s speech.
5. In the case of the PHA, the legislation was not even devised for the world of employment in general—it was designed to deal with the problem of stalking.
6. Where a player racially abuses a team-mate during a match, if the latter complains, the employing club can and should respond to this in the same way that it should respond to any allegation of racial harassment that occurs at the workplace.
7. This would be similarly the case if a club decided to substitute a player or even not to select a player for a game, where racism from sections of the crowd was taking place or had been anticipated prior to the start of the match.
8. In May 2010, Spanish striker, David Villa, became the first European footballer to have an anti-racism clause written into his contract. The clause, which was developed by the FC Barcelona Foundation/UNESCO Youth Voices against Racism project, states that ‘the player will not express or carry out, in any form, discriminatory ideas or acts, either during football games or in any club duties. The club will strongly condemn any discriminatory or racist act according to the agreement’ (cited in Puig 2010).
9. These proposals were recommended by a FA Working Party, chaired by John Mann, a Labour MP and Leeds United supporter.
10. See Gardiner and Welch (2001) on the anti-vilification code that operates concerning the behaviour of Australian rugby league players and spectators. See also the application of the English Rugby Football League’s Respect Policy to homophobic chanting by supporters of Castleford RLFC (see BBC Sport 2010).

16 Marrying Passion with Professionalism

Examining the Future of British Asian Football

Kuljit Randhawa

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades I have dedicated my personal and professional life to being actively involved in grass-roots football—a vocation that has led me to become an activist for race equality in football and sport. This chapter is a personal, ethnographic piece, which hopefully provides a real-world example of a player, coach, volunteer, manager, supporter and British Asian football representative. My passion to tackle the barriers faced by members of the British Asian football community compelled me to found the Asian Football Network (AFN) in 2003 and therefore become a voice to tackle inequality and social exclusion. My journey from grass-roots football to the boardrooms of the key stakeholders has given me a unique and objective viewpoint on issues that I care about deeply. Not a day passes when I do not receive correspondence from an aspiring British Asian player, coach or manager asking for support to access opportunities in mainstream football. These present day enquiries mirror my own experiences as a child wanting to play football within the mainstream arena. Hence, this chapter is intended to not only highlight the key challenges and issues, but to reinvigorate the British Asian football debate by outlining opportunities and pathways for realistic, sustainable change.

A decade and a half ago, the debate around “Asians in football” was ignited by the somewhat ironically titled ‘Asians can’t play football’ report (Bains with Patel 1996). Fifteen years later, this chapter provides a timely, first-hand exploration of the barriers and challenges that are still faced by the British Asian football community in gaining access to the professional game. It argues that the emergence of a largely *ad hoc* football infrastructure in British Asian communities, characterised by poorly structured and organised football, and limited resources, is not providing sufficiently sustainable and structured participation and coaching opportunities. This situation is exacerbated by a range of factors: limited pathways and partnerships within the game’s administration and institutions which might provide opportunities for British Asian communities in amateur and professional football; a lack of provision particularly for

younger age groups; and the continuing existence of racial discrimination and stereotyping in the game (Burdsey 2007a). Hence, this analysis calls for a move away from the stasis that characterises contemporary dominant responses to this situation towards the formation of more proactive, realistic and achievable solutions.

This chapter illustrates the current position of the British Asian football community within the “national game” by outlining its current engagement and analysing the central challenges it faces in translating its passion for the game into inclusion in the realm of professional football—both on and off the field of play. The key objective of this chapter is to highlight achievable and realistic solutions to current key challenges by emphasising how the numerous stakeholders can develop and create the necessary “conditions for change”. These, it is argued, are crucial to the formulation of future approaches for tackling the under-representation of British Asians in amateur and professional football provision. The chapter addresses a number of central themes, including the continued omnipresence of issues such as racism and stereotyping. In addition, it considers contemporary responses to this debate, from a wide range of key stakeholders, including anti-racism campaigns, professional football clubs and the game’s governing bodies. In this regard, it is also imperative to discuss how the government has responded to these developments through contemporary social inclusion policies and strategies to engage British Asians to participate in sport, notably football.

BRITISH ASIAN FOOTBALL: THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

Before signposting future directions, it is essential to review the current position of British Asian football, which is currently at the periphery of the wider domestic football landscape. It is all too easy to get lost in the anecdotal debates that have led to uninformed and biased reporting by the media, as well as the reproduction of misinformation by key stakeholders and within British Asian communities over the past decade. It is only by articulating an informed, objective picture of existing football provision within British Asian communities that the process of understanding how these groups can achieve their desired representation in the game—at all levels and in all aspects—can begin.

In 2010, British Asian participation on the elite field of play is almost inconspicuous, with only half a dozen professional players—a staggering and very telling statistic in light of the fact that over 4 per cent of the national population is from a British Asian background (Office for National Statistics 2010). Football is by far the most popular sport to participate in, and follow, for a huge number of British Asians, and arguably represents one of the most significant social indicators of the degree to which these

communities have attained the necessary cultural capital to participate in “mainstream” sport and, more broadly, integrate into British society. As such, tackling one of the great anomalies of amateur and professional sports participation in Britain is an imperative task.

Unfortunately, the usual response to the question, “Why is British Asian under-representation in football important?”, is one of apathy amongst many of the groups and agencies involved. The debate has subsequently become staid and the initial enthusiasm amongst second- and third-generation British Asians to try to implement change from “outside” the game has been dampened by the reality of piecemeal grass-roots change, characterised by limited opportunities and restricted pathways. Only by outlining, understanding and, most importantly, evaluating the key responses from all of the agencies involved in this issue will we be in a position to develop the necessary “conditions for change,” and outline realistic and achievable solutions to the under-representation of British Asians in football. This chapter outlines many of the problems contributing to the current unsatisfactory state of affairs, as well as some of the responses from key stakeholders, before finally proposing some potential strategies and solutions.

The Emergence of Ad Hoc Football Provision

A fleeting look at the parks, playgrounds and recreation spaces of Tower Hamlets in London, Handsworth in Birmingham or Beeston in Leeds will reveal that British Asians throughout the country are playing the sport they have grown up with. In a recreational capacity, second- and third-generations of British Asians have become immersed in the national sport and its associated subcultural facets—wearing the attire of their favourite teams, whilst mimicking their heroes on the pitch. Why, then, do these enthusiastic participants have their journeys through Britain’s national game beset by challenges and barriers to participation?

The past two decades have witnessed the emergence of an embryonic and *ad hoc* football infrastructure in British Asian communities, where poorly structured and organised football, with limited access to resources, partnerships, networks, coaching and training opportunities, and support for club development, contribute to a failure to provide sustainable, structured football opportunities. The emergence of numerous amateur, and a handful of semi-professional, clubs within British Asian communities over the past ten years has been one of the few success stories. Yet the clubs that are well structured and developed are the exception to the rule. It is critical to understand why this situation has occurred in order to begin the process of developing the “conditions for change”.

Most British Asians have their first experience of football participation at school and many young players turn out for their school teams, fully participating in an environment that provides structure and pathways towards inclusive opportunities. However, whilst it is at this junior stage that we have

perhaps the most captive audience, once these aspiring young footballers leave the school gates the opportunities to participate in mainstream football rapidly diminish. Why does this occur? British Asians have been proactively involved in football since the first mass migrations (Bains and Johal 1999, Burdsey 2006b), but the key enabler of sustained football participation—the “inclusive community football club”—is all too often underdeveloped or absent from local sports provision. Community football clubs catering for British Asians were a rarity two decades ago and in the last decade have we witnessed the emergence of a handful of well-run, Football Association (FA)-affiliated clubs and projects within these communities. Two examples of best practice are London Tigers and the Khalsa Football Academy (KFA) based in Letchworth, who have worked tirelessly with limited resources. These clubs have developed organically, and created opportunities and pathways for participation, training, education and employment. Notably, organisations such as the KFA have led the development of inclusive provision, not just for British Asian participants, but also for players from a wide range of diverse ethnicities. Not only do they therefore represent an example of best practice for equality and inclusion, but they also demonstrate the inaccuracy of dominant claims that British Asian teams deliberately seek to self-segregate themselves from players of other backgrounds.

The grass-roots football community clubs and previously mentioned projects notwithstanding, the vast majority of prospective young British Asian players do not have access to community football provision on their doorstep. As a consequence, the overarching objective of all parties interested in the future of British Asian participation should be to develop and embed a sustainable grass-roots football infrastructure that focuses on creating well organised and structured football teams, clubs and projects throughout the country which can offer access and pathways to a wide range of mainstream opportunities and provision.

How can British Asian Communities Access Existing, and Develop New, Pathways to Opportunities Within Football?

A key factor contributing to the *ad hoc* nature of current provision is the fact that the vast majority of British Asian football participation is non-affiliated (i.e. not played under the auspices of the Football Association), and played as small-sided games (i.e. not 11-a-side). As a result, these participants are under the radar of the FA, key stakeholders and existing football structures, as non-affiliated football participation is habitually absent from their strategic plans. One of the main consequences of this is that non-affiliated participation does not enable full access to mainstream provision, support and resources. British Asian communities therefore lack access to football development knowledge and experience, which ultimately results in limited pathways for them to develop sustainable football opportunities. It is only when the majority of participation becomes affiliated that British

Asians will be able to access mainstream provision, creating the conditions for change that will provide the catalyst for the emergence of a generation of professional players. Significantly, there is also a notable lack of knowledge amongst key stakeholders about how to engage, empower and include the British Asian football community which, critically, has further contributed to the current picture of exclusion.

The proliferation of poorly structured and resourced teams and clubs has created embryonic provision, characterised by grass-roots clubs that are dominated by male participants in the 16–25 age group. Many of these non-affiliated teams and players aspire to play in affiliated leagues, but all too often the perception and reality of amateur football as being rife with racism, discrimination and stereotyping (see also Bradbury, this volume) limit participation and sustain isolated, *ad hoc* participation. A key response to this exclusion from mainstream provision in the past decade has been the emergence of British Asian leagues and annual tournaments. This insular provision is reflected in the common approaches and responses from key stakeholders, professional football clubs and sports organisations where British Asian engagement is often addressed by providing opportunities in isolation and outside mainstream provision. Common in cities throughout the UK, these “Asian leagues” have provided an essential pathway for participation for British Asian teams, many of whom are resistant to mainstream provision because of lack of access and the importance of participating in a culturally safe and secure environment in which they can play without fear of racist abuse (Burdsey 2006b). The Asian Football League based in London has been tremendously successful in developing access to participation opportunities for aspiring British Asian players over the past decade. With over 1,000 players and 50 teams playing in an FA-affiliated league, it also has a prerequisite of a minimum of six British Asian players per team, and therefore is a participation opportunity used by a wide range of diverse ethnicities. Notwithstanding this, these leagues continue to be seen by some commentators as examples of self-segregation and a reluctance to integrate into mainstream structures. The challenge is how key stakeholders can capacity build, support and mentor these teams into mainstream affiliated leagues, so that they become a “stepping stone” to mainstream provision not the pinnacle of British Asian participation.

One of the main consequences of the organisation of football within British Asian communities, and the focus on adult male players, is an inadequate and undeveloped level of youth football provision. Very few British Asian clubs currently have well structured and organised youth football opportunities. This must be addressed, as currently the majority of budding young players are being insufficiently nurtured and are thus going unnoticed. In addition, the virtual non-existence of British Asian female provision highlights the lack of opportunities for this group within mainstream football and notably amongst existing British Asian male clubs. A greater understanding is required of the socio-cultural and religious barriers that

are faced by British Asian women and girls (see both Ahmad and Ratna, this volume), as they are not currently catered for within existing British Asian and mainstream football structures.

In 2007, the AFN delivered the Coaching Pathway Programme (CPP) targeting British Asian male and female coaches in east London. The programme highlighted the needs of, and barriers faced by, aspiring British Asian coaches. All participants in the CPP noted a lack of access to, and knowledge of, existing coaching pathways and opportunities as key reasons for non-participation. Many female coaches highlighted the need for culturally appropriate environments for them to participate in and deliver coaching within their communities. More significantly, the qualified female coaches struggled to find mainstream opportunities in coaching which ultimately points to the lack of participation and coaching pathways for British Asian women and girls. Whilst in recent years it has been encouraging to see British Asians obtaining FA coaching qualifications, these prospective British Asian coaches still lack the participation, mentoring opportunities and support structures necessary to reach their full potential, and to access mainstream opportunities which will enable progression up the coaching ladder.

Therefore, in order to develop an inclusive grass-roots football infrastructure that encompasses youth, female and disability provision, as well as coaching opportunities, there needs to be a significant contribution from a wide range of partners including County Football Associations (CFAs), local leagues, and existing football clubs and projects. Access to the resources needed to develop well-managed, governed and structured teams, clubs and football projects is critical to the advancement of British Asian participation, as currently these communities have limited capacity to engage with the appropriate agencies, such as CFAs, professional clubs and the wider football network. What is required is an informed and intuitive multi-agency response to support and facilitate grass-roots change, in order to “professionalise” football provision within British Asian communities, engender sustainable football participation and open up pathways to opportunities within mainstream football structures.

Racial Discrimination and Stereotyping: Continuing Issues and Challenges

Racial discrimination and stereotyping are issues that pervade not only aspects of the “Asians in football” debate but, more broadly, also many areas of British Asians’ everyday lives. As a result, these issues are undoubtedly key factors contributing to the current *ad hoc* and embryonic state of football provision for British Asians, manifesting themselves in segregated participation, the rise of British Asian leagues, and limited pathways and opportunities in mainstream football. All British Asian players have stories of personal discrimination and stereotyping on and off the field of play,

and this clearly continues to deter their involvement in mainstream football structures. How can we begin to tackle these barriers to participation?

When observing the terraces and stands of football grounds in England, it is possible to witness a positive change whereby more British Asians are supporting Premier League and Football League teams up and down the country. Specifically, Randhawa and Burdsey (2009) argue that there is a new found confidence within British Asian fans in the Premier League whereby they feel that it has become increasingly safer for them to attend matches over the past decade. However, this welcome and positive development is not mirrored on the pitches of amateur football, where many British Asians are still resistant to participate due to the reality and perception of the prevalence of racism and stereotyping. Whilst there have been successful anti-racism campaigns that have impacted within the stadia of Premier League and Football League clubs, the amateur and grass-roots game has been largely ignored.

Slowly the simplistic and misguided myths and stereotypes surrounding British Asian players that have acted as barriers to participation, including inadequate physicality, the prioritisation of education over sporting endeavours, and the perceived importance of cultural and religious traditions, are being eroded. However, greater understanding of these issues and, moreover, their nuances and complexities, are still required in order to ascertain how they impact on participation (Burdsey 2007a). Furthermore, despite a widespread, dominant perception regarding its eradication, racism continues to tarnish our national game, just as it affects the wider society. The overt racism of the 1960s and 1970s witnessed by my parents' generation has simply given way to more subtle and covert forms of racism, both in sport and the wider society (see Burdsey, this volume). As such, a truly equitable football environment still appears to be a utopian and unrealistic target. At the present time, many British Asians feel that the support networks currently in place to tackle racism are piecemeal and lack institutional backing. Therefore, the exclusionary effects of racial discrimination and stereotyping can only really be addressed when British Asian players, coaches and managers can be truly confident that key stakeholders have developed the education and anti-discrimination strategies and methods necessary to tackle them, both on and off the field of play.

CONTEMPORARY DOMINANT RESPONSES TO THE EXCLUSION OF BRITISH ASIAN FOOTBALLERS

As previously discussed, limited access to inclusive, mainstream football provision, continuing racial discrimination, and a lack of resources and development expertise within the British Asian football community have contributed to their exclusion from opportunities in the amateur and professional games.

The analysis now outlines contemporary responses from key stakeholders to this problem, and suggests how they might shape their future responses to the debate in order to bring about sustainable grass-roots change.

The FA

The FA is the governing body for the national game and has, in various guises, attempted to tackle the under-representation of British Asians over the last decade. At a national level the FA has endeavoured to engage in, and facilitate, discussions to encourage more British Asians to become involved in football by hosting forums, workshops and national conferences. These have served to highlight best practice and challenge the key barriers to participation.

The development of the national Race Equality Advisory Group in 2006 provided a platform for the “Asians in football” debate. It had some positive effects, such as the development of a multi-faith calendar to inform all parties about the cultural and religious events and festivals of the diverse communities involved in football. Such progressive steps have been few and far between, however, as the FA, especially at county level, continues to resist engaging in a full commitment and allocating significant resources that would bring about fundamental grass-roots change (see Lusted, this volume). As each year passes, new facets of the debate are given priority and highlighted without providing realistic solutions and signalling sustainable change. Therefore, the FA needs to engender strategic change within grass-roots British Asian football and bring together all aspects of the debate that are currently being addressed in isolation—including racism, segregated leagues, youth provision, female participation and coach education—and work towards more a realistic plan of action.

There have been other significant positive steps taken by the FA, most notably equality training which has begun to tackle the lack of understanding between the governing body and minority ethnic football communities. Encouragingly, the FA has also begun to work closely with key British Asian clubs and football projects, whilst a number of CFAs in areas of substantial British Asian communities, such as Middlesex, Essex, London, Birmingham and East Riding (Yorkshire) have developed partnerships with community-based organisations, such as the AFN. This latter relationship needs nurturing and support with real commitment and resources from the FA, however, in order to support football development within British Asian communities. All too often this support has been a postscript in the national FA strategy and, more importantly, within CFAs’ own regional strategies. Key to the FA’s future response to the situation regarding British Asian football is the extent to which it has the actual motivation and willingness to direct resources through CFAs to develop local engagement strategies. In the past few years, the seeds for a positive and proactive relationship with certain British Asian

communities have been sown, but this fragile and insecure relationship will need continual nurturing and support. Therefore, it is imperative for the FA to build relationships based on trust and respect within British Asian communities so that the processes of embracing and welcoming British Asians into the structures and networks of mainstream football can be enabled.

Anti-racism Campaigns

Anti-racism campaigns, such as Kick It Out and Show Racism the Red Card, entered the lexicon of football around fifteen years ago and have been prominent voices in the debate about British Asians' exclusion from football. Through the Equality Standard for Professional Clubs, Kick It Out, in particular, has made a positive contribution in challenging discriminatory behaviours in professional football, notably within the controlled arena of the football stadium. However, eradicating racism outside of the stadium, within the occupational structures of clubs and institutions, is a far more difficult issue. This is especially the case at amateur and grass-roots levels where insufficient work has been done in tackling racial discrimination and the stereotyping of British Asian players, coaches, managers and referees. The importance of key stakeholders supporting these campaigns with the appropriate resources cannot be overstated, not only to deliver a broad anti-racist message, but also to embed race equality work throughout all levels and aspects of the game. Traditionally, it has been too easy for key stakeholders and professional football clubs to align themselves to these campaigns—which have come to be viewed as a panacea *par excellence* for racism and inequality in football—without really demonstrating a tangible commitment to achieving change within the game (Long *et al.* 2005, Spracklen *et al.* 2006).

Kick It Out hosts the National Asians in Football Forum, which provides a platform for discussion on British Asian participation. However, it is yet another area that highlights the ineffectiveness of their work, as it has again failed to create positive, sustained change and has simply been satisfied with the insignificant success of finite exposure. In order for these campaigns to be truly effective, they must strive to be an independent voice which challenges the football hierarchy. This can only be achieved if they develop strategies to become self-sustaining and not reliant on key stakeholder support. Lack of capacity and limited resources within these campaigns have restricted the delivery of anti-racism to piecemeal work, whilst a lack of knowledge, expertise and resources to tackle the issue beyond simple media-friendly promotion has resulted in an ingrained stasis. Only when the resources and capacity to deliver race equality education through football, and within a range of settings, are in place can anti-racist organisations begin to tackle racism and bring about sustainable change towards race equality in football.

Professional Clubs

Over the last few years, high-profile campaigns at a number of professional clubs, such as Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur, have provided well-publicised schemes for young British Asian players to take part in large-scale trials, which provide opportunities for winners to train at their academies. This renewed interest in British Asian footballers is obviously a positive development with regard to their progression into professional football, but all too often this type of strategy serves to raise the hopes of players that a breakthrough is achievable, whilst in reality the pathways and opportunities that exist at the conclusion of these media-driven events are still limited and unsustainable. In particular, West Ham United's 'Asians in Football' scheme, launched over a decade ago, highlights the difficulties in embedding sustainable change, as although the programme has undoubtedly increased British Asian participation in the local area, it has not led to the much promised pathways into elite football. In recent years, some clubs, such as Charlton Athletic and Wolverhampton Wanderers, have developed successful and sustainable links with the British Asian communities in their locality. For example, the latter have developed links through their local British Asian community with clubs in the newly formed Indian I-League. These connections demonstrate the future direction for developing partnerships between grass-roots British Asian football and elite football expertise, pathways and opportunities.

However, this new willingness to engage with British Asian communities within professional football needs to be cultivated in the correct manner in order to develop opportunities for professional participation. This can only be achieved when a well organised, grass-roots talent identification framework is embedded in British Asian football communities. At present, the talent identification programmes, scouting systems and academies at very few professional clubs engage with, or venture into, British Asian communities. Consequently, the nurturing of proactive partnerships and relationships between clubs and their local communities is a crucial development in providing opportunities for the next generation of aspiring British Asian players.

Government

The New Labour government was broadly supportive of the work undertaken to tackle the under-representation of British Asians in football, through the rise of its social inclusion agenda under Tony Blair's leadership. Football participation has been utilised as a catalyst for tackling a myriad of social issues, including community cohesion, inequalities, deprivation, drug misuse, health and well-being and, most recently, extremism in British Asian—especially Muslim—communities.

Government policy of attempting to tackle social issues within British Asian communities through the "hook" of sport assumes that they are

already engaged within mainstream sport provision. The nature of British Asian engagement in sport and active recreation is critical to this debate as it is all too often omitted by commentators on British Asian participation in football. Ultimately, a lack of participation opportunities and knowledge of football, sport and active recreation provision has severely hindered the development of the next generation of British Asian participants in sport, on and off the field of play. Only when a framework of sport and active recreation provision is embedded within these communities by providing opportunities for participation, and by supporting and educating British Asian communities to become literate in the sport and active recreation environment, will we witness a new generation get involved in amateur and professional sport, and government led engagement strategies. Therefore football and sporting infrastructure in British Asian communities is currently immature and lacks the access and pathways that are required to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by sport-led social inclusion programmes. To what extent, therefore, has football been *forced* onto these communities through current policy without sufficient appreciation of their specific cultural and sporting attributes?

A more nuanced understanding of sports participation and engagement with mainstream sporting and active recreation structures is required if British Asians are to fully benefit from football-led social inclusion initiatives. First and foremost, there must be a shift away from uniform, homogenising perceptions of British Asian communities, which ignore the historical religious and cultural differences that exist within and between these communities. Football and sport have been utilised to bring about community cohesion within British Asian communities, yet all too often with little understanding of current sporting engagement by these communities. Ultimately, therefore, they have had limited effect. Participation in football can be a catalyst for social change, but only when British Asians are engaged and have full access to mainstream provision. The limitations of trying to use sport as a panacea for society's ills must also be fully understood and, instead, it should be employed more effectively through a multi-agency approach.

Funding

The Football Foundation has been the key enabler of capacity building grass-roots football within the past decade. With increased knowledge of the organisation's funding streams, British Asian clubs and community football projects have finally been able to access and utilise mainstream funding opportunities. Yet, the inherently exclusive nature of funding pathways has also at times excluded British Asian communities, as their limited access to, knowledge of and support in bidding for available monies means that still very few British Asian communities are able to benefit. In order to change this, key stakeholders need to engage the British Asian football

community to become aware of potential funding opportunities and proactively take advantage of them.

Access to funding and capacity building support from organisations such as the Football Foundation and Sport England is critical to developing community-based football and sports projects, which can access and develop appropriate facilities within their communities. Even though British Asian communities have successfully tapped into wider social and cultural funding streams, access to sports-led funding has been minimal. Currently, the majority of funding secured by British Asian football projects and clubs seems to be limited to equality and anti-racism aligned funding streams. These are important entry points to the funding environment, but in order to develop and sustain structural change, and capacity build grass-roots British Asian football, access to the myriad of mainstream sport and community funding options must be made available.

CONCLUSION

In the past decade, the foremost question in the British Asian football debate has been “where are the professional British Asian footballers?”. The issues highlighted in this chapter call for a move away from this stasis, in order to begin to answer the more relevant and central question, which is “where are the amateur and professional clubs and community football projects providing inclusive opportunities for participation, training and coaching pathways for British Asians?”. For far too long, an informed debate has failed to develop and provide access to an inclusive grass-roots football infrastructure which will in turn open up the myriad opportunities and pathways that are currently not available to prospective British Asians playing, coaching, managing and participating in other aspects of the game, on and off the field of play.

It is not until the fundamentals of grass-roots football development and infrastructure are embedded within British Asian football communities that it will be possible to develop inclusive, affiliated and professionally managed football projects, clubs and teams that will provide the catalyst for the next generation of British Asian professional players. Only when a realistic and achievable approach to developing a grass-roots infrastructure that opens up pathways to professional football, enables talent identification, and establishes academies and key organisations is developed will we see this community become part of the wider football family, and finally address the barriers and challenges discussed in this chapter. These conditions for change are, I believe, necessary to safeguard the future of British Asian football, and to finally realise and convert the passion within this community into professional opportunities at all levels and in all aspects of the game. My suggestions for practical steps to work towards achieving this state of affairs are as follows:

- Develop well organised and sustainable “inclusive community football clubs” within British Asian communities, which have access to existing football provision, as well as support for development and capacity building, in order to open access to player, training and employment opportunities within amateur and professional football.
- Address the prevalence of racism and discrimination in grass-roots football through targeted campaigning and equality work. Key stakeholders must commit the appropriate resources which will allow anti-racism campaigns to work with a wide range of partners and in a variety of settings, including schools, football clubs, sports bodies, and voluntary and statutory organisations. This is crucial in instilling confidence within British Asian communities to access mainstream football and sports opportunities.
- Develop access to structured, well-organised youth football, which emphasises professional coaching and training frameworks, including player pathways towards continued professional development.
- Develop sustainable coaching opportunities for aspiring British Asian male and female coaches, whilst ensuring they have the support networks and pathways to access coaching opportunities in mainstream provision, thereby developing a new generation of positive football role models and mentors.
- The FA needs to commit resources and sustained support to enable CFAs to develop partnerships with British Asian football clubs and embed their development within local CFA strategies. This would urge a new generation of CFAs to embrace, identify and welcome British Asians into the structures and networks of mainstream football.
- Develop a support network that would allow prospective British Asian football clubs and projects to access resources and funding, to create and sustain football, sport and active recreation opportunities.
- More informed research is required to understand the nuances and complexities within British Asian communities with regard to sporting participation, which can then be used to address the vacuum of knowledge which can exist between British Asian communities and key stakeholders.
- Professional football clubs need to create sustainable pathways for aspiring British Asian footballers by developing opportunities to support grass-roots development and facilitate talent identification and scouting systems for their academies.
- Empower British Asian communities to become literate of the sporting and active recreation opportunities available to them through engagement with key partners and sports networks.

Even though the seeds of change have been sown, developing an effective and sustainable football infrastructure in these communities will take a multifaceted approach by a wide network of key stakeholders at a local,

regional and national level, and within grass-roots football in British Asian communities.

My hope is that this chapter presents a new direction for all interested parties wishing to tackle the under-representation of British Asian communities in football with realistic and achievable solutions. The key points outlined in this chapter indicate the need to renew emphasis on building grass-roots football infrastructure in such communities and, by doing so, tackle the ever present issues of race inequality and social and cultural exclusion that have thwarted British Asians' involvement in the sport they love.

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