

Here we go-but where? The possibilities of diaspora in the field of sport

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Introduction

This working paper, which draws on my work funded by an AHRC small grant in the Diasporas, Migration and Identities Programme, presents some preliminary reflections on opportunities for the re-configuration of diasporic identities in sport using the example of football. My research explores some of the processes through which identifications in football might be being transformed in the twenty first century, in the year of the 2006 men's World Cup, by examining the participation of fans, especially in organisations that are endeavouring to promote social inclusion and combat racism in football. My work focuses upon interviews with activists and supporters in the anti-racist organisations, *Kick it Out (KIO)* and *Football Unites: Racism Divides (FURD)* and evidence drawn from football club fan websites, in order to ascertain what is happening in the field of combating racism and social exclusion and to explore the extent to which football might be a site where transformations are taking place. I address two issues, which are set in the context of possible cultural and social transformations. Firstly, there is the matter of identity and the kind of identifications that are taking place in sport as a domain, which, not only has enormous social, cultural and economic importance in the contemporary world, but is also part of the wider arena of cultural change. Secondly, I seek to explore some of the meanings of diaspora that are distinguished by mobility and hybridity (Clifford, 1999, Hall, 1996, 1990, Bhabha, 1994, Gilroy, 1993) and the relevance of viewing identifications in sport through the lens of diaspora. The concept of diaspora, as it has been used to explain the fluidity and mobility of diasporic identifications, for example as experienced by African Caribbean people (Chamberlain, 1998) can be seen as challenging more stabilised, 'classic' understandings of diaspora (Chivallon, 2002). A hybrid version of diaspora might sit uneasily with the strong sense of belonging and even of fixity that have been linked to football fandom. Diaspora is not, of course, a term that appears in the discursive field of football. It is 'ethnic minority', 'black' and Asian people, 'immigrant', 'traveller', which feature on the web sites under the heading of 'community' on club websites and in the language of activists.

However, I suggest that it is the fluidity and hybridity of the concept of diaspora which could inform explanations of some of the changes that are taking place in sport,

albeit at a very slow pace. As James Clifford has demonstrated, the adjectival use of the term, diasporic, has the advantage of greater fluidity (1999), which makes it attractive as part of the explanatory framework as a concept that might be applied to transformations, which in this instance, I argue, might be taking place in sport.

Football fandom does invoke a strong sense of belonging and of commitment to a particular team, with strong ties to class and gender in its affiliations. I do not wish to underestimate the global marketing appeal of the sport, as is expressed, for example, in the promotion of its products, its celebrity players and the recruitment, especially to the big Premiership clubs like Manchester United, of what are sometimes called 'fair-weather' supporters. It is not only the rhetoric of football that invokes passionate supporter commitment to this sport across the globe. As the former Liverpool FC manager, Bill Shankly has been so frequently quoted as saying:

Some people believe football is a matter of life and death: I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that.

(in Goldblatt, 2006: ix)

Dedication to football goes further than the insignia of affiliation, ranging from wearing the team strip and scarf to embodied inscriptions, such as tattoos in the style of 'United till I die'. Football fans are associated with passionate feelings that are both strongly held and forcefully expressed. It is a sport which invokes strong emotions that are often characterised by the setting of boundaries and oppositions, notably of 'us' and 'them'. As one white, male fan at *FURD*, described football:

It's tribal. You support your team. You want to support them and all that makes it inclusive. Everyone. Whatever they are. If they are in your team they belong.

This might suggest possibilities for more open and fluid identifications that could transcend, or more likely, cohabit with other versions of belonging. Football presents a potential site of transformation with possibilities for embracing a more diverse range of those who are admitted into its field of belonging, in which the explanatory reach of diasporic identifications might have some purchase. Activists, among whom I include volunteers and part time workers in the anti-racist organisations, and other fans who may not be so directly involved, do express a belief in the potential of football to promote diversity. How far is there some manifestation of a transgression of traditional boundaries of belonging in sport which opens up possibilities of new forms of belonging and different ways of making sense of the self through the

apparatuses and technologies of diversity and social inclusion? What are the new identifications and how are they accommodated?

For football fans, the sport is primarily focused upon belonging in a particularly partisan version which involves being part of the club and its history, a more local team or, at key moments, identifying with the nation and being part of its imagined (Anderson, 1971) and lived, albeit only for brief periods of time, community. I deploy the concept of identity, as a means of accessing the processes through which a sense of being part of a community might develop, or be rejected, although I acknowledge its limitations. Identity provides a shared sense of belonging which is difficult to achieve and may, in fact, be unattainable, for example, because it feeds 'expectations of being together that are impossibly high' (Gilroy, 2005: 54). Paul Gilroy also suggests that the concept of identity may invoke notions of fixity that limit its usefulness in the context of global transformation and proposes the idea of 'conviviality'. Gilroy uses conviviality as a more relevant follow-on from 'multi-culturalism', which he claims to have broken down politically, as a means of understanding the 'processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in post-colonial cities elsewhere... that turns attention toward the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification' (2005: xv). Thus, Gilroy expresses the recent preference for the more dynamic notion of identification which highlights mobility and contingency rather than fixity. The concept of identity, however, provides a means of theorising the interface between the personal and the social and securing a sense of self within a politics of location (Hall, 1986). Taking up an identity position and belonging, take place through recognition and identification, enacted through sets of practices and meanings produced through a series of significations, heavily dominated by language and visual and visible signs. The security of this belonging is manifest in histories and the personal and public narratives of spatial and temporal belonging that are an integral part of identification in sport. As Pnina Werbner has argued,

Post-modernists who attack constructions of "culture" miss the fact that identities matter deeply and are long term...they are not simply pre-given or inherited: they are formed, made and re-made: they exist in practice dialogically, through collective action and interaction.

(2002: 267)

However, some identities matter more than others. How can different identities co-exist? This research explores some of the specific spaces in which heterogeneous,

multiple identities are re-constituted and questions how different identities might be accommodated without necessarily involving contradiction. Football still invokes strongly polarised oppositions and notions of fixity, often expressed through the idea of 'authenticity' that might differentiate between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' followers of a team. However much the ethnographer, or indeed any social science researcher using qualitative methods, might seek to employ mobile, fluid categories and conceptualisations, it remains the case that in many fields, the subjects of the research may doggedly hold on to binary systems and polarised allegiances, which have to be acknowledged. It may, however, be these identifications that are being transformed through the very ordinariness of multi-culture and of multi-ethnic societies.

Football can be seen as offering a very strong sense of location and of identity. It has even been categorised as 'the most universal cultural phenomenon in the world' (Goldblatt, 2006: xii). However, not only has the sense of belonging which football has promoted been difficult to achieve, but also, it has, at particular moments, been (and continues to be) associated with the social exclusion of racism, homophobia and misogyny. In recent years there has been an enormous growth in activities which aim to combat such exclusion by promoting social cohesion through wider participation in sport, although there are entrenched attitudes which resist as well as accommodate change, for example in the identifications with national identities. Football invokes loyalties that are located in different spatial contexts, for example at the level of the club and the ground itself; cities are split spatially, ideologically and through historic religious allegiances, most marked in the UK example of Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers. Affiliations operate trans-nationally as well as at the level of nations, although boundaries are blurred, especially through the multi-national players who make up most English Premiership and other European major club teams. Ambiguities are apparent in the signifiers of belonging. As Bill Schwarz (2002) has argued, Englishness, as a national identity, has been characterised by whiteness in post-war Britain. This articulation has been particularly associated with football and, at times, with the Union Jack, which was appropriated as a symbol of Englishness. Paul Gilroy, nonetheless, sees the more recent use of the St George's flag as a more positive development that disrupts the links between the Union Jack and right wing, white Englishness in a shift which saw the substitution of 'the more pliable associations of the flag of St George for those of the discredited Union Jack' (2005: 106). Gilroy's optimism might be contested by some of what could be called the 'racial events' (Doane, 2006:259) of the 2006 men's World Cup, when some,

albeit a few, England supporters waved the St George's flag to accompany chants of 'Ten German Bombers' and a range of racist expletives in German cities (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/5219906.stm>). The 'Ten German Bombers' chant, seeming to refer to the defeat of Germany by Britain and her allies in the second world war, has served as a shorthand signifier of xenophobia and racism and has been deployed by those who may not have much understanding, let alone memory of its genealogy.

As Ashley Doane argues, although not largely in a sporting context, 'racial events' constitute the arena in which racial ideologies are presented, challenged and defended-and are re-shaped in the process' (ibid.:260). This remains a contested arena, where dispute is often concentrated on specific events, many of which receive extensive media coverage. For example, the media coverage of the 2006 men's World Cup ranged from celebration of the England fans' exemplary behaviour in the press to coverage which recognised the more troubled activities of fans. The BBC Panorama television programme, *Hooligans*, shown on 2nd August 2006, was intended to expose the bad behaviour of some English fans at the tournament. Panorama carried out an undercover investigation into previously unreported hooligan violence at the men's 2006 World Cup, for which a record 170,000 England fans, the majority of whom admittedly caused no trouble, travelled to Germany. The film followed England fans from Frankfurt to Gelsenkirchen and infiltrated groups of troublemakers.

Several of the people I interviewed made reference to this film in the aftermath of the World Cup, showing how media coverage of 'racial events' is troubling for activists too and demonstrates the ambivalence of arguments about progress. Such 'events' constitute pivotal moments in the re-active work of anti-racist organisations, whose members pro-actively endeavour to create their own counter events. For example, *Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE)* synchronises trans-European events through internet publicity (www.Farenet.org) and the work of locally based organisations in different European countries. Fans I spoke to from the anti-racist organisations, who had been involved in the *Street Kick* campaign through which games were organised for children and young people in secured areas in the streets around the grounds of matches in the competition, felt that their efforts had been marginalised. As one white, male Sheffield fan, who had been out in Germany, said of the BBC Panorama programme:

They came along, the BBC and that and they filmed *Street Kick* and they didn't use any of that. Yes we were fed up about that...but then again you can't deny what you saw. There were enough young white lads there being like that. Not just the odd few. There were a lot.

Activists acknowledge the persistence and materiality of racism and the struggles which face anti-racist organisations and football fans in spite of their collective efforts.

Diversity: Policies and Practices

Many of the campaigns to promote diversity and social inclusion are part of a programme of activities following the 1997 Blair, Labour government's decision to target social exclusion (Wagg, 2004); although some of the activist work, often generated by fans, predates the first Blair government. Such interventions can be seen as creating an assemblage of persons through the mechanisms of governmentality, (Rose, 1996, [1989] 1999) to present an exploration of the possibilities of these transformative and transforming identities within contemporary football, where cultural diversity provides the framework for new sets of practices and re-conceptualisations. Football supporters are part of the dynamic of transformation and themselves take up new identities through the practices of diversity. In the promotional activities of the clubs, however, fans are more likely to be interpellated¹ as individual consumers who will buy the club's products (Brown et al., 2006, Woodward, 2005). Football League clubs have sections of their websites which provide links to information and up dates of these activities which are also summarised by the FA for the Premier League (<http://www.premierleague.com> (About us community projects)) as do the anti-racist organisations like *FURD*, *KIO* and *FARE* (www.FAREnet.org). Most Premiership clubs have sophisticated websites, the majority of which are designed by premiumtv.co.uk offering a wide range of projects which promote diversity as well as lucrative merchandise. Charlton Athletic, which along with Manchester United and Arsenal runs its own web site, is distinctive because of its long and very successful record of promoting diversity (<http://www.charlton-athletic.co.uk>). Not only has Charlton been in the forefront of developing social inclusion and cohesion strategies, for example through its Charlton Athletic Race Equality Partnership (*CARE*) programme (<http://www.cafc.co.uk/anti-racism.ink>), but also its fan web sites and 'Your Views' sites are marked by a broader range of participants, including women, as recognised by the names given and, perhaps even more significantly by the nature of their exchanges, which largely feature coherent, critical discussion of the recent game, the team and football related

matters (<http://www.cafc.co.uk/yourview.ink?messageid=15421&display>). No fan sites I looked at included explicitly negative or racist comments, but Charlton was distinctive in the elaborated codes of communication and reasoned discussion on its sites, suggesting some benefits of the club's long history of implementing policies of diversity.

Stephen Wagg claims that policy interventions to promote social inclusion have two interrelated aspects; the role played by clubs and that of 'the grass roots campaigns to save clubs' both concerned to 'mobilize prevailing interpretations of the word 'community'' (2004:16). It is the relationship between these elements and the changes in identification, including the tension between 'outsider' communities, classified as disadvantaged and the related notion of belonging and 'insiders', which informs the discussion in this paper. Communityⁱⁱ is an avowedly complex concept, as acknowledged by both academics and practitioners (Brown et al, 2006). Whilst the debates about definitions and the status of the concept are outside the scope of this paper, the frequent deployment of the word 'community' in football, constituted as embracing all activities of social inclusion, has implications for diasporic identifications in football. This paper is concerned with the ways in which what is categorised as 'community' interests through implementations of the policies of anti-racism, diversity and cohesion, rather than with legislation *per se* and focuses upon the status of fans in the mobilisation of communities. Although many of these organisations are labelled specifically as targeting matters of race and ethnicity, usually under the 'anti-racist' banner, their work embraces a much wider range of social exclusion, including not only people from ethnic minorities, but also women, girls, disabled people and disadvantaged young people who may have taken drugs and committed various offences. Organisations such as *KIO* and *FURD* receive government funding to target a wide area of disadvantage. This is expressed in the UK government policy statement that 'Arts and sport, cultural and recreational activity, can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities' (PAT10, 1999:5). These organisations, however, have to bid for resources, for example from the National Lottery and other European Funding sources in order to develop their work and rely heavily upon the support of volunteers, most of whom are fans. There is increasing competition for funding among the different bodies involved in a climate of new initiatives and short-term projects and formulating bids constitutes an ever growing aspect of their work (see for example, Bradbury, 2001 Football Unites,

Racism Divides, 2006). As the director of *FURD* commented in response to my questions about classificatory systems in the field of anti-racism:

The language of diversity? Whether you say ethnic minorities or minority ethnic or what...that's for funding, for bids. Now, we have to say the right things for European funding, Government funding

Their objectives remain primarily concerned with promoting diversity and in transforming the practices and identities that are re-produced within football, especially among the fans, but the economic framework in which the agencies are positioned plays a significant role.

Such organisations, through the articulation and promotion of anti-racist practices and strategies, are implicated in negotiating new meanings for the diasporic subject and actively engage in 'explicit and systematic encounters with prevailing philosophies of race and ethnicity' (Schwarz, 2002:81). The concept of diaspora has contributed to these debates through a focus upon change and the dynamics of mobility (Gilroy, 1993). Anti-racism and discourses of social inclusion challenge and seek to subvert these philosophies of race which exploit different ideas about nature and culture. Sport encompasses cultural phenomena, but most exclusionary apparatuses are imbricated in the practices of sport, including ideas about 'race', gender and able-bodiedness that are embedded in a naturalisation of race (Wade, 2002) and draw upon repertoires of what is deemed 'natural'. This naturalization is more explicit in relation to gender through the segregation by regulatory bodies of sport into the women's and men's games (Hargreaves, 1994). Football, like most sports is highly gendered. The regulatory bodies which discipline and organise football are clearly segregated, although it is only the women's game which is marked as such. The 'World Cup' is the men's competition and gender is only noted when women are playing.

Debates and tensions within sports diversity policy initiatives reflect those in other areas of the multi-faceted complexities of the relationship between the state and diversity, although there are particularities within sport because of its specific alliances between competition, celebrity and community. Diversity poses problems in sport, because of the inherent conflict, between the positive understandings of diversity, based on the freedoms that the liberal state cannot deny its citizens and the negative aspects, premised on normative liberal notions of equality. On the one hand

there are policies that demand both multiculturalism and the celebration of difference and, on the other, antidiscrimination practices. Multi-culturalism suggests the celebration of difference and heterogeneity and the homogeneity of a common humanity that shares equal rights and duties that, as John K. Noyes argues of post-colonialism, 'requires a dialectic that can account for the unifying and homogenizing moments' (2002: 274). This dialectic has to be situated and to be located within the temporal and spatial specificities of the institutions and cultures within which encounters take place and sport presents problems as well as possible resolutions. Multi-culturalism as a celebration of difference plays a less prominent role in sport than in other areas of cultural life in which diversity is promoted and discourses of antidiscrimination have been situated more within the context of how football can benefit from wider social inclusion than any celebration of difference and heterogeneity.

Under-represented groups are being encouraged to participate in football as it is currently played and experienced, rather than to bring their own versions of sporting practice to the game, although this too is changing. Diversity in sport, as elsewhere, is, however, concerned with addressing inequalities and marking out differences, making them explicit and yet at the same time claiming such differences *do* not matter because they *should* not matter. As Christian Joppke observes, policies, which he classifies as liberal-democratic, call for 'different, even diametrically opposed responses to both appearances of diversity: abolish it by means of "anti-discrimination" policy or protect and promote it by means of "multi-culturalism" policy' (2004:451). In effect, they demand 'the simultaneous rendering invisible and visible of ethnic diversity' (ibid: 451). In sport the visibility of difference is a key strategy in promoting social inclusion. For example club websites and those of the anti-racist organisations, include representations of a wide range of people participating in the sport. As the KIO officer who has responsibility for coordinating promotional activities and liaising with other organisations, acknowledged:

Look at the women's football on our [KIO] website. Gender is a priority area under the Community Chest. Click on Community Chest, scroll down and you'll see it. We want to increase that participation; getting girls and women into football. It's only just started for us...including women and girls on the website and there's a picture too in 2006 for the first time

Women have to become visible in order to promote their inclusion in football, although this is a very troubling visibility, which is far from carried over into full

participation in league clubs. The presence of South Asian girls, wearing shalwar kameez and enjoying a game of football on the Kick it Out web site (www.kickitout.org.uk) presents a new departure, fairly understood as progress, but does not significantly challenge the invisibility or at least marginalisation, of the women's game at club and national level and the lack of financial support and club resources to support women's teams (Woodward, 2005). Gender presents a particularly difficult area for challenging traditional identifications, even if there is some acknowledgement of this.

Football Identifications

The re-configuration of new identities is made possible in a discursive field in which visibility and visual representations play significant parts, not only in the campaigns of anti-racist organisations and in the promotional practices of football clubs, but also in the routine encounters of the football fan. The visible differences of social exclusion are marked by absences, on the pitch and on the terraces and the invisibility of particular groups of people. Thus, it is not surprising that the anti-racist organisations give high priority both to inclusive symbolic representations and the embodied visibility of underrepresented groups, in the team and at the ground. This is acknowledged as a big problem, for example by the Director of *FURD*:

I think one of the big issues here is the lack of involvement of black and Asian spectators at professional games. Get a few black managers, coaches in the league clubs, but that's a gap. Of course the clubs may think they've done it because of the numbers of black players in their teams... There's still a danger of tokenism

There is a powerful visibility, which is marked by the dominating presence of football insignia and expressions of allegiance, through purchasing and displaying club merchandise which has been expanded to include anti racist slogans and even 'Kick it Out' shirts worn by the team at photo shoots to secure the club's anti racist credentials. The language of inclusion and exclusion is central to the processes of transformation, or to those of re-entrenchment of identifications in football. Activists, like the director of *FURD*, hold onto the discourse of diversity, whilst acknowledging that this is largely not the language of fans.

Yes well we keep the anti racist language because there is an edge to it. Anti sounds as if there is a battle to be fought and there is. We used to say black

and Asian then it was black and ethnic minority then minority ethnic. I couldn't get along with that one. There's one that says ethnic minority there is BEM [black and ethnic minority]... It's what they use in Local Authority youth work. I am not keen, no. In Europe it's all 'minorities', although we don't say 'black' when we're out there. Diaspora is not used. Not by the fans not in our work really. Ethnicity...Diversity, cohesion, social inclusion, exclusion.

This demonstrates the demands of the bureaucratic structures of liberal government which re-produce the version of multi-culturalism, which Gilroy describes, in the wider arena of global capitalism as 'the market-driven pastiche of multi-culture that is manipulated from above by commerce' (2005:142). 'Multi-culture' is articulated in specific ways in football and arguments for cohesion and diversity are framed more by notions of disadvantage and the desirability of including those who have been categorised as outsiders, than by any celebration of differences. However, football like all other commercial enterprises is, of course, profit and resource driven and whether the aim of activists and fans is to celebrate diversity or bring underrepresented groups into football, they are dependent on the practices, policies and resources of the state as well as the market. The 'pastiche of multi-culture' is seen by Slavoj Žižek as having some purchase because of the absence of governmental action and initiatives organised from below (1997), which is what informs Gilroy's critique of liberal democracy. Whilst campaigns that promote diversity and anti-racist fans might not be central to football, they are an increasing presence at all major events and through routine practices, for example in effecting some changes at grounds and in the language of sport. Activists are only too aware of the game they are playing in their endeavours to survive in an increasingly competitive field of providers in which they have to satisfy the requirements of this regulatory discourse in order to access resources and funding. However, the discourse of diversity is constituted through practices as well as the language which may or may not explicitly address its concerns. As one black, male activist said:

The fans understand these words though, like cohesion. They never use it but they say like in a pub 'we ought to get these Asian lads in. We ought to get the people who live round the ground to come to matches, get more of them playing'. That's cohesion, but they wouldn't use the word.

Market forces may not be all negative in their impact and a changing climate, wherein social inclusion and diversity have been 'put into discourse' (Foucault, 1981:11) so that they may even have become part of common currency through the endeavours

of anti-racist campaigns and fans. As the *K/O* officer for Europe and media relations pointed out:

The World Cup was a plastic card sponsors' cup. More than it ever has been before. A corporate World cup. However, that is not all bad. Black and Asian people could get tickets through corporate sponsors...to be part of a members' group who could get tickets, say through Coca Cola, Play Station, using their own business contacts. This is anecdotal evidence...but black and Asian people didn't have to log on the FA saying they had been to millions of games. They didn't need all those qualifying caps...they can pay so they can get tickets

This suggests a challenge to the notion of the 'real' or 'authentic' fan, who has proven credentials:

You don't have to prove that you belong to get tickets. You needed proof you were a **real** fan. This time Asian couples went too. First time. OK if they had money. That's how it is.

There is an incremental shift from a discourse of authenticity in the identifications that are being made in sport here. The evidence may be anecdotal and the changes marginal, but such disclosures demonstrate some movement away from fixity of belonging and the 'life or death' discourse of football fandom, which could accommodate diverse identities that can cohabit without contradiction.

Just as Gilroy's notion of conviviality can embrace both positive and negatives dimensions, multi-culture has evolved into something that is both taken for granted as a feature of contemporary life in the UK, but so too has the racism that accompanies it. New identifications of social inclusion have to negotiate as well as counter some of the negative traditions of belonging in football. Football chants play a significant part in signifying belonging but because of their explicit hostility they have also been the target of much of the work of anti-racist organisations. Expressions of identification with the team are most voluble through the audible presence of football chants, which have given voice to racist, homophobic and misogynist feelings in the past as well as contributing to more innovative re-articulations of popular culture. The following statement from one activist is echoed by all those actively engaged in fighting racism:

Things are different. The thing is we've stopped the racist chants. It is as if that's been our big project... Well I think there have been some big changes banana throwing monkey noises have gone from the British game which is very encouraging but unfortunately there was the mass racial abuse against black England players in Madrid in November 2004 and that isn't so long ago and we are not happy about that.

However, this is qualified by this observation:

I can't help thinking that's part of *Kick it Out*. Just part of it because have we kicked racism out of the stands, so that it's now somewhere else. There is still a lot of racism out there. It goes deep. But its going at least it's moved from the terraces. There is anger there. Bad language but mostly it's not racist ...The way we have done it is to stop the racist chants. Everyone knows that now- no chanting. Some of them are still racist though and even say so but they know not to do it at the ground.

There is evidence of transformation and the possibility of diasporic identifications that challenge the constraints of racism and social exclusion, but this is accompanied by the worrying possibility that what has happened is a re-location of racist discourses.

Changing Times?

Although the campaigns that are involved in challenging racism and social exclusion, target a range of socially excluded groups within the remit of their work, as do the clubs in the football league through their 'community' work, there has been a shift from the classification of the target groups as victims towards a more fluid notion of football fan identities. As one mixed race, male activist said:

Our message is fighting racism. It isn't just black people or to 'help' black people. It is for everybody. We are doing it for football. Not just for black people only.

I suggest that his position as actively working to fight racism situates these statements differently from the football clubs who defend their community programmes to the club board, as benefiting the public image of the club or of opening up a wider pool of players for the youth academy (Woodward, 2005). The transformation within activism interrelates with the experience of fans and the wider terrain, although there are clearly tensions.

The racists can be embarrassed by the fans who stand up to them. That is what we are trying to do. Place the racists in minorities so the majority of fans do stand up to them. But twenty or thirty guys in a pub are not going to get challenged are they? It's changing though.

It is largely accepted that, although there are transformations, these are often countered by negative manifestations of exclusion. It does, however, seem more likely that there has been a significant spatial re-location, for example in moving racism in particular, out of the ground and into other spaces, like the pub or in the less public spaces at the ground as this white male fan observed:

You don't have to hear people sort of chanting things. Just in half time conversation over the years you can hear people talking.

The other place is the street. As one black, male fan who attended the 2006 World Cup said:

The numbers flooding into the town centres made the big screen showings a different experience...There was more [racist, xenophobic] chanting in the town centres I only heard the Ten German Bombers Twice. At the ground it was quickly stopped by the fans...the chants were everywhere in the town centres ...It was bad. They were singing those songs. Really racist. Fascists. Women were getting a lot of abuse...it was pretty primal rubbish...In some ways we have kicked racism out of the ground but into other places, into the town. Outside the ground.

It is noteworthy that the interweaving of gender, race and ethnicity are acknowledged here and there has been a shift from the segregation of different aspects of 'othering'. Anti-racism' now specifically embraces the multi-faceted phenomena that constitute social exclusion. Gender presents some difficulty, even for the activists who recognise the differentiation that is institutional and structural in sport. Whilst women might be encouraged to participate, either as spectators in the 'family' atmosphere which the clubs seek to promote at grounds, or as members of under-represented groups in the 'community', the game which is the focus of all activity is the *men's* game. Women may be encouraged to join in, but this is always underpinned by the global dominance of the men's game, with its celebrity players and massive salaries at the top levels.

Fans and volunteers who work with children and young people, for example organising football matches and in the Street Kick games also say that girls are often reluctant to play and may prefer to watch. As one black male volunteer said:

We do get them coming but like in schools the girls seem to prefer to watch. It's hard getting them playing. We do try. Yeah in some schools they do like primary schools but the secondary stage that's more of a problem

Gender presents a disruption to diasporic identifications which could however, be productive. As one young south Asian, Muslim woman told me:

Yes, I like watching the games. We go to United it's big where I live. It's OK, Yeah, it's a game, but I enjoy going and following the team

This young woman astutely notes that indeed it is 'only a game' and she has no problem with accommodating her identity as a fan with other aspects of subjectivity. People do assemble themselves in a manner which is not always contradictory and can accommodate different identities. Football can be a part of popular culture that is accommodated along with other diasporic identifications of religion, kinship, occupation and location. Transformation may be incremental and involve the cohabitation of diverse differentially weighted identifications.

Conclusion

The politics of diversity has seeped into sport as it has in other areas of social life. It has become ordinary in many situations such that it has become possible for there to be diasporic identities which can be re-constituted within the terrain of popular culture which includes football. This is not to suggest that there are no longer 'racial events', or that racism is not a routine aspect of sport, but it is to claim that 'diversity' has been 'put into discourse' and that sporting identifications are being transformed as a result, albeit often in marginal and incremental ways. Fans play a significant part in the promotion of practices of diversity and social inclusion, both historically, for example through the development of organisations like *FURD*, *KIO* and *FARE* and through the routine practices with which fans engage in following football. There is some accommodation of diversity which takes place through the minutiae of the routine encounters as well as through more dramatic events and campaigns and policy initiatives. However, whilst some fans may be the motor for change, others are a source of social exclusion, which prevents transformations in the identities that can be taken up in sport. Racism has, nonetheless, been explicitly addressed and not, been entirely obliterated by multi-culturalism, as has been suggested (Gilroy, 2005). This is not to argue that combating racism is central to sport; it is not. It has, however become a discursive possibility, so that diverse diasporic identities can be re-constituted in sport.

Belonging invokes boundaries that are contested by diaspora and its more fluid possibilities that are wrought through diasporic identifications which open up opportunities for new ways of belonging that transgress traditional limitations that are often rooted in the histories of 'myths of origin' that are spatially and temporally located. Settlements in these new configurations are uneasy and any shifts have to be addressed in the context of the more traditional narratives of social exclusion that are implicated in more fixed, polarised identifications. Change is explicitly acknowledged by activists, albeit within the context of resilient racist discourses, but transformations and new identifications are apparent in the increased visibility of a more diverse constituency at grounds and on the web sites. New fans may further challenge the distinctions that have been between 'authentic and 'inauthentic' supporters and exercise an agency that counters the culture of dependency and the notion of being victims in the classification of under-represented groups in sport.

Re-configurations suggest an accommodation of different elements, which is not necessarily contradictory. These shifts are manifest in the ways in which it becomes possible to follow football, without eschewing other, more deeply held identifications and without seeing the sport as 'just a game'. The major problem for the promise of re-configurations is the possibility that there may be fewer opportunities for transformation out of the ground than in it. There is no simple, linear trajectory of progress and change, but a series of disruptions and re-alignments which do, however, suggest that new identifications are emerging, even in football.

ⁱ I use the concept of interpellation drawn from Louis Althusser, (1971) to describe the process whereby supporters of the club are recruited through recognising themselves as 'named' by the team or club. On club web sites this seems to take place through identification with the club's history and iconography, often validated by the purchase of associated products. Whatever the limits of this Althusserian concept, it has application in this context not only as a 'summoning into place' of the subject (Hall, 1996) but also as a means of capturing particularly well the intensity of the moment of identification and the investment in identity that is so powerfully expressed in the belief systems in football. The notion of moments of being hailed into an identity position, also suggest the possibility of such moments constituting the narratives through which particular identities are constructed and re-constructed. There are, however, moments when subjects do not recognise their 'names' and are not hailed, as expressed in the tensions between the corporate power of football clubs and the football business and the identifications made by their fans (Crabbe and Brown, 2004)

ⁱⁱ The concept of 'community' is seen as increasingly problematic, for example, by the Football Foundation in its Final Report on Football and its Communities, firstly because of

the social change, which has led to re-constituted allegiances of class and kinship and in the geographical location of 'communities. Secondly, economic factors have led to the exclusion of some groups in society and thirdly, the notion of 'community has been distorted and undermined because it has been "sprayed on" to all manner of initiatives to indicate feelings of inclusiveness and the overcoming of social deprivation' (2006:9).

The 'community' or 'communities', as deployed in football, are described as embracing 'particular groups such as current and potential supporters from black and minority ethnic "communities", those with disabilities and those from "disadvantaged" groups that are considered as such...those who have been labelled "community" targets' (Brown et al., 2006:49). From my own previous research, I would add women and girls to the membership group of a 'community' (Woodward, 2005); the point being that those included are seen as belonging to a community because they are in some way 'outside' the mainstream. Traditional fans are not usually identified as being part of a 'community', but more as individual consumers, which itself has damaging consequences (Brown, et al., 2006).

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