

Racism in Sport - A European Perspective



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Racism and Xenophobia in European Sport - Incidents and Manifestations

Many officials in sport, politics and media refer to sport as "an immunisation against violence". The European Union declared the year 2004 the "European Year of Education through Sport". It appears to be generally acknowledged that sport has the ability to counteract negative social symptoms such as violence, racism and xenophobia: sport speaks all languages, anyone and everyone can participate in sport and people believe this alone means that sport automatically has the capacity to integrate people. The common view is that sport is also an important catalyst for integrating the Member States of the European Union.

Yet the reality is quite different: for many years, hooliganism has been documented at nearly every match played in the European football leagues. In the match between Lazio Rome and Livorno in April 2005 it became evident that Italian stadiums had become arenas of the political right. Lazio fans waved flags displaying swastikas, banners with SS symbols and slogans such as "Rome is fascist" were displayed. Especially in Rome, groups of right-wing extremists exploit the sections of stadiums where hard-core fans congregate as recruitment centres and training camps. British hooligans have hit the headlines time and again in the recent past: the European Cup final between Arsenal London and Galatasaray Istanbul played in Copenhagen in May 2000 resulted in hundreds of hooligans going on the rampage, in street fights and in two fatal stabbings of football fan.

Yet in Germany too, a whole day of fixtures involving a total of 450 football matches had to be cancelled in Cologne in April 2000: not because of hooligans, but because of riots and racism among players and spectators and towards referees. These incidents of racism were generally been played down and the fascist background of the hooliganism denied. Also in 2005 - in connection with the right-wing declarations made by Italian fans - the response was: "The problem of hooliganism is solely a police problem!" And even the Italian Government has ignored the true causes of riots and of matches having to be stopped despite the fact that they promised to take action.

One week after the riots at Lazio Rome described above, a Champions League quarter final return match between Inter Milan and its local rival AC Milan had to be completely abandoned 79 minutes into the game because violent hooligans began attacking players and the referee with lighted flares. FIFA said the incidents were "planned terrorist acts against football". UEFA imposed one of the largest fines in the history of football on the club. Yet this measure is viewed in different ways: on one hand the sports paper *Gazetta dello Sport* wrote: "Six matches to be played without spectators for Inter - a warning to hooligans, things are getting serious".⁽¹⁾ On the other hand, however, others considered the punishment too lenient.

To this day, there have been no signs of any decisive rejection of racist disorder/riots or systematic countermeasures anywhere in Europe. Before the beginning of the 21st century, it was the so-called "boot boys" who caused riots in football stadiums. In England, there is one particular group called "Combat 18". It appeared in 1995 when the group organised violent clashes before and after the international match between England and Ireland. The name of the group is derived from Adolf Hitler's initials: the first and eighth letter of the alphabet. In Italy, it was the so-called "Ultras" who drew the attention of security experts: in the late 1960s/early 1970s, young football fans formed groups to boost support for their own team. In 1968, the "Fossa dei Leoni" was formed at AC Milan, in 1969 the "Ultras Tito" appeared at Sampdoria, 1972 saw the emergence of the "Commando Ultrá" at SSC Naples, etc. From then on, they stopped calling themselves "tifosi" (=fans), and began calling themselves "Ultras". For the most part, they chose provocative names such as the "Red-Black Brigades" at AC Milan. The Ultra groups represent the hard core of the respective fan sections. They are the ones who trigger all the action. All in all, the situation has changed at two levels in recent years:

Firstly football fans who are willing to engage in violence as part of right-wing extremist groups are today no longer confined to national boundaries but are organized in European networks. That is why no particular country or fan community of a certain club can be pinpointed as the epicentre of racism.

Secondly the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York

and of March 2004 on four commuter trains in Madrid brought a new form of racism into sport: security plans at large sporting events now focus more on "averting terror" than on controlling violent hooligans. The targets of this new form of xenophobia are currently spectators of Islamic origin. If fans look even remotely Arab, this makes them suspicious and leads to humiliating security checks. This new type of xenophobia has become quasi socially acceptable because it is considered necessary to prevent terrorism.

For the organisers of major sporting events such as the Olympic Games or the European Football Championship or the World Cup, it is very important to be able to guarantee maximum security for athletes and spectators. In the Olympic Games in Athens 2004 as well as in Lisbon during the European Football Cup, it was feared that the "sporting spectacle" would be a failure because of the extremely unstable security situation. The fear of terrorist attacks could discourage fans from visiting stadiums. At present, major sporting events always run the risk of being associated more with "fear and militarisation" than with "peace and reconciliation". During the European Football Cup 2004, the 16 teams competing were protected round the clock for the very first time by a Portuguese elite unit and members of the paramilitary police. This ultimately meant not just protection, but also total surveillance and monitoring of the individual players, coaches, support staff and officials. This total surveillance also related to spectators: the name, address, telephone number and ID number of anyone who bought tickets was registered. "In Portugal, it was easier to end up in prison than to get to watch a European Championship match" was therefore the conclusion drawn by fan organisations.

When the first tranche of tickets went on sale for the World Cup 2006 in Germany, a significant amount of data was collected and stored on those trying to purchase them. The admission tickets to World Cup matches contained security chips that store the access data - albeit not any personal data.

These data collection and surveillance activities are connected to national security issues which are on top of the agenda in all European countries. Data protection issues are currently being discussed in several contexts at European level. For instance, in relation to the issue of video surveillance of public places or pan-European files on the surveillance of groups that do not tow the line or the increased use of private security services in the public arena.

Often, the environment of sporting events, especially football matches, is used as a "testing ground", so to speak, for the further use of new security systems in the area of terrorism prevention.

On the other hand, the most recent riots at matches involving the German national football team must be taken seriously. On the 26th of March 2005, 50 German hooligans were arrested and two policemen were injured in Celje/Slovenia. The hooligans also caused considerable damage to property by ripping out seats in the stadium, knocking down barriers and creating mayhem in the city centre. "It is clearly evident that the cooperation between German and Slovenian security forces was ineffective", Franz Beckenbauer said at the time: "We cannot afford to let this happen. The situation was underestimated".⁽²⁾ For the following internationals against the Netherlands and against Slovakia the World Cup 2006 Organising Committee advised the authorities to take sweeping measures against potentially violent hooligans: "We must remand these registered individuals in custody for 24 hours. That's all there is to it!"⁽³⁾

However, it is more than doubtful whether this can be legally implemented. Violence, racism and xenophobia do not just manifest themselves in the football environment and at the periphery of mass sporting events which enjoy great publicity, they manifest themselves in all types of sport; although this phenomenon appears to be most widespread at all levels in football.⁽⁴⁾ And above all, racism and violence in football always attract strong media interest, whereas the public is frequently unaware of racist incidents in other types of sport.

Both aspects naturally played a crucial role in planning the World Cup 2006 in Germany:

Securing the stadiums and other venues against terrorist attacks - without undermining the data protection regulations and discriminating against visitors or participants.

Preventing violent riots by groups of fans with racist motives - by calming the situation in the run-up to matches down and not, if possible, by banning spectators from entering stadiums.

The fact that football, in particular, is so badly affected by racist incidents is rather surprising, considering the fact that football

teams today consist of players from all cultures and all nationalities in all football leagues:

- Referring to youth football, the head of the Lower Rhine Football Association, stressed that “we could basically shut up shop if we didn’t have foreigners”.⁽⁵⁾

- The German men’s national football team would have been far less successful in the past without naturalised players such as Kevin Kuranyi, Paolo Rink or Gerald Asamoah.

Furthermore, most of the best weightlifters, wrestlers, boxers and athletes involved in martial arts at the top level in Germany are foreigners.⁽⁶⁾ Even in “social teams” at tennis clubs, foreign players are signed up for a season due to their success, and nobody takes offence.

The role the media play in violent clashes before, during and after football matches must also be critically examined. With their aggressive journalism and equally aggressive images on TV and in newspapers, they have frequently heated up the levels of nationalism, racism and violence. During the European Championship in 2000, journalists from all over the world offered money to hooligans and encouraged them to continue their violent assaults, riots and mayhem on the streets: violence has obviously become a necessary component of entertainment.

We have to come to terms with the fact that we will have to combat the phenomenon of racist violence at several levels in future:

- On the one hand, we are called upon to tackle the very existence and development of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violence,

- On the other hand, we need to oppose unlawful activities which politicians and civil servants engage in allegedly in the name of security and

- We must ensure that the media report in a responsible way.

Political and Social Backdrops

Europe has seen many waves of nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violence in recent years that has reached an alarming level of intensity in all areas of life - and especially in sport. Many European governments tend to ignore these trends, to misinterpret them or to play them down even though the Council of Europe, inter alia, has made it clear that racism and xenophobia belong to the realities of everyday life which threaten the European integration process and the enlargement of the European Community eastwards. Back in 1994, an advisory committee of the European Union was set up in Corfu, Greece, to address the issues of racism and xenophobia. It was entrusted with the task of drawing up proposals for cooperation between governments and other organisations at international level in a bid to fight racism and xenophobia in Europe. In its final report, the extent and importance of this problem was recognised and it was proposed that an additional article be incorporated into the European Treaties. The aim behind this was to give the EU the jurisdiction and authority to act at supranational level - contrary to the principle of subsidiarity - in order to combat discrimination based on race, religion or ethnic or national origin.⁽⁷⁾

In the draft of the European Constitution - not yet ratified by the member states - the EU advocates adopted an active stance: in Part III of the draft, Article III-3 states:

“In defining and implementing the policies and activities referred to in this Part, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation”.⁽⁸⁾

Despite this clear position very little success has been achieved so far in fighting racism. On the contrary, Neo-Nazi, fascist and other right-wing extremist parties, some within and some outside the established political systems, are very popular in the whole of Europe. The National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) is a small but very active right-wing extremist party. The Independent Party of Austria, the Vlaamse Blok in Belgium, the Front National in France and Movimento Sociale Italiano in Italy are politically more successful. In many European countries, the success achieved by these parties, in particular the conservative parties, has led to reputable and established parties copying some of the political issues, rhetoric and party programmes from the right-wing extremist spectrum. The established parties hope to win back their own voters by shifting more to the right.

Over the past 20 years, social and economic problems such as unemployment, poverty, crime and terror have increasingly been linked to the issues of immigration, the presence of ethnic minorities and the growing number of asylum seekers and refugees. Yet there is evidence to prove that these problems are not the actual causes of racism, xenophobia and violence.

The growing number of violent attacks based on racist and xenophobic motives is directed particularly at immigrants and their relatives, against asylum seekers and refugees. Ethnic minorities who have lived in Europe for generations have also become the focus of violence. During the past ten years, a number of citizens from countries in the European Union have fallen victim to this trend. In this context, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism also exist in the sport and leisure sector: on sports grounds, in sports clubs, between athletes and among spectators, in discos, bars and dance halls, on the streets, in the woods while people are out jogging and via the telephone, fax, text messages and the internet.

Yet the patterns of violence, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the area of sport and leisure are by no means identical in European countries:

For instance, far less than 10 % of Spaniards state that they have a problem with the presence of foreigners, the number of people from countries as diverse as Greece and Denmark who do have a problem with the presence of foreigners is much higher. Particularly noticeable is the problem the Greeks have obviously with people of a different nationality (38 %) and the Danes have with people of a different religion (31 %). The responses given by the Germans are about the EU average, i.e. between 15 % and 18 % for all three questions.⁽⁹⁾ More than half the German population also believe that they themselves have a number of good attributes which other peoples do not have. However, one of the latest survey carried out by the Centre for Anti-Semitism Research at the Technical University Berlin shows considerable anti-Semitic tendencies in other European countries

too:⁽¹⁰⁾ 63 % of Spaniards, for instance, think that Jews have too much power in the world economy, whereas in Germany 32 % of citizens agree with this statement. At 33 %, Spain also has the dubious honour of being the leader as regards the number of respondents who agree with the statement: “Jews tend to use shady methods in order to achieve something”. In Germany, 21 %, and in the Netherlands 9 % of citizens agree with this statement. On the other hand, 80 % of Germans think that right-wing extremist ideology poses a threat to their country; with 87 % of women holding this view as opposed to just 73 % of men.

All in all, these recent studies show that there is considerable anti-Semitic feeling in all Member States of the EU. This makes it clear that the political struggle against Arab terror must go hand in hand with the fight against anti-Semitism in Europe.

Priester⁽¹¹⁾ states in her book on social history that racism has always been in demand as a strategy of power and that it has been used in all its manifestations to support claims to power. The power that the right-wing extremists “Ultras” have over Italian football was demonstrated by what happened in the Italian football league in 2004. It was then that rival groups of fans from AS Rome and Lazio Rome joined ranks for the first time and forced a match between the two teams to be abandoned. Sports officials, society as a whole, politicians and policemen were totally helpless when confronted by the activities of the organised “part-time fundamentalists” of both clubs. It was the first time in the 72-year history of the Italian football league that it was not possible to finish a match.

The most recent incidents in Rome and Milan described above also demonstrate quite clearly the political position of the “Ultras” and hence their demonstrations of power: “We are superior. We can stop a football match at any time.”

Racism and Xenophobia need Certain Conditions

Racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism are based more on attitudes than on personal experience in dealing with foreigners: young people with racist tendencies have much fewer contacts with foreigners than others.⁽¹²⁾ The authors of the Shell Youth Study emphasise: racism and xenophobia are not a basic attitude but rather the expression of personal perspectives. Young Germans agree, by and large, with the following statements:

“Foreigners deprive Germans of jobs because they work for less money” (62 %),

“Foreigners who are unwilling to adapt should not be here in the first place” (79 %), “Germany would be much better off financially if there were fewer foreigners living here” (55 %),

“The majority of politicians in Germany are too concerned about foreigners, and not concerned enough about ordinary Germans” (62 %).

They thus express their personal fears about expected unemployment, lack of financial resources, fewer prospects for their future career and the threat posed by their own culture.⁽¹³⁾

The so-called “contact hypothesis” which stems from the assumption that more frequent and intensive contact with people of a different ethnic origin helps to reduce prejudice about them is no longer valid. Recent studies on offenders show that xenophobic and right-wing extremist attitudes and behaviour are by no means always reduced by having contact or friendships with foreign children/young people.⁽¹⁴⁾ This desired effect obviously depends on a number of factors:

The individual importance and influence of the peer group and the group sanctions associated with them in dealings with “foreigners”,

the opinions of relatives, public opinion,

current inter-ethnic conflicts,

negative experience with young foreigners in the past,

the individual potential for aggression and

the intensity of previous xenophobic attitudes.

In an interview published in the study by Wahl⁽¹⁵⁾ we read: “My friend Ali is a great chum, but the Turks themselves are”.

Racist and anti-Semitic attitudes and the corresponding behaviour can also be an expression of an alternative lifestyle, protest and sub-culture. This is portrayed in the results of a study conducted in the USA.⁽¹⁶⁾ As such, the group, shared aspects of a lifestyle, the group experience but also the joint rejection of values, things and people play an important role. As anti-Semitism has become a taboo, it has become interesting to certain social groups within society. By making anti-Semitic statements and expressing anti-Semitic attitudes these groups attract attention to themselves or separate themselves from others.⁽¹⁷⁾

In this regard, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violence have a similar impact as drug consumption: certain young people - not just young men, but increasingly also young women - “get off on them”. The key motive for hooligans from their own subjective perspective is the kick they get out of it and the enjoyment they derive from violence. The desire to compete with others, to have extreme emotional experiences and to cause friction with state power are also part of the phenomenon. However, these needs are often embedded in certain personality dimensions: the Youth Study conducted by Wahl shows that hyperkinetic children who display above-average aggression often end up in youth groups that have a propensity for violence.⁽¹⁸⁾

But very anxious and depressive children are also at risk. The homes the offenders come from are often full of emotional coldness, alcohol and domestic violence. At school, this manifests itself in an inability to perform, aggressive behaviour, delinquency, dropping out of school or expulsion. During puberty, it becomes evident what scene or group young people gravitate towards. There is obviously a lack of attractive alternatives on offer with young offenders in this age group.

There is much written in the literature about the psycho-social characteristics of children and young people who subsequently emerge as perpetrators of acts of violence guided by racist or xenophobic motives. But why do they become racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic and as a result violent?

Today, in times of cooperation, integration and harmonisation at international level, there is no longer any enmity between individuals, social groups or other

communities. We must therefore ask ourselves what mechanisms lead to violence against ethnic groups, even though there is basically no enmity between the individual nationalities in Europe? Hatred and violence towards ethnic minorities are obviously not natural – they occur in the context of conflict processes. Xenophobia is closely linked to traditional historical concepts, cultural patterns and projections. Not all situations necessarily lead to violence towards ethnic minorities. Very specific additional conditions are responsible for it.

The relevant literature identifies four phases in the development of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violence. These phases have been described and explained in detail in Tokarski.⁽¹⁹⁾ To summarize:

The first phase can be described as “disassociating oneself from others”, such as mistrusting others, harbouring prejudices or having a propensity for violence.

The second phase is characterised by “increased isolation / ethnocentrism / xenophobia”, for example especially emphasising the differences between oneself and others, attempts to find a scapegoat, discrimination against others, holding others responsible for social deficiencies or a lack of future prospects.

The third phase can be called “aggression against others”, particularly in the case of failure and deprivation, for instance, rioting in groups on the street, shouting anti-Semitic slogans, insulting others and stirring up trouble.

The fourth phase represents the “use of force against others”, such as the propensity for violence in a group on the lookout for the “right situation and the right moment”, particularly when there is no risk involved. The “right situation and the right moment” can be determined by group dynamics, by alcohol or drugs, by a police operation (“force against force”), by the type of sport itself or by particular sporting results (the final score in a football match, a lost boxing match, etc.) or else by pure coincidence.

If these considerations are followed, developing into a racist, a xenophobe, an anti-Semite and a potentially violent person is the final stage in a sequence of developments.

Recommendations and Potential Measures for Combating Racism and Xenophobia in Sport

In recent years, academics in Germany have examined the situation of expatriates of German origin and resettlers from the former Soviet Union, asylum-seekers and immigrant workers very closely. It is particularly the issue of access to education and the labour market for second and third generation immigrants which has been investigated in depth. However, the major role that sport plays in regard to the assimilation of migrants has been largely disregarded. The Mannheim Centre for European Social Research has found in its most recent studies that players of foreign nationality also have poorer career opportunities in the “football system”.⁽²⁰⁾

The reason for this “ethnic difference” is not deliberate discrimination against migrants on the part of sports clubs or coaches, but rather the structure of public sports funding in Germany. The selection process in sport, similarly to the school selection process in Germany, begins much earlier than in other European countries. Yet most children of migrants tend to come into contact with sports clubs while in school. They tend to join clubs one to two years later than young Germans of the same age. What may appear to be a minor initial disadvantage becomes noticeable in a sport in which even the month in which they were born becomes crucial for the career of young players. Furthermore, a lack of integration into social networks – starting from parents’ car pooling to get children to training and away games – impedes the early advancement of foreigners’ children.

Conversely, the increasing level of performance and the growing professionalism of club structures are gradually eliminating the disadvantages. It is good to see the high percentage of players of foreign origin in higher leagues. Compared to the labour market and the education system, integration in football is therefore

quite advanced.

This means that sport’s impact as an intervention tool as part of social control depends on how it is organised.

After a “sport against racism” hearing Kothy stated:⁽²¹⁾

“The role sport plays in combating racism involves the ongoing analysis of racism in sport. This is the preventative task of the regular work carried out by youth sport in clubs”.

But it is estimated that only 5 % of the sports federations in Germany have a relevant concept, provide staff and carry out theoretical and practical work on this issue.

During the past few years, a large number of programmes have been developed to prevent and combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violence. The FIFA has drawn up its own resolutions and the Council of Europe has also repeatedly drawn up requirements. Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands and Great Britain have developed targeted strategies in conjunction with FIFA to combat racism in stadiums, ranging from stadium bans right through to playing matches in empty stadiums if sports clubs tolerate racism.

The following will need to be clarified for the future:

It can be shown that better education, better prospects for young people, a reduction in unemployment and the development of exchange programmes, etc. are effective means of eliminating racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. These measures need to be initiated by government agencies and are only effective in the long term. That is why they are not suitable for sport which needs fast solutions.

Furthermore, the following recommendations given by the Sport Youth Organization of Hessen / Germany should be taken up and developed:⁽²²⁾

Every single club and every single association should issue rules and statutes outlawing the exclusion of minorities and should enforce relevant sanctions if these rules are not observed or if racist incidents occur.

In top-level sport, guiding principles and sporting role models are needed as something which young people of foreign origin can identify with. Access to top teams and national teams must be secured for athletes of foreign origin who have permanent residence. Incidents like those in the Italian club Hellas Verona - which met the demands of its neo-fascist supporters and stopped including players with dark skin in the team - should be prevented by having sports federations exert their control.

Intercultural skills should be an educational task of organised sport in Europe. Intercultural skills should be taught as part of training and advanced training provided to staff employed by sports clubs and sports federations. High-risk clubs should be obliged by national sports organisations to introduce conflict management in order to deal with intercultural conflicts.

The policy of subsidies in sport should be designed in such a way that additional funds are appropriated to clubs and organisations

which are involved in anti-racist activities,

which forge cooperation between national and ethnic clubs or

which make increased efforts to integrate children and young people with a migration background.

The step-by-step implementation of these recommendations could play a role in combating racism and violence against ethnic minorities. However, it would be utopian to believe that these types of activities can eliminate racism and violence towards ethnic minorities in a short term. The idea that racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violence might suddenly disappear is more than a pipe dream. The fight against them can only be successful if combined measures are developed and continually implemented in all areas of society – far beyond the area of sport. And without patience and joint efforts to outlaw racism and violence all of the above-

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Sportsmanship and Respect: From Conceptual Framework to Research



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Introduction

Good sportsmanship and respect are two cornerstones of sport. If sports participants and others behave in a sportsmanlike and respectful manner, they not only ensure that sport remains fun, fair and safe, but also ensure that sport provides real pedagogic value. Indeed, sport is increasingly seen as crucial in bringing about personal growth and improvements to society. Among other benefits, sport promotes positive social behaviour. Doing sports together can bring people together and help to create a sense of trust – irrespective of culture, background or religion – and create a wider network of friends and acquaintances.

However, it is difficult to say with great certainty whether sport truly has these benefits and how great these benefits are. There is a growing clamour to intervene in society by using sport-based tools that have a proven effect. But it is not as simple as that. Coalter (2007) points out the difficulty of making scientifically sound statements about the impact of sport on society. “In most cases, it is misleading to argue that ‘sport’ reduces crime, or leads to improved educational performance. Such issues are compounded by the difficulties in controlling for intervening and confounding variables which will also influence attitudes and behaviour, the difficulties of undertaking longitudinal analysis and the precise definition and measurement of desired outcomes” (p. 22).

In the light of Coalter’s statement, we should perhaps rephrase the question “What is the impact of sport on society” into “What forms of sport (participation) under which conditions can have what effects on which target groups?” As we seek to answer this question, it is important to obtain information about the process and the context variables that could come into play in giving shape to this process. Some studies demonstrate that, in actual fact, sport can have a beneficial influence on day-to-day life (among other sources from the Netherlands Rutten, 2007 and from Belgium Theeboom, 2001). What remains an open question is how can this best be done? We ourselves are convinced that fair play, good sportsmanship and respect in sport pave the way for drawing maximum benefit from the educational value of sport. Determining precisely which preconditions need to be met before certain effects occur could well be one of the greatest challenges for the coming years in promoting sportsmanlike conduct and respect.

Irrespective of the methodology used, it is imperative that we clearly understand what we mean by terms such as fair play, sportsmanship and respect. Conceptual clarity forms the basis for any empirical research. In the Netherlands, two publications recently appeared in quick succession regarding fair play, sportsmanship and respect. The first publication is a book entitled “Fair play....Over de regels en de geest. Van begripsverheldering tot beleid.” (Steenbergen & Vloet, 2007). This book – the Dutch title of which translates as “Fair Play....On the Rules and the Spirit of the Game: From Explanation of Terms to Policymaking” – is mainly conceptual in nature and focuses on the concepts of fair play, sportsmanship, respect and on how they relate to each other. The second publication is entitled “Sportieve beelden” (NSA & Kennispraktijk, 2008). Its English title is “Images of Sportsmanship and Fair Play in Sport.” This is an empirical study on (un)sporting behaviour in recreational sports. To that end, almost 1,000 sport participants, referees, coaches, supporters and parents filled in a questionnaire and thus created a picture of what sportsmanship and respect actually mean.

The empirical research uses the conceptual framework set out by the book mentioned above. Let us make a few remarks about that framework and then present a few research findings.

The Conceptual Framework Relating to Fair Play, Sportsmanship and Respect

Fair Play

In our view, fair play only figures in those sports that involve competition (these sports have a so-called “agonal character”). This is unaffected by the level of these sport activities or their organizational structure. These sports activities can range from an Olympic event and a match within a particular national or regional competition to a game that is part of physical education at school and a pick-up game played by neighbourhood children. We define “fair play” as follows, “Fair play is the morally proper

way of practicing sport, as is manifest in 1) compliance with the written and unwritten rules; 2) mutually courteous and sportsmanlike behaviour towards others (teammates, opponents, officials); as well as 3) the aim to create equal opportunities.

Compliance with the written and unwritten rules

Those doing sport are morally obliged to follow the written rules, even when the referee is not looking. In addition, they need to demonstrate the proper attitude towards the match and other participants in line with unwritten rules. Participants need to know what conduct is expected from them in order to abide by these unwritten rules. Some rules are part of good manners that make sense to everyone, such as not spitting at your opponents. But some well-established practices may not be immediately clear to everyone. Many examples can be found. For example, in tennis when a player smashes a ball, he is not supposed to hit the ball deliberately at the opponent’s body, least of all from up close. Conversely, most tennis players apologize to their opponents when benefitting from the net in scoring a lucky point. And at bridge it differs on the level if it is desired or not, to shake hands before starting a new game with new opponents. When players of different levels play against each other, do you or don’t you shake hands?

What adds to the confusion is that these unwritten rules often create dilemmas or have many “legal gaps.” How far does sportsmanship go? Say that, after your race, a piece of equipment used by your opponent turns out to be defective. Are you morally obliged to lend yours to him/her and thus reduce your own chances of winning that coveted title? In volleyball, would you tell the referee who has made a bad call that you did touch the ball before it went out? In many sports, intimidation in many forms is very much part of the game plan. Is this gamesmanship (using questionable expedients without actually violating the literal rules) or part of the competitive nature of sport?

Courteous and sportsmanlike behaviour towards others

Sports participants interact with each other in an intensive manner and a charged atmosphere. Particularly in the heat of battle, this may create tensions. Fair play also covers the way in which sportsmen and women treat each other within the context of a match or other competitive event. Unfair behaviour is quite common. For example, players give one of their own teammates dirty looks after each mistake made. Another case in point: players who have slipped up a few times no longer receive the ball from their resentful teammates.

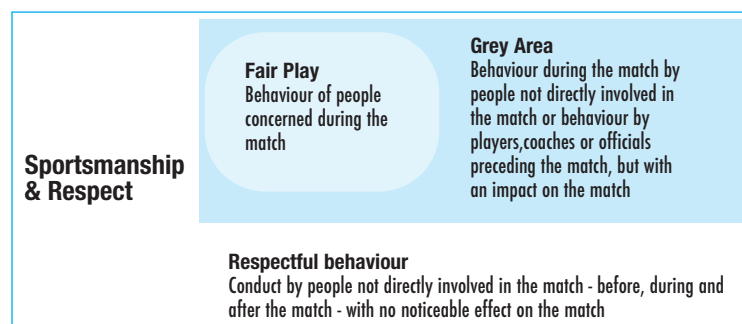
In addition to the above, fair play also governs the personal behaviour that may not be so much directed against others, but that nonetheless affects them, including swearing loudly at yourself when you have made a mistake; as well as refusing to give credit where credit is due when you have lost the match to a clearly better opponent and come up with weak excuses.

Creating equal opportunities

Creating a level playing field is about creating similar or even equal conditions with the aim of giving participants an equal chance to do well to the extent that this is possible. A good example can be seen in speed skating, in which an ice resurfer frequently cleans the track, with the aim of providing comparable circumstances for the competitors. Holding speed-skating championships indoors also promotes fairer competition.

Sportsmanship and Respect

By the term “fair play,” we mean the conduct of participants during the match or competitive event. But apart from fair play, players can behave in all sorts of ways that represent sportsmanlike and respectful practice of sport. All of this is collectively known as Sportsmanship and Respect (see diagram below).



Let us first look at respectful behaviour, with no noticeable effect on the match itself. This includes conduct before and after the event, as seen in the changing rooms or the canteen. But it also includes the way spectators behave, such as two parents stealthily puffing at cigarettes, while their child is playing a match.

But some instances of behaviour can be found in the grey area. These fall just outside the notion of fair play, but do affect the match. We are, for instance, talking about conduct by participants and others before the match, such as the treatment of opponents or referees prior to the event. But also crowd behaviour, which can have a (strong) impact on the match for better or for worse.

“Images of Sportsmanship and Fair Play in Sport” Research

The conceptual framework described above was used in empirical research carried out in the Netherlands in 2008 (NSA & Kennispraktijk, 2008). This study submitted 90 statements to athletes, match officials, coaches and supporters concerning fair play, sportsmanship and respect and asked for their comments. This research distinguishes itself from other studies because it focuses on 1) experiences of conduct by others; 2) a number of different viewpoints (sportsmen and women, referees, coaches, supporters); as well as 3) the whole spectrum of behaviour constituting sportsmanship and respect. The questionnaires consisted of three sub-areas: 1. Fair play, 2. Respectful behaviour and 3. Grey area (see definition above). We will not present all the findings, but only a limited number of results showing the perspective of the athletes.

Fair Play (sub-area)

Sport participants state that (most of) their fellow athletes “play in the spirit of the rules” (84% say this) and “follow the rules” (72% believe so). These are high percentages. But the remarkable thing is that playing in the spirit of the rules – which many regard as the most important part of fair play – is practised more often than following the rules. On the other hand sport participants do point to areas requiring improvement. Only a tiny majority (52%) agrees with the assertion that fellow athletes “refrain from using physical violence.” Many (63%) have encountered verbal abuse directed against other sportsmen and women, while a large number (60%) have witnessed verbal abuse aimed at referees. So the sports associations and clubs have their work cut out for them in these areas. Physical violence and verbal abuse have no place in society as a whole, least of all in sport.

Table 1.

Percentages of sportsmen and women who disagree or agree with these statements about fair play shown by (most of) their fellow athletes during the match

“Fellow athletes...	Disagree	Agree
...follow the rules”	28	72
...play in the spirit of the rules”	16	84
...do not use physical violence”	48	52
...never hit or kick someone deliberately”	54	46
...do not verbally abuse other sport participants”	63	37
...do not verbally abuse match officials”	60	40

A very large majority of sportsmen and women (89%) believe that referees (match officials) have sufficient knowledge of the rules. But a decidedly smaller group (64%) thinks that referees come to the match well prepared. An even smaller group (57%) finds that referees are able to “read the match” and thus interpret the rules in the spirit in which they are intended. Referees and other match officials are believed to be susceptible to pressure from spectators (38% of respondents say so), coaches (36%) and athletes (41%).

The participating sportsmen and women say that most coaches subscribe to the principle of fair play. Many coaches include the subjects of sportsmanship and respect in their preparations for the match (83% of respondents have seen this) and urge athletes to behave in a sportsmanlike fashion (79%). Many coaches (77%) admonish or reprimand sportsmen and women who misbehave. But a far smaller percentage of coaches (61%) is prepared to replace players guilty of unfair conduct. Only 38% of “interviewed” athletes say that coaches manage to refrain from interfering with the decisions made by match officials.

Table 2.

Percentages of sportsmen and women who disagree or agree with these statements about fair play shown by (most) coaches during the match

“Coaches...	Disagree	Agree
...discuss sportsmanship & respect in the run-up to the match”	17	83
...set a good example”	34	66
...admonish athletes engaging in undesirable behaviour”	23	77
...do not interfere with the calls made by match officials”	62	38
...encourage athletes to behave in a positive manner”	21	79
...encourage athletes to commit ‘tactical’ or ‘professional’ fouls”	38	62

Grey Area (sub-area)

So this sub-area mostly deals with supporters’ conduct during the match affecting the course of the match. Examples are spectators creating a charged atmosphere in a sports centre or parents shouting words of encouragement or abuse at their kids and opponents.

Athletes about supporters

An overwhelming majority (91%) believe that (most) supporters root for athletes in a sportsmanlike fashion, while 80% of respondents are of the opinion that (most) supporters make a positive contribution to the atmosphere at a match. However, only 44% are content with the level of “social control” among supporters when some fans are misbehaving.

Athletes about parents

The image of parents playing a dual role (spectator and “personal coach”) is mostly a positive one. But social control among parents leaves a lot to be desired, with only 51% of respondents being happy with the “self-regulation” among parents.

Respectful Behaviour (sub-area)

This sub-area focuses on the behaviour before and after the match, as well conduct that has no influence on how the match unfolds. If, say, spectators litter the sport grounds, then this does not impact the game, but is an expression of disrespect.

Athletes about the conduct seen in clubhouses and changing rooms

The general image of sport clubs is positive. 95% say that canteen staff receive respectful treatment. But a few areas of concern have emerged. A substantial group is unhappy with how alcohol is served or consumed, with 27% saying that this “never” or “hardly ever” happens in a responsible manner. A similar level of discontentment can be seen with the type of language heard within sport clubs. That also applies to how athletes clean up after themselves in changing rooms; 27% are dissatisfied with the level of cleanliness in changing rooms, while 19% complain about a general litter problem.

Table 3.

Percentages of sportsmen and women having the following opinions about respectful behaviour in clubhouses and/or changing rooms

Statement	Never happens	Sometimes	Often	Always	≥Often
Responsible serving/consumption of alcohol	11	16	45	28	73
People use decent language	3	13	67	17	84
People clean up after themselves	3	16	54	27	81
Canteen staff are treated with respect	1	5	44	51	95
Belongings are stolen	31	55	11	3	14
Users keep the changing rooms clean	5	22	54	19	73

Sports participants about their fellow athletes

Almost all sports participants (92%) believe that most athletes help to build a good atmosphere. 87% find that clubs provide a warm welcome to new members. Worryingly, 64% have (frequently) experienced bullying, while 62% complain about discrimination.

Conclusion

The findings above show that sportsmanlike behaviour in the Netherlands during, before and after matches and competitive events is the norm. But areas in need of improvement have also come to our notice. Quite a few sports participants verbally abuse referees and opponents. Moreover, referees appear to be susceptible to pressure, while coaches fail to refrain from criticizing match officials. Also, social control among supporters is almost absent when fans are misbehaving. A final source of concern is how alcohol is served and consumed. In the coming years, this survey will be repeated, with the aim of monitoring developments and hopefully steering them in the right direction. By doing so, this study aims to enhance the sportsmanlike character of sport and thus its educational value – to the benefit of not only sports participants and their supporters, but of society as a whole.

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Sport Intervention in Divided Societies Pragmatic Realism and a Human Rights Approach

Keynote Speech, 14th European Fair Play Congress
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Introduction

What, if any, is the value of sport to processes of peace and reconciliation? Seeking to answer this question has led me on a journey of critical self-reflection. For more than three decades as a left-leaning sociologist I have been involved in the critical scrutiny of sport. I have spent almost as much time as an advocate and activist, attempting to use sport as a vehicle to promote mutual understanding, reconciliation and co-existence in deeply divided societies. This, I believe, makes me quite unusual inasmuch as many, if not most, of my academic contemporaries can find little good to write or say about the social value of sport and very few are actively engaged in sport-related social interventions. In this study I hope to make clear that there is nothing particularly schizophrenic with regard to my professional persona. I will do this in three sections: to begin with, in very general terms, I will outline the key features of arguments and debates which surround the question of the role sport plays in the process of peace making. Secondly I will draw upon some of the sport-related community relations projects that I have either drawn upon for inspiration or have been a key player in the delivery of to show how this has influenced my own thinking; thirdly I will explain how this practical engagement informs my theoretical positioning, presenting a theoretical model for guiding and understanding sporting interventions in deeply fractured societies.

Sport: Peace Maker or War Monger?

As a starting point let us consider George Orwell's often quoted sentiment that sport is 'war minus the shooting' which is open to a variety of interpretations. Orwell harboured bitter memories of his experiences of sports at public school in England where, as an athletic underachiever, he had been dominated, bullied and brutalised by muscle-bound pupils and tyrannical games masters. Years later he coined the above quoted phrase in an essay about the Moscow Dynamo soccer team's post-war tour of Britain in 1945. In this essay Orwell argued that far from helping to improve international relations between the West and the Soviet Union - the stated intentions of the tour organisers - by providing opportunities for public and collective displays of aggressive nationalism, contests such as were likely to make the impending cold war even icier. Here is a key passage from Orwell's statement on the subject:

"It [sport] is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure...If you wanted to add to the vast fund of ill-will existing in the world at this moment, you could hardly do it better than by a series of football matches between Jews and Arabs, Germans and Czechs, Indians and British, Russians and Poles and Italians and Jugoslavs, each match to be watched by a mixed audience of 100,000 spectators."

Countering Orwell's dystopian view of 'planet sport' there are those who believe that it can serve as a cathartic alternative to war, that the playing of competitive sports provides distinctive communities (nations, regions, towns and so forth) with opportunities to express distinctiveness and rivalry without threatening the wider social order. Related to this view, there are others who cite the fabled ancient Olympic Truce or ekecheiria when it is believed that otherwise warring city states of ancient Greece lay down their weapons for the duration of the Olympic festival. In our own troubled times, the spirit of the Olympic Truce is regularly evoked in the context of modern Olympic Games. Likewise the impromptu truce in the First World War during Christmas 1914 and the various soccer matches played between British and German soldiers in and around no-man's-land, is used to exemplify the capacity of sport to divert, albeit temporarily, hostile communities: for both of these cases it is sport instead of the shooting.

Others, mainly sports administrators and allied politicians, go a stage further and are even more optimistic about sport's capacity to promote peace and understanding, believing that it offers more than a haven for the temporary suspension of conflict. Most of this group will have been long-time sports participants and enthusiasts. If sport was good for them, it must be good for others and the intrinsic value of sport as a social good is rarely questioned. They believe in the fraternal and character-building qualities of sports and in its capacity to bring diverse people and peoples together in global festivals, such as the modern Olympics or the World Cup Finals. The literature on the modern Olympic movement and other national and world sports governing bodies reflects this and is littered with the rhetoric of this sports evangelism. For instance, in an interview in 1997, Joao Havelange, the outgoing President of FIFA, international soccer's governing body, spoke of his last great ambition in terms that both echo and directly contradict Orwell's views:

"One day during the World Cup [USA '94] I had a telephone call from Al Gore [vice president of the United States]. At that time Gore was involved in negotiating for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. Mr Gore said he really had no experience of football before, but he was amazed that the World Cup could be so perfectly organised and that so many people could become so passionately involved. He was greatly inspired by this and asked would it not be possible to have a match between Palestine and Israel, organised by FIFA? The project is now indeed to have such a match, Palestine versus Israel, ideally in New York - New York being the seat of the United Nations - just to show the

politicians football can do things that they cannot!"

In fact, there are at least as many examples of sport damaging community relations as there are instances of it making a positive contribution to peace and understanding. The metaphorical relationship between sport and war - one through which theatres of conflict are analysed and talked about in the language of sport - is almost as old as modern sport itself. Who can forget the claim that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Orwell's old school, Eton? While the "soccer truce" on Christmas day 1914 is often remembered, it is less well known that during the Great War British regiments went over the top kicking soccer balls or carrying rugby balls so as to add ardour to their attacks on the enemy. It is also worth remembering that the armistice that ended the War came in 1918 not 1915, with millions more dead on both sides long after the final whistle had sounded. There are those that question the validity of the historic Olympic Truce, pointing out that while it may have existed as an ideal, it certainly did not prevent the ancients waging a more or less permanent "war of all against all", for which the main events of the Ancient Olympics were good practice! Certainly, the modern Olympics have been blighted by a whole series of political conflicts, none worse than the massacre of Israeli athletes taken hostage by Palestinian militants, Black September, in Munich in 1972. Soccer has demonstrated an unequalled capacity to generate violence and conflict both on and off the field. Fan violence or hooliganism is a global problem, adversely affecting relations between towns, cities, ethnic groups, religious sects and nation states. The worst case of sport acting as a catalyst for conflict was the 'soccer war' between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969 whereby a series of hotly contested World Cup qualifying matches in between two countries that were already in conflict over territorial and trade issues led to a short war that left more than 30,000 killed or wounded.

Sport and the Politics of Intervention

Who is correct, Orwell or Havelange? Despite the counter arguments of the sport evangelists and the sport heretics, it is my considered view that in and of itself sport is of no intrinsic value: it is neither naturally good nor irrevocably bad. It is, like all collective human endeavours, a social construction which is malleable according to the social forces that surround it. Bruce Kidd captures this position well when he says, "caution should be taken not to 'essentialise sport' and the role it plays in societies - in fact it would be preferable to think of 'sport' as a plurality of forms that have different results in different contexts". This is why sport can be claimed and proclaimed in the name of both complementary and contradictory social goals and practices and in this regard context is everything.

A classic example of how sport can be manipulated adapted to entirely different ends is provided by South Africa. For most of the twentieth century sport was an institutionalised feature of the country's racialised social and political landscape. Under apartheid, like any other significant theatre of social interaction, sport both symbolised and reinforced a white-dominated pattern of ethnic and racial stratification and power relations. White South Africa's sense of its standing in the world was bound up with its sporting prowess and the strength of this "sportive nationalism" was dependent on the achievements of its white-only sports teams, particularly in the favoured sports of the post-colonial elite: cricket and rugby. Imbued as it was with the odious values of apartheid the white supremacist state saw in sport a reflection of itself.

For the majority of disenfranchised racial and ethnic categories, white South Africa's obsession with sport presented an opportunity to destabilise the apartheid regime by successfully lobbying the international community to impose a sporting boycott on that country. "No normal sport in an abnormal society" became a clarion call for anti-apartheid activists in South Africa and overseas, a position behind which, eventually, all significant global sport governing bodies gathered. While it would be an over-statement to say that the sport boycott alone led to the demise of apartheid and white rule in South Africa, it is generally agreed that it did play a major part in its destabilisation.

Since the end of apartheid sport has played a dramatically different role in the construction of the new South Africa. Nobody understood better the dynamic power of sport to promote social and political change than Nelson Mandela. While he was a great supporter of the boycott, he also believed that once white rule was over the residual passion for sport could be harnessed to the cause of constructing a new and transformed South African national identity. Mandela articulated the philosophy that inspired his belief in the transformative power of sport when he said, "sport has the power to unite people in a way little else can. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair. It breaks down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of discrimination. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand".

This is more than rhetoric for Mandela. Rather than eschew the sports that had been most symbolic of white supremacy - cricket and rugby football - upon his release from prison to become leader of the ANC Mandela supported the lifting of the sporting sanctions and encouraged all races to unite behind the national teams which he believed could be gradually remodelled to reflect a vibrant and peaceful multi-racial state. Almost miraculously in 1995, one year into his Presidency, South Africa hosted and won the Rugby World Cup

enabling Mandela, famously dressed in a Springbok shirt and cap, to present the William Ellis Trophy to the Afrikaner team captain, Francois Pienaar. The following year he was able to perform a similarly high-profile piece of sporting theatre when he turned out in the blazer, tie and cap of the newly formed United Cricket Board (UCB) of South Africa to congratulate the triumphant national side as it wrapped up a comprehensive Test series win over England. Shortly afterwards he completed a memorable hat-trick when garbed in green and gold kit of the national soccer team - Bafana Bafana - he presented team captain, Neil Tovey, the African Cup of Nations in front of 80,000 cheering fans in Soweto's FNB stadium.

Meanwhile, as Marion Keim has demonstrated, beneath the surface, at two different levels, measures have been put in place to gradually reform the deep structure of sport. Firstly, sport governing bodies introduced a number of complementary strategies to ensure that the principle of multi-culturalism influences not only the apex of pyramid of elite performance, but more importantly the broad base of mass sport participation. In conjunction with this in the schools and the communities a large number and wide range of sport-based community relations initiatives have been introduced, not just to promote inter-racial harmony, but also to help tackle a range of social and welfare problems such as HIV and juvenile crime and violence. While there remains much work to be done, both in the reform of South African sport and the reconstruction of that country's multicultural national façade in general, what we can learn from the South African experience is if it is imbued with the right values and organised and managed correctly, then even in the most fractured and deeply divided societies, sport can play a vital role in promoting peace and reconciliation.

The politics of sport in South Africa was a prominent theme in the Sociology of Sport course that I taught in the early 1980s at the Northern Ireland Polytechnic (now the University of Ulster, Jordanstown) on the outskirts of Belfast. This was a very turbulent time and the "troubles" - as the undeclared civil war between British Loyalists and Irish Nationalists became known - was at its height with widespread, shootings, bombings and civil disorder. On arrival in Belfast I was warned by a mentor not to address local political issues in my teaching. Which is why, one sunny September morning, I was talking to a group of students about sport in South Africa and not about sport in Northern Ireland. Suddenly an enormous explosion shook the classroom's bomb-proof windows through which I saw the top of the adjacent teaching block being blasted hundreds of feet into the air. Later it turned out that the Provisional IRA had targeted a criminology examination being taken by a group of policemen from the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) and detonated explosives that killed four and injured many more.

For me this was a transformative moment as I determined that from then on, instead of investigating the politics and sport in exotic, distant lands, I would concentrate on making sense of this complex relationship in what was to become for fourteen years my own backyard. With a colleague, Alan Bairner, we embarked on a programme of research and scholarship through which we were able to challenge the received wisdom that while all else may be conflict and chaos, at that time sport in Ulster was a neutral safe-haven in which communities otherwise at odds with one another could come together. On the contrary we were able to demonstrate and argue that sport was a part of the problem and like most other elements of Northern Ireland was organised and played along sectarian lines.

This was also the moment that the sports activist in me began to emerge. I became heavily involved in student sport. At that time a university environment was one of the few places where young Protestants and young Catholics could meet and interact. Many of the student sports team followed the sectarian pattern prevalent in the wider society, with Protestants playing games of Anglo origin such as rugby, cricket and hockey; Catholics engaging mainly with Gaelic games like Hurling, Gaelic Football and Camogie. Arguably, while my own sport (association) football is an English invention, it is clearly also a universal game which was popular with and played in Northern Ireland by Loyalists and Nationalists alike - although not usually in combined teams. At my University the football team that I coached was mixed - as were the combined Northern Ireland and all-Ireland student teams that I later went on to coach. As I coached and travelled with the teams to residential competitions I watched as friendships blossomed across the community divide, many of which are sustained to this day.

Thus I learned that in a relatively neutral setting, given a common cause and goal and a shared set of values, and a committed mentor, a sport team was an excellent crucible within which to nurture intimacy and mutuality. I did not see why this experience had to be limited to a relatively small number of those who were university educated. To this end, in cooperation with colleagues at the Institute of International Sport at the University of Rhode Island, USA, we developed Belfast United. Using mainly soccer but also basketball, this was a sport programme for teenage Catholics and Protestants drawn from some of the more entrenched and embittered Belfast communities. We built them in to mixed teams in the neutral setting of a university campus and then took them on playing coaching tours of the USA where they were hosted in mixed pairs by American families. Although initially small in scale, accompanying research and evaluation demonstrated that Belfast United did have a measurable impact on the young people that participated and also helped to inspire larger and much more ambitious cross-community residential sport festivals both in Northern Ireland and the USA.

Importantly, this intervention was not done in isolation from other ongoing avenues of research and critical scholarship. On the contrary, knowledge gained from learning about the structure, process and politics of sport in Northern Ireland in general was used to inform and shape Belfast United and related grass-roots interventions. At the same time information emanating from researching and evaluating these interventions fed into a growing corpus of critical scholarship which in turn began to have an impact upon the Policy Community for Sport - clusters of government, private and voluntary stakeholders and pressure groups that shape the wider institutional agenda for sport - in Northern Ireland. By the time I left the Province in 1996, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland had developed and introduced a Community Relations Policy for Sport and most local councils and sport governing bodies had employed dedicated Community Relations Officers. This was all part of a very complex interaction of social, economic and political initiatives that were contributing and giving momentum to the peace process which I am very happy to say, has since gone from strength to strength. While it is impossible to say how much critical interventions in the world of sport outlined herein has contributed to this, I would like to think that in some small way a more progressive, proactive and politically sensitive approach to sport has contributed in some way to making Northern Ireland a more peaceful and prosperous place to work and play.

The knowledge and experience gleaned from my days in Northern Ireland travelled with me when I took up a new post at the University of Brighton in 1996. At that time, with many other outstanding commitments, I had not planned any further involvement with sport-related community relations projects. Then in 1999 I was approached by a group of well-meaning private citizens who, frustrated with watching from their armchairs nightly news bulletins filled with scenes of conflict and vio-

lence in Israel and Palestine, wanted to do something to make a contribution to the faltering peace process there. They had the idea that football might be something that could be used as a vehicle to help. As someone who had experience of developing and directing sport-based community relations projects - albeit in a very different setting - I was invited to sit in on some of their early meetings and act as an advisor. Gradually my involvement became more and more operational as what began as a relatively modest project involving half a dozen volunteer coaches from the UK working with approximately 60 children from one community, grew year by year until by 2008 we were sending over 40 volunteers to work on a series of parallel projects incorporating more than 30 Jewish and Arab communities and attracting around 1000 children.

This programme is now called Football for Peace (F4P) and I am currently its director. Since its inception, the programme has grown not just quantitatively but also qualitatively. As a starting point, the broad view taken is that Israel will be better placed and more willing and able to move towards a peaceful settlement with the Palestinian Authority and its neighbouring Arab-dominated countries once it has grown equitable and harmonious relations between the 20% Arab and 80% Jewish populations living within its existing boundaries. F4P seeks to contribute to this goal by making pragmatic and incremental grass-roots interventions into the sport culture of Israel, helping to build bridges between otherwise divided communities, and at the same time making a contribution to political/policy debates around sport in the region. Linked with this, F4P's fourfold aims are to: provide opportunities for social contact across community boundaries; promote mutual understanding; engender in participants a desire for and commitment to peaceful coexistence; and enhance soccer skills and technical knowledge. In order to achieve these goals we have developed a dedicated values-based teaching and coaching style through which we model and encourage participants to demonstrate appreciation of the basic qualities of good citizenship, namely: respect, trust, responsibility, equality, and inclusivity.

There is insufficient time for me to give too many details about the current shape of the project (much of this can be found in a book about the project). Briefly, over six consecutive days at alternative Jewish and Arab community venues, children are coached in mixed groups (Arab and Jewish) growing into teams and taking part in end-of-project football festivals. In respect of local traditions and customs, one project is for girls only and is staffed entirely by female coaches. In addition, we have twice-yearly training camps - one in Europe and one in Israel - during which volunteer coaches from Israel and overseas are schooled in the methodology of F4P before helping with the delivery of the programme during the summer months in Israel itself.

The development of a network of partnerships has been crucial to the success, continuing growth, and sustainability of the project. Firstly there are the community partners: the dozens of Arab and Jewish towns and villages which willingly provide their children as well as volunteer coaches and leaders to work alongside their European counterparts. Then there is a growing list of key institutional partners (IGOs and INGOs) including the British Council, the Israeli Sports Authority, the (English) FA, the German Sport University, the London Marathon, and my own institution, the University of Brighton. In complimentary ways all of these organisations have helped with the resourcing of the programme and have provided important moral and intellectual input. As I will go on to explain, the engagement with and expansion of this stratum of institutional players has dramatically enhanced the potential impact of F4P, helping to connect the relatively microscopic community-level interventions with the wider Policy Community for Sport and in doing so promote social change on a much larger scale. For instance, the British Council, the (English) FA and, most importantly, the Israeli Sports Authority have all adapted and developed their own approaches to community relations work with sport through engaging with and learning from F4P.

At every level of its articulation, research and evaluation has been a seminal feature of F4P. The research has a complex, two-way dynamic: ongoing learning about the transcending social and political context which is used in the pragmatic design and development of the programme of intervention; and detailed evaluation of the impact of the project at each level, up to and including, were possible, tracking its influence on the transcending social and political context.

A "Critical Pragmatic Realist" Approach to Sport and Social Intervention

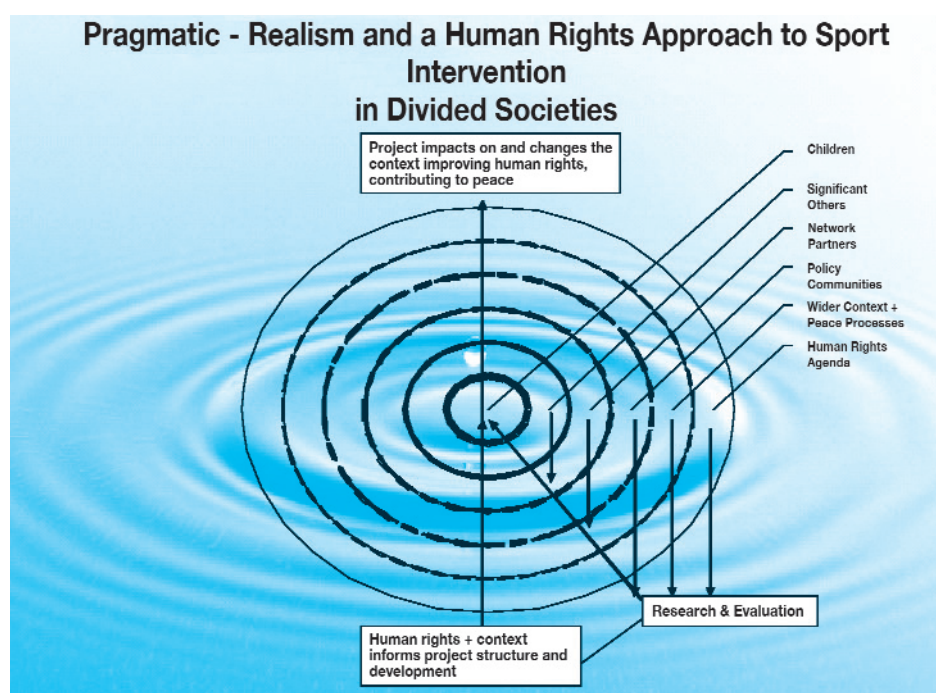
How then has my sociological imagination been influenced by my experience of these sport-based interventions in Northern Ireland and Israel and vice versa? There is some theoretical support for the palliative role of sport from the academic community. According to Elias and Dunning, for instance, the experience of sport has a moderating effect on social behaviour beyond the playing field itself and as such makes a positive contribution to human social development. Sport, by offering opportunities for the socially approved arousal of moderate excitement, leads people to exercise stricter control over their public behaviour. In short, sport is a "civilising" influence, not just at a local or national level, but also between nations. Others are more sceptical, believing variously that sport encourages aggression and violence, homophobia, racism, and political submissiveness. My own view is somewhere in the middle. Sport is a very important element of collective identity, carrying meaning beyond anything intrinsic to the activity itself. Even in (relatively) stable societies, a high degree of social stratification and racial/ethnic heterogeneity means that sporting expressions of shared identities are complex, often ambiguous and can be generative of class distinctions and cross-community animosity and conflict. When there is a lack of shared understanding of what precisely constitutes "the nation" and/or a legitimately sovereign state, the function of sport in the politics of community identification and celebration is even more problematic. In my own research and scholarship about sport in a number of deeply, politically divided societies, I have tried to show how multi-faceted, fractured and fractious the issue of sport and community relations can be. In this regard it is argued that sport is a fiercely contested element of "civil society" - that area of civic culture and popular participation which stands outside of the formal institutions of state but is nonetheless vital in securing consensus and control for those occupying the commanding heights of "political society". As will be illustrated below, understanding the role that sport can play in the relationship between political and civil society is key in understanding the role it can have in peace processes.

My maturing sociological imagination and my experience of designing and delivering sport-based community relations initiatives come together to frame a practice or action-based theoretical position which resides somewhere between critical pragmatism and left-realism and adopts a human rights approach to agenda setting. Based loosely on the works of the American philosophers and educationalists, William James and John Dewey, critical pragmatism advocates the science of the possible whereby action and intervention is linked to outcomes which themselves are based upon a critical assessment of what can be achieved within a given set of circumstances. Critical pragmatism places emphasis on theoretical development and refinement through critical, practical, empirical engagement, rather than fixating upon abstract debate. This view recognises that the construction of society is not pas-

sively structural, but is an embodied process of individual and collective actions. A good example of this is provided by the emergence of left realism within criminology. Disillusioned with conventional theories of crime and delinquency and the failure of Marxist-orientated scholarship to develop and deliver a programme of humanitarian social reform, left-realism allowed for the mobilisation of a radical and critical sociological imagination in determining strategies for progressive and pragmatic engagement with social problems with a view to developing policies and interventions (praxis) that reduced crime, helped the victims of crime and improved conditions of society's most vulnerable groups. While left-realism developed with particular foci on deviance and crime, a similar form of "praxis" has been advocated in the context of sports activism by Marxist scholar, Ian McDonald, who argues that "a radical sociology of sport should be seeking to assist the reconfiguration of the culture of sport by intervening against dominant relations of power". This kind of "critical pragmatic realism" - as I choose to call it - can be applied equally to a range of other social and political problems, including, as in this case, fractured community relations and social conflict in divided societies.

Of course, even with strategies based on critical pragmatic-realism, engagement in social activism of any kind requires those involved to have a starting position and defined goals to work towards. This can be a minefield, particularly when working in contexts of deep division and conflict when the antagonistic groups and social factions that are trying to be brought together espouse antithetical ideologies and mutually exclusive goals. When this is the case it is vitally important to maintain a neutral stance with regard to those conflicting goals while at the same time articulating a rationale for the goals of social and political intervention that do not expose those engaged in this work to the charge of neo-colonialism. Outside of reverting to religious and/or ideological doctrine or falling prey to the inertia of cultural relativism, as Donnelly and Kidd have argued, "those of us committed to opportunities for humane sport and physical activity ought to resort more systematically to the strategy of establishing, publicizing and drawing upon the charters, declarations and covenants that enshrine codes of entitlement and conduct". Of course this begs the question, whose "codes of entitlement"? The United Nations Charter for Human rights is one of the few touchstones for governing activism that has (near) universal approval Article 26 of the U.N. 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states, "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace". The value of sport in the furtherance of these goals is something recognised by the United Nations itself which in 2003 empowered a Task Force to look into the role of sport in the context of development and peace and has a Special Advisor whose mandate is to encourage the global utilization of sport in the service of the U.N.'s Human Rights agenda. In 2005, the then Secretary-General of the U.N., Kofi Annan, launched the U.N.'s Year of Sport saying, "sport is a universal language. At its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status. And when young people participate in sports or have access to physical education, they can experience real exhilaration even as they learn the ideals of teamwork and tolerance".

Paper declarations and accompanying rhetoric are useless without intervention, but how and where to intervene? Peace processes are messy affairs: hugely complex enterprises that move forwards or backwards according to conditions prevalent in the transcending social and political order. Usually they are driven by activities and actors in political society. However, if there are major social and cultural impediments, "road maps to peace" that take account of the political sphere alone are doomed to failure. Changes of heart and mind do not ordinarily take place because of political initiatives. Peace is only possible when significant proportions of ordinary people are ready for and open to conflict resolution. By way of illustration, politicians may be in the driving seat but for the "peace bus" to get anywhere meaningful there must be passengers willing to climb on board. This comes gradually through social and cultural engagement in everyday life. The challenge for us is to discover ways to join up specific grass-roots cultural interventions - such as Football for Peace - with more broadly influential policy communities and those elements of political society that hold the keys to peace. It is within the spirit of this that F4P's contribution to social justice and peace building is framed. The following diagram draws on critical pragmatic realism to depict how this can be achieved:



The two outer circles represent a Human Rights agenda and the prevailing Transcending Social and Political Context, including the Peace Process. Taken together they provide a framework upon which to make pragmatic judgements about the structure of the project and its development goals. The two inner circles represent the project itself, consisting first and foremost of children from different communities, surrounded by adult volunteer coaches and significant others (relatives, teachers, community leaders etc...) from represented local communities, and the overseas volunteers. The nature of the structure, organisation, management and delivery of activities and encounters taking place within these two circles is crucial in determining the outcome of any such sporting intervention. In between, working from the

middle outwards, the next circle comprises representatives from a network of institutional partners through whom ideas and findings emanating from the project can be articulated within the wider policy community for sport. This in turn may influence events taking shape in the transcending social and political context and have an impact on the human rights situation not only of those directly involved in the project but also further afield. Each level of the process is subject to research and evaluation and these findings are fed back to inform project modification, growth, and redevelopment. The different thicknesses and permeability of the concentric circles is to indicate that, just like a stone dropped into a still pool of water, the ripple effect of an intervention like F4P dissipates as we move further from the centre where the impact is more obviously felt and more easily measured.

Of course, as Michael Mann reminds us societies "are much messier than our theories of them" and the reality of an intervention such as Football for Peace is decidedly more fluid, complex and fickle than this rather simplistic, concentric model might imply. In many ways the reality is more like Lederach's "web approach" to peace building whereby starting with a small focus the strategy is to build networks of relationships among individuals, communities and institutions around the delivery, development and expansion of that focus. Like a real spiders web, the more threads there are, the thicker they get and the more anchor points they have, will make them more robust enabling them better to withstand potential damage and more amenable to repair should that damage occur. Finally, while the above figure is a structural representation, in reality it is an embodied process and the success of any endeavour will depend on the animation and agency provided by key actors operating across and between each level of activity.

In addition, learning derived from a project developed in one particular (national) context can be used in the planning of further programmes in different settings. Interestingly and bringing us almost full circle, since 2007 F4P has gone back to its roots, cooperating in the development of a second programme, Football for Peace Ireland, wherein children and young people in the border areas of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic take part in structured programmes of soccer development which is entirely based on the F4P model. Another setting where we believe a project like F4P might be able to make a contribution to reconciliation and peaceful co-existence is in Cyprus, an island that has been divided since 1974. Whether in the North or the South, football is passionately followed in Cyprus, but like the Island itself, football has a long history of social and political division. This, we believe, can be overcome. What we have learned from Israel is that through the implementation of a carefully tailored and managed project like F4P, if the passion for football is there, then it can be harnessed in multiple ways to serve the cause of peace.

In conclusion I would like to leave you with F4P's Maxim. It comes in the form of the inspirational words of eighteenth century political philosopher, Edmund Burke, who in many respects anticipates the ideas of critical pragmatic realism when he states: "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing".

Notes:

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