Football

A Sociology of the Global Game

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The Cultural Politics of Play: Ethnicity, Gender and the 'Post-fan' Mentality

In this chapter, I examine how the cultural politics of class, gender and ethnicity are reshaping football's social condition. In discussing the 'class' dimension, emphasis is placed on the changing nature of general football fandom in the UK, particularly in England, but also in other Home Nations. Historically, UK football culture has been uniquely embedded within the modern, urban working classes. The new post-industrial society and the remarkable commodification of top professional football underpin the possible realignment of the game's class identity. The notion of the 'post-fan' is an important heuristic here; this new supporter category has white-collar employment, and shows a greater reflexivity and critical distance when engaging with popular culture.

A more global perspective is employed to discuss the cultural politics of ethnicity and gender within football. The major problems of sexism and racism lie within the mainstream of football culture, among ordinary supporters, coaches and officials. Prejudicial assumptions remain influential in determining the role to be played by women and non-whites within football cultures in the UK and overseas. The major historical contribution of women and non-whites to football tends to be submerged. The new football cultures, such as the USA, do seem to promote female participation, but at the expense of a genuinely 'multi-cultural' game. I conclude the discussion by arguing that recent, heavily publicized anti-sexism and anti-racism drives in UK football are reflective of football's class transformation rather than any structural revolution along the lines of gender or ethnicity.

Football and Social Class: introductory remarks

In previous chapters, I noted regularly that social class is an important theme in football's historical and structural development. Generally, football's modern and urban character ensures that its social meaning has been heavily influenced by the processes of nation-building, industrialization and the creation of a large working class. In southern England and South America, the old upper middle-class elites still exercise substantial control over the game, though their cultural influence was greatly diluted by football's 'massification' throughout the twentieth century. Conversely, southern European football always possessed a relatively classless character, although the working classes remained the most sizeable contributor. Class issues and football's bourgeoisification received substantial critical analysis by sociologists during the 1970s and early 1980s.[1] I am therefore committed to avoiding a straightforward recapitulation of this body of work. My concern instead is to assess the key changes in football's class culture within the context of the game's recent economic boom.

Since 1990, the structural nexus of football and the working classes has been strongly undermined. Football clubs and the police are less tolerant of expressive forms of support. Ground redevelopment has replaced the old terraces with more expensive, family-friendly stands. Those locked out must forfeit a hefty subscription fee to watch on television. Merchandising and share issues mean that clubs pursue wealthier, national fan groups rather than satisfy local supporters. On the park, the local one-club heroes have become peripatetic national or international 'celebrities', drawn increasingly from affluent suburbs rather than poor housing estates.

Concomitantly, the working class itself has undergone major structural changes since the 1970s. Deindustrialization and the rise of the service-sector economy have reduced the industrial working class and expanded the white-collar workforce. The structural boundaries between the old lower middle classes and the affluent upper working classes have become very blurred. A dispossessed underclass is sedimented at the base of the new class hierarchy. In the post-modern era, this underclass and the class strata just above are most visibly excluded from football's brave new world. UK football's new target audiences include family groups, the first generation middle classes and the young metropolitan elite. These developments have certainly enlivened the cultural politics of football. The new middle classes have contributed particularly to the UK game's fashionability throughout the 1990s. It is to an analysis of this new class and its material culture that I now turn.

The Post-fans: class and cultural properties

To open this discussion it is useful to consider the changing culture of football fandom in the UK. This relates specifically to the emergence of a new category of football spectator, which I have previously termed the 'post-fans' (Giulianotti 1993).[2] The concept of the 'post-fan' is derived from my re-application of John Urry's (1990) notion of the 'post-tourist' to a football context. According to Urry, 'post-tourists' are distinguished from mere 'tourists' by their reflexivity, experience and irony. They are highly knowledgeable about the constructed and artificial nature of tourist experiences. Behind the façade of an 'authentic tourist encounter' with another culture lies a large commercial organization which manufactures the host society to fit with the stereo-typed expectations of Westerners. Post-tourists are conscious that tourism carries its downside for their 'friendly hosts': it places the locals in a dependency relationship with the West, undermines the indigenous culture, and has a disastrous effect on local ecosystems. Post-tourists acknowledge that, within the multi-million dollar tourism industry, their capacity to generate meaningful change is rather limited. Nevertheless, post-tourists pursue alternative travel strategies: staying off the beaten track, signing up for 'green' holidays or educational tours.

Football's 'post-fans' share this reflexivity, irony and participatory outlook. They represent an epistemic break from older forms of fandom, in particular the passivity of the 'supporter'. Post-fans are cognizant of the constructed nature of fan reputations, and the vagaries of the media in exaggerating or inventing such identities. They adopt a reflexive approach in interpreting the relative power positions of their players and club within the political structures of domestic and international football. They maintain an ironic and critical stance towards the apologetic propaganda emanating from their board of directors, and against the generally sympathetic relationship that exists between the latter and the mass media. The comments of post-fans on their favoured club and players often slip into parody or hostility. They are at the epicentre of supporter movements which militate to change club policy on the players, manager or directors. Nevertheless, post-fans recognize their influence remains very limited within football's corridors of power.

Crucially, Urry (1990) argues that 'post-tourists' emerged from important changes in the class structures of post-industrial Western societies. Specifically, 'post-tourists' hail from the 'new middle class' of white-collar workers (see Bourdieu 1984). Many received further education, particularly in the liberal arts and social sciences; they tend to be employed in the new 'knowledge industries', such as sales, media and market research. Unlike the traditional bourgeoisie, this new class embraces rather than rejects popular culture, often mixing football or rock music with an interest in literature and the performing arts. However, this cultural consumption is not passive. The new middle classes are educated or employed to engage critically with all forms of

popular culture. Many work as 'cultural intermediaries' in the service sector, setting trends or educating the public on how to consume specific products (Featherstone 1991b).

The New Middle Classes and Contemporary Football Media

There is strong evidence that the new middle classes have a sizeable stake in the production, mediation and consumption of post-fan football culture. The new supporters' organizations, such as the Football Supporters' Association (FSA) or the Independent Supporters' Associations (ISAs), tend to be filled with white-collar service workers. Fanzine writers are drawn from new middle-class employment, such as sales, middle management or further education (Giulianotti 1997c: 219). Moreover, the fanzine's staple content is riddled with post-fan irony and parody (Curren and Redmond 1991; Haynes 1992).

The new middle classes are at the heart of the production and consumption of mainstream football media, which mushroomed throughout the 1990s. It is relatively strong in disposable income and media literacy, and particularly unsatisfied by schoolboy football magazines, like *Shoot!* and *Goal*. The success of football fanzines, especially *When Saturday Comes*, encouraged mainstream publishing companies to publish their own titles, such as *Four–Four–Two, Total Football* and *90 Minutes*, and copy the fanzines' strategies of flexible accumulation: quick organization, low overheads, flexible production and management arrangements, and easily imposed liquidation (in this case, by head office, on workers employed on short-term contracts). Mainstream publishers have also recruited many journalists from the fanzines and dip into their pages for stories and gossip (see Rowe 1995: 28, 40).[3] UK television stations (satellite and terrestrial) have released a surfeit of football chat shows, most notably *Standing Room Only*, *The Rock and Goal Years*, and *Fantasy Football*. The latter programme is the television spin-off from the 'Fantasy Football' league that is promoted in all newspapers and played by thousands of readers. Indeed, the newspaper which organizes the 'official' Fantasy Football League, the *Daily Telegraph*, is the leading upmarket daily, has an ageing readership and is regarded as the bastion of conservatism in its coverage of news events (Tunstall 1996: 16). Its use of football reflects not only its populist pursuit of younger readers, but also the rising stock of the game among young middle-class readers. Finally, the game's fashionability has enabled one young entrepreneur to found *Philosophy Football*, selling to more cerebral consumers a host of shirts emblazoned with great football *aperçus* by Baudrillard, Camus, Wittgenstein et al.

The new media thrive upon some fundamental changes in the associative nature of football fandom. The old working-class spectators were raised to discuss football intersubjectively, at work, in the pub, on the street or in the home. They attended matches in groups, either with their family or their peers

(Clarke 1978). Conversely, football is experienced in a more solitary way by the new middle classes. Primary and secondary relationships are less football centred. Football match attendance occurs in smaller groups, especially with female partners. The new football media seek to fill this dialogical hole in a virtual fashion by becoming the source of football chat for new middle-class readers. Female journalists are recruited partly to encourage the 'significant others' of male fans to take an interest in the game.

Some qualifications are necessary in linking post-fandom with the new middle classes. First, critical or ironic fandom is not purely the preserve of this class fraction. The football ground has always harboured a 'post-fan' element, ready to dispense ironic invective and self-effacing insights. Second, 'post-fandom' can be practised by a diversity of fan types. In Scotland, for example, the ambassadorial 'Tartan Army' are highly skilled in manufacturing their reputation abroad. Some hooligans are equally adept at manipulating the police or press through deliberate misinformation (Armstrong and Giulianotti 1998c). Third, football's 'cultural intermediaries' or 'style-setters' do not always hail from the new middle classes. As I argued in chapter 3, other sub-cultures (even hooligan ones) can generate new fan identities that are consolidated by mainstream supporters. Finally, we should beware the tendency of cultural sociologists to exaggerate the social and cultural importance of their specific class strata. Football or other forms of popular culture may now be legitimate topics of conversation at liberal dinner parties, but that does not confirm by itself an epochal shift in the social meaning and structural significance of these practices.

Nevertheless, the long-standing critical and reflexive dimensions of 'post-fandom' are increasingly associated with the new middle classes. This class possesses the intellectual and technological capital to transfer the critical impulse of football crowds, from the Socratic context of the open terraces to the more permanent medium of the fanzine, the web page or the football novel. As mainstream and independent kinds of football media have multiplied, so the intermediary influence of the new middle classes has expanded in tandem.

Class and Geography: North v. South, traditionalists v. arrivistes

A critical point here concerns the fact that, within a football context, the new middle class is not a homogeneous entity. Important internal differences exist along social class and geographical lines. At the local level, particularly in northern England and Scotland, there is a strong traditionalist undercurrent within the fanzines and ISAs which is deeply critical of football's commodification and the marginalization of long-standing fans. The new middle-class fans associated with these movements tend to have a long personal immersion in football. Even among northern actors, musicians and writers who move south, the close bond with the supported club tends to be insoluble (for example,

Sean Bean at Sheffield United, Noel Gallagher at Manchester City or Harry Pearson [1994] at Middlesborough).

While fanzines and ISAs in southern England share such traditionalist impulses, they have been overshadowed by the genesis of a metropolitan cadre of football followers. At the vanguard of this new football class is an oligarchy of metropolitan journalists and Oxbridge graduates which has acquired a literary hegemony over the game. Their personal background in football is usually very limited; their club affiliations are also rather flexible. Dubbed the London *soccerati*, this cadre includes the novelists Martin Amis, Bill Buford (1991), Nick Hornby (1992) and Roddy Doyle (1993); the journalists Simon Kuper (1994, 1997), Emma Lindsey and Anne Coddington (1997); and comedians like David Baddiel (Giulianotti 1997a). The *soccerati* favour the redevelopment of football stadia to the benefit of their class on the assumed grounds that this has eradicated hooliganism and enabled more women and ethnic minorities to attend. The *soccerati* are particularly popular among football *arrivistes*, a strata of London-based white collar workers who 'do football' to flesh out the popular culture dimension of their social curriculum vitae. Through use of the new football media, they may learn the game's lexicon and teach themselves all about the players and playing systems. This knowledge is of the autodidactic type, and not engrained with time, reflection or experience in playing the game.

It is here that a serious conflict begins to emerge over football's cultural politics in a manner not dissimilar to the north–south dispute of one hundred years earlier. In contrast to the protective approach of the northern new middle classes, the southern elite openly attacks working-class fandom. Simon Kuper, for example, lambasts

> this idea that I've been following my team for 30 years and my dad did before me and my grandad did before him, that football is about blood and toil and belonging. This is very dangerous for two reasons. First football is about more than belonging and community, it's about art and great moments: George Best beating three defenders down the wing; a Platini free kick. Second, it makes Asian fans, black fans, women fans feel excluded. How can you come in if you didn't belong before?
>
> (quoted in Coddington 1997: 74–5)

Kuper's seductive opinion crystallizes many of the false assumptions and prejudices about the nature and traditions of working-class fandom. A few of the fallacies may be summarized: that working-class fans don't change teams between generations; that working-class fans are unable to appreciate or practise the aesthetics of the game; that a sense of 'belonging' precludes an appreciation of footballing genius; that working-class fans are the most racist and sexist; that working-class chauvinisms rather than more deep-seated economic and cultural inequalities prevent less powerful social groups from football involvement. Indeed, Kuper is guilty of blaming one less powerful social group (the working classes) for the social exclusion experienced by others (ethnic minori-

ties and women). His analysis simply mirrors the same kind of scapegoat rhetoric that is employed by right-wing groups to support their racism, whereby one weak community (an ethnic minority) is blamed for the troubles of another (the working classes).

Significantly, a counter-hegemonic movement has emerged within the new middle classes to challenge both this elite and the wider commodification of football. The CRASH satirical cultural project (CRASH stands for 'Creating Resistance to Society's Haemorrhoids') has published pamphlets attacking the middle-class 'new laddism' of television's football celebrities (*Independent on Sunday*, 3 August 1997). Resistance emanates from supporter pressure groups, social movements and more critical football commentators, such as Horton (1997) and Conn (1997). The pressure group (Football Fans Against the Criminal Justice Act) (FFACJA) was founded to oppose legislation that extended police powers over supporters. A popular supporters' network called Libero! was formed by those 'who are opposed to the growing regulation of our beautiful game', organizing a number of well-attended, dissenting supporter forums in London. The success of books on hooliganism and football's commodification suggests that the Oxbridge hegemony over 'good writing' on the game can be challenged.

These contemporary conflicts indicate that class issues remain central to the cultural politics of the game. The fact that the most acute conflicts take place within the new middle classes tells us something instructive about post-1990, post-modern UK football, and the marginalization of working-class supporters. However, class is not the only issue, nor always the dominant one, within the cultural politics of football. Two other fundamental conflicts are those relating to issues of gender and issues of ethnicity. It is to an assessment of these questions that I now turn.

Football and Women: the historical context

Within the broad historical and global framework, women's general exclusion from football has been relatively recent and particularly apparent in more 'civilized' societies. Guttmann (1991: 47–8) reports that, from the twelfth century onwards, women took a very prominent role in the 'ludic turbulence' of folk football. On some occasions, teams of women were pitted against each other according to marital status; their play was no less hardy than the men's, and they suffered the same injuries.

Following the establishment of association football, women were gradually squeezed out of attending British matches. Many clubs had admitted women free of charge, but as professionalization struck by the mid-1890s, admission fees were introduced, often at half of the men's price. Mason (1980: 152–3) argues that rising working-class crowds saw women dislocated from the terraces and eased into the stands.[4] By the 1930s, this migration had given rise to

the stereo-type, as popular as it was disputed, that female football fans were stoically from the middle classes (Fishwick 1989: 57–8). Though English football's cultural peculiarities are noteworthy, it seems that this process was generally replicated elsewhere. In Brazil, for example, Lever (1983: 40–1) found that football's colonization by the working classes in the 1910s finalized the demise of 'the fashionable ladies in the stands'.[5] Meanwhile, throughout South America, the gender barriers were being broken down outside of football grounds, as young players became heroes in local *barrios*, attracting a steady flow of female admirers especially at dances (Carvallo et al. 1984: 22–3).

In England, there is clear evidence from the inter-war years that the football authorities saw the rise of women's football as a threat to the male game. The famous 'Dick, Kerr Ladies XI' became remarkably successful, embarking on international tours and proving unbeatable at home. In 1921, they played 67 matches in the UK before around 900,000 spectators; one match in Liverpool on Boxing Day of 1920 drew over 53,000 fans (Newsham 1994: 61, 55). Yet within a year, the English FA effectively outlawed major female football matches by instructing clubs not to lease out their grounds. The decree secured men's future domination of commercial football and represents a blow from which English women's football has never truly recovered (Lopez 1997: 6–7).

Women, Fan Violence and Match Attendance

Substantial debate surrounds the relationship of female match attendance to different levels of football hooliganism. English sociologists have argued that female attendance causes men to soften or 'feminize' their behaviour, thereby reducing the frequency and seriousness of violent or disorderly incidents (see Jennifer Hargreaves 1992: 174–5; Taylor 1991a; Williams 1986). One solution to fan hooliganism, it is argued, lies in the promotion of football as a modern, 'family' game (Murphy et al. 1990: 224–5).[6]

Several criticisms may be directed at this viewpoint. First, the football industry is keen to attract women for business rather than pro-feminist reasons. After facing a spectacular decline in attendances from the 1960s to the late 1980s, football's business controllers sought out a 'reserve army of leisure' to fill the spaces vacated by men (Russell 1998). Second, we might question the ethics of using women to solve football hooliganism as the latter phenomenon is purely a male problem (Clarke 1992: 217). Third, the feminization thesis mistakenly assumes that hooligan fans are the most abusively sexist. Many of football's oldest and most sexist chants or epithets emanate from mainstream male supporters and officials. Football hooligans are rarely the most voluble chanteurs of standards like 'Get Your Tits Out For the Lads'. Meanwhile, football coaches and spectators routinely couch their encouragement of players in classically masculine terms, invoking them to stop 'playing like poofters' or 'tackling like women'. Fourth, we need to question the rather essentialized and

Victorian assumption that femininity is ontologically rooted in a family-centred and physically inert role. There is even evidence to suggest that women can participate in or actively support boisterous or violent fan behaviour. In continuation of Mason's (1980: 158–9) records on Victorian women 'behaving badly' at football matches, we can note female participation in hooligan or 'militant' groups through to the current day; for example in Scotland (see Finn 1994b: 123n), Germany and Italy (Roversi 1994: 375–7).[7] If we look to South American evidence, we find that the links between hooliganism and female attendance are just as inconclusive. In Brazil, Lever (1995: 13) suggests that the violence of *torcidas* during the 1980s was highly off-putting to women, whereas other research indicates that falling female attendance reflected a deeper structural decline in the domestic game (Helal 1994). In neighbouring Argentina, hooliganism among fans increased markedly during the 1990s, but so too did the attendance of female supporters (Alabarces 1998).

In the UK, there are serious doubts as to whether female attendance at football has increased significantly. Some research claims to demonstrate that the 'modernization' of English football *has* increased female interest in football: more are attracted to matches (SNCCFR 1995: 14), and more are watching on television (Woodhouse and Williams 1991: 87). During the early 1980s, most surveys of football supporters had shown that women constituted 12–20 per cent of the crowd (Canter et al. 1989: 20; SNCCFR 1983: 124). Subsequent research in Aberdeen suggested females constituted 13 per cent of the crowd (Giulianotti 1992: 13). Annual surveys for the English FA point to similar findings today. Coddington (1997: 1) argues that up to 25 per cent of football's new fans are female, though this may signify only that there is a higher turnover of female fans relative to males. Domestically, more women are watching football on television, but then it is also increasingly prevalent in the schedules. It is also easier for males to watch televised matches if they can socialize females into enjoying the game or if they can 'trade' viewing football at one time for watching their partner's programme on another occasion (see Gantz and Wenner 1995). Recent proponents of football's gender transformation appear to ignore a key finding from the early 1970s, that female spectating is indicative of football's more fundamental transformation into a middle-class sport (Taylor 1971: 149). One protagonist of the 'sexual revolution' has criticized this position, declaring that 'Our alleged class is being used as a convenient mask to attack our gender' (Coddington 1997: 13). But, she does little to sustain this point, since almost all of her interviewees, as a sample of modern female fans, are university graduates and / or employed in white-collar work.[8]

Masculinities and Football: class and analytical issues

When discussing the gender politics of football, male power and the cultures of masculinity within the game are also crucial issues. Initially, the evidence all

favours the conclusion that football's 'hegemonic masculinity' is uniformly aggressive and humourlessly chauvinistic. Earlier chapters highlighted the centrality of male domination within football. Male public schools created the rules of association football, while the game's organizational hierarchies continue to be bastions of male power. Professional football sides became all-male representations of the founding community. Until the 1960s, football helped to reproduce the modern sexual division of labour and leisure. Men dominated workplaces and public spaces (such as football grounds); women were relegated to private domains like the home. Football's playing aesthetics preach a traditional masculinity; 'It's a man's game after all . . . players should accept a bit of boot.'[9] The players' occupational sub-culture is dominated by the rapacious pursuit of 'birds' for sexual conquest. The mass media's football coverage caters continuously to the male gaze. The front pages of tabloids 'expose' the sexual secrets of top stars; the back pages mix football stories with adverts for sex chat lines, 'lap dancing' clubs and lingerie; inside, semi-nude female models pose provocatively in football regalia.

Football's modern industrial heartlands might be typified as places of hard toil, where tough masculine norms are reproduced through football. Examples from the major football nations include the shipyard and coalfield towns of Scotland; the heavy industry centres of north England; the steel towns (Lens) and port cities (Marseille, Rotterdam) of France or Holland; the industrial Ruhr area of Germany; the tough, uncompromising style of working-class teams from these localities, or even from South America (such as Boca Juniors in Argentina).

Many supporter cultures celebrate traditional idioms of masculine identity through an uncomplicated public emasculation or feminization of the 'others' (such as opposing players, supporters, match officials). Supporters aim epithets such as 'poofter', 'fanny' and 'nonce' at the allegedly weak masculinity of players and officials. Fans gesticulate to insult opponents as 'wankers' (sexually inactive men) or 'dickheads' (stupid males). Football hooligans often use graphic metaphors of sexual power ('We fucked them', 'We shagged them') to assert their masculine superiority over their opponents. Even the anti-hooligan 'carnival' fans possess a masculine culture that is conventionally intoxicated and avowedly heterosexual.

While these features of football culture demonstrate the strong presence of traditional masculine norms and identities, their pre-eminent status is thrown into serious doubt by the presence of other, more complex constructions of masculinity. We may note, initially, that there are important cultural differences in the masculinity that football dramatizes. Northern and southern European teams show clear differences in the aggression they bring to the game. More subtle differences exist in the songs and chants of various supporters, regarding the metaphors of sexual power they use to disparage 'others'. In the UK, 'realist' and performative locutions are employed to reassert male power over these others.[10] Conventional categories of 'normal' and 'deviant' sexual

identity tend to be utilized. The most reflexive fan groups might label themselves with absurdly deviant identities, leaving any further epithets thrown at them by opposing fans looking pathetically weak.[11] Conversely, in southern Europe, a wider and more figurative range of sexual impurities is associated with opponents through song. In Latin America, allegorical images of sexual control (including male rape) serve to feminize the other (particularly opposing fans) (see Guttmann 1996: 67).[12]

Masculine identity is complex and multi-faceted for all groups of supporters. Hooligans are not the eternal prisoners of 'aggressive masculinity' (see Dunning, Murphy and Williams 1988) or a 'yob culture'. Outside football, they adopt other masculine roles as partners, parents, children, workmates and social friends. Among carnival fans, conventional forms of masculinity are also inverted and mocked. Songs and comments about their instrumental sexual prowess are often self-effacing.[13] Moreover, with regard to the aesthetics of playing football, most working-class clubs and supporters have always contained a deep penchant for non-violent or non-aggressive forms of masculinity. The most 'artistic' or technical players are greatly revered, particularly their sophisticated and deceptive skills which outmanoeuvre or ridicule 'tough-tackling' or 'hard' opponents.[14] Many working-class teams traditionally emphasize flowing, entertaining football rather than a 'blood and thunder' style (for example, West Ham, Glasgow Celtic, Newcastle, Napoli). Players noted for their 'aggressive' or 'dirty' style are mocked for their lack of guile, grace and dexterity. *Pace* Williams and Taylor's (1994) simplistic study of changing masculine norms, one cannot reduce the diverse and contradictory meanings of a player like Paul Gascoigne to a 1990s 'lad' or 'yob' culture.

Generally, then, we may observe that football cultures have always enabled the expression and appreciation of different forms of masculinity. One particular aspect of this masculine identity should not be emphasized to the exclusion of others. A specific masculine aesthetic cannot be pinned solely upon a singular class *habitus*, just as one cannot restrict extreme expressions of male dominance (such as beating female partners) to one social class.[15] Given the tendency of some gender sociologists to personalize the debate, I should add that I am in no way seeking to excuse or condone the more sexist forms of masculine identity. My intention here is merely to emphasize that contemporary masculine identities are far from one dimensional, no matter the social class.[16]

The critical investigation of masculinity is making slow progress within sociology. Through the post-feminist turn, a new field emerged in recent years as male academics came to reflect upon the epistemological and critical consequences of feminism for their gender. Unfortunately, rather than forward a detached yet critical analysis of masculinity issues, many enquiries have been too obviously preoccupied with lifestyle politics or plain navel-gazing. The gendered ghosts of the writer's past are exorcized, the narrative slips into a solipsistic and confessional style of prose. Cohen's (1990) excursus on masculinity is inspired and coloured by his experience of divorce. Redhead (1995:

108) rails against the 'male-dominated, and machismo' culture of football, adding paradoxically that the game was a retreat from the 'vicious male bullying at school and in the street' which he suffered as a boy. The American sociologists, Messner and Sabo (1994), produce an exceptionally onanistic enquiry into masculinity and sport.[17] The more sophisticated, critical sociologists sometimes lapse into this auto-narrative.[18] If personal reflection upon the 'inner self' does provide deeper insights on masculinity, then 'sociologists' of this ilk have effectively written themselves out of a job. New Age gurus or psychotherapists are more empowered by contemporary Western culture to locate the phenomenology of the self and map its contours. Professional essayists and novelists possess the Leavisite credentials of 'good writing' to unmask the personal properties of emotional and social experiences. Sociologists analysing male identity have to get back to writing critically and objectively on their subject, rather than advertising their personal worth as 'corrected males'.

Women and Participation in the Football Culture

While academics cavil over the gender politics of their colleagues and themselves, women struggle on in making headway within football. In the West, more women are playing and reporting on the game. The rise in registered female players has been sudden, reaching around 25,000 in England alone, with greater numbers of clubs organized into women's leagues (Lopez 1997: 235–6; see Duke and Crolley 1996). As late as 1978, the English FA had been supported by the Court of Appeal in excluding women from football teams. One judge, Lord Denning, ruled that a dissenting view would be an 'absurdity', rendering the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 'an ass – an idiot' if it were strictly applied to football (McArdle 1996: 157). Today, most schools encourage female pupils to play in PE classes or representative matches.

These advances are unlikely to revolutionize women's relationship to physical culture. They remain far more committed than men to fitness and body shape than to team competitions like football (Buñuel 1991; Markula 1995). Female footballers still experience the same treatment as athletes and tennis players. Both men and women comment on their 'lesbian tendencies' and their physical 'masculinization' through 'overdevelopment' of limbs in the heat of 'unfeminine' competition (see Griffin 1992). Technically, among children, there is often little to separate the sexes. Nelson (1996: 78–9) cites the case of a ten-year-old goal-keeper in Baltimore who performed so well that flabbergasted parents insisted she pull her pants down to prove her gender. In separate cases in Virginia and Ohio, all-girl teams were recognized by soccer coaches as superior to all-boy ones, resulting in the boys' unwillingness to compete in cross-gender tournaments. Nevertheless, in coaching the game, the 'glass ceiling' remains intact in the oldest football nations, as it is in other international sports (see Theberge 1993). In 1997, the Equal Opportunities Commission

backed a top English female coach in her sex discrimination case against the national FA (*The Guardian*, 24 September 1997).

Women's professional football leagues continue to endure low economic and social status. Female players in the top leagues (Italy and Scandinavia, for example) earn a mere fraction of the fortunes earned by their male counterparts. Only 2,200 fans turned up in Oslo to watch the 1997 final of the Women's European Championship, between Italy and Germany, although the event was televised in 135 nations. Female international football is given its strongest global media coverage during the Olympics, where public and corporate interest in the male tournament remains relatively low. The mediascape of female football has yet to produce its superstar player, with full access to advertising contracts, major interviews and the enveloping celebrity circuit. The first such superstars will follow other female sports celebrities (such as 'FloJo' in athletics, Gabriella Sabatini in tennis or Manon Rhéuame in ice hockey), in being rewarded commercially for feminine beauty rather than sporting expertise (see Laberge 1995: 142). In this way, the patriarchal gaze retains its power as the price of admission to an exclusive male sporting world.

Further sex barriers are constructed through media presentations and discourses on football. The 'football talk' of sports presenters invents an exclusively masculine 'football world'. Ex-professional commentators employ discourses that are grounded in the male world of public work, rather than the female realm of private intimacy and emotion (Johnson 1994). In the past decade, some women have emerged prominently within the football media. In southern Europe, female reporters regularly interview football personalities or compere television shows. However, their visual attractiveness rather than analytical abilities are at a premium; few women fill the position of resident tactical expert or chief interviewer, deferring instead to older male colleagues. In the UK, journalists like Eleanor Levy (former editor of *90 Minutes* magazine) have established a prominence among football writers. Again, however, this may say more about the relatively low esteem of both football glossies and women within the fourth estate than it does about any equalization of gender roles.

I noted in chapter 2 that football's twentieth-century development was heavily dependent upon the modernization of nations, and the related establishment of class and gender identities. Throughout Europe and Latin America, the game became dominated by the working classes and, more particularly, men. Conversely, we find that the new, post-modern football cultures have become the most accommodating towards women. In Japan, women are in the vanguard of new cultural trends, and have taken to football spectating more readily than men (Horne 1996: 541–2). In the United States, women comprise roughly 40 per cent of all soccer players (Andrews et al. 1997: 265); the game has around 27 million 'involved family participants', and is particularly supported among white suburban mothers, the 'soccer moms', that were explicitly targeted by the 1996 Clinton re-election campaign. Large numbers of women

participate in the carnival culture following Ireland, Norway and Denmark, including the stereo-typically 'male' predilections of heavy drinking, earthy language and carousing (Giulianotti 1996a and 1996b; Eichberg 1992).

Elsewhere, strong cultural pressures undermine female involvement. In sub-Saharan Africa, female sports participation is culturally proscribed at the local level; in the most extreme circumstances, such as war or famine, care of the family is prioritized (Richards 1997: 150). In old socialist societies like Poland, the football ground remained the preferred public space for males; the theatre or some other social event was favoured by women (Ciupak 1973: 97). Women of Eastern extraction, such as Muslims or Hindus, experience a stark cultural division between male/public space and female/private space. Even among second and third generation Western immigrants, formidable barriers prevent or dissuade women from taking an interest in football, never mind playing the game (Zaman 1997: 62). However, some reports from the Muslim world suggest that football participation can help women to challenge their traditional gender role. In Zanzibar, the Women Fighters team has been formally recognized by the national FA, although players are forced to wear the traditional Muslim *higab* and some are beaten by 'disgraced' male relatives (*New Internationalist*, December 1997). In Iran, women defied an eighteen-year ban from sports stadia by storming into Tehran's Azadi Stadium to celebrate the national side's qualification for France '98.

Generally, important class and cultural divisions shape women's experience of football. The expertise of young, middle-class women in earning greater freedom within the realms of lifestyle and leisure politics is not mirrored among older, working-class women who have less economic and cultural capital. Further differences tend to be cultural. The new football cultures in the West (admittedly with greater middle class participation) are more accommodating towards female involvement. Conversely, new football nations in the developing world tend to obstruct women's involvement in the game for cultural reasons, although at the national level some women's teams perform with notable success (for example, China, Nigeria). Racism and ethnic intolerance may prove to be a cross-cutting source of inequality, which I examine below in fuller detail.

Football Racism: the scope of the problem

Racism within football appears to be a cultural universal, occurring between and within ethnic groupings. Elementary expressions of racism involve the abuse and discriminatory treatment of non-white players. More complex racism includes prejudicial treatment by the powerful against the relatively powerless within the same ethno-national community, such as the *terroni* insults aimed at southern Italians by northern counterparts, or the former West Germans' maltreatment of the *ossies* of eastern Germany (Merkel 1998).

The ubiquity of football racism is most starkly illustrated in Brazil. Initially, the nation appears as an ethnic 'melting pot': Brazil's national football is ethnically mixed; the word *raça* ('race') has an empowering meaning within football culture, designating vigour and energy rather than a Darwinian 'racial' hierarchy. Nevertheless, Brazil's complex history of slavery, racialized divisions and vast economic inequalities leaves a deep impression on football (Leite Lopes 1997). Contrary to popular belief, football 'offers almost no opportunities for significant upward mobility' (Evanson 1982: 403).[19] Brazil's white elites resisted football's organized dissipation among the black population.[20] Only managerial pragmatism persuaded top clubs to admit black players. Vasco da Gama were the first to field non-white players in 1923 and promptly stormed to the Rio league championship, encouraging other sides to follow suit (Oliver 1992: 615). The national side continued to exclude black players, such as for the 1938 World Cup semi-final against Italy, which Brazil lost 2–1 (Allison 1978: 219–20). Brazil's shock defeat in the 1950 World Cup finals has been commonly blamed on black players, especially the goal-keeper. (Significantly, Brazilian sides still favour white goal-keepers, through their 'racial' characteristics of reliability and rationality). Black players were pivotal to Brazil's successes during the 1960s and 1970s, yet white middle-class hegemony over football's powerful positions was reasserted. Meanwhile, domestic football still highlights Brazil's ethno-regional divisions; affluent south-easteners deride poorer north-east people as *paraibas* due to their large black constituency.

In the West, football racism is particularly acute during periods of political and economic restructuring. In Italy, the *mezzogiorno* tensions see both northern and southern people routinely defining themselves against 'the other', such as Africans and Afro-Caribbeans; hence the routine insults ('*Negro di Merda*') directed at black players like Abedi Pele and Paul Ince. In the UK, racist abuse was routinely aimed at players such as Paul Elliott, Mark Walters, Ian Wright and, most famously, John Barnes throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Hill 1989). Meanwhile, the Thatcher government was stoking anti-immigration sentiments within the white working class. In Germany, terrace racism is associated with the rise of the far right, particularly in the old East where deep social and economic insecurities prevail (see Lash 1994: 131, 168). Even in traditionally liberal nations such as Sweden and Holland, outbreaks of supporter racism are highly reflective of growing anti-immigrant sentiments within mainstream society (see Bairner 1994: 213).

Anti-Racism Campaigns: strengths and limitations

In the UK, anti-racism campaigns have been initiated, especially through spectator organizations and the professional players themselves. Fan groups following Leeds United, Leicester City, Newcastle United, Hibernian and Hearts

were among the first to form anti-racist organizations (Thomas 1995: 98). Many club fanzines were inspired by supporters sickened at the racist abuse meted out to players, and campaigned for fellow fans to intervene against such attacks (Giulianotti 1997c; Holland et al. 1996: 178–83). The Commission for Racial Equality and the Professional Footballers' Association launched a joint campaign in August 1993, entitled 'Let's Kick Racism Out of Football'. The Football Offences Act 1991 criminalized racial chanting or abuse (Armstrong 1998: 127–8). In Germany, public awareness campaigns have countered perceived rises in fan racism at matches. In December 1992, all Bundesliga clubs wore shirts emblazened with the legend '*Mein Freund ist Ausländer*' ('My Friend is a Foreigner'), while Frankfurt fans carried banners announcing 'Germany without foreigners is like a piano without black keys' (Merkel 1994: 113). The Italian players' association organized '*No al Razzismo*' ('no to racism') pre-match demonstrations and sparked wider debate on racism. The most militant anti-racism comes from specific fan groups. Hamburg's second division club, St Pauli, attracts a leftist core support, which has distributed anti-Nazi fanzines and stickers, and tackled racist fans more physically (Benson 1993: 57). Supporter groups following Manchester United and Celtic have also fought with members of fascist movements.

A recurring weakness of some campaigns is their concentration on the perceived racism of football hooligans (see Fleming and Tomlinson 1996: 83). Typically, this grossly exaggerates the prevalence of racist or neo-Nazi groups within the hooligan networks. Few hooligans are ideologically racist or members of extreme right-wing movements. Indeed, hooligan groups are far more likely to include some black lads, for whom racist rhetoric is anathema. Moreover, most hooligans would undermine their evasion of police attention if they were openly associated with racist or neo-Nazi movements.[21] Rising racism among German supporters is often pinned on hooligan groups, particularly those from the East. But, it would appear that their use of 'Nazi' symbols and slogans reflects a deeper, more generalized alienation towards wealthier Westerners rather than a popular and coherent political ideology. Punks during the 1970s were similarly interested in using swastikas to shock and upset, rather than to signify underlying fascist sentiments (see Hebdige 1979: 116–17).[22]

Pinning the blame on hooligan groups does some violence to the real complexity of fan racism. It nurtures the smug, self-justifying inference that 'ordinary' football people are far removed from such anti-social extremism. Far more insidious is the deep-seated and 'normalized' racism within football's mainstream institutions. First, there is the more routinized racist vernacular of the football crowd, employed stereotypically to explain the game to fellows, and to influence the performance of players. Football players are still blithely discussed in racial idioms ('Pakis', 'darkies', etc) (see Back et al. 1996a; 1996c: 58). Academic and liberal interpretations of fan racism are too keen to condemn rather than understand its cultural properties. For example, when John Barnes became Liverpool's first black player in modern times, fans of all-

white neighbours Everton taunted their rivals by chanting 'Nigger-pool, Nigger-pool'. Such abuse might commonly receive condemnation, but it carried a further perlocutionary force. Certainly, it was intended to put Barnes off his game. But it was also intended to affront the vast majority of Liverpool fans since they (as the Everton fans knew) were probably just as 'racist' (Back et al. 1996b).

Secondly, fan racism is less problematic to black players than their maltreatment by more powerful football figures. Football coaches and officials decide when the non-white player can play and in what position. For non-white athletes, experience of racism begins at school. Teachers expect relatively limited academic standards from black pupils, tacitly aware that their job prospects are poor. The curriculum is shuffled to maximize their 'natural' sporting ability. Vince Hilaire, touted during the 1970s as the future first black England international, reports his schooling experience: 'I was pushed into certain sports at school, like athletics. The teachers naturally thought, because you're black, you must have some sort of athletic ability in you; but I didn't even want to do athletics, at all' (quoted in Cashmore 1982: 98). Conversely, teachers possess the equally racial assumption that Asians are not 'natural' athletes, and so discourage them from competitive sports (Dimeo and Finn 1998). The positive responses of black pupils to such treatment seems, on the surface, to support stereotypes about their ethnicity. However, high unemployment and a dearth of successful role models within mainstream society underline sport's greater potential for enabling rapid social mobility.

Playing the White Man: racism within football's institutions

Once ensconced within football, young black players are less likely to share in the banter and camaraderie of white team-mates. Racial stereo-types about black athleticism and low intelligence continue through team selection. Like other team sports such as rugby union, American football and baseball, soccer players are stacked into 'central' or 'non-central' / 'peripheral' positions. Central players form the team spine of goal-keeper, sweeper, midfield play-maker, centre-forward. They represent its 'intelligent centre', shaping the pattern of play according to the team's ability and the demands of each match. Peripheral players, such as full-backs and wingers, are valued intellectually, although their athleticism and individualism are vital in exploiting width, especially in attack. Black players tend to be 'stacked' into these peripheral positions due to their coaches' racial beliefs, that they cannot match the decision-making skills or consistency of white players, although their speed and unpredictable style are essential on the wings (Maguire 1988; 1991: 102–13). Thus, football coaches and the media tend to assume that black players possess erratic qualities ('natural ability'), while white players have more controllable capabilities ('hard work' or 'dedication') (see Murrell and Curtis 1994). African players are seen

as 'magical' and 'irrational' in the West (Hoberman 1997: 70, 117); European clubs import them to provide something 'unpredictable', a touch of the 'exotic', to help break down scientifically organized, Western defences. In further contrast, Asian players that advance to the youth leagues or to trials with professional clubs, find that they are played consistently out of position by white coaches who still expect little from them (Holland et al. 1996: 166).

One problem in elucidating player stacking is that football coaches and players have long associated particular nationalities with specific playing qualities. Even in cosmopolitan France, clubs have practised what may appear to be crude stereo-typing in their acquisition of foreign talent: in goal, we have Yugoslavs; on the wing, Africans and South Americans; in attack, the South American or the Yugoslav; in midfield, Austro-Hungarians or the Dutch; in defence, Germans or Danes (Lanfranchi 1994: 69–72). Future research into positional segregation and racism would do well to recognize the complexity of this issue.

The dominant discourses within the professional game reproduce racist assumptions. In the 1970s, top English manager Ron Atkinson 'joked' about the three 'sambos' in his West Bromwich Albion side (see Redhead 1986b: 28). When commentating for television on the England–Cameroon match in 1990, Atkinson described the Africans as lacking in professional nous, attributing this to their recent descent from the trees. The Welsh manager, Bobby Gould, was accused of racism by one of his players, Noel Blake, who then withdrew from the national side while Gould retained his position (Back et al. 1998). The Nigeria coach, the Dutchman Clemens Westerhof, placed his players under virtual house arrest at the 1994 World Cup finals, claiming that they were 'immature and easily diverted' (Hoberman 1997: 120–1).[23] In the upper echelons of football officialdom, the UEFA President, Lennart Johannson, made unguarded, racist jokes about 'darkies' in South Africa to a Swedish newspaper (Sugden and Tomlinson 1998). In the UK, before the mid-1970s, such racism meant that very few black players broke into the top leagues, particularly in Scotland (Holland 1995: 571; Horne 1995: 38–9). Successful players tended to be air-brushed from football's official histories, even though the lineage of black players goes back to Arthur Wharton in 1889 (Cosgrove 1991; Vasili 1995). Even latterly, researchers from Middlesex University found that top British clubs remained reluctant to participate in anti-racism campaigns (*Independent on Sunday*, 7 September 1997).

Young black players do employ certain strategies of empowerment. Some nurture their ethnicity by forming all-black or all-Asian clubs or leagues (see Williams 1993, 1994). Top players like Ruud Gullit and Brendan Batson use their professional kudos and intellect to campaign publicly against racism (see Orakwue 1998). The UK government has announced its intention to criminalize racism at all levels of the game. Yet racism, prejudice and social intolerance may be expressed in particularly insidious ways that are difficult to establish beyond reasonable doubt. If a coach claims that the poorer players in his

playing system 'just happen' to be Pakistani, how do you 'prove' legally his racism? We may assume that non-white players will continue to be discriminated against in team selection; remain underpaid relative to their merits; and stay under-rewarded through secondary income, such as in public relations work or merchandising deals. In that sense, anti-racism strategies continue to fail when they seek 'technical' solutions (such as a penal code on racism) rather than a full moral and intersubjective debate involving all football people on the social principles of the game.

Beyond the millennium: the new cultural politics of class

Clearly, football cultures throughout the world have much work to do to establish social equality. Traditionally, women and ethnic minorities have been the most marginal social groups, particularly as men re-established their hegemony over football during the inter-war years. Latterly, some figures suggest that female attendance at matches has increased, although the evidence remains stretched. Instead, the sudden surfeit of female sports writers and journalists reflects the growing football interests of young, new middle-class women. Traditional male prejudices and stereo-types continue to be directed at female participants, but the new 'post-national' football cultures of Japan, USA and Ireland highlight the potential of women's involvement.

Ethnic minorities and non-whites struggle with prejudicial treatment inside the game. In the West, structural inequalities and cultural antagonisms underlie both manifest and latent forms of racism. Even in Brazil, where non-whites have used football for social and economic advancement, white elites predominate. In the UK, political legislation and anti-racism campaigns have been introduced. Yet, so long as these measures fail to confront the routinized racism within mainstream football, fans and coaches will continue to racialize the players.

While 'race' and gender remain important in their own right, each is heavily influenced by the vicissitudes of social class relationships. For the majority of Afro-Caribbean and Asian youths, the 'racial' aspects of their disadvantage are superseded by class dynamics. Many inhabit a post-modern urban 'underclass' that is unable to join the small, upwardly mobile, middle-class stratum of Afro-Caribbean or Asian descent which football's marketeers are drawing into the stands (see Wilson 1987).[24]

A similar point may be made about the millions of women in the UK who find themselves trapped in an underclass conundrum of low pay, part-time work, childcare expenses and meagre state benefits. Football's institutions may claim that these men and women receive a 'non-discriminatory' opportunity to participate in the contemporary game. However, a reasonable disposable income is essential to purchase the kit or pay the pitch fees to play football, or to afford the match ticket or monthly television subscription to

watch the matches. The football clubs and the authorities are not, of course, responsible for the sub-standard schooling and housing, or the abysmal employment prospects that characterize the 'life chances' (*sic*) of this underclass. But they do reproduce these deep inequalities by opening football to an unfettered market system, disadvantaging people along the lines of their class (and relatedly, of their 'race' or their gender). We may note here that 'liberal' critiques of football's 'traditional masculinity' also benefit the game's commodification, since they contain thinly veiled assaults on its working-class male culture.

The concept of the 'post-fan' crystallizes these class conflicts in two particular ways. First, it highlights the fact that football's working-class 'traditions' are not unidimensional. They may include strong elements of sexism and racism (as one finds throughout society at large). But they also include irony, wit, humour and a critical perspective on the club, the football authorities and the state of the game in general. These post-fan characteristics figured among football supporters long before the new middle classes discovered the sport.

Secondly, more significantly, post-fandom points to divisions within football's new middle classes. There are 'traditionalist' new middle-class fans, seeking to protect the interests of their fellow supporters by publishing critical fanzines and forming ISAs. Alternatively, a metropolitan elite of football *arrivistes* ignores the 'post-fan' impulses within working-class fandom, exaggerating instead the latter's reactionary aspects. This class seeks to assume a monopoly on 'good football writing' or critical insights into the contemporary game. The future of football culture in the UK and other Western societies is heavily dependent upon the relative influence of this new class.