Space for Inclusion? The construction of sport and leisure spaces as places for migrant communities

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Abstract

The research on which this paper is based started from the proposition that sport and leisure spaces can support processes of social inclusion (Amara et al., 2005), yet may also serve to exclude certain groups. As such, these spaces may be seen as contested and racialised places that shape behaviour. We shall use this paper not just to explore how those spaces are perceived by new migrants, but how those interpretations may vary with time and processes of social change. That involves examining how sport and leisure spaces are encoded in different ways, thereby affecting people's experience, while at the same time recognising that their sport and leisure practices shape those social constructions. We argue that such an understanding is necessary to inform policies and practices that could promote the development of mutual and shared spaces rather than disconnected multiple occupations of spaces. Our goal is not only to contribute to the development of theory, but also to the debate that has counterposed multiculturalism and integrationism.

Our recent systematic review, conducted for Sporting Equals and the sports councils (Long et al., 2009), synthesised literature on participation in sport and physical recreation by people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BME) in the UK. That review identified a growing body of research, but one focussing primarily on the experiences of Black and Asian groupings. That has led us to turn to a consideration of new migrant communities. In this paper we shall be reporting on empirical research conducted with 'new migrants' now living in Leeds.

Introduction

Not purely the creation of evil media empires or far right groups there has been public anxiety about recent immigration, frequently centred on concerns about

employment opportunities and the allocation of resources in the face of quite rapid social and political change. These economic concerns have been coupled with attention to the extent to which minority ethnic communities maintain culture and practices seen to be 'different', questioning the 'cohesiveness' of British society. Disturbances in northern towns in 2001 were considered to have a 'race' dimension, and the report of Ted Cantle's independent review team promoted the suggestion of ethnic groups living 'parallel lives'. These reports advanced the notion of 'community cohesion' and 'civic and social solidarity' as the solution (Cantle, 2001), a concept which has since gathered considerable momentum in local and national planning and policies (Flint & Robinson, 2008). Anxiety about the level of difference between groups in society was further propelled by a speech in 2005 by the Chief Executive of the Commission for Racial Equality (Trevor Phillips) on the theme of 'sleepwalking into segregation'[1]. At the same time there were comments by senior politicians such as David Blunkett's assertion as Home Secretary that immigrants should speak English in the home, and senior Labour politician Jack Straw's questioning of Muslim women wearing the niqab or burqa-style veil in public places.

Subsequently, media and policy debates on community cohesion, citizenship, social inclusion, integration and equalities and diversity have all assumed a concern with how we live with difference in a rapidly changing world. More recently, it has been suggested by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) that the effects of the economic recession are likely to enhance the need for attention to integration policies and for increased investment in social and community cohesion, equality and active citizenship (Somerville & Sumption, 2009: 68). Tellingly this is most commonly couched in terms of what migrants should do to integrate rather than what longer term residents might do to encourage migrants to feel included.

Our current project on the racialisation of sport and leisure spaces lies at the sparsely populated intersection of overlapping research interests. We previously noted a growing but still relatively small amount of research in the UK around the participation in sport by people from black and minority ethnic communities (Long et al., 2009) – but what there is relates primarily to people from African Caribbean and

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[1] The veracity of claims of (problematic) ethnic segregation in the UK have been strongly contested (e.g. Finney and Simpson, 2009).

South Asian backgrounds, largely ignoring the presence of whiteness and the power and privileges conferred by its presence (Long & Hylton, 2002; M. Stodolska, 1998; Watson & Scraton, 2001). New migrant communities have figured even less than these more recent interrogations of whiteness as process and identity. And even our review was restricted to sport and physical recreation rather than leisure more generally, where research is more sparse. Research on new migrants focuses almost exclusively on the economic realm; most research on the role of sport and leisure in integration in the UK focuses on refugees rather than other groups of migrants. And recognition by the government of the role of public space is primarily in terms of its contribution to regeneration rather than social cohesion (Rutter, et al., 2007). And the work on policies for integration tends to direct attention to formal structural-functional approaches rather than the informality of everyday life. That is why we are currently engaged in trying to explore how the sport and leisure spaces (in the public rather than private realm) of new migrants are understood, constructed and racialised at different times and in different contexts[2].

Migration Patterns

Similar to other major UK cities, the 2001 census identified the main minority ethnic populations in Leeds as being Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Caribbean and Chinese (and Irish); those with an ethnic origin other than White British represented 10.8% of the population (Leeds City Council, 2005); 6.5% were born outside the UK. The compulsory dispersal of people seeking asylum (since 2000) and migration of people for labour, to join family or other reasons has significantly altered the minority ethnic population of cities like Leeds since then. The past decade has seen a rise in international migration with a diversity of reasons for migration, immigration status, nationality, language, culture, gender, age and religion transforming the social and geographical spaces migrants enter (Berkeley, Khan, & Ambikaipaker, 2006; Lewis, Craig, Adamson, & Wilkinson, 2008; Robinson & Reeve, 2006; Vertovec, 2006).

This 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2006) is a significant shift from previous patterns of migration, dominated by large numbers arriving from a small number of countries

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[2] At this stage we do not know that they are racialised, even if the racialisation is seen in terms of ethnic markers.

with colonial ties to the UK. Earlier trends were often characterised by migration involving families, creating chain migration drawing further migrants through social networks, often from particular villages or towns and settling within a few streets in urban centres in the UK, entering particular trades and strata of employment (such as Gujarati Mochis in Leeds, Knott, 1994). Approaches to multiculturalism and integration[3] of immigrants have been shaped by these specific histories, promoting ethnic 'communities' as integrative and organisational units (Alleyne, 2002; Baumann, 1996; Griffiths, Sigona, & Zetter, 2005). This research will look beyond the now more substantial and established African-Caribbean and South Asian communities in Leeds to more recent migrants to the city. Leeds is not selected purely for convenience; it has a range of such groups and of sport and leisure provision[4].

Recent EU accession migration since 2004 has been of a scale and speed not seen before in the UK, however, much of this is temporary (Experian, 2007). It is not known how many have left, even before the recent recession (half the migrants from Poland who arrived since 2004 are thought to have already left the UK (IPPR, 2008). The political baiting in the run-up to the 2010 general election highlighted the difficulty government departments/agencies have had in keeping track of international movements and indeed of movements internal to the UK. Table 1 is based on national insurance number registrations (NINos) to estimate the numbers of different nationalities arriving in Leeds. It is thought that a significant number of these have subsequently left, but it is not known how many.

Table 1: Top 20 non-UK national NINo registrations (thousands), by nationality, cumulative 2002 to Sept 2009, Leeds

Nationality	2002 – 2009	Nationality	2002 – 2009
Poland	9.87	Australia	0.97
India	4.33	Czech Rep.	0.82
Pakistan	2.36	Iran	0.80

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[3] It should perhaps be noted at this stage that the meaning of 'integration' is wrestled over by different camps wanting to differentiate it from either assimilationism or multiculturalism depending upon their own value position.
[4] In addition, the Yorkshire and Humber region has received around 20% of people dispersed in the asylum system, and Leeds has accommodated a higher than proportional regional share.

China	1.95	Malaysia	0.79
Zimbabwe	1.82	Eritrea	0.75
Iraq	1.55	Spain	0.74
Slovak Rep.	1.30	Germany	0.72
Rep. of Lithuania	1.28	Portugal	0.71
Nigeria	1.17	Philippines	0.70
France	1.06	South Africa	0.67
		Total	**34.36**

Source: DWP unpublished

This most recent wave of large migration, fuelled in part by EU accession, means it is now likely that recent migrants from Poland outnumber other established minority ethnic groups. Polish NINo registrations in Leeds are higher than Bangladeshi and Chinese population figures from the 2001 census (Leeds City Council, 2007). Cheaper and more accessible transport and free movement within the EU facilitates 'yo-yo' or repeat migration making it likely that many migrants maintain transnational lives with family, friends and other links in two or more countries, visiting or spending time in each. The Polish migrants involved in this research maintained particularly high transnational links, as we will discuss below. Partly because of these numbers and partly because there was a previous wave of Polish immigrants arriving in Leeds (when they fled the turmoil in Poland during and after the Second World War) which offers the future prospect of comparison, we have chosen to focus this round of investigations on people from Poland. The choice of a white migrant group allows us to investigate whether there are processes of othering not attributable to skin colour. In short, do Polish migrants share in the privileges of whiteness or are they othered by their ethnic difference?

Inclusion, Capital and Cohesion

The way in which social inclusion, social capital and community cohesion seem to be used interchangeably in policy documents makes it difficult to differentiate between them. Indeed, with cut-and-paste they seem to be dropped into the same sentences depending upon the political mood and discourse of the moment. As a prelude to

subsequent discussions we offer a cursory distinction here between social inclusion, community cohesion, social capital, multiculturalism and integration.

- *Social inclusion* was ushered into public policy circles in the UK with the arrival of Blair's New Labour government in 1997. It was founded on the proposition that everyone living in the UK should be a stakeholder contributing to and benefiting from what the country has to offer. For good or ill this moved the attention of policy-makers beyond those who were simply 'poor' to those who lived within an interacting cluster of indicators of deprivation (the socially excluded).

- The interest in *community cohesion* comes from the contention that people living in the same area should recognise their common interests and work towards shared goals. This started as a response to what was perceived to be a fragmenting, increasingly individualistic society, but was given added impetus by the civil disturbances and acts of terrorism at the beginning of this century and a desire to isolate 'Muslim extremists'. The Cantle (2001) report and its successor (ICOCO, 2007) were concerned that different 'communities' live 'parallel lives' in ignorance of understanding of each other, and that this could create a target and opportunity for extremists to stir up 'race' hatred and demonise particular groups.

- *Social capital* can be characterised as the social connectedness that promotes shared values, increases trust and encourages reciprocity. The assumption that interaction in contexts categorised as 'bridging' between groups improves cohesion goes hand in hand with the presumption that isolation in 'bonded' social spaces within groups counters cohesion and leads to social isolation. This simplistic opposing equation has been heavily critiqued (e.g. Finney & Simpson, 2009; Flint & Robinson, 2008). There is, of course, a 'dark side' to social capital as a social force that resists immigration and excludes outsiders (Zetter et al., 2006). Social capital also operates a deficit model that implies that only particular forms of 'capital' are valuable

rather than others, such as the 'cultural wealth' that can strengthen particular groups in oppressive societies (Solórzano & Yosso, 2005).

- Under the weight of community tensions there has been a crisis of confidence in governance circles in the concept of *multiculturalism* such that this has been giving way in favour of *integrationism*. While the former sought to give value to the different cultures now practised in the UK and encouraged their development and celebration, an emerging assimilationist approach to integration has been that multiculturalism promotes a damaging separatism and we need to find a way of recognising that we are all part of the same citizenry.

Involvement in Leisure and Sport

Sport and leisure have been seen to be able to contribute to each of those agendas, though researchers keep identifying limitations and caveats. Nonetheless, Amara et al. (2005: 3) highlight recognition of the use of sport for aiding social inclusion by the Council of the European Union in 2002; by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) Task Force on Integration and by the Council of Europe Committee for the Development of Sport.

Having previously criticised the overwhelming emphasis on residential segregation as a red herring, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion[5] in its final report (Our Shared Future) asserts that efforts to bring people together in other spaces will need to be redoubled in areas of residential segregation given the importance of safe, well managed shared spaces (including parks, leisure centres and shops as well as transport networks) for encouraging interaction (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007: 119-120). Of course, the areas of greatest segregation are those occupied exclusively by people who are 'White British', but that is not what the Commission was referring to.

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[5] Its *Interim Statement*, published earlier in 2007, suggested this was not the cause of the problem; whereas other arguments contend residential segregation is a mistaken construction or artifice of statistical procedures.

The Institute for Community Cohesion (a completely separate body) supported by Sport England East Midlands and the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA) published a draft sport and community cohesion toolkit, 'The Power of Sport', with the express aim to:

> …draw attention to the hugely significant role that sport can play to promote community cohesion, whilst also taking forward the Government's other key targets in terms of increasing participation and performance in sport and improving health and well-being. Sport can change people's lives in so many ways, but it can also change the perspective of whole communities and develop their sense of belonging. (ICOCO, 2007: 3)

Implicit (and less often explicit) in many of the studies relating to migrants or minority ethnic groups and sport and leisure is the idea of common leisure interests providing a space for social interaction that escapes dominant structural forces frequently considered marginalising. The notion of the 'equal' playing field is expressed by an interviewee in the study of refugee integration in the UK by Rutter et al. (2007: 97): "football, that's a good way of settling in actually because if you're good at a sport, they want to be with you. Same with me in snooker, because I'm playing really good snooker".

Evidence submitted to the Communities and Local Government Committee on Preventing Violent Extremism again cites the role of sport for building strong and cohesive communities, helping excluded, isolated people get involved in the mainstream. Similarly, evidence from the Institute of Community Cohesion argues that community cohesion programmes to tackle underlying issues that breed fear and resentment will be more successful in addressing extremism by promoting 'active citizenship, volunteering schemes, sports, arts and social care schemes' (House of Commons, 2010: Ev 119). However, the association of sport and leisure programmes with interventions to address prevention of crime, surveillance of social activities and an assumption of extremism across large, diverse groups in society (such as 'British Muslims') suggests a need to be cautious about the promotion of using people's free time to address deep-seated inequalities and issues of inclusion

or integration; and reinforces the need to question the naïve construction of sport as an unproblematic force for good (Long & Spracklen, 2011).

Collectively, the literature suggests that new migrant leisure is constrained by knowledge of the landscape (city orientation), leisure opportunities (facilities, services, seasonality), lack of resources (money, transport), and communication problems (language in marketing and during activities) (Long et al., 2009). For those migrants barred from work, sport and leisure may offer blessed relief from boredom, looking for work or looking after their relations. The corollary for those in employment is that, in addition to other constraints, long hours may reduce the scope for sport and leisure and especially time for socialising due to shift work. On the other hand, work might be seen as one of the few opportunities offering chances for sustained social relations with new colleagues, though work does not necessarily offer the chance for 'good' relations (Cook, Dwyer, & Waite, 2010).

Public Places as Leisure Spaces

Discussing the role of cricket and Pakistani community activities surrounding a major sporting event, Werbner (2007) highlights how fun and play are domains of young males and women, allowing control of public space by elder males to be contested. She also highlights the importance of fun and play as part of daily life for spaces away from the 'elevated preserve of elder male honour'. This supports the notion of leisure as a form of resistance to marginalising structures, but is in contrast to Taylor's findings among women in Australia whose leisure involvement appeared to occur primarily within predetermined boundaries and uncontested terrains within the framework of patriarchal, ideological, hegemonic and structural limitations (Taylor, 2001). Further, a common, everyday racialisation of sport may link to bounded racialised spaces of sport and leisure (Hylton, 2009).

Within British cities, areas of continued black presence, such as Chapeltown in Leeds, have become racialised and fixed through police actions and media tropes, and in the mental maps of institutions like housing associations and building societies (Sibley, 1998). Such simplified mappings may serve to locate imagined threats in particular places (Sibley, 1998), belying the complex realities of residential

distribution. It might be imagined that the very newness and transience of new migrants mean they create less fixed or less strongly delineated appropriation of space. Nonetheless, in describing 'a mosaic of liminal spaces for migrants' in the Omnia district of Athens, Noussia and Lyons (2009: 619) suggest these spaces are appropriated and maintained through cultural boundaries and are associated with personal moments 'movements of transformation' when people are in transition: 'this state of 'between-ness' is particularly associated with recent migrants' experiences of rapid change'.

The social value of public spaces for providing opportunities for mixing with others and everyday experiences of ethnic diversity has also been highlighted. Mean and Tims (2005) found that many of the spaces that best supported sharing and exchange were not traditional public spaces; while parks and markets are often important, a wider range of places, such as car boot sales, allotments and supermarket cafes, could be significant social hubs. Dines et al. (2006) found that while green spaces were associated with therapeutic value (unwinding, leisure, solitude), 'hard' spaces such as streets and markets were as, or more, important as social places. Public spaces without a specific purpose allow possibilities for casual social encounters, encourage shared use and leave room for self-organisation which encourages diverse activities and contributes to commitment to an area (Mean and Tims, 2005). Rutter et al. (2007) observed how the built environment may make it difficult for refugees [and that might be extended to new migrants more generally (Lewis et al., 2008)] to engage with neighbours, and problems of overcrowding have a profound impact on social life and wellbeing, limiting possibilities for inviting friends round or pushing young people out on to the streets or into situations that risk exposure to crime and violence (Aden Hassan, Lewis, & Lukes, 2009). Hence, ensuring that migrants have access to leisure, arts and sporting opportunities in their neighbourhoods could also promote resilience (Rutter et al., 2007: 79). The role of space in processes of inclusion highlights how the promotion of integration goes beyond employment, education and housing, and much broader change is needed if the necessary conditions for community cohesion are to be created.

Understanding who has access to public spaces exposes ethnic patterns of distribution, suggesting a lack of equity in access and use (Floyd & Johnson, 2002).

Use, preferences and meaning of outdoor recreational space are, of course, shaped by cultural norms (Carr & Williams, 1993). The 'Viewfinder' participative, collaborative photography research project examined refugees' experiences in Sheffield to explore both access to green space and its role in shaping belonging (Rishbeth, 2006; Rishbeth & Finney, 2006). They found that refugees did encounter barriers to green space including perceptions of safety, location and understandings of permitted access, and that when asked about use of open spaces in countries of origin the idea of specific areas of public amenity green space were not common (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006: 292). The refugees in their study found the concept of recreation or visiting countryside for pleasure alien: they did not share commonly held (British) motivations for visiting open space, such as health benefits, or appreciation of 'beauty', and were unclear what adults are to 'do' in parks. In contrast, a report for Sport Northern Ireland (Countryside Access and Activities Network, 2008) observed that there was a strong walking culture within Eastern Europe, including the Lithuanian and Polish communities, and that many migrant workers and their families had brought this propensity to Northern Ireland. However the report also pointed to the constraints imposed by lack of public transport, paucity of information/guides, and language barriers. For others in the study by Rishbeth and Finney (2006), green space made interaction possible without language, such as a young man with poor English who engaged in informal football. They therefore concluded that green spaces could offer a means of integration with the wider community, and that diversity of provision and free access are crucial (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006). Those researchers wanted to move away from the association of particular spaces in certain places or moments with fixed cultural or ethnic meanings: experiences of spaces may encompass both nostalgia and novelty.

A number of studies exploring the experiences that shape inclusion and integration suggest a focus on the everyday is vital for improving understandings of social processes (Amin, 2006; Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003; Cook, Dwyer, & Waite, 2010; Dines et al., 2006; Werbner, 1996; Wise, 2009). According to Amin, spaces that allow people to work together in a common interest can enable a 'habit of intercultural formation', for example in 'mixed sport teams in schools, colleges, cultural exchanges in crèches, growing food from around the world in communal gardens, and multicultural events in housing estates' (Amin, 2006: 1017).

Countering assimilationist trends of community cohesion based on fear of segregation, Wise (2009) argues that 'everyday multiculturalisms' are formed in contact zones that allow a quotidian recognition of others. Examining the practice of exchange and gift relation among neighbours swapping foods, she argues that individuals who employ and facilitate 'transversal practices' foster everyday relationships across cultural difference in multicultural settings (Wise, 2009). As observed above, places to hang around, and spaces to go without a clear purpose may be especially important in building the familiarity of daily encounters (Dines et al., 2006). Conversely, considering interactions between A8 migrants (those coming from East European countries joining the European Union in 2004) and host communities in a UK city, (Cook, Dwyer, & Waite, 2010: 14) found that:

> …the common spaces of neighbourhood and work shared by many A8 migrants and established community members facilitated everyday encounters that routinely ranged from negative experiences and structurally enforced absences of interaction through to more active spatial strategies of *withdrawal* from mixing with members of 'other communities.

Hence, in this area of work on city spaces and encounters the assertion of the importance of building 'alternative public spheres of the city' that help to bridge the contrast of the strange unknowable and the familiar, knowable neighbourhood (Keith, 2005) through everyday interactions is in tension with the concurrent possibility of reinforcing difference, where the city remains a place where people interact and stay as strangers (Bauman, 2003).

We have to look beyond the formal, the institutional, the functional to ensure effective integration, generate social capital, promote community cohesion and mediate belonging (Cook, Dwyer, & Waite, 2010; Dines et al., 2006; Griffiths, Sigona, & Zetter, 2005; Lewis, 2007; Mean & Tims, 2005; Rublee & Shaw, 1990; Rutter et al., 2007; Rutter et al., 2007). However, that 'mixing', 'contact' and proximity (as opposed to spatial segregation) promote 'good relations' or build cohesion by improving tolerance of difference cannot be assumed. Therefore the dynamic and everyday use of sport and leisure spaces by new migrants is explored

as their realities are constructed for us during this research process. The use of the same spaces does not imply a sharing of the same experiences and there is recognition here that there are multiple readings and explanations for the same image hence it is imperative that these new migrant voices are privileged and centred where they have not been in the past.

Means of Understanding

Part of our current challenge is to investigate what different techniques can contribute to our understanding of the leisure lives of people from migrant communities and how they 'construct' leisure spaces. Were we to use quantitative survey-based approaches taken from studies of the 'majority' or 'mainstream' society, the adoption of pre-existing frameworks might be severely limiting when applied to migrants. The constructions they encompass are formed from perspectives that may not account for, or be relevant to the conceptualisations and experiences of leisure of new migrants (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; M. Stodolska, 2002; Monika Stodolska & Walker, 2007; Tsai & Coleman, 1999).

Alert to the effects that the background of the researcher will have on interpretation and understanding the lives of others, we are developing a mixed methodology to allow the experiences of new migrants to be voiced differently in the research process. In the current project this involves:

- an extension of our earlier systematic review (Long et al., 2009) to embrace literature on leisure more generally and include more contributions from beyond the UK;
- an examination of publicly available migration statistics
- one-to-one interviews
- mental maps
- photo-elicitation

The first three are commonplace in leisure studies; the next two are less commonly used. Mental maps and photo-elicitation were chosen in part because we wanted techniques that were less dependent on respondents being able to articulate ideas in

a second/third language, or on the intercessions of an interpreter. In practice we are using these different techniques in combination. Discussion here is based on mental maps used in conjunction with interview. However, they do open up the prospect of a more migrant-centred research process.

The kind of mental mapping we have been using may also be encountered in the literature as cognitive mapping or participative mapping. Because we are less concerned with what people know than with how they think about different leisure spaces and opportunities beyond work and the home we are not concerned with how 'accurate' the resultant maps might be. Rather than asking people to draw a map of Leeds we asked what they did in their spare time beyond work and the home and to draw a map of where they did that. Chambers (1997: 149) explains how 'the visuals' can 'present an agenda for discussion, and it is the visuals rather than the people that are interviewed'. Utilisation of mapping to express activities, spaces, times and relationships can offer a trigger for rich and 'thick description' in a creative way. Participants may or may not feel that they are 'arty' and able to express themselves visually, but even for those who choose not to draw a conventional 'map', the idea and discourse of mapping can be a trigger for discussion (Emmel, 2008).

Although intended initially as a means of obviating some of the problems of understanding that might occur when people do not share the same first language, we still supplemented the mapping exercise with discussion of what that represented. Following Emmel (2008) this allows a progression from description (what do you do where?) through elaboration (who with, when, how do you get there, how do you feel?) to theorisation (why is it like that?).

Figures 1-5 provide examples of the outputs produced by some of our research participants as they engaged with this challenge. Kasia's map (Figure 1) is sparse – but does have a geographical spatial element to it, though not precise and North is unconventionally to the bottom. On the basis of other information provided in the interview further layers can be built-up on such maps, for example with whom, transport, and so on. Such maps can identify behaviours that warrant further investigation – for example the bus route to the Hyde Park cinema takes Kasia right past a major city centre cinema that she does not use.

Piotr's map (Figure 1) also has geographic order (North is to the right). He cycles a lot (to and from work every day and to friends' houses, or just around), so probably has a keen appreciation of the city's topography as well as geography. He is in a fixed gear cycle club, regularly trains capoeira (a Brazilian form of martial arts that combines acrobatics, music and dance), plays basketball and tennis in public parks in the Hyde Park/ Kirkstall/ Headingley areas, has a Polish girlfriend and a set of close Polish friends.
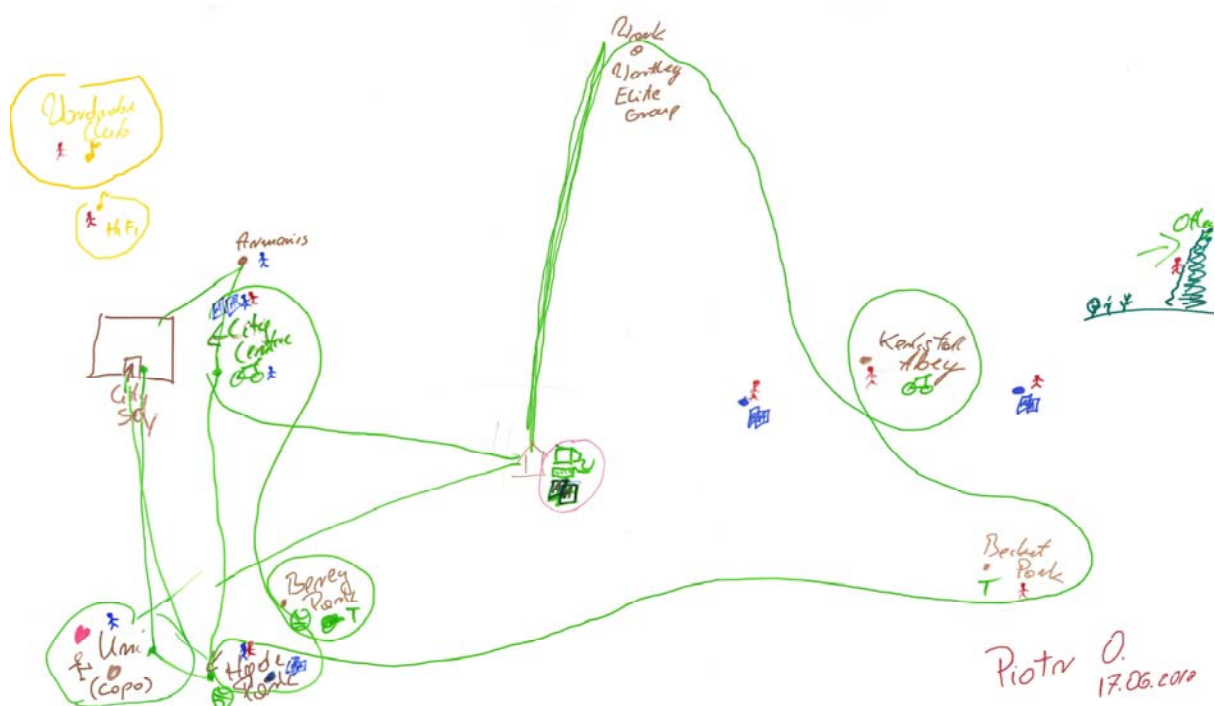

Figure 1   Piotr's map

Figure 2   Kassia's map

Other maps, like Dorota's (Figure 3) offer no spatial representation. It is a visual catalogue of leisure interests (Polish soaps (not soups), handball, shopping, cinema, pub, swimming, etc.) and significant people (boyfriend and Polish friends). Figure 4, which was drawn by the researcher in discussion with Rafal is even more abstract, like a concept chart. The researcher then tried to introduce some geographical order (Figure 5), but despite the cardinal points of the compass, the geographical orientation is awry.
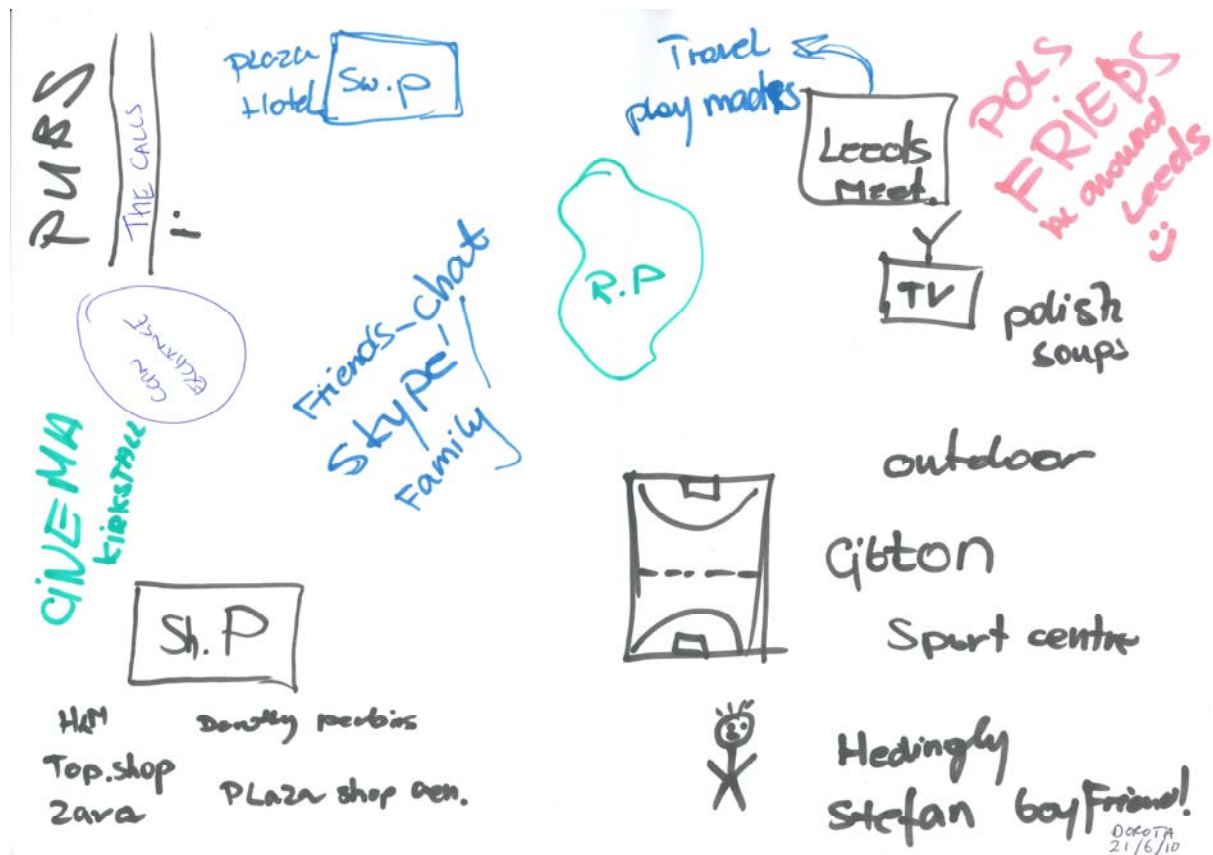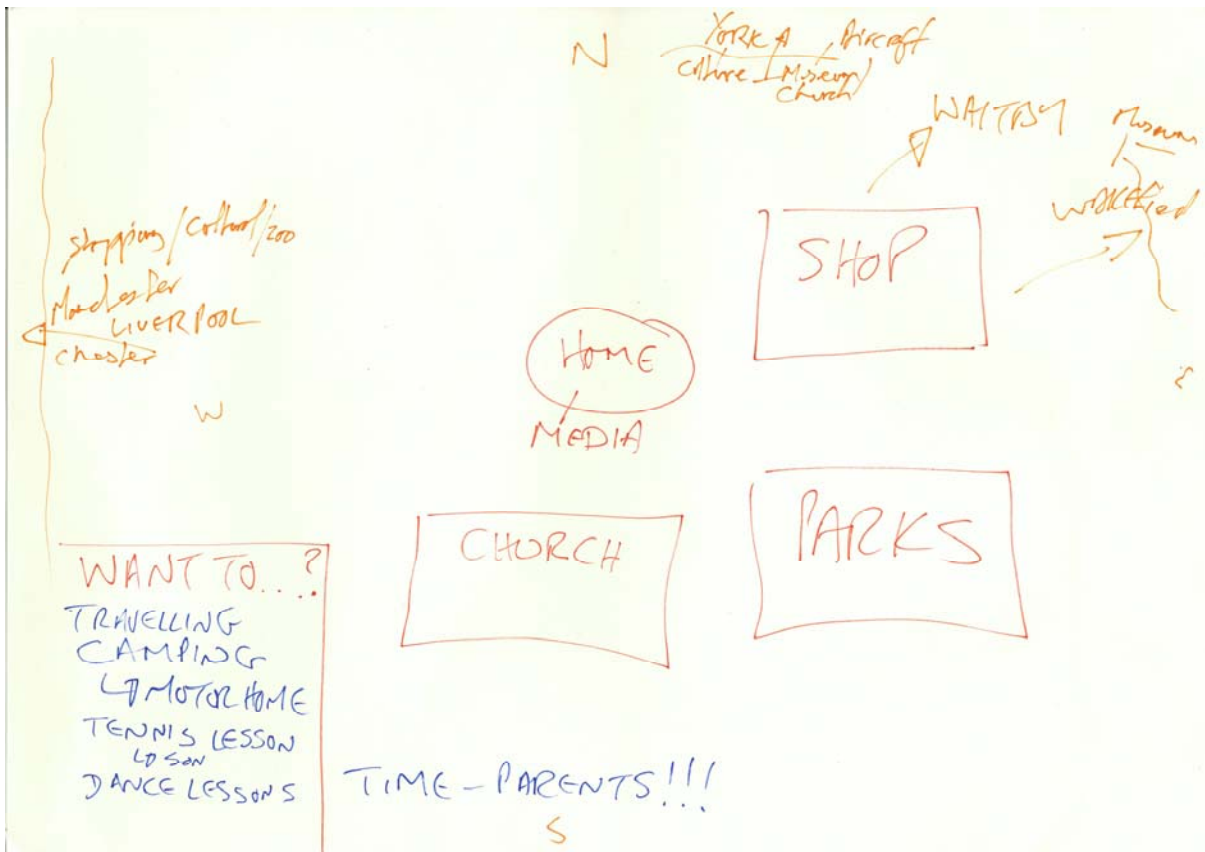

Figure 3   Dorota's map

Figure 4   Rafal's first map

Figure 5   Rafal's second map

Learning about Leisure

Language and leisure

To present language as the passport to participation, acceptance and integration is not really appropriate as passports are associated with yes/no decisions about whether or not the carrier may be admitted. Undoubtedly a crucial component of human capital, linguistic ability is far more graded than that and its deployment nuanced by personality, context and reception. Apart from work, learning English is the most important reason for these migrants coming to the UK. In practice the two are interrelated as work is the main route to improving their English rather than formal classes. Even though these new migrants presumed they could manage at work, they often felt inhibited socially. Consequently, those not confident in English had limited non-work contact with British residents. As Piotr explained: "On the beginning, like I said, I couldn't speak, I couldn't met other people… My only choice was Polish people to have, like, social life". Feeling unsure of her English another respondent became involved in the Polish Catholic Centre because of her desire to worship in Polish (the priest then invited her into the Centre).

We have encountered some instrumental use of leisure to improve English (e.g. going to visitor attractions and thereby reading/hearing about history/culture in English; or not speaking in Polish, even with children, outside the home). Others just recognised the opportunity provided by their leisure and social environment to practise English.

Other people from Poland

Discussions of the social connectedness elements of social capital typically distinguish between links with people who are like or unlike each other (in terms of our current interests this means whether or not contacts are with people from the same ethnic group). The numbers of migrants reflected in Table 1 above indicate that people from Poland need not be separated from fellow nationals in the UK (there are plenty of them around). Moreover, unlike political refugees and some earlier flows of migrants, national borders have been more permeable for members of new

European countries since they joined the EU in 2004. Different political and economic circumstances allow regular holidays in Poland that help to retain links. Respondents also reported others returning to Poland, having spent their planned time in England, only to come back to England a short while later. On a more everyday basis, social networks are less constrained geographically because of electronic technology – phone (e.g. package giving free calls after 6.00pm), Skype, email – which facilitate trans-national links (from once a week to 3x a day). This level of contact and relative freedom of movement allow a more informed, perhaps less romantic, assessment of the two societies.

For some, social networks are almost exclusively Polish. All know others from Poland who now live in the city – through work, the Polish Catholic Centre, sport or other interests – but these fellow nationals are not necessarily a significant part of their social network. The extent of willingness to engage with others from Poland is not straightforward. For example, Piotr has a set of Polish friends, including his girlfriend, but is not interested in things Polish (places, culture and parties); he wants nothing to do with the likes of the Polish Catholic Centre. For him places like that are for people who do not want to learn about England.

The Polish Catholic Centre has a significance for more than those like Kasia who wish to worship in Polish; it is a community centre offering a range of cultural activities and opportunities to socialise. However, it was established in a very different political context through the fundraising efforts and labour of an earlier generation of migrants fleeing either the Nazis or the Communists. Relatively few of their grandchildren are actively involved in the Centre, having become Anglicised/ integrated, and there is some tension with the new migrants from Poland who are a similar age to their grandchildren, but with a stronger Polish identity. One of our respondents observed that 'they [the older generation] feel we have it easy' by comparison with their own arrival in the UK with little in terms of possessions or prospects.

Exclusion

Whether cycling, handball, capoeira, basketball tennis or pubs our research participants have found forms of leisure that offer channels for inclusion. These of

course are by no means the only routes to inclusion; work and neighbours also being particularly important.

Apart from concerns about their linguistic ability the factors that serve to exclude these migrants from participation in leisure pursuits are much the same as those affecting long-term British residents: for example, lack of money and car ownership. White British people may, of course, feel excluded from the imagined communities of rugby league or the opera because they don't command the specialist language, but the new migrant's linguistic restraint on social intercourse is more fundamental. Freedom of movement (and a decent income in the UK) facilitates the very highly active transnational links these respondents maintain (e.g. regular visits to Poland, paying for phone calls, owning computers). These (employed) migrants are able to exercise high levels of choice in most areas of their lives and therefore our understanding of these priorities offers some insight into complex rationales for participation in sport and leisure.

Research focused on UK employment suggests some segregation and unfair treatment (e.g. EHRC, 2010) and our own work on Black and Asian men in sport rarely failed to identify some form of racism. However, to date this has not been the story here. We are not naïve enough to think that others will not have experienced it[6], but we also note the argument of Stodolska and Jackson (1998) that less racism is evident in leisure than work for her Polish migrants in Canada. What tales of racism were told related to acts committed by other Polish people.

Conclusion

While we acknowledge the point made by writers like Sibley (1998) that spaces may be encoded through becoming associated with particular ethnic groups, we are more concerned here with the ways in which new migrants themselves construct their understandings of leisure spaces and whether there is an ethnic dimension to that – one that might encourage or deter access.

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[6] NB later interviews have brought experiences of racism to light

We therefore finish this reporting of our pilot study with some observations on the presumed integration/multicultural binary. As we have observed, in recent years multiculturalism has commonly been counterposed with integration in policy debates, with multiculturalism being regarded as separation rather than contribution, a damaging separation that has been supported by publicly funding (e.g. Commission for Racial Equality, 2005). We contend that multiculturalism need not deny the possibility of integration, but does not require that as a condition of acceptance or recognition of contribution. Some might argue that is precisely what integrationism permits, but we have suggested here that integration is typically seen in terms of what migrants should do to integrate rather than what longer term residents might do to encourage migrants to feel included. Encouraging cultural expression through organisations like the Polish Centre (or indeed more informal networks) supports the development of cultural capital that allows new migrants to feel safe in the belief that Britain is a comfortable place for them to be and where they can contemplate building a productive life. Putnam (2007) makes the point that people with lots of friends who are like them in some way (e.g. ethnicity) tend to have lots of friends not like them (though this may be less likely to apply to the White British majority).

In terms of social networks our respondents confirm Brimicombe's (2007) observation that dense networks of co-ethnics (not a term we feel comfortable with) may be spatially dispersed. The freedom of movement and immigration status enjoyed by many since Poland's accession to the European Union may be more important, or as important, as their whiteness in creating privilege/access/equality. Moreover, electronic communications mean they can retain their links with things Polish back in Poland without necessarily having to recreate that here. Studies led by Ryan (Ryan et al., 2008) and by Eade (Eade, Garapich, & Drinkwater, 2006) suggest that recent Polish migrants regarded their ethnic community with 'wariness and even suspicion'. To date we have not encountered that, though some certainly question those who want to perpetuate a predominantly Polish lifestyle in their new environment and are critical of some of those who came before.

As Rutter et al. (2007: 113) say, the role of space in processes of inclusion highlights how the promotion of integration goes beyond employment, education and housing,

and much broader change is needed 'if new migrants are to feel welcomed in their locality and the receiving community is to feel unthreatened by migration'.

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