

Richard Giulianotti, *Football: Sociology of the Global Game*. Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999. pp. xvi + 218, \$40.00 (paperback).

In this volume Richard Giulianotti draws together and/or applies sociological insights into the phenomenon known as football (or, as it is known in Australia, soccer) - the world, global or beautiful game. 'The book', he says, 'deals primarily with professional football ... It is not intended to be a second doctoral thesis, but instead seeks to provide the first "sociology of football" by exploring the game's major social properties and issues' (pp. xii and xiii). Giulianotti maintains 'that the social aspects of football only become meaningful when located within their historical and cultural context. Football is neither dependent upon nor isolated from the influences of that wider milieu; instead, a relative autonomy exists in the relationship between the two' (p. xv). These words suggest that there is no role for football as a social leader. There is no equivalent, for example, of baseball being ahead of America in struggles over civil and black rights, when Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Note, for example, his dismissive response to attempts by supporter groups and player associations' 'Lets Kick Racism Out of Football' campaigns (pp. 160-162).

Giulianotti explores various issues - the growth and diffusion of football, fans, grounds, finance/economics, players, styles of play and cultural politics - through the lens of the 'ideal types' traditional, modern and post-modern. By traditional he means 'the "pre-modern", where vestiges of the pre-industrial or the pre-capitalist era are still strongly influential'. Modernity 'is associated with rapid urbanization and the demographic and political rise of the working class ... the spectre that haunts modernity is its self-assurance, its faith in progress, its utopian conviction that problems and people can be "put right"'. Finally, post-modernity 'is characterized by a philosophical skepticism towards science; an opposition towards "meta-narratives" and "grand theories" that purport to explain all history; and an instinctive distrust of modernity's faith in historical progress and human enlightenment' (pp. xiii and xiv).

Other than attempting to fit various football issues into this schema Giulianotti does not have a theoretical (testing - a la a Ph.D.) purpose as such. Also, it is not clear that the way he has defined his various 'ideal types' - irrespective of their relevance to non-football/broader societal issues - provide useful insights into the workings and administration of professional football. This is an issue which pertains to the 'relative autonomy' of football. Giulianotti's major concern is with professional football (see above). Other than for his first chapter, which talks about the development of football in the United Kingdom, and its diffusion to the rest of the world, the traditional phase assumes a minor role in the examination of various issues. It is difficult to see how a professional sport can be pre-industrial, especially given knowledge that its creation was dependant on urbanization and the emergence of mass markets.

In terms of administrators and how the game is portrayed, more recent years - the last two decades - seem to have been more optimistic and utopian, with a notion that things and people can be 'put right'. The solution to all problems are the seemingly ever-increasing rivers of gold which flow from television/broadcasting rights and sponsorships. Think of former FIFA president Jono Havelange. Contrast him with former administrators of English football throughout the twentieth century - the likes of Sir Charles Clegg, Charles Sutcliffe and Alan Hardaker. These three, especially the latter two, would hardly pass for 'utopians'. They were dour men, persons of hard grind, pragmatists with a cautious, pessimistic approach to steering the ship of football through stormy waters.

Giulianotti's attempts to push his narrative into his three-pronged schema is far from convincing. This is especially so with his material on different playing styles and football aesthetics. It might also be added that one fan's aesthetic is another fan's boredom. He sees the *Bosman* case, which enables players to change clubs at the end of their contract, free of the encumbrance of a transfer fee, as being 'post-modern'. While this case was decided recently, in 1995, wouldn't it be more correct to regard the abolition of employer/club and league controls on players' employment, the granting of economic freedom (after almost a century) as being 'utopian' - of 'utopia' realised?

Giulianotti's handling of material is uneven, and, at times, contradictory. Much of *Football: Sociology of the Global Game* is concerned with fans, or 'fandom'. For example, he provides quite an amount of detail on hooliganism, one of his major research interests in the past. He is at pains to develop an understanding of hooliganism. He wants, as it were, to understand hooligans on their own terms. On the basis of fieldwork he found that 'UK hooligans ... are far more *incorporated* within mainstream society [when they are not acting as hooligans] rather than structurally excluded from it' (p. 51). He also found that hooligans derive psychosocial pleasure from football violence. He observes 'that hooliganism falls into a wider category of voluntary risk-taking leisure pursuits, such as scuba-diving, hang-gliding, and bungee-jumping. In these "high-risk" sports, the pleasure of facing danger is socially acquired' (p. 53). These activities where the participants place themselves in danger is fundamentally different from that of the hooligan who perpetuates violence, and the risk of serious injuries, on others. Giulianotti also says:

and no matter how disturbing the thought to the reader, football violence may be said to contain its own aesthetic form. The innate and intense momentary beauty of hooliganism is revealed only to those who stride somatically into the eyes of the storm, the hooligans themselves (p. 53).

Presumably, all types of violence have their own 'aesthetic' form, and habitual perpetrators become hooked on its 'innate and intense momentary beauty'. Should one draw attention to Giulianotti's use of language here? Presumably the victims of hooliganism, and innocent bystanders, and those who attempt to clean up the 'mess' left by hooligans - medical staff, police, governmental officials and the (re)builders of that which is wrecked also derive their own 'aesthetics' and 'innate and intense momentary beauties' from their (forced) involvement with hooliganism.

It is also interesting to contrast Giulianotti's treatment of hooligans with the attendance/emergence of a new middle-class, wealthy fan. He is not interested in deriving an understanding of the meaning or utility of football for such fans. He bemoans 'the attendance of wealthy, less passionate spectators at the expense of dedicated fans ... The withdrawn objective perspective of the modern spectator comes to supplant the subjective participation of traditional fandom' (p. 80). He also says 'Television and merchandising companies have successfully targeted a new, young middle-class audience whose club affiliations are the most plastic of all ... Indeed, the biggest danger for football's new marketers is that this new cosmopolitan fan may abandon the game as quickly as he or she arrived at it' (p. 105). His lament is that these 'new' fans are not the same as 'old' working class fans. Why should fans at different times and different places be expected to 'view' football in the same way? Why is one particular form of 'viewing' better than another? Moreover, his doomsday prediction concerning football seems to be wide of the mark.

Giulianotti's treatment of various employment and industrial relations issues displays an ignorance of football's operation. In examining the increased mobility and income of players, he says, 'Their advances ... have been earned in spite of a collective reluctance to flex their industrial muscles' (p. 124). In 1961 threatened strike action by the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) resulted in abolition of English football's maximum wage. In 1963 the PFA backed George Eastham in a legal action which found the transfer system to be an unreasonable restraint of trade. Following this case, and again in the latter part of the 1970s, the PFA negotiated important changes to football's employment rules which enhanced players' rights. European player associations backed Jean-Marc Bosman in his action against Europe's transfer system.

On page 112 Giulianotti says 'there is little chance of [the PFA] securing strike action by elite players to save a debt-ridden club at the foot of the league'. In the early 1980s the PFA acted to save a number of lower division debt-ridden clubs, without having to utilise strike action. It did this by entering into arrangements whereby it advanced funds to the clubs concerned to pay the salaries of players/members; with the Football League agreeing to pay back the PFA from television and broadcasting income, when it became available, which

otherwise would have been allocated to the clubs concerned. Moreover, on several occasions the PFA has threatened strike action in ensuring that it receives an 'appropriate' share of such income. This income, coupled with historically low membership fees, translates into the PFA acting as a conduit whereby star players subsidise welfare benefits - such as second career training and payments to ease the transition out of football - which flow to players in lower divisions.

Giulianotti's approach to the transfer system and the *Bosman* case is contradictory and confusing. On page 91 he says 'One Italian football agent has founded a Ghanaian club for recruiting young players who can then be sold to Europe when they reach sixteen, a system denounced by the Italian football authorities as "slavery" ... Western involvement in sports development in the Third World therefore tends to mask cases of classic imperialism, the athlete becoming a commodity akin to the coffee bean or banana'. Compare this with his comments concerning the implications of the *Bosman* case for smaller European clubs. They 'had profited in the past by refining young talent for sale to larger clubs, and *Bosman* terminated that lifeline' (p. 12). He goes on to say

we may identify some positive, deeper feature of *Bosman* that fit with the holistic coaching and recruiting techniques of clubs. The players' legal freedoms are worthless if they cannot adjust to unfamiliar surroundings. A holistic learning process encourages this adaptability to change. From the national team's point of view, mobile players are able to assimilate more knowledge of technical skills and playing styles. Players from small Scandinavian nations like Sweden and Denmark are groomed to play abroad, bringing that cosmopolitanism to full benefit with the international teams (p. 123).

This seems to be such a 'narrow' benefit. It might have been thought that the broader significance of *Bosman* was the employment freedom it afforded players. Having said this, compare the above statement with problems Giulianotti perceives will flow from football's increasing television and broadcasting income. 'Peripheral nations (including the Latin American leagues) will be increasingly bedeviled by the export of their most precious playing commodities, sowing the seeds for future under-development of their own "national" game' (p. 106).

In an afterward Giulianotti lists a number of areas for future research, which bears a strong similarity to his previous and current research. We should be wary of people who know that which should be researched. Master plans stifle innovation and creativity Research is its own master or mistress which should be evaluated according to the quality of its execution, rather than its topic(al)ity). He also denounces 'armchair theorising', somewhat immodestly pointing to his own work on hooligans as an exemplar. This was a precept he failed to heed with respect to new middle class fans and the PFA. Also, what are we to make of

his insight into a particular style of defensive football, when he says it 'actuated the cultural politics of the Cold War, the phony war of attrition, with bluff-calling and nerveless deception played out before huge defensive stockpiles' (p. 132).

In his final sentences Giulianotti says, 'In framing their research agendas, football academics would do well to remember this point. Without its deep subliminal features, the game falls into stalemate, the spectacle can no longer deliver, and the match cannot be won. True football ends' (p. 173). How is one to make sense of this. Does the future 'success' of football have anything to do with the research agendas of football academics? Football as a spectator sport and on television accrues every increasing revenue streams. Different followers (and participants) of football all have their own 'truths'.

Football: Sociology of the Global Game provides insights into various aspects of professional football in the twentieth century. While the scope of the material it covers is ambitious its execution suffers from a number of more than minor problems and weaknesses. These problems result from the weaknesses of his 'ideal type' schema and/or the associated lack of any explicit theoretical purpose.

Braham Dabscheck
School of Industrial Relations
University of New South Wales
Australia

Ian Heads, *South Sydney Pride of the League*. Lothian Books, 2000 (2nd Ed). pp. 208, \$32.95;

Mark Courtney, *Moving the Goalposts*. Halstead Press, 2000. pp. 224, \$25.00.

On Friday, 15 October 1999, the South Sydney Rugby League team was excluded from the 2000 National Rugby League competition. To many supporters, not only of this grand old club, but also of the game of Rugby League itself, this decision left a sour taste in the mouth. It represented the stark reality that Rugby League was not only continuing to distance itself from its working class and community roots, it illustrated that the game itself is a pure money making exercise for a small number of companies and to hell with the rest of us who love this great game.

The above two books in their different ways tell a story of a club that is as old as the game itself in Australia. As well, the story is of a club and team that has an undeniable tradition and history that is, and continues to be, worth fighting for. Ian Heads' book is in its second edition, the first previously appearing in 1994 under the guidance of the late Tom Brock. Heads knows his subject. The book is structured in a way that gives a brief summary of each year in the club's history up until 1999. He also includes in-depth reports and highlights