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A critical discourse analysis of a local enactment of sport for integration policy: Helping young refugees or self-help for voluntary sports clubs?

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Abstract

An increasing number of scholars argue that politicians' ill-defined policies of sport for integration are difficult to realize, and paradoxically, can lead to a sense of alterity and exclusion. This paper provides a micro-analysis of the 'slippage' between government visions of sport for integration for refugees and the local, contextual interpretations of sport policy for inclusion. From a critical constructivist perspective, influenced by critical race theory, it examines policy enactment by asking: 'how did sport for integration of young refugees get talked and written about in a voluntary sports club (VSC)?'; 'how did this language in use construct the practices that became locally naturalised?'; and 'what ideologies were underpinning these realities'? Findings from the critical discourse analysis revealed that local enactments of policy for integration were mostly built upon assimilationist ideas that can exclude, rather than integrate refugees, and did ideological work to uphold racialized hierarchies in sport. Alternative visions of integration (such as two-way processes of integration or ideas about celebrating cultural diversity) were rationally marginalised in the everyday business of the VSC, namely, competitive sport. The findings contribute to the literature that claims VSCs may be unsuitable arenas for integration initiatives aiming to provide meaningful physical activity for refugee youth.

Key words

Sport for integration; critical discourse analysis; racism; sports policy enactment

Policy makers continue to assert that sports clubs represent an important arena for assisting young refugees integrate into their new host societies despite growing evidence to the contrary (Coalter, 2007; Jeanes, O'Connor and Alfrey, 2015; Spaaij 2015; Waardenburg et al 2018). This article contributes to the body of work that argues that politicians' ill-defined policies of sport for integration are difficult to realize, and paradoxically, can lead to a sense of alterity and exclusion by paying close attention to the ways in which policy has been interpreted and translated at a local level. By analyzing policy as discourse, it demonstrates 'the problem of meaning' in the hermeneutics of policy (Fullan, 2001:8), and in particular, provides a micro-analysis of the 'slippage' between government visions of social integration via sports participation and the local, contextual interpretations of sport for integration. It draws on a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Markula and Silk, 2011) of a case study of a voluntary sports club (VSC) that has focused on the following questions: 'how did sport for integration of young refugees get talked and written about in a sports club?'; 'how did this language in use construct the practices that became locally naturalised?'; and 'what ideologies were underpinning these realities'?

The research is situated against a backcloth that increasingly problematises the ability for VSCs to implement sport policy interlinked to welfare objectives such as the integration of refugees in host societies. Recent studies in Sweden (Stenling, 2014; Stenling and Fahlén, 2016), Netherlands (Waardenburg, 2016) and Norway (Bergsgaard, 2016; Skille, 2011; Sisjord, Fasting and Sand, 2011) all question whether their preoccupation with competitive sport as an end in itself is a major hindrance. Waardenburg (2016) points to the fact that inertia is a distinguishing organisational feature of such clubs, as well as observing that VSCs seldom are involved in the development of sport policy and are cast, therefore, as the passive conduits of others' innovatory ideas.

Current policy on the integration of refugees and immigrants in Norway, constructs sports clubs as civic arenas that can provide a sense of belonging, opportunities for learning the Norwegian language and about Norwegian society, as well as providing physical activity that can enhance individuals' personal health (Melding St. 30, 2015-2016). The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sport's (NIF) Refugee Fund policy echoes these sentiments and highlights sports' inclusive capacity as symbolised by values such as 'sport for all', a 'level playing field' and its 'universal language' (<https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/inkludering-i-idrettslag/nifs-flyktningsfond/>). Indeed, this, too, is a reflection of the ideology in the White Paper, 'The Norwegian Sports Model' (Melding St. 26, 2011-2012):

NIF is Norway's largest voluntary organization for children and youth. This alone makes sport an extremely suitable arena for inclusion. Participation in sport does not necessarily demand advanced language skills, but often involves a form for collaboration and community that communicates the majority population's norms and values in an inclusive fashion. (pp.25-26)

Thus, similar to many nations' policies for integration, inclusion via sport is perceived in functionalist terms offering cultural and social integration into the host society, and as something that is straightforward and uncontested. This article, however, builds upon the view that integration is a contested concept (Ager and Strand, 2008; Rutter 2006) and sport as an arena for integration can be wrought with problems, such as cultivating limited social capital amongst refugees, providing transient feelings of belonging, or in some instances, leading to a heightened sense of social exclusion (Burrmann et al, 2017; Coalter, 2007; Doherty and

Taylor 2007; Jeanes et al, 2015; Spaaij 2012; 2015; Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes 2014; Spracklen, Long and Hylton 2015; Waardenburg et al 2018; Walseth, 2008).

A growing number of studies sow doubt onto the degree to which social capital through the development of shared norms and trust can be accrued via socialising in sport and whether it, in turn, actually contributes to social cohesion (e.g. Coalter, 2007; Spaaij, 2012; Spracklen, Long and Hylton, 2015; Walseth). Walseth's Norwegian study (2008) indicates that the accrument of such capital tends to be limited to bonding between participants with similar backgrounds (e.g. Muslim young women) rather than gains in bridging ethnic divides (e.g. between Muslim youth and ethnic Norwegian youth). Spaaij (2012) points to the failure of Putnam-inspired, functionalist understandings of social capital to pay sufficient attention to the workings of power and inequalities. Similar to Spracklen, Long and Hylton (2015), he suggests that it is more fruitful to conceptualise social capital according to Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, as " ... an unequally distributed resource that is produced and invested in by social actors for their individual and mutual benefit"(p. 1521) and "...is border creating and maintaining, hence exclusionary and laden with power" (Spaaij, 2012: 1523). Spaaij's (2012) research in Australia suggests, for example, that ethno-specific sports clubs may have considerable value in helping refugees adjust to their host countries by creating a collective identity within the new community and preserving aspects of their cultural heritage, though these VSCs are often eschewed. Doherty and Taylor's (2007) Canadian study reveals how language difficulties, unfamiliarity with mainstream sports, and racism and prejudice on the part of peers can lead to feelings of social exclusion. Furthermore, it suggests that coaches' sensitivity to the special needs of refugee youth is paramount for the young people to feel a sense of belonging, yet, this can be inadequate. Burrmann et al's (2017) recent German study

highlights, in fact, the ambivalence and inner conflicts that young immigrants often face in both sport and society.

Thus, whilst sport is often constructed as essentially a good, unifying, pure and wholesome activity, many scholars argue (e.g. Coakley, 2011; Jeanes et al, 2015; Spracklen, Long and Hylton 2015) that this is a romanticised view downplaying the dark side of sport. Namely, that organised sport can be an arena for repression, sexism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia and values such as 'winning at all costs'. Hylton (2009) observes, for example, that despite the success of many athletes from black and ethnic minority communities, sport stands accused of advantaging the social capital of white people. Furthermore, in relation to national identity, he states "...sport has become a high-profile testing ground for bringing into sharp relief those who are included or excluded, integrated or separated, 'us' or 'them'" (Hylton, 2009, p. 16). Critical research on sport in Norway (Andersson, 2008; Massao and Fasting, 2010) indicates that indeed racism and nationalism is evident, as is sexism and homophobia. In other words, integration via sport is problematic and cannot be narrowly conceived in terms of enhancing access to a taken-for-granted 'good' sport.

In this article, I argue therefore that a different and more fruitful way of approaching research on sport for integration is that of critical discourse analysis. If we are to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities described here, it seems paramount to reveal the ways in which certain values and ideas become privileged and normalized in the institution of sport, at the expense of other ways of thinking. Rejecting the notion that sport policy enactment is a rational and linear process (Ball, 1993; Piggin, 2014), and building upon the idea that policy is an ever-evolving process, the paper conceives texts (written, spoken, practice) about the

ways in which sport can contribute to social integration as always in a state of 'becoming'. When policies enter local contexts, individual readers and sports clubs as institutions, all have histories through which local interpretations of sport for integration are filtered. Local policy texts, both written and spoken, inevitably contain 'slippage'. Emphases and meanings of policies are not only transmitted but also transformed when local sports club enact them, affected by local political and ideological values, economics, and the people (and their emotions) identified to work with them (Ball, 1993). A critical discourse analysis of policy enactment focuses upon the power dynamics in local contexts and aims to reveal who has the 'authority' and 'power' to determine local policy agendas and decide what is worthwhile doing with regard to the social integration of young refugees. In other words, it is an approach that endeavours to capture the complexities and contradictions of policy enactment, rather than assuming that policy necessarily leads to intended outcomes. Describing the Australian context, Jeanes et al (2015) have demonstrated how dominant ideas about the uniting capacity of elite competitive sport make it nigh on impossible to conceptualise a different form of sporting practice that might integrate refugees. This paper asks, therefore, whether similar discursive practice is evident in Norway, and simultaneously, seeks to further illuminate the ideological workings of texts of sport for integration; in short, what types of sporting practice do the discourses in use construct?

Theoretical lenses

The case study is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) influenced by the work of Fairclough (2003), but builds upon the adapted conceptual model as presented by Markula and Silk (2011). As Markula and Silk (2011: 118) write, "The central focus of CDA is to critically investigate and address social problems through examining *ideological workings* of the text". Following the tenets of critical constructivism (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000), and drawing

upon critical social theory, CDA aims to analyse how language in use, or discourse, functions ideologically to create and reproduce unequal power relations. Indeed, Fairclough (2003) describes CDA as ‘oscillating’ between a focus on specific texts and what he calls the ‘order of discourse’, that is the relatively durable social structuring of language, which is an element of the structuring of social practices. Language contributes to the social construction of identities (the powerful and the marginalized), social relations between individuals and groups, and the systems of knowledge and meaning used to maintain power hierarchies. Using Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, CDA seeks thus to reveal the taken-for-granted ideologies (systems of belief) that dominant groups use to maintain their power via texts and language (spoken, written, visual images, body language). Acknowledging that power relations are not fixed but changeable, unveiling the emergence of new kinds of discourse can be conceptualized not merely as a consequence of social change, but also as an instrument for change (Cameron 2001). The study focuses, therefore, upon the disciplinary power of talk about sport for integration and the ways in which the normalized ideologies underpinning the discourses favour and/or marginalize individuals and groups in sport. With regard to the repression of subjects in the institution of sport, it seeks to contribute to the possible transformation of normalized ‘truths’ and events (practices) in relation to sport for integration.

Central to the analysis are, of course, ideas and discourses about the integration of refugees. The paper acknowledges that integration policy builds upon contested notions of social integration; integration is both politically and theoretically a controversial and hotly debated concept (Ager and Strand, 2008). Ideas range from assimilation (the need to learn Norwegian and embrace all traditions and customs) to multiculturalism (rejecting the idea of a unitary citizen, and celebrating cultural diversity), as well as middle range ideas that construct a two-way process between the host population and newly-arrived refugees and immigrants

(recognises the richness of cultural diversity but with an expectation to engage with aspects of Norwegian society). As Geddes and Scholten (2016) underscore, some areas of integration policy are more clear-cut, such as in relation to formal integration (legal rights for citizenship, access to welfare system, education, health, job markets), yet less formal forms for integration into civic society like that of sport, tend to be more loosely framed. At their core, however, policies for integration rest upon the ideas about the capacities to include and/or exclude refugees. Rutter (2006) points to the discourses that link mass migration and ideas about integration to threats to national cohesion and ‘British’ values, which she argues have led to an assimilative construction of integration in the United Kingdom and the expectation that refugees (‘them’) become like ‘Us’. She identifies four oppositional discourses on asylum that potentially affect ideas about integration: humanitarian discourses that position refugees as helpless and traumatised in need of support; economic asset discourse that positions refugees as well-qualified individuals with valuable skills; cultural enrichment discourse that sees refugee artists, sports talents and musicians as enriching culture; and finally, hard-fact discourses that use analyses of statistical data and rational argument. Some of these discourses are upheld by discourses of ‘race’ and ‘racism’ (Rutter, 2006).

Indeed, the conceptual tools of ‘race’ and (anti)racism have also been adopted in the CDA of sport for integration in this study. Despite the notion of ‘race’ being discredited, athletes continue to be ascribed particular traits, behaviours and attitudes on the ill-founded concept that humans belong to different, distinct ‘racial’ groups of people (Hylton, 2009). Integral to the essentialist ideology is the idea that certain racial groups are superior to other subordinate racial groups, and in particular, that ‘whiteness’ signifies ‘raceless’ normalized identities against which ‘black’ identities are Othered (Frankenburg, 1993). In a similar vein, phenotypic ideas about refugees’ ‘race’ have survived in the popular imagination, as well as

some policy makers (Rutter, 2006). Language in use is central to how people become racialised and attributed status in society and in sport. The concept of ‘new racism’ (cultural racism) has also informed the analysis, namely, how “...references to *cultural differences* reify distinctions between powerful and less powerful groups that present an argument for exclusion, prejudice or hatred” (Hylton, 2009, p.14, my italics). In addition, the idea of ‘race neutrality’ or so-called ‘colour-blindness’ in sport has been utilized. This is a form of racism revolving around issues of liberalism or ambivalence to matters of racism founded upon the ‘truth’ that effective anti-racist campaigns have been effective in eradicating discrimination.

Sport for unaccompanied young refugees in a VSC: contextualising the case study

Before describing the methodology of the case study, I will briefly contextualise the VSC. There are approximately 12, 000 VSCs in Norway organised under the umbrella organisation of The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sport (NIF). NIF receives considerable state funding based on the belief that VSCs offer meaningful activity (for active athletes and volunteers who staff them), the promotion of democratic ideals and public health (Bergsgaard, 2016). Sport is organised in leisure time and is separate from school Physical Education. A large proportion of young people are involved, or have been involved, in sport: 93% of teenagers from all social strata, though this figure declines to 42% for boys and 28% for girls at the age of 18-19 years (Bakken, 2017). Families are important for children's sport participation and parents/guardians perform a substantial amount of the voluntary work. VSCs are increasingly being expected to contribute to State welfare policies, such as social integration (Bergsgaard, 2016).

In the wake of the so-called migration crisis in 2015 that brought unprecedented numbers of migrants, including many young unaccompanied young refugees, to Norway in 2015/16, grants for sport for integration were made available from both the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the NIF Refugee Fund. Monies were earmarked for the purposes of providing 'acute help' and 'instant, meaningful sports activities' for young refugees, as well as stimulating plans for more long-term, sustainable forms of sports participation and integration (<https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/inkludering-i-idrettslag/nifs-flyktningsfond/>). UDI emphasised, in particular, the potential for sports activities to provide children with a sense of normality in their otherwise disrupted young lives. The case study VSC applied to both organisations (in the period 2016-2017), in collaboration with the local residential care home for unaccompanied refugees (which was a precondition for applications), and it received two grants.

The VSC is above average in size (approximately 1600 members) and is a significant meeting place for children, youth and adults. Like most clubs, it relies heavily upon volunteers to organise and provide training in 11 sports (e.g. skiing, football, handball) for different age groups, but it can also afford to employ three and a half full-time administrative staff (including the manager) and some part-time salaried coaches. It receives financial aid from the local council for the maintenance of impressive indoor facilities, shared with local schools, as well as earning considerable revenue from annual popular events (marathons, ski competitions) and its club membership fees. Despite its size and economy, the VSC shares many characteristics of VSCs in general, and in this sense, offers insights into the typical challenges they face.

The club proclaimed a wish to extend the joy of sport to as many youngsters as possible, and simultaneously, perceived that participation in sport could lower the threshold for contact between local inhabitants and the refugees. At first glance, the VSC appeared to have many of the qualities required for providing the refugees with meaningful activities, yet, the initiative resulted in what at best could be described as 'ad hoc sport for a handful of unaccompanied refugees', as the critical discourse analysis below reveals.

Methodology

In order to study the discursive enactment of policy for integration via sport from a grassroots perspective, a multiple method approach was adopted (Markula and Silk, 2011). Texts were generated from fieldwork, interviews and documentary analysis. The fieldwork at the VSC and the collaborating care home lasted a period of 9 months, with regular monthly or bi-monthly visits lasting from a half to one and a half days' duration. I attended meetings, sports activities, and informal gatherings, and compiled extensive field notes. I also carried out individual in-depth interviews with key actors (the VSC's manager, the coach, 2 care home workers) and had two group interviews with young people participating in the sports activities for integration (n= 5 young male refugees, aged 15-17 years; n= 2 young male ethnic Norwegians aged 13-14 years). I used a semi-structured interview guide in all the interviews (Mason, 2002) designed to further elicit the rationale for the VSC's refugee project and insights into the on-going experiences of those involved (both organisers and participants). A research assistant (ethnic Norwegian woman) and an interpreter (Afghan man employed at the care home) assisted with the group interview with the young refugees, and the research assistant also contributed to the group interview with the ethnic Norwegian youth. I had access to a range of documents, including grant applications, minutes of meetings and email correspondence concerning the project for integration. All participants gave written consent

and were free to withdraw from the project at any time. I was particularly concerned that the young refugees should feel no pressure to participate and they understood that involvement would have no influence on their application process for asylum. All the information about the research was provided in their first language. The data have been anonymised. The project was given ethical approval by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed *verbatim*, and together with the other texts (field notes, documents), they have been analyzed using a critical discourse analysis (Markula and Silk, 2011). Firstly, this entails focusing on ‘what is’ in the text or what Cameron (2001) describes as ‘language in use’; e.g. key words, types of adjectives used, grammar, metaphors. Secondly, I analysed the narratives or discourses that were used to construct the texts (e.g. humanitarian aid, integration) and also paid attention to what is *not* said, things that are indirectly hinted at or presupposed as obvious. Thirdly, I connected the discourses to particular ideologies (e.g. assimilation, racism) and fourthly, I focused on power relations, asking what dominant groups benefit from a particular ideological structure in the text(s)? Steps 2-4 in Markula and Silk’s model refer, therefore, to “... discourse in its second sense (a form of social practice that ‘constructs the objects of which it purports to speak’)” (Cameron, 2003, p. 123). In other words, the critical discourse analysis aimed to reveal what social forces are underpinning the ‘taken-for-granted’ realities of sports for integration? The analyses are presented thematically below, though the separation of interconnected narratives and discourses is merely a heuristic because the themes were often overlapping.

The single case has limitations from a traditional scientific perspective, but my intention has been to reveal the discursive processes that uphold current ‘truths’ about integration via sport.

The authenticity of the analysis can be judged as to whether it coheres with existing knowledge, provides new insights into the field, and furthermore, offers resistance to ‘institutionalized forgetting’ (Smith, 2009). The CDA has the power to show how ‘every social order rests on a *forgetting* of the exclusion practices through which one set of meanings has been institutionalized and various other possibilities ... have been marginalized (Shapiro 2001 in MacLure 2003, p. 179). This represents a first step in an eventual reconfiguration of discourses about sport for integration.

Findings

Sport for integration: assimilation into *our* ethnic Norwegian VSC

The VSC had no formal local policy for the integration of refugees via sport prior to the ‘migration crisis’, though club officials talked in vague terms about NIF’s overarching aims for social integration via sport (‘sport for all’). The two grant applications to NIF and UDI (made in collaboration with the nearby care home, which was a precondition) comprised the formal documentation of sport for integration. In keeping with the perceived urgency of the wave of migrants, the application process was kept simple and only allowed for short descriptions of project aims. The goal of the VSC's project was articulated as:

...enabling as many youngsters as possible to get out and be integrated into *our* environment and experience the joy of sport, whilst simultaneously lowering the threshold for making contact between refugees and locals.

These overall objectives were translated into the following strategies:

To secure funding to pay an activities coordinator in connection with activities ... for refugees in the VSC ... and integration in sports teams.

... to organise specific activity days and trips with the refugees to teach about *our Norwegian* hiking culture and get to know about *our* community.

... to offer increased integration ... in the following sports: football, table tennis, golf, basic fitness, cycling, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding ... and opportunities for hunting and fishing such that ... the young people can experience more of *our local and national values*.

(Application to NIF and UDI, my italics)

The CDA revealed that the VSC's written policy constructed 'integration via sport' as *access* to existing sports activities in the local community. Drawing on the narrative of the 'universal joy of sport', integration occurs 'automatically', as long as resources are made available (e.g. for sports coordinator, for activity days). The use of metaphors like 'lowering the threshold' played on the established functionalist notion that barriers exist that hamper access, and thus their removal can facilitate integration. A more complex reading of the imagined universal sports arena revealed, nevertheless, cultural nuances that constructed the VSC as a local and national space requiring an understanding of specific cultural codes and norms. The strategies outlined above introduced the idea that certain activities are more symbolic of local and national values (e.g. our hiking culture), undermining the belief in universal practices or enjoyment. Hidden in the text is the idea that sports are not equitable, rather they are ranked within hierarchies of symbolic status, which in turn, conveyed the notion that athletes are differentially valued according to whether they are skilled in the 'right' sports. By default, refugees were constructed as being 'in need' of being taught the 'right' skills – they were perceived as having a 'deficit' that required rectifying at least with regard to 'our' valued sports.

In more informal texts (from discussions at meetings I attended and email communications), the aims articulated above were elaborated upon and discursively (re-)constructed in various ways. Certainly, the naturalization of the idea that sport is automatically inclusive was evident: “Sport has an important role to play in integration, 'cause you get to meet youngsters who're interested in the same interests, speak the same language”. The universal ‘good’ benefits of sports participation were exemplified further by talk of such things as “providing a sense of mastery” or “improving health and mental well-being”. Sport for integration discourse was, therefore, partly constructed on the currently dominant idea of a strong relationship between sport and health. A common expression identified in the CDA, relating to the latter, was that of “allow them to let off steam whilst their lives are on hold”. Of course, this sentiment echoed national integration policy and UDI’s description of sport for integration (see above) with regard to refugees’ mental health, but it can simultaneously be interpreted to draw upon the more sinister narrative of refugees being a threat to social cohesion. It feeds on the idea of the Dangerous Other who loses self-control (whose steam fuels unrest). This second reading of the language in use became more apparent when seen in relation to talk such as: “.. teach these boys that just because our girls wear skimpy training kit, it doesn't mean they're objects for rape!”

Indeed, the idea of the refugee being a potential rapist reoccurred many times throughout the field study in talk by VSC members, club leaders, care home staff and local youth. For example, in the words of a young ethnic Norwegian, “I'm not afraid of them but I know the girls were told to be careful, but I haven't been told *not* to invite anyone, I just haven't thought about it”. Or the sentiments of a coach:

I've had to clamp down on some poor behaviour, foul language, and taking liberties!
Not least, in relation to our girls! You know, they're not exactly a Mother-in-law's
dream!

Sports that were commonly favoured among the young refugees, such as cricket or boxing,
were discursively marginalized: “we don't have anyone who can coach that type of sport
around here”. The CDA revealed that ideas about a two-way process of integration and
reciprocal learning were, in fact, only evident in the care home employees' talk, as illustrated
here:

I've also tried to organize some cricket here, as many of them play cricket. I didn't
have a clue about cricket but I've tried to meet them halfway. ... With free ski passes
and borrowed equipment (a gift from the local ski resort), we've skied downhill and
tried snowboarding, and they've tried to teach me to bowl a cricket ball.

A discourse of resilience and resourcefulness (a counter-narrative to the deficit picture often
drawn) could in fact only be traced in talk at the care home: “when the Red Cross volunteers
took them out hiking they were so keen and longing to be with others, they were so incredibly
willing and eager to learn”. The young refugees also constructed themselves as agentic, rather
than victims:

I'd like to play football, but they say it's impossible ... I've been here now for nearly a
year and I'm still waiting to play football! ... When we can, we take the bus to Y
village and organise our own football matches ... with the refugees there, even though,
they're all much older than us. We do it ourselves! We don't need the VSC!

Constructing the young refugees as Other

In turning to how ideas about the target group, young refugees for whom the sport for integration project was tailored, the CDA revealed that ‘fear’ was a conspicuous word in many VSC’s texts: not only fear of the potential rapist, but “allay fear in the village”; “fear that our young people could find the newcomers intimidating ... an unknown quantity”; “fear they’ll lead to higher drop-out rates among our kids”; “fear our football team will lose matches if they play”; and in general, “fear they’ll frighten our kids”. Paradoxically, the idea of traumatised fellow human beings in need of compassion and help (which fueled the VSC’s desire to apply for grants and organise sport for integration) became displaced by a discourse of the ‘dangerous Other’. This discourse connected to the global narrative of increasing xenophobia, resulting in national borders being fenced off and strictly controlled in order to keep the unknown migrant at bay. The VSC ‘fenced off’ the young refugees by constructing them as someone to fear, indirectly reasserting that the club was primarily a space for *our* kids, sport was about winning and competition rather than social justice and inclusion, and refugees symbolized a threat to youth sport’s very existence if their presence exacerbated drop-out rates. The discourse functioned to limit the number of refugee participants: from the outset it was decided that a maximum of five refugee youth could take part in a sport at any one time, even though 50 refugees were in residence. The early vision of offering a broad range of sports became limited to two weekly activities: drop-in football and a fitness-cum-motor skills training, which rapidly became limited to merely the latter. The young refugees’ language in use echoed the hosts’ fear: “they’re much younger than us refugees... they’re afraid of us. ... Of course, I’d like to visit someone’s home, but no one’s ever invited me! I don’t know what a Norwegian home looks like!” The discourse of fear of the Other, therefore, resulted in creating a sense of alterity and exclusion, rather than integration.

The practice of homogenizing the young refugees in 'fear' discourse, as opposed to recognizing them as individuals with heterogeneous social and ethnic backgrounds, connected on occasion with racist discourse: "You wouldn't believe how Norwegians can talk about my boys, right next to where they're standing, ugly, racist things, as if they don't exist"; "those Afghanis, they don't respect rules!"; "they don't understand about respecting women, they're objects to be ordered around"; "they bring a lot of foreign bodies with them"; "they're a bunch of illiterates!"; "they've not seen water before! Don't wash, they're dirty so why should they be able to swim in our pool?"; "the Syrians are better than the Afghanis". Actors involved in the sport for integration project essentialised characteristics/attributes and used the ideas to justify the subordination and/or exclusion of refugees.

Whilst the examples above represent a more overt form of racism, the CDA also revealed more subtle forms of discrimination whereby difference was constructed due to a lack of appropriate sports skills (e.g. "not used to playing football for a team"; "they're weak and lack stamina"; "they can't play *our* sports"). This more insidious form of 'colour-blind' racism directs attention away from the refugees' 'racial'/ethnic backgrounds (read: because we live in an equal, non-racist society), highlighting instead the 'problem' of their deficit of sports skills. The effect of the discourse is to position the refugees outside of 'normal' practices. The CDA did not unveil a discourse that valued teaching sports skills to teenagers; implicitly the VSC expects youth members to have already learned and internalized these codes during 'normal' childhood.

The organisational challenges of sport for integration

Indeed, the CDA illuminated how talk about on-going concerns in the VSC (e.g. the recruitment/maintenance of young members; securing voluntary coaches) were connected to the sport for integration project. On the one hand, this ‘organisation’ discourse was constructed around the notion that the grants gained might be of benefit beyond helping refugees: for example, enable the employment of an activities coordinator. On the other hand, in the light of failing to provide sport for integration activities, organizational discourse was used to explain the difficulties the project encountered:

It's always a challenge to recruit voluntary coaches and we can't afford to pay everyone ... and parents, they tend, *naturally*, to take more responsibility when their own kids are involved ... it's difficult to get people to work for nothing! (my italics)

The idea that it is ‘natural’ to want to do things for your own kids, constructs helping others, like young refugees, as ‘unnatural’. Another ‘natural’ practice in the VSC seemed to be applying for grants irrespective of the target group:

We applied for the project funding 'cause that's how you get money! And of course, there's an expectation that you'll carry on the activity when the grant runs out, but I'm skeptical 'cause it's difficult to predict when the next bid will be, so you end up bidding for what you can. ...I admit, there have been few results in practice.

This last example of language in use discursively positions sport for integration as almost ‘irrelevant’, simply the current means for gaining extra funds. The VSC is an organization that prioritizes talent development, so discourses about competitive sport were predominant: “many of my former athletes have reached the Olympics”; “we’d hoped to use the money to pay for an activities coordinator who’d work part-time on talent development, as well as organizing the refugee sports”.

A common feature of the texts was the work they did with regard to constructing an 'agentless' initiative (Cameron, 2001). There was little evidence of discourses about individual ideological commitment or emotional investment in the idea that sport can contribute to social integration. The pronoun 'I' was seldom used to describe aspects of the project, rather it was talked about at a club level and in general terms that acted to create distance to it (e.g. 'it's always a challenge to recruit volunteers', 'no one's been willing to take it on', 'our motivation wilted', 'sport has an important role to play in integration'). The sport for integration project was the VSC's initiative, yet, no named individuals were constructed as being responsible for overseeing its development.

Discussion

The CDA illuminated that sport for integration in the VSC was discursively constructed as an ideological project of assimilation, rather than a multiculturalist or two-way process of integration. Integration was framed in terms of becoming like 'Us' and did not draw on discourses that perceived a potential for local inhabitants to become enriched by learning, for example, 'different' sports from the 'Other'. Echoing national sport policies (e.g. Melding St. 26, 2011-2012), texts defined the VSC's sports activities as neutral, universal arenas and espoused the belief that participation alone provides 'natural integration' (Andersson 2008) on account of the fairness of performance codes and the 'common language' of sport. This type of 'sport evangelism' (Coakley, 2011) masks the complexities of the social spaces of sports and the identities of those who frequent them. Ideologies, such as equality based on liberal notions of access, meritocracy and individual agency, work discursively to marginalise ideas about sport as a contested arena, in which social inequalities can be reproduced rather than challenged.

In some texts, sports were in fact explicitly 'racialised' and constructed as hegemonic. Norwegian (White) cultural practices (e.g. hiking and fishing cultures) were awarded more status than other sports, such as cricket, thereby openly contributing to the boundary work of integration and exclusion in the VSC (Spaaij, 2012): refugees were positioned as 'outsiders' who lacked the 'right' social capital. Following Carrington (2010), the discourses worked together to construct a colour-blind liberal space; there is little room for a future imaginary to see the VSC as evolving its sports practice to incorporate pluralist, 'new', 'non-native' (non-Norwegian) activities.

Indeed, drawing on the current circulating discourse of xenophobia in Norwegian society (and globally), policy enactment talk reasserted ideas about the 'dangerous Other' (e.g. potential rapist, unruly athlete, dirty refugee), and in effect, the club's project for integration reproduced a hierarchy of racialized privilege (Hylton, 2009; Rutter, 2006). It contributed, too, to the ideological work of maintaining the notion that refugees symbolize a threat to social cohesion (Rutter, 2006). It also did ideological work to uphold essentialised ideas about identity: it provided no room for notions of fluid diasporic or transnational identities (Hall, 1991 cited in Rutter, 2006). More subtle forms of racism could also be traced, such as the stereotypical attitude shown towards the young asylum seekers as lacking sufficient skills to be worthy of a place on the local football team: 'race' remains unnamed, the young men's cultural deficiency (lack of football skills) was the 'problem'. This is not to suggest that individuals who expressed such concerns about the young refugees were individually racist, rather the discursive practice of stereotyping (e.g. 'they' are unskillful, unreliable etc.) illustrates how power operating in everyday situations perpetuates racial and ethnic oppression (Essed, 1991; Massao and Fasting, 2010).

Providing unaccompanied young migrants with sports was constructed as a periphery activity for the VSC, even though the specific initiative brought it to the foreground. Within the logic of the organization, offering young refugees participation in the VSC provided a source of income (albeit rather meager in real terms) that not only could be used to achieve this objective, but more importantly, could be translated within, and potentially strengthen, existing practices. The grants awarded for sport for integration reinforced hegemonic ideas about competitive, 'Norwegian' sport, interlaced with discourses of volunteerism versus professionalism, marginalising discourses of sport for social justice and inclusion (Bergsgaard, 2016; Spaaij et al, 2014; Seippel, 2010). Similar to Spaaij et al's (2014) study in Australia, the Norwegian VSC constructed integration and diversity in terms of benefits and costs to the organization, rather than a moral imperative to integrate and celebrate diverse members. The CDA's findings also cohere with Jeanes et al (2015), who claimed that the ideological work of competitive sport is so powerful that it excludes alternative visions.

Concluding comments

In conclusion, the CDA contributes to a deeper understanding of the institutionalized 'forgetting' of the exclusion practices through which some 'truths' and values are privileged at the expense of other norms (MacLure, 2003). It revealed the ideological work of the idea of competitive sport as being at the core of VSC's practice, promoting integration as assimilation, thereby marginalizing other ideals about social integration. In addition, the CDA demonstrated how integration talk and practices did 'ideological work' to perpetuate racialized hierarchies and difference in sport (Anderson, 2008; Hylton, 2009). The discourses

constructed very little sense of belonging amongst refugees, at times rather a sense of alterity, and they created few social spaces for 'bridging' majority/minority cultures.

From a critical constructivist position that sees assimilation as problematic and discriminatory (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000; Rutter, 2006), it can be argued that VSCs may be unsuitable arenas for sport for integration. The latter is particularly relevant in the light of Norway's discredited policy for the assimilation of Sami people and subsequent attempts to create racial equality, but should also cohere with international projects of sport for integration that revere social justice and human rights. Less traditional arenas and forms of physical activity in the local community (e.g. organized by NGOs or in collaboration with young refugees) may be more 'fit for purpose' for social integration than sports clubs.

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