

SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN BRITISH TENNIS:
A HISTORY OF PRIVILEGE AND PREJUDICE

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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April 2008

Abstract

This study focuses on the issue of social exclusion in British tennis. It commences with a critique of current LTA policy, presenting exclusion as static, ahistorical and underpinned by false dichotomies of age and social class. Aspects of Norbert Elias's theoretical approach are employed throughout as an analytical framework. Initially, the roots of exclusion in British tennis are sought through historical analysis. Aspects of the Civilising Process help direct attention towards wider social processes to explain the prevalence of exclusion, particularly in tennis clubs. Cost was a crucial factor in determining early access, but as tennis became more accessible to lower classes, codes of behavioural etiquette helped demarcate members along status lines. Into the mid-20th century, the globalisation, professionalisation and commercialisation of tennis pushed the LTA to adopt a more performance-oriented outlook, but this has come to oppose the more relaxed culture of tennis clubs. Thus, a power struggle emerged between these two institutions, and, underpinned by thirty interviews with leading figures in British tennis as well as extensive documentary analysis, the third section documents these developments from the 1980s. Crucially, tennis clubs remain largely amateur and voluntary-run organisations, yet are important locations for the implementation of the LTA's demanding talent development objectives. These recent developments are understood with the help of Elias's Game Models theory. The fourth section presents findings from a ten-month ethnographic study of social exclusion in a tennis club; a micro-analysis of club member relations underpinned by Elias's Established-Outsider Relations theory. Overall findings suggest that social exclusion in British tennis is far more complex, multi-faceted and historically-rooted than what current LTA discourse presents. Differences in age and class are less central, and instead preconceived notions of social status based on longevity of membership, adherence to behavioural norms and playing standard are powerful determinants of inclusion.

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Acknowledgements

The production of this thesis could not have been achieved without the help and encouragement of numerous people over the past four and a half years. Deserved of my first mention should be the School of Sport and Education at Brunel University, which provided me with a bursary to complete my PhD on a full-time basis as well as funding to present at numerous academic conferences. My current employer, St. Mary's University College, also provided financial support over the final 24 months of my research, as well as blocks of time off which I was able to dedicate to writing-up.

Also deserved of considerable acknowledgement are my supervisors Martin Roderick and Gary Armstrong. Especially in the final two and a half years of research and writing, Martin's feedback on my work was fantastic; prompt, reliable, informative and exceptionally thorough and detailed. Martin always adopted a clear and thoughtful position with regards the direction he felt my work should progress, yet he never let that impinge upon my own views in this regard. His patience, dedication and excellent sociological knowledge and 'imagination' should be acknowledged. Gary also offered considerable insight and support, particularly in the first two and a half years of my research when I was 'finding my feet'. He was always on the look out for useful information for me, and his encouragement really helped to build my confidence when I was about to embark on interviews conducted with some of the most prominent personnel in British tennis. It is to these individuals that I must now turn to acknowledge.

When attempting to arrange interviews, it was my intention to approach the most well-respected and informed individuals that I could find within the British tennis industry. It is testimony to the superb enthusiasm and dedication of each of them that they agreed to take time out of their busy schedules to be interviewed by me, a relatively unaccomplished doctoral student. It was an absolute pleasure to not only meet but also critically question some of the most renowned individuals in the sport, and it is hoped that I am able to repay some of the effort and time they gave me and to British tennis in some way. Perhaps the production of this thesis, dealing critically and sociologically with some of the very issues that they identified as problematic, can go some way towards this endeavour.

Just over ten months was spent conducting ethnographic research at a tennis club, and so the 500 or so members of 'West Regency Tennis Club' also need to be acknowledged, whether they were, in fact, knowing or unknowing research subjects. While pseudonyms for the club and club members have been used in this analysis to protect anonymity, a great deal of thanks should go to the club PR and development director 'Paul'. Were it not for his intense dedication to the club and his enthusiasm for my research, I would have struggled immensely to find another club to take me on. The two coaches I interviewed 'Mark' and 'Sergey' should also be acknowledged, for always being forthcoming with insight and information. I trust you know who you are!

Aside from the main subjects of my research, I also received considerable help from a number of other individuals. Everyone at the AELTC, especially Audrey Snell in the Kenneth Ritchie Wimbledon Library and Julian Tatum of the AELTC committee, and many at the LTA, particularly Craig Edmondson, Andrew Thomas and others who I was able to interview, should also be acknowledged for giving time and effort when answering my incessant questions and providing constructive help and information when

requested. Other individuals and/or organisations that deserve a mention for help and support are Henry Wancke and Chris Ronaldson, everyone at the Middlesex LTA, the staff at David Lloyd Raynes Park and Bushey clubs, and the BTCA.

When undertaking such a demanding and time-consuming piece of research, it was imperative that I was able to work in a supportive environment, surrounded by encouraging and understanding family, friends and academic colleagues. The general support I received from close family and friends was constant and unwavering, but particular mention should go to my mum, Jayne, my dad, Arthur, and my step-dad Duncan. My girlfriend Siobhan was also immensely supportive and understanding of the long days and nights spent 'being boring', as well as my respective housemates, Stuart Wood and Harry Sampson.

The world of academia provided me with individuals I could bounce ideas off of and who were always on the look-out for 'stuff on tennis'. Fellow sport sociology PhD candidates Matt McCormick, Tom Gibbons, Lara Killick, Andrew Turner and Jim Lusted were always at hand to read drafts of my work and discuss complex theories and concepts over a beer; they provided excellent moral support in this regard. Fellow PhD students with whom I shared an office at Brunel University between 2003 and 2006 also deserve a special mention for the moral support provided, particularly Noel Kinrade, Dave Coleman, Ryan Groom, Aarti Ratna, Dan Bishop, Dale Cannavan, Natalie Middleton and Liz Gough, as well as Bryan Taylor, Georgios Loizou, Donna Evans, Emma Hart, Philippa Velija and Lee Nelson from the 'other' office. My colleagues at St. Mary's, particularly Mark Glaister and Glyn Howatson were also helpful as sounding boards for my general research ideas.

In the world of academia, it is also imperative that I thank the British Sociological Association for providing me with two £150 BSA Support Funds to cover research costs as well as the opportunity to attend the 2005 BSA Sociology Summer School at Coventry University, where I met a number of other 'budding' sociologists.

Last but certainly not least, Ian Cooper deserves a very special acknowledgement. Like me, but 8 years earlier, Ian conducted an MA in the Sociology of Sport at the University of Leicester and, also like me, but perhaps more diligently and successfully, he waded through hundreds and hundreds of research, newspaper and magazine articles to find information on his subject. He also sweated and toiled through archives in numerous libraries up and down the country to find material, in order to produce his final 20,000 word Masters dissertation. His research just so happened to be on the historical development of tennis and, in the final section of his piece, he wrote that 'further research' of a historical/sociological nature was essential to investigate reasons for Britain's lack of competitive success of late. It is apparent that he must have seen in me either great potential for this endeavour to be achieved, or, perhaps more accurately, downright pity! Nevertheless, when approached for 'any help', Ian proceeded to give me no less than every single article he found on the subject, every scrap of paper that he had collated over the years and organised for easy access. Were it not for his hugely generous gesture, I would have undoubtedly missed a substantial amount of research as well as spent an inordinate amount of time compiling the very same collection of material.

Were it not for all of the support and encouragement that I received over the last four and a half years, the endeavour to produce this thesis undoubtedly would have proved twice the job with only half the enjoyment. Thanks to all.

List of Abbreviations

AEC – All England Club
AELTC – All England Lawn Tennis Club
ATP – Association of Tennis Professionals
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
BTCA – British Tennis Coaches Association
CCDP – Community Club Development Programme
CCPR – Central Council for Physical Recreation
CDO – Club Development Officer
CRTF – Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation
DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DE – Department of the Environment
DfES – Department for Education and Skills
DNH – Department of National Heritage
DRTA – Dutch Real Tennis Association
FFT – Fédération Française de Tennis (French Tennis Federation)
ILTF – International Lawn Tennis Federation
ITF – International Tennis Federation
ITI – Indoor Tennis Initiative
ITV – Independent Television
KPI – Key Performance Indicator
LIRC – Leisure Industries Research Centre
LTA – Lawn Tennis Association
NCF – National Coaching Foundation
NGB – National Governing Bodies
NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PESSCL – Physical Education School Sport Club Links
PTR – Professional Tennis Registry
RTW – Road to Wimbledon
TASS – Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme
USPTA – United States Professional Tennis Association
WJTI – Wimbledon Junior Tennis Initiative
WRTC – West Regency Tennis Club
WTA – Women’s Tennis Association

Introduction

The Guardian journalist Steven Wells (2003, July 2) wrote quite dramatically in 2003: “British tennis is crap. It’s a sporting Chernobyl. It’s a smug, sterile, mono-cultural, quasi-fascist, casually racist, elitist, snob-ridden, blazer-buggered, apartheid-crippled disaster area. It makes golf look like the Notting Hill carnival”. Was Wells over-exaggerating the deprived state of British tennis or, perhaps, did he have a point or several worth further consideration? Whilst he can be criticised easily on account of amplification and dramatisation, the numerous “troubles” that British tennis has found itself in have been made readily apparent over the last twenty or so years. It is undoubted that many like Wells, but who are perhaps without the similar means by which to vent their frustrations, have regarded British tennis as another one of those sports that we, the British, *should* be better at. Since before the First World War, members of the British tennis-playing public have shown concern regarding the “state” of the sport in this country. It seems, from having been the birthplace of its invention, the British have always felt a particular ownership of tennis and, in some instances, a certain right to achieve success at it. The staging of the world’s premier tennis tournament every summer and the continuous poor standard of British players within it, have only allowed the anger and frustration of disappointment to be rekindled every twelve months. While numerous hopefuls have come and gone over the last few decades, providing flashes of inconsistent brilliance to continuously whet the appetites of the tennis-loving British public, the facts remain clear. There has not been a men’s Wimbledon champion since Fred Perry in 1936, or a women’s champion since Virginia Wade in 1977.

Several plausible excuses were proposed in the 1960s and 70s to explain Britain’s poor standing in international tennis, such as a lack of sufficient funding to build facilities, a lack of good and qualified coaches and the persistence of unequal access for certain sections of British society. However, the extent to which these still hold water today can be strongly questioned. Since the early 1980s, the funding for the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) provided by profits from the Wimbledon championships has grown significantly.¹ In 1981, the governing body were awarded a little over £1 million to invest; in 1996, they were given over £30 million. While some

of this money has been invested in supporting performance players, staging international events, marketing and promotion, the largest proportion has been directed towards tennis clubs. This was predominantly through the construction of new facilities in clubs, mostly courts but also clubhouses and floodlighting; the development of schemes to encourage children to play tennis, such as 'short tennis', Play Tennis and Mini Tennis; running local tennis tournaments; and, the education and development of coaches, most of whom apply their trade in clubs. While the largest proportion of the tennis courts in Britain are in public parks, tennis clubs are the main locations where competitive tennis is played (Houlihan & White, 2002). Ostensibly, therefore, it is clear why the latter continued to be the main focus for attention and investment.

After considerable investment throughout the 1980s and 90s in some of the more ostensibly weak 'problem areas' like facilities and coaching, the LTA began to focus on the issue of social exclusion in British tennis. This was undoubtedly related to the growing issue within wider political discourse. From the 1960s and 70s, central government concern for sport was couched quite heavily in political objectives centred on the facilitation of 'equality'. Sport came to be regarded as providing instrumental benefits to an individual's health and self-esteem, and to providing alternative attractions for potential juvenile delinquents (Collins, 2003). Into the 1980s and the Thatcher government, economic concerns in society came to demand greater attention than social ones, and thus sport came to be seen as a means of regenerating urban areas and providing employment (Collins, 2003). In wider society, poverty for the poorest sections increased during the Conservative government of the 1980s and early 1990s (Walker, 1997). Thus, one of the major goals for New Labour was the reversal of this trend through social inclusion, of which former Prime Minister Tony Blair mainly chose to focus on education and employment (Lister, 1998). It is not surprising that removing barriers to participation and preventing the social exclusion of particular groups from participating in tennis also became goals of the LTA around this time.

Programmes for children's development emerged in the 1980s, but it was not until the mid to late 1990s when the LTA's emphasis clearly shifted to make lasting change for children and to "open doors" for those specifically from lower-class backgrounds. They began to incorporate wider political aims into their own objectives, using terms like "equality", "rights" and "responsibilities", which mirrored New Labour

jargon. They also spoke of the need to change the “culture” of tennis clubs and eradicate social exclusion. Reflecting wider society, the groups most excluded in tennis were young people generally, the poor and unemployed, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Whilst funding provision came to be set aside for the development of participation in all of these groups, it was towards children, specifically those from the most economically-deprived or lower-class sections of society, where the majority of this new funding was directed. In the 1995 LTA Development Strategy, whilst the overall emphasis was on progress at the elite level, there was considerable stress put on greater inclusion of school children generally. It was in 1999 when the objective of social inclusion was first made explicit in LTA discourse, to “ensure that no barriers exist to hinder those wishing to play” (LTA, 1999b, p.7). Clubs were specifically targeted, with specific mention made of the need to “offer high quality coaching and junior development programmes at reasonable cost, without a playing-in requirement or prohibitive dress codes” (LTA, 1999b, p.12). John Crowther, the LTA chief executive from 1997 to 2006, spoke in the 2002 LTA Annual Report of the need to “break down traditional barriers”, making clubs “enjoyable, welcoming environments” (LTA, 2002a, p.5). It was clear that the continuous exclusion of lower classes and children, particularly in tennis clubs, became one of the most problematic issues for the LTA during this time. This was reflected in their two main objectives: i) to develop children’s talent, focused on the over-riding objective of developing their potential as elite level players, and ii) to change the culture of clubs, essentially to make them more competitive and accessible environments for the new “crop” of players from all backgrounds whom they wished to attract (LTA, 2002a).

The equation put forward was simple: the more players, particularly children, introduced to the game and encouraged to play, the greater the chance of one or more of them progressing to the elite level. To achieve more players, British tennis had to broaden its appeal to more diverse sections of the population, namely the lower classes, many of whom were of an ethnic minority. Because they were regarded as being occupied traditionally by middle-class, white, middle-aged men and women, or rather because they were regarded as being bastions of social exclusivity, and because the LTA saw them as crucial in their plans, voluntary-run tennis clubs became the target for several development proposals. However, the implementation of change in tennis clubs

was far from straight-forward, because many were simply unresponsive to the LTA's requests and continued to exclude certain groups for the benefit of their already existent membership. Being autonomous, independently-organised and voluntary-run associations, the clubs could not be controlled by the LTA. The governing body had no "stick" to beat the clubs with, so to speak. The precarious relationship between these two tennis institutions lies at the centre of this sociological issue.

The main aim of this thesis is to shed light on the issue of social exclusion in British tennis. However, it is important to consider that this is both a *social* and a *sociological* issue. The *social* issue of concern in this thesis is, to a great extent, media-orchestrated. It is related to the lack of British Wimbledon champions, the LTA's failure to produce a large crop of elite-level players and the poor implementation of talent development schemes in clubs. The *sociological* issue of concern here is related to the dynamic power struggles resulting in the exclusion or marginalisation of certain groups from participation in all aspects of tennis.

This thesis will show how the *sociological* issue of exclusion in British tennis has a long history, which can be traced back to the formative years of lawn tennis, if not earlier, to its ancient ancestor Real Tennis. The exclusion or marginalisation of playing opportunities for certain sections of the British population has been an enduring characteristic of the game since its conception. Conversely, the *social* issue of exclusion in British tennis has a relatively short history. It has only been from around the 1960s when the British tennis authorities came to deem a problem the denial of tennis playing opportunities to certain groups in British society, mainly because the standard of elite British players came to be regarded as increasingly important socially, culturally, economically and politically. This was a consequence of the growing commercialism, professionalism and globalisation of sport throughout this period. Specifically to tennis, the poor standard of British players and the dearth of talent coming through "the system", added further pressure on the British tennis authorities to intervene for the purpose of ensuring future elite-level success. Moreover, whilst comment on the problems associated with "elitism" in tennis was forthcoming from the 1960s, it was not until the 1980s when Wimbledon profits increased to provide the LTA with the financial means to put any of their development plans into fruition; and it was from then that the media came to take notice and put the issue on a wider public agenda. Thus, it could be

said that the *social* issue of exclusion in British tennis has only been around for a few decades, whilst the *sociological* issue can be traced back a number of centuries.

Despite the growing social issue of exclusion in British political discourse and the continuous social significance of tennis among the wider British public, it is surprising that, to date, little systematic academic research has been conducted in this area. This thesis, therefore, can be regarded as a point of departure towards filling this void, and it aims to address a number of research questions: How and why did the sport of lawn tennis from its advent in the mid/late 19th century have an associated social ethos that allowed and facilitated the systematic exclusion of particular groups in society, most specifically the lower classes and children? What role did lawn tennis play in the wider social class struggles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries? How can the prevalence and persistence of social exclusion in British tennis clubs today be explained, despite the marked professionalisation, commercialisation and modernisation of the LTA and tennis played and organised at the elite level? How can the growing power struggle between tennis clubs and the LTA be explained? What specifically did members of exclusive tennis clubs regard as the value or purpose in excluding other social groups from obtaining access? How adequate are age and class discrimination arguments in explaining why certain groups in tennis clubs are denied access or treated poorly?

Thesis Structure

The main objectives of this study are threefold. The first is to offer a point of departure towards finding the historical roots of social exclusion in British tennis; exploring the wider social contexts in which privileged members of British society in the late 19th century came to develop lawn tennis in line with their motives to demarcate themselves socially from members of inferior social classes, and to investigate why lawn tennis, and voluntary-run lawn tennis clubs in particular, came to be valued so highly as a social context of upper and middle class conspicuous consumption and social exclusivity. The second objective is to investigate how, why and from when and where the contemporary issue of social exclusion in British tennis was derived. The focus specifically is on the growing divergence and thus ideological power struggle between tennis clubs and the LTA throughout the 20th century, and how the largely unintended

outcomes of this struggle have characterised the ways in which the sport came to be governed, funded, organised and played. The third objective is to investigate social exclusion in a micro-level tennis club culture; exploring aspects of hierarchy in an old and established tennis club, to illuminate power relations between club members as a point of departure towards an explanation of the historical prevalence of exclusive practices in modern clubs. In line with these aims and objectives, this thesis is divided into three main sections: a historical analysis of tennis and its development on a macro scale; a contemporary analysis of developments on a macro scale from, broadly speaking, the 1960s until the present day; and, a contemporary micro analysis of a tennis club culture.

These three sections are preceded by Chapters 1 and 2, which provide a literature review on the subject of social exclusion in British tennis. The aims of these chapters are to bring to light how the issue is understood, approached and dealt with at present, firstly, in a practical and applied sense, and, secondly, in a theoretical sense. By expanding on and critiquing the contemporary issue in several crucial ways, these first two chapters highlight several fundamental shortcomings, which form the platform from where this present investigation departs. Highlighting the inadequacies of these approaches brings to light what kinds of questions need to be asked, what theoretical models might be of considerable use and what critical research needs to be undertaken.

Specifically, *Chapter 1* sets out to examine the ways in which the LTA currently understand and explain the issue of social exclusion in tennis, critiquing their explanations for it, their most recently initiated plans for dealing with it and the relative success of these initiatives. LTA policy is critiqued primarily because of how it conceptualises the problems associated with social exclusion in British tennis in ways that sociologists would call “structural-functionalist”. Firstly, the LTA is charged with being “ahistorical”, “contemporary biased”, and failing to adopt a suitable long-term perspective for social change. Secondly, the LTA are charged with putting forward a “consensus biased” account of the British tennis infrastructure, underestimating the extent that their stakeholders have conflicting aims and objectives. This chapter concludes by offering an alternative theoretical approach for dealing with social exclusion, based on the work of Norbert Elias (1978). The concepts of power, power

relations and interdependence that underpin his approach are introduced, defined and explained.

According to LTA policy discourse, social exclusion in British tennis clubs is explained in relation to one's class and age; thus, they have conceptualised the problem around simple dichotomies, notably between adults and children and between middle/upper-class and working-class. *Chapter 2* sets out to review literature on the subject to critique these dichotomies and their supported arguments. These distinctions are found not only to be static and inaccurate, but also "false dichotomies"; they are distinctions made to divide society into groups that are not entirely mutually exclusive. Firstly, power relations between adults and children have become more complex and more equal over the years,² so conceptualising exclusion solely around age relations is arguably inaccurate. Thus, the adequacy of the "age discrimination" assumption is critiqued through a historical look at children's exclusion. Secondly, because social class is now represented in ways other than economic, it is suggested that conceptualising class relations and explaining social exclusion in British tennis clubs in these terms also provides a decidedly inaccurate illustration of a more complex social structure. While class undoubtedly has been a central focus of exclusion throughout the history of tennis, how central is this aspect of exclusion in tennis clubs today? In order to offer alternative approaches to understanding this issue, aspects of Pierre Bourdieu's (1978; 1984) theoretical framework are introduced, particularly his concepts of "habitus" and "capital". This is compared, briefly, with the "developmental" approach of Elias (1939/2000), particularly with a focus on processes of formalisation as an aspect of the Civilising Process, as well as the theoretical framework of Established and Outsider Relations.

Chapter 3 sets out to discuss aspects of methodology and ethics in this study. Numerous methods of data collection were used in this investigation, most notably, documentary analysis of historical texts and contemporary LTA material; semi-structured interviews of British tennis stakeholders; and a ten-month period of ethnographic observations in a tennis club. The aims of this chapter are to set out how the research was designed and undertaken, to introduce the various research methods used in this investigation, and to provide a rationale for why each of these methods was chosen. Towards the end of this chapter, the various ethical issues that arose during the

research process are discussed, including obtaining consent for research, confidentiality matters, and ethical obligations when conducting research in settings where children are present. More detailed and specific information on methodology can be found in the appendices.

Chapter 4 begins the historical section of this investigation, where the societal preconditions for the emergence of lawn tennis and its development into a prestigious and exclusive sport are examined. The roots of lawn tennis are located in the game of Real Tennis played among the aristocracy during the late Middle Ages, and the ostensible structural and “social” links between these two games are brought to light. An attempt is made to apply aspects of Elias’s (1939/2000) *Civilising Process* to the analysis of the developing “social character” of lawn tennis. Locating its emergence within the broader class struggle between the landowning upper classes and the burgeoning bourgeoisie helps to explain aspects of its social character and why players felt compelled to maintain its exclusivity. Growing ties of interdependence between the social classes in wider society, and the constraints that this imposed, are identified as important influences to the development of lawn tennis throughout its history. This chapter concludes by introducing the concept of “amateurism”, which was derived in large part from the public schools during the mid 19th century, and the ethos by which many aspects of upper-class conduct came to be underpinned. *Chapter 5* examines the ways in which the 19th and 20th century class struggles were played out in lawn tennis. The motivation of social demarcation characterised lawn tennis participation among the upper classes during this time, as they sought to defend the code of “amateurism” by excluding those from meagre educational backgrounds or people working in professions deemed “ungentlemanly”. Meanwhile, the aspirant middle and upper-middle classes were motivated by “conspicuous consumption”, as they sought to emulate their social superiors in many aspects of their lives, including prestigious club memberships. This chapter sought to examine these and related developments up until the early-to-mid 20th century. *Chapter 6* outlines the gradual inculcation of what could be described as more “middle-class” values and attitudes onto the sport and its players from the early-to-mid 20th century. The gradual professionalisation, commercialisation and globalisation of tennis came to challenge the more insular and amateur organisation of tennis in Britain. The experiences of Fred Perry are used as a case study to illustrate the growing

constraints imposed by the amateur ethos at the elite end of the sport, examining, specifically, the rise of professional tours, the charade of “shamateurism” and the institutional resistance to professionalisation. The influences that these developments came to have at the club level are then examined, noting the continued relative autonomy of voluntary-run associations despite the marked changes elsewhere. This chapter concludes by noting the emergence of the issue of social exclusion in public discourse from around the 1960s.

Chapter 7 attempts to chart developments in British tennis since the 1960s, commencing with an examination of the increasing political concern for sports development and what functions it could serve society. This is followed by a look at new commercial influences in British tennis; the notable and rapid emergence of corporate sponsorship and television providing new investment that enabled the LTA to put into fruition more impressive development plans. The drive towards talent development is then discussed, as British tennis authorities came to regard success in the sport internationally with greater significance and sought to address inadequacies through schemes such as “short tennis”, the establishment of tennis academies, talent identification programmes and indoor tennis court construction. The final development examined is the increasing focus on children, as this group became the main focus for investment in clubs and schools. *Chapter 8* charts the developments in wider society that put many voluntary-run clubs in an increasingly precarious position financially from around the 1960s. The emergence of new “commercial” clubs is examined as an important aspect of this process, as well as the decline of “voluntarism” across British society more generally. This chapter also documents and analyses the developments taking place within the LTA from around the 1980s. It is from this decade that problems in terms of elite-level performance came to a head, but it was not until the mid-1990s when a change in leadership helped the LTA to adopt a more proactive stance towards attempting to fulfil their objectives. They became more “modern” and “business-like”, but they also became increasingly defensive in certain areas, as the British print media became more vociferous in their condemnation of the LTA for failing to make positive changes, or rather for failing to “produce champions”, despite their growing pot of investment. *Chapter 9* examines the increasing divergence in terms of values, outlook and objectives between tennis clubs, in general, and the LTA from around the 1980s. As

the LTA's emphasis shifted to become more "performance-oriented", the vast majority of clubs sought to retain their more central "social" function. From when the LTA gained the economic power to put into action some of their larger development plans, clubs came to be regarded as crucial locations for the initiation of talent development programmes. The consequences of this notable change are analysed, and it is here where Elias's (1978) *Game Models* theoretical model is applied to help shed light on shifting power relations within the growing "figuration" of British tennis from the 1960s.

While recent developments in British tennis at a macro-organisational level are examined in the preceding section, Section 4 of this thesis aims to illuminate the consequences of these changes for a voluntary-run tennis club. *Chapter 10* sets the scene for this ethnographic micro-analysis of tennis club culture, commencing with a discussion of the adequacy of dominant social exclusion myths perpetuated in LTA discourse. The club under investigation is introduced, with important information provided regarding its historical development, contemporary issues that have come to affect its present economic security, and the club's prevalent social hierarchy of member groups. Details are provided of my observations of interactions between members among and between these groups. *Chapter 11* brings to light the various areas of club life where socially exclusive actions take place. Detailed evidence is provided of the numerous sophisticated ways in which established members are able to exert their status superiority over new members, in order to exclude or marginalise them, and to deny them access to certain club resources that established members might enjoy. Certain areas of club life where hierarchy can be enforced and reproduced are also investigated, helping to bring to light the deeply embedded and internalised nature of club members' social positions. *Chapter 12* illuminates my findings at the club using Elias and Scotson's (1965/1994) theoretical model of *Established and Outsider Relations*, and attempts to explain the prevalence of social exclusion in the club despite outside pressure from the LTA. This chapter concludes by examining the club and its potential problems in the future, caused not only by financial insecurity, but by the established club member's unwillingness to accept change and alter their exclusive stance towards new members and children.

Chapter 13 offers some personal reflections on the research process, examining issues of reflexivity and involvement and detachment, while *Chapter 14* draws together

a number of important sociological ideas and themes explored in this thesis in order to offer overall conclusions. The relative adequacy of the LTA's methods for dealing with problems associated with social exclusion in British tennis is also questioned in *Appendix 6*. This forms the basis for offering practical policy recommendations to the LTA.

¹ "Wimbledon" or "The Championships" is the flagship tournament of the All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, south-west London. Held every summer since 1877, Wimbledon has become regarded as the most prestigious and important tennis tournament for both men and women on the professional circuit. In an arrangement with the Lawn Tennis Association designed to help burgeoning British talent, all Wimbledon profits each year are invested back into British tennis through the control of the LTA.

² A number of examples illustrate this point, for example: the emergence of government and non-government organisations and charities that provide a "voice" for children, such as the NSPCC; the abolition and/or increasing social objection in many Western societies to corporal punishment of children; the increasing power of the social services to intervene for the sake of the child; and, the fact that children now have earned the right to bring legal proceedings against their parents in cases where the latter are felt to be harming or neglecting children.

SECTION 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Chapter 1: The Political Issue of Social Exclusion in British Tennis: A Review of Literature and a Critique of LTA Discourse

From the mid 1990s, evidence from LTA discourse suggested that the governing body attempted to instil a more “performance-driven” approach to talent development within clubs in order to engender a more open and accessible environment. The LTA opted for the challenge of attempting to change the “culture” of tennis clubs as a whole. It is suggested, however, that this decision was underpinned by an inaccurate and incomplete understanding of what “club culture” is, the extent of its deep roots in history, and how best to actually implement change to the cultures within the clubs. I feel that many of the arguments put forward by the LTA to support “changing the club culture” have tended to rest, not on findings from rigorous research, either “in-house” or in conjunction with academic establishments, but rather on tenuous assumptions and anecdotal evidence, which many, including those at the LTA, have jumped upon and used to support their own objectives. It is suggested here that the LTA have tended to regard terms such as club culture and social exclusion “ahistorically”, as static entities and conceptualised in “process-reductive” ways. These terms have been reified, deemed as part of a “social structure” that somehow exists over and above the actions of interdependent people or groups. In these main regards, they mirror a “structural-functionalist” sociological approach (Dunning, 2004), which, despite being heavily criticised in mainstream sociology debates since the 1960s, has managed to find its way and infiltrate into contemporary sports-policy rhetoric.

The aims of this chapter are to critique contemporary LTA policy with regard to social exclusion and offer a more adequate theoretical model upon which future research and policy can and should be built. This model is based, primarily, on the sociological insights of Norbert Elias. It is felt that they offer a great deal with respect to overcoming some of the problems with contemporary thinking around social exclusion in British tennis, by exploring its emergence as an outcome of long-term historical changes in balances of power between societal groups. This goes beyond some of the static, ahistorical and “present-centred” thinking that is evidenced in LTA literature. Employing Elias’s (1978) understanding of “power” and his theoretical concepts of “interdependence” and the “figuration” help to tease out and make sense of changing

attitudes and shifting balances of power over time. These Eliasian concepts underpin the theoretical framework that is employed in this thesis to help make sense of the dynamic and complex issue of social exclusion in British tennis. What now follows is a critique of LTA policy on this issue and an introduction to Elias's theoretical framework.

A Critique of 'Structural-Functionalist' LTA Policy

It is suggested here that the ways in which politicians or those involved in sports policy understand society and social change at present is underpinned by a structural-functionalist approach, which has been internalised by many as an acceptable and appropriate way of viewing sport as “serving the needs” of society, as a tool of integration or equality. Emerging from the 19th century work of Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim, then taken forward by others such as Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, the sociological paradigm of structural-functionalism or “functionalism” suggested that society was made up of inter-connected individuals, institutions or sub-systems that worked together to support the equilibrium or “status quo” of the whole social system (Loy & Booth, 2000; Rojek, 1985). A society was conceptualised like a biological organism, with all of its constituent parts functioning together to maintain its balance. People learnt norms of behaviour, values and beliefs that supported the dominant structure of society through childhood socialisation. Thus, every human being learns of the “role” they should fulfil in society in order to function for the maintenance of the whole social system. Social change was understood as a malfunction in a normally stable social equilibrium; thus, understood as “dysfunctional”, with counter-balancing adjustments required for the restoration of the status quo (Elias, 1968).

The theory of functionalism was heavily criticised by sociologists from the 1960s onwards (Dunning, 2004), but, despite this, it is suggested that sport policy has come to be underpinned largely by a functionalist approach. Sport policy from the 1960 Wolfenden Report (Wolfenden Committee, 1960) onwards has been laden with functionalist assumptions similar in kind to those put forward by Stevenson and Nixon (1972). The “functions” of sport included: i) the socio-emotional function, whereby sport contributed to the stability of people's emotions; ii) the socialisation function, whereby sport teaches cultural norms and values; iii) the integrative function, whereby

sport contributes to the “harmonious integration” of people; iv) the political function, where sport is used to support dominant ideologies; and, v) the social mobility function, where sport serves as a vehicle for social mobility (Loy & Booth, 2000).

Similarities between the now forlorn functionalist perspective and contemporary LTA policy are reflected in the rhetoric produced by the governing body, in the very fabric of their understanding of the social concepts they discuss. These ideas and conceptions have also been reinforced in current media discourse on these issues in British tennis, as I am about to highlight. Criticisms of the structural-functionalist approach were mainly related to, firstly, how it conceptualised society with a “contemporary bias”; that is, in ahistorical, static and process-reductive ways. While the LTA recognised the similarities between tennis clubs of old and of today, their proposed solutions have never been underpinned by an explicit and detailed understanding of their history and how it can help explain the present and, to a certain extent, predict the future. A second criticism of the structural-functionalist approach is related to how it fails to overcome the false dichotomy of “agency versus structure”, stressing that humans passively follow the norms and values of social structures; and how it overemphasises the “normative” element of society, exaggerating the apparent unity and harmony of social groups and, therefore, neglecting conflict between them (Elias, 1968; Loy & Booth, 2000). LTA policy has been couched in positivist assumptions such as these for decades.

Process-Reduction and the Contemporary Bias of LTA Policy

In this first respect, Elias (1968, p.456) offered a heavy critique, specifically of Parsons’ works, in a postscript of *The Civilising Process*, in which he declared:

Parsons takes as his starting-point the hypothesis that every society normally exists in a state of unchanging equilibrium which is homeostatically preserved. It changes, he supposes, when this normal state of social equilibrium is disturbed by, for example, a violation of the social norms, a breach of conformity. Social change thus appears as a phenomenon resulting from the accidental, externally activated malfunction of a normally well-balanced social system.

Absent from the view of Parsons, Elias (1968, p.457) argued, was an understanding that “change is a normal characteristic of society”; functionalists view social change “as though it were something supplementary to the problems of the normally unchanging system. In this way ‘social change’ itself comes to be treated as an attribute of a state of rest”. Thus, not only did this approach consider society as static, reducing dynamic processes to motionless states, but it also viewed society, essentially, as without history or historical relevance (Ritzer, 1988; Zeitlin, 1973). Or rather, “the past” came to be regarded as providing merely an “historical background” to the current social system, “inessential in explaining how things are now” (Mennell, 1992, p.22).

To overcome this particular shortcoming of the functionalist approach, Elias (1987a) proposed the following: “The understanding of human societies requires... testable theoretical models which can help to determine and to explain the structure and direction of long-term social processes” (Elias, 1987a, p.226). However, he suggested:

The range of explanations is unduly narrowed if inquiries are focused on contemporary problems. One cannot ignore the fact that every present society has grown out of earlier societies and points beyond itself to a diversity of possible futures. If we immure sociological problems in static typologies and static concepts of structure and function, we neglect the intrinsic dynamics of human societies (Elias, 1987a, p.226).

The “present”, thus, is regarded as “one small momentary phase” in the vast development of humanity (Elias, 1987a).

Elias preferred to think of social change in terms of “structures of change” and “the structure of processes”, in recognition that societies and social structures should be regarded, at their initial and most basic level, as always in flux, changing, dynamic and, essentially, processual (Mennell, 1992). The relative failure of human beings to recognise that society is perpetually in motion is a major criticism that Elias levelled at contemporary understandings of society and social change; thus, he suggested that sociologists should “think processually”, by “constantly studying social relations as emerging and contingent processes” (Rojek, 1985, p.160). Seeking the “origins” and “first principles” of social developments are thus futile and meaningless exercises, argued Rojek (1985). From this platform, it is clear that theoretical models that fail to approach sociological concepts developmentally are inappropriate for many if not most

investigations into contemporary social issues or concepts. Jarvie and Maguire (1994, p.133) suggested that a developmental approach facilitates the act of “tracing ‘movements’ over time and of explaining how later social formations arise out of earlier ones”. Featherstone (1987, p.202) added the following on this subject:

Our ability to comprehend these [contemporary social] problems and conflicts and therefore our capacity to act or caution against action, is immensely enriched by an understanding of the long-term processes, the development which through the dynamic of unintended forces brings about changes which move in a specific direction.

The contemporary bias criticism of functionalism can also be levelled at the LTA in two main ways. Firstly, it is argued that while the LTA now claim to have adopted a more “long-term” perspective, their conception of this time range is ambiguous, in that the constraints imposed within the wider sports policy figuration do not allow long-term developments to be entirely followed through. Secondly, the LTA appear to have underplayed the historically-rooted nature of many of the problems that they have recently come to grapple with, with the consequence that their future proposals are underpinned by false and untested assumptions. I shall endeavour now to critique LTA policy in these ways, whilst offering a point of departure for a more fruitful investigation.

David Felgate, LTA performance director from 2003 to 2006, had as his main focus the long-term development of elite-level players. In the 2003 Annual Report, Felgate wrote of the need for long-term player development in the following way: “Getting more people to play from an early age will help produce more world-class players”, but he then stated rather quizzically, “I just want players to do well, to be making it. I want to come to Wimbledon in *three years time* and see a lot more British players in the draw” (LTA, 2003a, p.23) (italics added). Along these same lines, in an article for *The Daily Telegraph*, Carl Maes, who was appointed as head coach at the LTA’s Welwyn Garden City academy in 2002, talked of the need to “widen the base of the pyramid” in order to produce better players, but intimated that progress would be noticeable within just five years (cited in White, 2003, April 27). Also, in 2006, Roger Draper introduced the *Blueprint for British Tennis* and wrote of the need to “optimise the

use of our resources long-term” (LTA, 2006b, p.5), and reiterated the importance of long-term player development from junior to senior levels in the following way:

We will develop sophisticated talent identification systems, procedures and profiling tools that are easy to apply on a consistent national basis. And we will put in place a national network of talent scouts to spot players at an early age. We will place particular emphasis on players as they make the transition from the junior to the senior game (LTA, 2006b, p.7).

In the *Blueprint*, Draper spoke of “long term” progress in a noticeably truncated way, however, as the following passage in the 2006 Annual Report demonstrates:

2007 will be a challenging year for us in British tennis. We have to deliver the start of our plans as set out in the *Blueprint* and we need to clearly recognise that this is a long game. I am under no illusion that we are looking at *around 5 to 7 years* to address many of the underlying challenges that we face in our sport (LTA, 2006a, p.7) (italics added).

It is strongly in doubt whether the kinds of changes that Felgate, Maes and Draper had in mind would show noticeable results over such a short time-frame. Nevertheless, it is suggested that, for an organisation like the LTA under such immediate pressure, the time-frame of five or seven years is actually quite a long period of time. This, however, presents a confusing picture of sports development in the UK.

It is suggested that many at the LTA, including the previous and incumbent chief executives and their respective teams, recognised, at least in part, the embedded socially and culturally-rooted nature of some of the problems in British tennis, as well as the need for “real” long-term planning. However, whilst they might have welcomed an opportunity to couch their development plans over, say, a 25-year period, they were heavily constrained through ties of interdependence; wider pressures, in part caused by the growing commercialisation and professionalisation of their organisation. As Wimbledon profits and, thus, LTA income increased sharply from the early 1990s, this was matched with a concomitant growing level of expectation, responsibility and pressure to develop talent and offer solutions to the various problems in British tennis. This would have also constrained the LTA to think in the short-term, in order to satisfy the increasingly insatiable media and general public, as well as their growing plethora of

corporate partners and other stakeholders. As such, it is suggested that they had come to develop and reproduce a largely “present-centred” approach to the issues.

This is not to offer personal criticism, however, as this approach of the LTA might be symptomatic of the fact that “those involved in planning are all too often involved in networks of relationships which constrain them to deliver results in the short-term” (Dopson & Waddington, 1996, p.535). Terms of office for sport’s governing body officials, similar to those in central or local government, are based on yearly or sometimes three or four-year cycles, where one must prove their worth by making positive changes within a short time-frame. The departure of both Rebecca Miskin and David Felgate after just three years as LTA executives should serve as a suitable example (LTA, 2006, May 16). When it comes to developments of a social or cultural kind that both Crowther and Draper remarked on, for example, changing the club culture or “the culture of tennis” generally, the speed at which progress would become noticeable is invariably much slower than their respective terms of office at the LTA would allow them to oversee. While Crowther was under no illusion that progress in this regard was slow and necessitated a “generational” change, it is suggested that those in positions of power might be more inclined to offer solutions that yield noticeable short-term success in order to appear to be doing a “good job” for the relatively brief time they are in power. Of course, this has meant that policies and programmes have come and gone at the whims of the changing executives on board, which has given cause for concern. Allan Patmore (2003, p.xv), in his foreword in Michael Collins book entitled *Sport and Social Exclusion*, suggested the following with regard to the problems of rapid personnel changes in policy-making for social exclusion:

As politicians and managers change, each in turn locked into a personal quest for distinctive policies ‘to make a difference’ and to carry their individual stamp for wider approbation, so programmes are all too often terminated long before their impact or success can be perceived or measured. The tendency to indulge in what Mike Collins calls ‘initiativitis’ is dangerous and counter productive in trying to tackle social exclusion.

It is suggested that this present-centred orientation of the LTA might be symptomatic of the spread of structural-functionalist approaches from wider British politics and sports policy. This orientation is often justified, as Dopson and Waddington

(1996, p.535) suggest, in terms of “a dichotomy which emphasises the practical rather than the theoretical, with the implication that such a ‘practical’, present-centred orientation provides a better guide to planning”. In other words, the argument is that planning for the future is much more effective if one analyses what is happening at present, instead of delving into the past to investigate what has already happened. The danger of adopting an approach such as this, however, is that it could lead to a lack of awareness of the extent to which planned initiatives invariably lead to unintended outcomes. Dopson and Waddington (1996, p.535) paraphrased Elias in noting that,

it is only through striving to understand long-term processes that we can move towards obtaining an orientation that is sufficiently wide-ranging and reality-congruent to enable us to decide whether short-term practical measures designed to overcome difficulties and disadvantages will not, in the longer term, produce difficulties and disadvantages that are even greater.

Elias suggested that one should adopt a long-term developmental approach to an understanding of contemporary social structures. Therefore, to understand tennis club culture and most specifically the issues surrounding social exclusion in the present day, the illumination of these phenomena should be sought “developmentally”. The historical development of tennis clubs should be exposed as well as the specific relations of power within them that have come to underpin the particular character of club culture. Further, a developmental approach to the investigation of social exclusion should be adopted, bringing to light the long-term changes in the social conditions within which such exclusion has become manifest. Arguably, it is only through such a historically-rooted analysis that one can bring to light the unplanned nature of change in this direction and understand fully the shifting balances of power and ties of interdependency that underpin such a situation. More pertinently, in practical terms, through a developmental analysis one can more effectively judge the extent to which implemented change will yield intended results.

It is suggested here that many of the individuals in the high-pressured positions at the LTA have been unable to achieve a sufficient degree of detachment necessary to fully recognise the long-term and historically-rooted nature of social issues and take affirmative action in the light of this perspective. Those who have been able to recognise the long-term time frame were constrained in terms of implementation. It is

arguably far simpler to achieve and maintain a sufficient level of detachment if one is not held accountable for the short-term results of such actions, but this is likely impossible in such a cut-throat and commercialised environment as sports development.

As a sociologist, alternatively, it is easier to adopt a relatively detached position in an organisational examination of this type, because, in general, investigators are not constrained in the same ways as those who make the important decisions for their organisations. Of course, Elias (1956, p.237) warned that sociologists “cannot cease to take part in, and to be affected by, the social and political affairs of their groups and their time”; thus, he did not advocate or even suggest that a wholly detached position could be achieved. He did, nevertheless, suggest that one should attempt a “detour via detachment”, which can help investigators remain focused on long-term social processes in order to illuminate the inter-weaving of planned and unplanned processes that both enable and constraint certain individuals or groups to act in particular ways. Thus, the crucial unplanned “nature” of social change can be highlighted most clearly in order to better understand the complex ties of interdependency that bind groups or individuals together. I can therefore move onto my second criticism of the LTA’s perspective, that they have ignored the past while attempting to plan for the future.

Between 1999 and 2002, the LTA appointed a Frenchman called Patrice Hagelauer as their Performance Director (LTA, 1999, March 3), and his conception of how tennis *should* be played and how tennis clubs *should* operate came to be widely accepted and also internalised in many people’s understandings of these subject areas. However, they were grounded in an ahistorical conception of the current social and cultural problems in British tennis and the potential solutions to these problems.

In one of his many interviews with the press, Hagelauer made a number of basic observations upon his arrival in Britain that surprised him; he declared:

I realised when I took the job that there was a cultural problem about how tennis was played in Britain, but I didn’t realise it was that much of a cultural problem. The clubs are more social than competitive and what really amazed me when I started was that these clubs existed without junior programmes (cited in Henderson, 2001, March 4).

He recounted this fear some months later on BBC Sport Online (2001, June 25), when he remarked: “We are trying to change the culture in these clubs. At the moment, they are

leisure and adult-orientated. We need to change it to a more competitive and junior culture. If this doesn't happen, forget about producing champions". In the Telegraph (cited in Baker, 2001, June 29), Hagelauer commented again, at length, as follows:

Tennis in this country is a culture of leisure, not a culture of competition. So many of our clubs are nothing more than factories in which to lose weight. There's no way that things are going to change without a new culture in the clubs... Tennis here is leisure, adult, social, something to do before you have a drink at the bar. This is our fundamental problem. Clubs are not like this in other countries. In Belgium, in Switzerland, they have great junior programmes in the clubs. In Argentina, in Spain, the adults at the clubs want to watch the juniors play, they are proud of them. It's a huge difference from here.

In 2002, again, he spoke of the fundamental need to change club culture, as follows:

I was not expecting clubs to be operating as they were. I didn't realise clubs had a kind of leisure and adult culture here, or that the cities and local authorities were not supportive of the clubs, which is where everything starts – mini tennis, juniors programmes and so on (cited in Henderson, 2002, June 30).

Throughout his time in Britain, Hagelauer recounted again and again his reservations and worries about British tennis, focusing on its numerous problems that related to the dominant social structure or culture of British tennis, and tennis clubs specifically. While Hagelauer and others at the LTA were right to conceptualise these sorts of problems as social and cultural issues, they did not and still have not paid enough attention to their historically-rooted nature. Hagelauer did recognise the ostensible links between contemporary British tennis clubs and what was found in the typical "Victorian garden party" of the 19th century, for example, when he suggested that "the roots of Britain's inability to produce champions was that tennis here was a pastime rather than a competitive sport" (cited in Henderson, 2006, January 22). However, his proposed solutions were never couched within a historical perspective. Therefore, by ignoring how the culture of tennis clubs has developed over time, both to exclude certain groups in society and to put at the forefront a certain way of playing tennis over another (i.e. playing tennis "socially" rather than competitively), the LTA essentially have conceptualised the culture of tennis clubs as a static and unchanging entity, rather than a dynamic process as reality would indicate. Zeitlin (1973, p.14) questioned this

functionalist way of thinking, as follows: “Is it not the height of naiveté to suppose that one can explain the present exclusively by means of the present – to suppose that the chain of events leading from the past has no effect on the present?” Much like structural-functionalist conceptions of society, thus, the history of social exclusion in tennis and the closely related culture of tennis clubs were merely regarded by the LTA as “historical background” and of little real use to developing solutions at present. It is suggested in this thesis that the present issues of social exclusion and the need to change club culture in British tennis should be examined historically, adopting a developmental approach like the one Elias advocated.

The constraints of working within the demanding and competitive sports development industry have perhaps prevented the LTA from adopting a suitable and complete historical and developmental perspective. Instead of looking in both directions, to the past in order to help explain the present and to predict the future, the LTA have only come to look at the present and towards the future. From this perspective, however, their explanations of social change have been understandably flawed, and this will continue to undermine their attempts for future planning so long as they ignore the past. Thus, a more complete socio-historical analysis of tennis is undoubtedly required, as part of a rationale to expand contemporary knowledge of these areas of academic interest, and to help augment the LTA’s understanding of these areas of interest in order for them to better plan and implement change in the future. It is suggested that this present critical analysis serves as a useful point of departure in this regard.

“False Dichotomies” and a False Consensus in LTA Discourse

The second main critique of the structural-functionalist perspective is related to how individuals are conceptualised as being separate from the society in which they live and operate. Functionalists like Parsons and Durkheim came to be criticised by symbolic interactionists for the ways that they conceptualised individuals as passive, rather than active agents in society (Loy & Booth, 2000). While symbolic interactionists can be criticised for falling on the other side of the false agency versus structure

dichotomy, however, they nevertheless brought to light the shortcomings of this aspect of the functionalist approach.

Elias, on the other hand, sought to do away with dichotomous modes of thinking. His concept of the “figuration”, described as “a structure of mutually oriented and dependent people” (Elias, 1978, p.261), goes some way to challenge the idea that either individual psychological processes or wider social processes are responsible for outcomes in society. Elias (1978, p.113) wrote:

We always feel impelled to make quite senseless conceptual distinctions, like ‘the individual *and* society’, which makes it seem that ‘the individual’ and ‘society’ were two separate things, like tables and chairs or pots and pans. One can find oneself caught up in long discussions of the nature of the relationship between these two apparently separate objects (original italics).

Functionalist sociologists were trapped in, what Mennell (1992, p.254) referred to as, “an endless series of futile arguments about which of the two is more ‘real’, and which should come first as point of departure in sociological investigation”. These theoretical misconceptions, according to Elias, formed part of his critique of “*homo clausus*” (closed man) thinking, whereby particular behaviour is explained solely in terms of individual psychological traits, instead of patterns of behaviour that are related to the dynamic norms and values that prevail and dominate within a particular figuration of interdependent people. There is often an assumption made in the social sciences that “what goes on inside” and “what goes on outside” are structurally divided (Elias, 1969b). Paraphrasing Elias, Mennell (1992, p.102) wrote of the flaws in adopting a purely psychological or “ego-centric” concept of behaviour, in that “too often it implicitly assumes that the essential determinants of a person’s behaviour come from ‘inside’, independent of his or her relation to others, and are related to others almost as an afterthought”.

Elias (1939/2000), in his analysis of long-term changes in both the personality and social structures of Western Europeans over the course of many centuries, found that the two processes were “interdependent aspects of the same long-term development” (Elias, 1968, p.452). Attempting to separate them, much like attempting to “reduce everything variable to something invariable, and to simplify all complex phenomena by dissecting them into their individual components” needlessly removes an integral

component of all social phenomena, specifically the component of social change (Elias, 1968, p.455). In this specific regard, Elias (1998, p.197) asked the following questions:

How should the simultaneous transformation of the personality structure of many people be explained without reference to the network of relations which many people form with each other? How can one make long-term psychic changes comprehensible and explain them without recourse to the associated long-term social changes?

As a way of answering these questions and, thus, overcoming this dichotomous way of thinking, Elias proposed to view individuals as “*homines aperti*” (open men), bound within numerous figurations of interdependent people. Changes in the social structure of a given figuration over time were inextricably related to changes in the “personality structure” of its component people. This was one of Elias’s (1939/2000) major and most influential findings achieved through his empirical work in *The Civilising Process*. Murphy, Sheard & Waddington (2000, p.93) wrote the following describing the central tenets of this research:

A long-term process took place generally involving the refinement of manners and social standards and an increase in the social pressure on people to exercise stricter, more continuous and more even self-control over their feelings and behaviour. As part of this unplanned process, there occurred a shift in the balance between external constraints and self-constraints in favour of the latter, and at the level of personality, an increase in the importance of ‘conscience’ as a regulator of behaviour. That is, social standards came to be internalised more deeply and to operate, not only consciously, but also beneath the level of rationality and conscious control, for example by means of the arousal of feelings of shame, guilt and anxiety.

It is suggested that the most appropriate way to conceptualise long-term social change is through an Eliasian developmental perspective, bringing to light the interdependent changes to the social structure of people and to their individual personality structures, whilst conceptualising multiple sources of power at both “individual” and “societal” levels of abstraction.

Related to the functionalist conception of individuals as passive followers of structural norms and values, is the notion that the actions of all individuals and groups

tend towards harmony and unity (Rojek, 1985). Thus, conflict is not seen as an integral feature of society and a normal and expected outcome, but rather as a consequence of particular individuals or groups acting against societal norms and values. Whereas functionalists overemphasise “consensus” and agreement in society, conflict theorists, such as feminists and neo-Marxists on the other hand, “emphasise the dominance of some social groups by others, see social order as based on manipulation and control by dominant groups, and view social change as occurring rapidly and in a disorderly fashion as subordinate groups overthrow dominant groups” (Ritzer, 1988, p.78). While conflict theorists can be criticised, themselves, for adopting an “evolutionary” perspective of social change, instead of one that is determined by unplanned and unintended outcomes, they nevertheless put forward a more persuasive and reality congruent conception of power as being both enabling and constraining (Loy & Booth, 2000). One of the many advantages of Elias’s concept of the figuration is the way it highlights how interdependencies naturally stimulate structural tensions, struggles and conflicts between groups (Rojek, 1985). These power struggles are at the heart of people’s functional interdependencies.

Far from fully acknowledging the different motivations that all people who play and are involved in tennis have for the sport, the LTA have tended to put forward a rather simplistic and one-dimensional view of how tennis *should* be played and organised in clubs. This is apparent in the rhetoric surrounding the attempt to change club culture from the late 1990s. In this regard, Patrice Hagelauer was instrumental in implementing what came to be called “Club Vision” in 2000, which was an LTA strategy designed to help progressive clubs “open their doors” to new sections of British society. Detailed leaflets and booklets were produced and distributed to clubs with redevelopment in mind and guidelines were put in place for clubs to follow, which focused on developing juniors, competition and coaching as well as improving the marketing, promotion and management of clubs.

The whole concept of Club Vision was centred on the notion that clubs *should* strive to develop talent and *should* want to help the LTA in its objectives to produce “more players, better players”. It was thought that, after all, these clubs are supposedly filled with the very same people who, every summer during Wimbledon, scratch their heads in confusion after the vast majority of British players lose in the first round, then

proceed to berate the LTA for not doing a good enough job in producing champions. Surely, the LTA thought, club members would and should recognise the responsibility that they have in the whole process of developing talent. However, this was found to be an untested and unfounded assumption, and Hagelauer came to regard changing the club culture extremely challenging. His general view was that club members in Britain failed to accept their responsibility for helping the LTA develop talent, and he regarded these types of members as selfish “club users”. It was suggested that clubs were unwilling to support junior development and generally reluctant to open their doors to new members, for fear that these changes would bring negative consequences. It was for these reasons that clubs tended not to support talent development initiatives or “performance” tennis.

Adults and established members of clubs have tended to adopt quite a defensive position, demonstrated a lack of acceptance for change and harboured strong resentment towards the LTA who wanted to force change upon them. It was assumed that talent development was or should be the aim of everyone involved. However, the notion that all individuals and groups involved had different and numerous motives for participation, and that these motives were structured according to their ties of interdependence, was seemingly not taken into sufficient consideration here. Thus, it could be argued that the LTA have overlooked or misunderstood the complex sociological reasons, firstly, why individuals join tennis clubs and why they value their tennis club memberships; secondly, why individual members and committees of tennis clubs have shown and continued to demonstrate considerable resistance to implementing some of the LTA’s talent development initiatives; thirdly, why tennis clubs seem generally resistant to change; and fourthly, why certain societal groups have continued to be excluded or, at least, marginalised within tennis clubs despite the numerous schemes, programmes and policies implemented by the LTA. Since Hagelauer’s departure in 2002, the LTA have continued to struggle with their objective to change the culture of tennis clubs, and the fact that many clubs have continued to show either resistance to change or play “lip-service” to the LTA’s goals for club redevelopment, suggests that problems continue to persist at a basic level of understanding.

From this standpoint, it should be clear how the LTA’s conceptualisations of social exclusion and club culture are fundamentally flawed, underpinned by functionalist assumptions that regard dynamic processes as motionless entities and view power

relations as static and perpetually in harmony. It is suggested that the figurational perspective developed by Norbert Elias, that is, an “Eliasian” approach, offers considerably more explanatory purchase than a functionalist perspective. Let us examine some more features of an Eliasian approach to sociology, particularly those that underpinned this investigation on a theoretical level.

The Value of Elias in his Concept of Power and Game Models

A number of Elias’s theories and concepts are used in this investigation to illuminate, critically analyse and explain aspects of how British tennis has developed, and there are a number of reasons why a predominantly figurational approach was adopted. Firstly, one of the most recognisable and important ways in which Elias’s theoretical framework is distinctive from others is his unwavering focus on long-term developments and wider social processes. This was first recognised in his seminal empirical investigation, *The Civilising Process*, whereby developments on a social level over the course of many centuries (i.e. sociogenesis) were linked to the ways people thought and felt about certain aspects of their social lives on a personality level (i.e. psychogenesis). It was also from this work where major findings and insights came to inform aspects of my historical analysis of British lawn tennis. For Elias, “good” sociology meant historically-grounded sociology, with a suggestion that contemporary social issues and phenomena should be understood as emerging from actions of numerous interdependent individuals and groups over time. Secondly, another distinctive quality of Elias’s approach is how the macro and micro dichotomy is overcome. He stressed the importance of recognising that humans live out their lives as part of small and large-scale figurations simultaneously, and his work on *The Court Society* (Elias, 1968) makes these ties of interdependence clear. Further, Elias and Scotson’s (1965/1994) investigation of *The Established and the Outsiders* could be read as an empirical study underpinned by extended theoretical points made earlier in *The Civilising Process*. While Elias and Scotson’s work is essentially an analysis at a micro level, by applying this as a theoretical model in the investigation of a tennis club, explanations can be found as to how and why changes and decisions made on a macro, wider-societal level, that is, changes in LTA policy or wider societal trends or processes,

were influential on a micro, tennis club level. Using Eliasian terminology, one could see clearly how the “figuration” of British tennis and the figuration of the tennis club were “interdependent” or interconnected on numerous planes and levels. The bridge that held the micro and macro-scale analyses together was Elias’s (1978) theory of *Game Models*, which understood power as a structural characteristic of all human relationships. The theory explored the dynamic nature of human interdependencies and power relations, bringing into focus how wider social processes on a macro scale tend to influence an individual’s or group’s relative power over others on a micro scale. Let us examine Elias’s conception of “power” and his theory of Game Models.

For Elias, power is best conceptualised in terms of “power chances”, or the extent to which an individual or group has the ability to influence something, someone else or the direction of social change more generally. According to Elias (1978), power is always expressed in relative terms, whereby every individual or group has power chances to a greater or lesser extent. Power is not something that some have and others wholly lack, but rather it is a “structural characteristic of all human relationships” (Elias, 1978, p.74). While it might be the case that one individual or group is able to control and/or influence the thoughts, intentions and actions of someone else, it is more appropriate and, indeed, more realistic to what is observable to conceptualise power in terms of balances or “relations of power”. Elias (1978, p.74) went on to provide examples as follows:

From the day of its birth, a baby has power over its parents, not just the parents over the baby. At least the baby has power over them as long as they attach any kind of value to it. If not, it loses its power... Equally bi-polar is the balance of power between a slave and his master. The master has power over his slave, but the slave also has power over his master, in proportion to his function for his master – his master’s dependence on him. In relationships between parents and infants, master and slave, power chances are distributed very unevenly. But whether the power differentials are large or small, balances of power are always present wherever there is functional interdependence between people.

In this way, even in circumstances where one group or individual is seemingly powerless to act in accordance with his/her own intentions, in most cases they are still able to

influence the actions or reactions of other more powerful groups. This is because power has a reciprocal function; it is “polymorphous” (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994).

Within a given figuration, the power of a particular individual or group in relation to another is based upon the particular functions that they provide for each other. “Functions”, however, are not to be thought of in functionalist terms, as a particular task performed by an individual or group to support the balance of harmony within a given social structure. Instead, argued Elias (1978, p.78): “We can only speak of social functions... when referring to interdependencies which constrain people to a greater or lesser extent”. He went on to provide more detail as follows:

When one person (or group of persons) lacks something which another person or group has the power to withhold, the latter has a function for the former. Thus men have a function for women and women for men, parents for children and children for parents (Elias, 1978, p.78).

In complex figurations, such as contemporary British society, it is undoubtedly the case that we depend on others and others depend on us, whether it is on a basic subsistence level, providing food or housing, or in terms of employment or education. Elias (1987a) proposed four universal processual functions that are necessary for survival, common to all societies: the economic function, the control of violence, the development of knowledge or “orientation” and the development of behavioural self-restraint. All of these social functions are open to monopolisation by particular individuals or groups; in the past, the opportunities presented have created marked divisions between societal groups.

Karl Marx famously developed his idea that the economic function was everywhere and always the most fundamental and root function in society, underpinning all structural divisions of power. One’s relationship to the means of production was regarded universally as the predominant source of social power (Rigauer, 2000). Drawing on research findings of relations between social classes during the 18th and 19th centuries, Marx found that the respective monopolisation of the economic function, of the means of production, by the entrepreneurial “bourgeoisie”, allowed them the greatest power chances and the concomitant ability to exclude or exploit other groups. Marx made an enormous impact with regard to developing a sociological understanding of social inequalities, demonstrating that “the superior power chances of one group in

relation to other groups are due to the *monopolisation* of certain resources which another group needs” (Mennell, 1992, p.125). Nevertheless, Elias (1987a) was able to critique the “economic reductionism” of Marx, pointing to evidence from research on other societies where the economic functions were evidently less important in the divisions of power; for example, in the feudal societies of the Middle Ages, priests and warriors, rather than “economic specialists”, were the most powerful groups. Kilminster (1987, p.219) suggested that the resultant economic power of the warriors was related to other social functions that they were able to monopolise:

In the priests and warriors figuration, they monopolised what the majority of the people most needed at the deepest level under less secure conditions, i.e. magical and religious interpretations of the spirit world to assuage their fears and protection against attack from outside forces. Thus, it was the priests and warriors who were the castes set apart, privileged, who, *because of what they monopolised*, were able to command the economic power (original italics).

Clearly, the differences in power chances here were related to the basic “functional interdependence” of groups in society. One’s power was derived from their ability to withhold something that someone else required, and evidence reported that only in certain figurations have economic functions played a decisive role in divisions of power.

Elias, of course, saw the “interdependence” of groups in society, the invisible ties of mutual dependence and reliance that bind societal groups, as dynamic and constantly in flux. Over time, balances of power can shift and particular groups within a given figuration can become increasingly reliant or dependent on others in the light of wider social developments or changes in their functional interdependence. As figurations grow, however, they invariably become more complex and, concomitantly, often outside of any individual’s or group’s respective direct control. Elias’s (1978) theory of Game Models goes some way in bringing to light how these changes manifest themselves in relations of power.

Game Models theory is particularly useful in bringing to light the intricacies of changing power relations between individuals or groups helping to uncover “how power-ratios influence the extent to which the moves of one person or group can influence, if not quite determine, the moves of another, as well as the final outcome” (Green, 2000, p.184). Elias (1978) saw Game Models as a means of temporarily isolating in close

focus the interweaving aims and actions of pluralities of people, thereby making these complex processes more easily understandable. He suggested that Game Models utilise “the image of people playing a game as a metaphor for people forming societies together”, and this can “serve to make certain problems about social life more accessible to scientific reflection” (Elias, 1978, p.92). Game Models are, thus, “simplified analogies of more complex social processes” (Dopson, 2005, p.1134).

At a simple level, Elias put forward a model of a game involving two people; one of whom is much stronger and, thus, more powerful than the other. The strongest player is able to limit the actions and options of the weaker player to make certain moves, but the weaker player has less opportunity to do the same to the stronger player. Where the balance of power between the two is very great, the stronger player not only has relatively more control over the actions of his or her opponent but also over the course of the game in general. Imagine a game of tennis in which one player is much stronger than the other. The stronger player is able to make her opponent move in any direction she chooses, forcing her to play shots that are easily returned, with points easily won. The stronger player is able to exert a considerable degree of control over the moves of her opponent as well as the particular game of tennis on the whole. The stronger player is never wholly omnipotent, though, because the weaker player can, at least to a limited extent, exert some degree of control over the stronger player in terms of forcing them at least to take their moves into consideration. The stronger player, at the very least, has to move into position in order to win the point and, thus, assert her superiority and control over her opponent and over the course of the contest. As such, the game cannot be entirely controlled by the stronger player. This is what Elias (1978) meant by the term “interdependence”, whereby in any game the players always have a degree of control over each other. In games where both players have relatively equal power, it is clear that the control that each player has over the moves of the other player is lessened, as well as the control they have over the course of the game itself; the course of social change as it were.

While this type of model is probably too simplistic and uncharacteristic of any type of institution or organisation that could be found in contemporary Western societies, nevertheless, it suggests how power relations are structured between two individuals or groups for ease of understanding. The main strength of Game Models is

the light it can shed on changing social relations in a figuration that is undergoing a marked process of change. Consider the figuration of international tennis since the 1960s as an example. Elias (1978, p.80) posited that Game Models have the potential to “show how the web of human relations changes when the distribution of power changes”; thus, as the number of players in the game or figuration enlarges, for example, so too does the complexity of their relationships and the extent to which all individuals are restrained in their available choices. Ties of human interdependence, which bind us to depend on others for various social functions, increase in number and lengthen meaning that groups or individuals are forced to “play” numerous “games” at once. In an expanding figuration, power thus becomes multi-polar. The growing dependency ties, in this instance, come to limit the power chances of even the most powerful individuals or groups, as they are forced to take into consideration the outcomes or consequences of their actions within all the games or relations in which they are involved. To a certain extent, they are forced to accommodate the needs and wishes of others whom they are in direct competition with, in order to fulfil their own personal objectives. “Power”, thus, takes on a reciprocal character, with all groups able to access different resources in their attempt to influence the general direction of social change. Returning to the example of international tennis from the 1960s, it is apparent that as a consequence of the growing consumer culture of the 1960s, even the powerful governing bodies of tennis, such as the LTA and the USLTA, came to depend on television networks and commercial sponsors. Tournaments were organised and even rule changes were made to satisfy the interests of these groups. For the governing bodies, therefore, some of their authority over the game was relinquished as a result of these new partnerships or ties of interdependence. Elias’s more elaborate models bring these lengthening interdependency ties to light.

At a more complex level, Elias proposed numerous different types of games involving multiple players, for example a game whereby the stronger player plays a number of weaker players simultaneously, and a game in which there are multiple levels or tiers. These games tend to resemble more closely societies or institutions that are governed by either oligarchic or democratic structures. One could think of tennis clubs or governing bodies as respective examples. Yet, it is clear that the growing complexity

of the game relates to the increasing number of power relations that need to be taken into account. Roderick (2003, p.57) stated:

as the number of interdependent players grows, it becomes clear how little the game can be controlled and guided from any single player's or group's position; indeed the opposite is the case, for it becomes clear how much the course of the game... increasingly constrains the moves of every single player.

In this way, it is suggested that regardless of what particular individuals or groups set out to achieve, they are always dependent on others. The choices available for each individual or group are restricted by the actions of others, the actions of whom in turn influence the overall direction of the game or, in this case, the direction in which tennis was to develop.

At the same time, Elias (1978) suggested that as relations in a given figuration become more complex and multi-polar, demands are placed on all groups involved that invariably lead to a higher level of competitiveness between everyone. The successful management of these competitive relations comes to demand the exercise of foresight and behavioural self-restraint, which often has the unintended effect of power differentials "evening out". Elias (1968) called this process "functional democratisation". Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.237-8) described an expanding figuration in which there occurs,

a change in the direction of decreasing power-differentials within and among groups, more specifically a change in the balance of power between rulers and ruled, the social classes, men and women, the generations, parents and children. Such a process occurs because the incumbents of specialised roles are dependent on others and can, therefore, exert reciprocal control... Increasing division of labour and the emergence of longer chains of interdependence lead to greater reciprocal dependency and, hence, to patterns of 'multi-polar control' within and among groups.

Increasing reciprocal control on the actions of all interdependent groups within a given figuration inevitably leads to a situation whereby, "as the moves of thousands of interdependent players intertwine, no single player nor group of players acting alone can determine the course of the game, no matter how powerful they may be" (Elias, 1978, p.147). The game can appear to take on "a life of its own", with a whole host of

unintended consequences that are, essentially, the result of the complex interweaving of large numbers of interdependent individuals or groups (Elias, 1978). The current figuration of British tennis could be said to have experienced a number of unintended consequences that came as a result of growing ties of interdependence over the past few decades. One example could be the increasing pressure that British players now claim to be under, when competing at Wimbledon. Whilst it was probably not the intention of any one group or individual to do so, it is clear that the growing commercial “hype” and media attention that the event generates, the rising interest in sporting celebrities and the large number of British entries to the tournament each year has led to the increasing expectations of British success within it.

It is entirely possible and often evident that individuals or groups have little or no knowledge of the actions, plans, goals or general ways of life of others with whom they are themselves functionally interdependent (Mennell, 1992). Ties of interdependence can stretch beyond what is observable to any given person and connect individuals and groups together that have no awareness of each others’ existences. In this way, the actions of one individual or group can influence the social conditions of others several links down the chain, but with whom they have no visible connection, as the above example illustrates.

It is because of this complex social arrangement that numerous unplanned and unintended or, rather, “blind” social processes take place (Elias, 1978). It is this concept that marks out the Eliasian theoretical approach as being very appropriate to make sense of people and the numerous networks they are involved in, as Elias regards ties of interdependence in relation to both observable and hidden relationships.

Conclusions

This chapter aimed to highlight the weaknesses of how social exclusion in British tennis clubs is at present understood by the LTA. A critique was offered of its structural-functionalist nature, and the figurational approach by Elias was introduced as an alternative framework for sociological enquiry. Elias’s (1978) theory of Game Models is felt to be a useful framework for analysis in this thesis, as it overcomes many of the inherent problems with the LTA’s current frame of thinking with regard to social

exclusion being a reified, static and ahistorical phenomenon. Employing the concepts of “interdependence” and the “figuration” to the changing social structure of British tennis reveals the phenomenon of social exclusion as an unintended outcome of changing balances of power in British society. These balances of power are relational and always in process. This model and the associated concepts and terms are used throughout this thesis to help shed light upon the changes that occurred within the figuration of British tennis since the late 19th century. In *Chapter 9* the Game Models framework is used more explicitly to explain some of the problems faced on a more practical level of application from the mid-1990s.

Following on from this chapter, it is suggested that the concept of “social exclusion” is heavily laden with political and ideological assumptions that are in need of critique. It is felt that the LTA take a biased and emotionally-charged position and also reduce the phenomenon of social exclusion in British tennis to inadequate static conceptions of social-class or age discrimination. Exposing these arguments and offering alternative theoretical positions are the aims of the following chapter. The work of Elias is returned to, together with some added insights provided by Pierre Bourdieu.

Chapter 2: Beyond “Right and Wrong”: A Closer Look at Age and Social-Class Exclusion Arguments in British Tennis

The overall aim of this chapter is to examine the arguments surrounding the exclusion of individuals or groups in British tennis on the basis of their age and social class. When explaining the phenomenon of social exclusion in British tennis clubs, the LTA, together with other British sport governing bodies, has tended to adopt a certain position regarding who is excluded and for what reasons. The issue is conceptualised in terms of discrimination based on age and social class. According to the LTA, the main groups excluded in tennis clubs are children and those from lower social classes, with the combination of these features, i.e. working-class children, presenting their biggest challenge and also their largest target group for increasing tennis participation (LTA, 2003a, 2004a, 2004c, 2006b, 2007a). It is argued here, however, that to understand the issue in these terms is of only limited use. It presents the issue in a static way and also supports dichotomous modes of thinking, by conceptualising the problem in terms of adults vs. children and middle-class vs. working-class, as well as good vs. bad or right vs. wrong. Again, this is regarded as being an unfortunate consequence of the widespread adoption of a structural-functionalist framework when trying to understand complex social problems in sport. The objectives of this chapter are to expose the weaknesses of these age and class-discrimination arguments, with an attempt made to discuss the issue of social exclusion in British tennis without resorting to or taking sides with a particular emotional or political position, i.e. that social exclusion is wrong, or that working-class children are victims, etc. Instead, a more balanced and “detached” discussion is offered, with these problems and their consequences understood merely as outcomes of uneven balances of power between interdependent groups. The growing issue of their exclusion is understood as being a result of a shifting balance of power.

The first part of this chapter discusses the changing balance of power between adults and children, to examine long-term trends and processes that have resulted in the issue of children’s exclusion in sport, and tennis in particular. An argument is made that examining this changing balance of power in an emotionally-detached way, through an Eliasian theoretical perspective, offers greater potential for understanding children’s contemporary exclusion. The second part of this chapter discusses the issue of exclusion

in tennis based on social class, with the aim to critique the adequacy of the simple economic-reductionist position that is adopted by the LTA and other governing-bodies in explanation of this phenomenon. The work of Bourdieu is used to expose the multi-layered complexity of “social class”, and the theoretical frameworks of he and Elias are suggested as worthwhile alternatives. To end the chapter, the specific framework outlined in Elias and Scotson’s (1965/ 1994) text *The Established and the Outsiders* is introduced to complement aspects of Elias’s other theories utilised in this thesis.

The ‘Social’ and ‘Sociological’ Issues of Exclusion in British Tennis

Underpinned by the common structural-functionalist approach within contemporary sport policy, the issue of social exclusion has tended to be regarded by governing bodies and their connected agents as wholly negative, but it is suggested that this presents an over-simplistic and inaccurate account of this complex and dynamic subject. Whether in education, employment, healthcare or sport, the exclusion of particular groups from gaining access to certain resources is always an outcome of an unequal balance of power. However, contemporary rhetoric on the subject has tended to reduce the processual nature of exclusion and present it in a reified way, as a static entity, ignoring the historical emergence and development of the power struggles of which exclusion has become an outcome. As power relations are dynamic and always in process, balances of power between social groups can and often do change over time, and while this might not necessarily lead to marked social change, it might lead to certain issues being raised in the public agenda. The issue of social exclusion is one such issue.

Issues are constructed socially, and the weight of issues in the public agenda is rarely determined in a “rational” way. That is, some issues are given more coverage because they involve important or popular people, while others that could be regarded as more important are marginalised. The enduring focus on celebrities as sources of news serves as an instant example. Thus, it is clear that the ability to label something as an “issue” and place it in the public agenda requires a relatively considerable amount of power, and those with relatively greater power chances in society are more able to raise or ignore matters as they see fit. As such, some “problems” can go on for many years

without ever being raised as “issues” that require attention. The issue of social exclusion in tennis, with specific reference to social class and age, is a perfect example of this phenomenon. While the *sociological* issue of exclusion in tennis can be traced back to the earliest days of lawn tennis and beyond, the *social* issue of exclusion only came to be viewed in “problem” terms relatively recently.

Certainly, in the earliest years of lawn tennis, the denial of children and those from the poorest sections of society the opportunity to obtain memberships in tennis clubs was not regarded as problematic. In fact, it is suggested here that the exclusion of these groups actually helped to develop the prestige of the sport, necessary for maintaining its popularity among the socially-aspirational classes. Because of the structure of class relations during this time, this was not regarded as something debilitating, but rather as something facilitative. A considerable part of the attraction of lawn tennis as a sport in the late 19th century was the extent to which those playing it or members of its clubs were able to derive social status and prestige from it, as well as, perhaps secondarily, the pleasure derived from actually playing the sport itself and sharing company with like-minded social “equals”. This was because it had become exclusive to a particular social class (Bourdieu, 1978). Further, as the social elements in the game at club level were invariably deemed more important than standard of play, tennis clubs remained primary locations for meeting and flirting with potential marriage partners (Holt, 1989; Lowerson, 1993). As children had no function for the adults in these clubs, for this reason, they were also excluded. Club members felt no remorse in limiting membership to the over-18s, because clubs had little use for children in the early decades of tennis. During this time, the exclusion of children and of the lower-middle and working classes helped sustain the popularity of lawn tennis.

The social issue of exclusion in tennis emerged during the latter half of the 20th century as the balances of power among particular groups in society began to shift, with the unintended outcome being that both the working classes and children came to have a greater right to more equal access in sport. With specific regard to tennis, the issue began to “peak” in the public agenda from the 1980s and 90s as enlarged Wimbledon profits gave way to a growing accountability and responsibility demanded of the LTA. Further, the increasing amounts of money available for governing bodies from sponsorship, the sale of television rights and indirectly through the central government

(i.e. from Sport England and the National Lottery Fund), also pushed them towards developing more inclusive participation in clubs. Thus, clubs became the focus of attention, with the denial of children and of certain sections of the British population of the chance to play and progress in tennis increasingly deemed as problematic. The behaviour of those who forcibly excluded children came to be widely regarded as unfriendly and/or discriminatory.

The Exclusion of Children in Tennis

A vast amount of sociological and anthropological research has been conducted on the subject of children and their development, with a number of studies linking changes in this respect with wider social developments over time (Goldson, Lavalette & McKeachnie, 2002; Hendrick, 1997, 2003; Hill and Tisdall, 1997; James & Prout, 1997). Research here has also been linked with studies into social exclusion (Collins, 2003; Room, 1995; Walker & Walker, 1997). In the context of present-day, it might sound strange to talk about the exclusion of children in sport, for children have come to gain considerably greater organised access to leisure and sport-related activities (Hendrick, 1997; Macphail, Gorely & Kirk, 2003), relative to the numerous other groups that came to be regarded as “disadvantaged” during the 1960s and 70s. Physical education, of which playing sports is a predominant aspect, became part of the school national curriculum when it formed in 1988, and most governing bodies of sport have developed special programmes designed to allow children the chance to take part in all manner of sport-like activities either in their schools or in clubs. The focus for development in many sports has now become firmly directed towards the provision for children, and in this regard tennis is no exception. However, tennis is unique in that its plans for implementation have taken place predominantly within the relatively insular and isolated recreational clubs, which have historically catered almost exclusively for adults. Problems of implementation might be related to the extent that competition was engrained within tennis club cultural practices.

Historically, in sports such as football, rugby and cricket, the competitive element within clubs has tended to be more central to their social function, so the talent development of children within the club network was regarded as a worthwhile objective

for the future competitive performance of the club. While evidence for this is scant, it is nevertheless suggested that, in football, rugby and cricket clubs, the personal objectives of membership were more oriented towards competition, especially that which took place between clubs (i.e. inter-club competition). In tennis clubs, by contrast, this element has tended to be secondary or even tertiary to the more social functions of membership. This could be related to the fact that, where tennis clubs did engage in competition, it tended to be played within the club (i.e. intra-club competition); thus, competition of this type probably did not engender the same degree of impassioned and spirited commitment had competition taken place between clubs. Therefore, the continual exclusion of children within tennis clubs must be understood within the context of adult-dominated, historically-rooted, amateur and relatively less competitive-oriented tennis clubs.

With this in mind, one might be inclined to ask why tennis clubs have become the focus of such considerable governing body attention and policy implementation when, in fact, history would suggest that clubs and the members and committees within them have traditionally abhorred or at least ignored children's talent development. The answer undoubtedly lies in the fact that tennis clubs offer a sizeable resource, so far as almost half of the 35,000 or so British tennis courts upon which children could play and develop their skills are found in clubs. Also, tennis clubs represent important locations for talent development. Looking further, however, it is clear that the growing focus of governing bodies on children's talent development, should be considered within the context of shifting balances of power between adults and children within the figurations of wider society and wider sports policy. Underpinning the widespread attitudes regarding how children *should* be treated and what adults *should* do for children at present are notions of appropriate behaviour, which have developed over the course of many centuries as part of long-term civilising processes (Elias, 1998). This long-term historical perspective is often overlooked in coming to terms with the recent changes in the position of children in sport and sports policy. However, it is suggested that to comprehend fully the current position of children in relation to adults, parents and coaches or the government or sports governing bodies, it is imperative to reconsider many of our contemporary taken-for-granted assumptions that present feelings towards children as immutable or innately supportive, affectionate or loving. It is suggested that

these feelings developed along with our conceptions of “children” and “childhood” themselves as a social construct, as an unintended consequence of long-term changes within the Western European civilising process. The mere acknowledgement of childhood as a special period of development in the human life-cycle, in itself, serves as a suggestion of the extent to which the balance of power between adults and children has shifted progressively towards the latter. Let us now turn towards an analysis of these long-term changes in the balance of power between adults and children.

The Changing Balance of Power between Adults and Children

The balance of power between children and adults is, at present, more equal than in centuries past; so much so that the “connection” and bond that adults and especially parents now have with children is widely thought to be innate, natural and immutable. In a paper called “The Civilising of Parents”, Elias (1998) critiqued this assumption, bringing to light the changing balance of power between parents and children over the course of many centuries. Elias (1998, p.191) attempted to explain how relations between parents and their children had gone from “a clear authority relation”, in essence “a relationship between a person giving orders and one obeying them”, to a more egalitarian relationship, where one has become “thoroughly sceptical about the notion that the unconditional authority of parents and the unconditional obedience of children is the best, healthiest, most productive social arrangement”. Underpinning Elias’s findings was the notion of “functional interdependence”. In the past, Elias (1998, p.192) explained, children served few functions for parents, and he made the following point: “Children came, they cried, they generated work, and the parents had no use for them”, thus they were often subject to infanticide; “exposing children was part of everyday life”. Changes over time as part of the wider civilising process, uncovered by Elias (1939/2000), brought power relations further into contention, whereby despite the balance of power remaining great between parents and their children, there developed a more reciprocal nature to it. Children began to have power over parents, as they came to serve a function for them. Elias (1998, p.195) suggested that children came to “represent the fulfilment of particular parental needs and wishes”. Cunningham (2005) added that parents began to look towards children for “emotional gratification”.¹

Thus, Elias (1998) critiqued the assumption that parental love and affection for their children was a cultural universal and, instead, presented it more plausibly as a social construct that has been widely internalised and taken-for-granted. He remarked as follows, in this regard:

Today a legend has become established which makes it look as if parental love and affection for their children is something more or less natural and, beyond that, an always stable, permanent and lifelong feeling... A social 'should' is transformed into the notion of a natural 'is' (Elias, 1998, p.195).

Adopting this perspective ignores the dynamic nature of human relations and projects contemporary standards of appropriate behaviour onto societies that had different norms and values. This perspective often underpinned the thought that children were "abused" in earlier times, placing our contemporary judgment of appropriate behaviour towards children onto a society with completely different levels of behavioural standards. Elias's (1998) findings underpinned his critiques of the seminal work by both Philippe Aries (1962) and Lloyd de Mause (1974). Research by the former he regarded as being "romanticised", value-laden and contemporary-biased, while the "psychogenetic" work of the latter failed to acknowledge the interdependence between psychological and sociological processes involved in social change.

A similarly value-laden and contemporary-biased perspective is also assumed for the relationship between adults and children more generally in modern Western societies. There are now appropriate standards of life that children have a "right" to obtain, and which adults are obliged to provide (Hill & Tisdall, 1997). Again, this perception is socially constructed; something overlooked by many who perceive the "fair" treatment of children, whatever that may be, as an inarguable cultural universal. In addition to this "process reduction", adopting this perspective also reifies "children's rights" as though they exist on their own, above and beyond the thoughts and actions of numerous interdependent human beings that developed over the course of many centuries.

Whilst one should be wary of projecting a view of "appropriate" behaviour onto a social structure of a different time period, one should also be cautious of projecting this viewpoint on present social structures that have their own unique codes of behavioural etiquette, or their own "social standards of self regulation" (Elias, 1995). It is important

to recognise that although in wider society there have developed codes of behaviour that determine what is appropriate and, specifically, expected behaviour towards children, in some institutions or social structures these social standards of self regulation or codes of behavioural conduct or etiquette might be slightly different, perhaps demanding higher or lower levels of behavioural self-restraint. The now firmly-established and largely taken-for-granted ways that adults are expected to behave towards children and vice versa in a school, for example, are undoubtedly different in some ways from expected codes of behaviour in a courtroom, hospital or the family home. Further, social structures that have developed with relative autonomy from wider society might have established codes of conduct that are markedly different from those in wider society. Voluntary-run tennis clubs that have developed through a number of generations are a prime example of this phenomenon, with specific regard to codes of behavioural conduct expected among adult and child relations.

In wider society, throughout the 20th century, the power chances of children relative to adults have increased to such an extent that this period has often been referred to as “the century of the child” (Cunningham, 2005; James & Prout, 1997). One of the clearest ways in which people from Western societies claimed moral superiority over non-Western societies has been through the relatively restrained ways in which children are now treated by adults. Cunningham (2005, p.179) wrote the following of how governments across the world progressively saw children as a source of national prestige:

Childhood became caught up in the international rivalry of states; children were seen as the most valuable asset a nation had, one which, if not properly nurtured, would lead to a process of degeneration and to a loss of power and status relative to other countries... it was therefore inevitable that states would be drawn further into issues of child policy.²

There are now clear guidelines in place for how adults ought to treat children, essentially demanding that they strive to nurture, teach and influence them in ways that are widely regarded as “positive”. Children came to be thought of as “the future”, and this was reflected in several societal institutions. The power of children grew in relation to the state, as well as in relation to adults more generally. Elias (1998, p.208) wrote the following in this regard:

Parents, teachers and occasionally even state officials, have greater regard for the particularity of children than ever before. Adults have ceased seeing themselves in children, as if they were only little adults. They know that the needs of people as children are different from their own.

The importance of children in political agendas undoubtedly influenced how children were regarded in wider society, and the notion of “doing one’s best” for children was reflected in both an educational and parental sense (Hendrick, 1997).³

In sport, the importance of recognising children’s rights was clearly outlined in the opening statement of the 2003 DfES and DCMS document entitled *Learning through PE and Sport*, whereby it was proclaimed: “all children, whatever their circumstances or abilities, should be able to participate in and enjoy physical education and sport” (DfES & DCMS, 2003, p.1). The examples given previously from LTA discourse also suggest a similar rhetoric with regard to children’s inclusion based on notions of rights and needs. However, while children came to be deemed a priority in the objectives of the governing body, this was not necessarily supported in the tennis clubs. An uneven balance of power between adults and children is evident in many British tennis clubs at present, with the latter group often being devoid of rights and power chances that they could expect to have in abundance outside in wider society or in other social institutions. Whilst in the vast majority of cases, children are not subject to serious abuse in the sense that would require intervention by government organisations like the social services, children are nevertheless, in many clubs, denied entry or membership, given only partial access to facilities and coaching opportunities, marginalised in decision-making processes and treated like “second-class” club members (LTA, 2006b, 2007a).

Of course, it would be unfair and inaccurate to portray all clubs as exclusive to adults, because, in many, children as well as adults working on their behalf have been able to gain greater power chances relative to other groups. In some clubs, this occurred because adult members came to recognise the potential of children as future club players and took interest in their development. Children became a means of delivering prestige to the club from on-court performances. In other clubs, perhaps a sense of duty to serve the wider interests of British tennis developed, with coaches brought in, links made with schools and children’s programmes initiated. These could be classed as changes brought about through internal pressure, through a shift of emphasis by members within these

clubs. In other examples, some clubs might have been forced to change through external pressure. Clubs that required repairs to their clubhouse, floodlighting, new courts built or a dome added within the last decade or so, for example, would have had to make several changes to their infrastructure in order to be eligible for LTA, Sport England or National Lottery financial assistance (LTA, 2005a). Others might have had to make changes in order to satisfy commercial sponsors, who demanded exposure to a larger and more diverse membership. These could be classed as changes brought about through external pressure.

It could be suggested that the rift between adults and children in clubs stemmed from the fact that tennis clubs are funded almost entirely by adult members; problems can arise when adults see little benefit in financially supporting and supplementing the development of junior players. Therefore, despite the changes made in many clubs in Britain, it has been suggested that the vast majority still do not support children's talent development in the ways that the LTA require and deem as necessary for the fulfilment of their objectives (LTA, 2006b). However, to suppose that all clubs and all club members *should* support the LTA on this implies a rather static and consensus-biased functionalist approach. Clubs and club members who have shown resistance to the idea of equal access for children have been openly admonished, with the concomitant assumption that all those in favour of progressive change for children have done so for altruistic reasons. However, the concern for sports provision by governing bodies is not necessarily a concern for children's welfare, but rather of producing champions (Green, 2004). The fact that both welfare agencies for children and governing bodies have each produced the same proposed outcomes does not hide the fact that their underlying motives are entirely different (Houlihan, 2000; Penney, 2000). The government might have us believe that we generally care more for children nowadays, but it is suggested that this truth is not necessarily embedded in notions of care based on benevolence, but rather on duty, responsibility and an imposed sense of guilt if children are neglected or ignored.

From this position, the adequacy of the age-discrimination argument, which suggests that children are excluded simply because they are, in fact, merely children, can be critiqued. Firstly, it seems to imply a dichotomous mode of thinking, whereby the experiences of children and of adults are regarded as mutually exclusive. This leads us

to ask the question: Is it not the case that in some clubs more than others, children are more highly regarded? Secondly, it negates the possibility that, in some clubs, adults are treated as poorly as children and are discriminated against in similar ways. Is this problem simply a problem for children? Examples can be found of cases where adults are also treated poorly as new members in clubs, which seems partially to negate the suggestion that children are treated poorly simply because their memberships are subsidised by adults. It questions the validity of posing the problem in this simple dichotomous fashion. *New Statesman* writer Jason Cowley wrote in 2004 of his own experiences being an *adult* new member of his local tennis club as follows:

A couple of years ago I joined the local tennis club... I took my subscription around to the club secretary, a grey-haired man in late middle age... He greeted me with suspicion and received the envelope in which my cheque was enclosed as if it were a small bomb. He did not smile, nor did he pause to welcome me to the club. This was not simply generational English reserve: my overwhelming impression of the encounter was one of absolute coldness, and so it was at the club itself, where I remained a member for less than a year and scarcely played at all (Cowley, 2004).

While this example alone does not tell us enough to disregard the possibility of age-discrimination within some British tennis clubs, it does, however, bring to light the complex and multi-faceted nature of social exclusion found here, and also leads us to pose further questions that require attention. What can an analysis of differences based around social class add to the adequacy of explanations of social exclusion in British tennis clubs? What kind of inter-play is found between social-class and age-related arguments surrounding social exclusion? It is to an examination of exclusion based on social class that I now turn.

The Exclusion of Lower Classes in Tennis

A vast amount of research has been conducted suggesting the influence of social class on sports participation (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984; Gruneau, 1975; Loy, 1969; Lüschen, 1969; Scheerder, Vanreusel & Taks, 2005; Scheerder, Vanreusel, Taks & Renson, 2002; Taks, Renson & Vanreusel, 1995). Coakley (2007) suggested that social class divisions

remain the single most divisive factor in sports participation. Certainly in tennis, arguments around the subject of social class have been put forward as reasons for the relatively poor standard of British tennis compared to other nations. There has been an assertion often made that British tennis has an image of being “middle-class”, and that in many cases this image actually fits with the reality of participation. In other words, it is assumed that the majority of people who play tennis are middle or upper-middle-class, with the implication being that the lower classes are excluded; and this assumption has appeared on numerous occasions in the press. *The Daily Telegraph* journalist Sue Mott (1999) remarked on “socio-geographical reasons” why a particular 8-year old boy living in Hackney could not develop his tennis talents, and again in 2000 when she wrote of basic economic reasons for low participation levels in tennis; she quoted some letters that were sent to the LTA by disgruntled parents:

‘We need children from ALL BACKGROUNDS, not just the well off, and provide a different structure for them’ wrote Nick Chance to the LTA this year, enclosing a copy of his son’s annual subscription form to the Stourbridge Lawn Tennis Club. It cost £128. ‘He is only 12 years old for God’s sake and they want £128’. There is one aspect of the problem. Another was contained in a reader’s letter from Ventnor in the Isle of Wight. The council cannot afford to maintain the only four courts in the area and wants to build on the best of them. ‘It is the system that’s wrong’, writes Madeline Wheeler. ‘It seems the only children to stand a chance are those who can afford a public school or have their own court’ (Mott, 2000, July 17).

After providing details of the poor state of women’s tennis in Britain, Jon Henderson, in 2001, made the suggestion that the sport’s social class connotation was part of the problem; “the British class system is still robust enough to have a devastatingly negative impact” (Henderson, 2001, March 4). Along these same lines, Colin Richardson wrote in *The Guardian* in 2003:

Tennis is one of the last remaining bastions of class privilege in this country. Tennis clubs such as... The All England Club – exclusive, expensive and... royally patronised – have ruined the image of the game. No amount of initiatives in primary schools will attract large numbers of children to the game so long as it is seen as the preserve of the rich... The exclusive, upper-middle-class image of

the game in this country is a disincentive and a barrier to opportunity (Sargent & Richardson, 2003, June 21).

Remarks linking the prevalent British middle class with a lack of “hunger” to progress in the game have also appeared numerous times in the press (Bierley, 2005, June 27; Norton, 2004, June 21; Sargent & Richardson, 2003, June 21; Wells, 2003, July 2; White, 2004, June 20).

In recent LTA discourse, the same assumption that “social class” elements continue to undermine progress in tennis has also been made, most specifically regarding the recent introduction of the City Tennis Clubs scheme (LTA, 2001, June 11). In the 2003 annual report, the LTA wrote: “To many, tennis is perceived as a largely white, middle-aged, middle-class sport. No longer. The LTA is determined that everyone, from all social and ethnic backgrounds, has the opportunity to play tennis” (LTA, 2003a, p.15). This was further reiterated in the 2004 annual report:

City Tennis Clubs are a means of identifying and nurturing raw talent that might not have emerged inside the more mainstream tennis system. They are also helping us break down the traditional, middle-class image that has been perpetuated in tennis over the years, allowing a new generation of players to make their mark (LTA, 2004a, p.12).

Thus, despite remarks by the LTA to the contrary, tennis is still widely regarded as middle-class.

The arguments surrounding the influence of social class on sport participation are persuasive, and there are numerous pieces of academic research that support the notion that basic financial differences are fundamental (Collins & Buller, 2003; Furlong, Campbell & Roberts, 1990; Carlson, 1988; Kay, 2000; Kew, 1997; Kirk, Carlson, O’Connor, Burke, Davis & Glover, 1997; Rowley, 1994; Scheerder et al., 2005; Timm, 1981). Ultimately, some working-class people are simply unable to afford to buy the equipment, join a club and receive coaching for tennis (Kirk et al., 1997; Toussaint, 2004), but could possibly make progress in other less expensive sports, such as football.

Limitations based on social class have also been related to playing opportunities in school. Mandy Sargent wrote the following for *The Guardian* in 2003:

Every week schoolchildren play football, netball, hockey, but tennis is given a low priority. The fall in the number of tennis champions is linked to how much

encouragement is given to children... The way schools use their playing fields gives children more opportunities to become tomorrow's David Beckham than tomorrow's Tim Henman. Quite simply, you can get more children on to a football pitch or a netball court... Further, if you go to most schools... in England you would be lucky to find a court (Sargent & Richardson, 2003, June 21).

With regards tennis in schools, Sue Mott, for *The Daily Telegraph*, also wrote: "We don't want the shires. We've got them. It is the inner-city athletes, the primary school children, the have-will-but-no-racket contingent who need to be inspired. Public schools have the courts but not the ambition to produce tennis players" (Mott, 2000, July 17).

A lack of parental involvement in sport, and a lack of encouragement to participate and/or gain knowledge of sport by parents have also been put forward as important factors related to social class (Baxter-Jones & Maffulli, 2003; Kay, 2000; Kremer, Ogle & Trew, 1997; Rowley, 1994; Toussaint, 2004; Yang, Telama & Laakso, 1996). All of these basic obstacles and the high cost of tennis, it seems, present an impossible situation for some. Judy Murray, the mother of Andy Murray, wrote in *The Guardian* in 2005 (Murray, 2005, June 20) of the massive expenditures needed to produce a tennis champion, which comprised individual and group coaching, court hire, equipment, clothing and participation in tournaments, which includes travel, accommodation, meals and entry fees.

These examples bring to light a rather common conception of social class as being largely determined by economic-based distinctions. This tendency is also reinforced in governing body discourse, as a recent document from the Sports Council for Wales (2005) highlighted; in comparing participation levels across a number of sports, it classified social class using reductionist and out-dated socio-economic classifications: A, B, C1, C2, D and E. Stempel (2005, p.416) wrote of this common tendency to reduce social class to economic differences, as follows: "When social scientists and others who do not study sports are informed that adult sport participation is strongly associated with social class they are frequently inclined to reduce this class inequality to economic barriers". It is at this juncture when the drawbacks of a Marxist economic-reductionist approach become clear. It is doubtful whether the conception of social class is as simple and one-dimensional in reality as has been presented here, and

research by Zevenbergen, Edwards and Skinner (2002) remarked that Marxist analyses tended to ignore the particular “history and cultural function” of sports, instead focusing on them as products or commodities. Taks et al. (1995), White and Wilson (1999) and Wilson (2002) were also heavily critical of the economic reductionism of Marxist work by stressing that the monetary cost of playing sport was only weakly associated with its class status.

This common misconception could be related to the adoption of an out-dated understanding of the increasingly complex concept of social class. A number of centuries ago, an individual’s social class could be judged according to educational attainment and employment. Certainly up until the mid-late 19th century, opportunities for social mobility were not widely available. However, to rise in society became a prime objective for the aspirational bourgeois middle classes, so they sought the various economic symbols of a higher class, for example, through educating their children in the public schools, purchasing land in the country, joining exclusive clubs or playing sports like lawn tennis and golf (Bailey, 1978; Veblen, 1899/1994). Lines of social-class demarcation began to blur somewhat, and distinctions between the various social class factions came to be determined by less ostensible symbolic manifestations of status. While economic distinctions clearly remained one of the most or perhaps the most significant determinant of social class, the extent to which an individual had, what Bourdieu (1984) referred to as “cultural capital”, came to determine one’s access to the various symbols of social class. It is therefore imperative that the concept of social class is critically analysed, taking into account its dynamic and processual structure.

Also looking developmentally, it is apparent that the methods through which particular social groups in tennis clubs have come to exclude others has changed and become more covert and complex. While overt exclusive practices have come to be widely regarded as improper and un-democratic, particularly in the light of political movements towards greater equality in other institutions, status distinctions have become more sophisticated as an unintended consequence. In tennis clubs, while the majority are no longer able to deny access to potential members on the basis of occupation, education, race, gender, age, disability or religion, rank has come to be conveyed through behavioural conduct, as an aspect of an individual’s possession of cultural capital. This has meant that the exclusive practices of clubs and club members more specifically have

become much more difficult to recognise. The usefulness of examining developmentally the particular behavioural conduct of members in tennis clubs is further proposed here, bringing to light how and why specific codes of behavioural conduct emerged and have continued to exclude particular groups.

Bourdieu, "Habitus" and Cultural Capital: A Critical Appraisal

Haywood, Kew and Bramham (1989) discussed how one's social background was influential and, in particular, constraining in terms of available opportunities for participating in various sporting activities. They suggested constraints took two forms: "intervening" and "antecedent". The former referred to constraints that are readily apparent to the particular individual, such as cost of facilities, coaching and transport, while the latter referred to constraints that the individual is entirely unaware of. These include constraints that are imposed before individuals have chances to make conscious choices. In his essay on sport and social class, French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu attempted to explain these hidden "antecedent" constraints on sporting participation as part of a broader aim to overcome the agency versus structure dichotomy, by suggesting that "social practices are neither objectively determined, nor exclusively the product of freewill" (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, p.186). He argued that the uneven representation of individuals from different social classes among the various sports was related to one's respective "habitus", a term which refers to patterns or "dispositions" of thought, behavioural conduct, beliefs and tastes, which are internalised by individuals through the process of socialisation, so as to become "second nature" (Stempel, 2005). Habitus refers to the "generative schema" that is learned formally by the individual through socialisation, but is then forgotten as an object of conscious thought and forms as part of an individual's habitual and intuitive response when in a particular social setting or "field" (Bourdieu, 1984).

For Bourdieu, these learnt aspects of culture are, according to Jarvie and Maguire (1994, p.186), "incorporated bodily within structural social contexts... In this way, the body is viewed as a site of social memory. This involves the individual culturally learning, refining, recognising, recalling and evoking dispositions to act". The way the body was used, for Bourdieu (1978; 1984), seemed to underpin the appeal of various

sports. Jarvie and Maguire (1994, p.184) wrote: “These [sport and leisure] practices act as taste signifiers in a constant struggle to maintain distinction”. Bourdieu (1978) believed that working-class people found greater pleasure in using the body in more instrumental ways, as a means of achieving a particular end; hence, their affinity to physical sports such as boxing and football. The middle classes, on the other hand, attempted to use the body as an end in itself, hence their attraction to the pursuit of fitness and sports such as golf and tennis. The upper classes also avoided sports with physical contact and primarily sought “distinction”, following those sports that are regarded as being distinct, special or rare. Other research by Eitzen and Sage (1991) and Nixon and Frey (1996) also supported this hypothesis that the upper class tend to avoid sports that stress physical bodily contact.

Bourdieu recognised that every class or class fraction derived different types of “profit” or meaning and value from leisure and sport. Tomlinson (2004, p.164) discussed how best to understand the meaning derived from a sporting context, as follows: “It is necessary to look at when and how a sport was learnt, how it is played, in what context it is played and how often it is played”. One can understand, therefore, differences in the way that certain sports are played by certain classes of people. With specific regard to tennis, Bourdieu (1984, p.212) compared the typical dress codes found in traditional private tennis with an alternative version, and showed how each provides a different profit or meaning for its participants: “Tennis played in Bermuda shorts and a tee shirt, in a tracksuit or even swimming trunks, and Adidas running shoes, is indeed another tennis, both in the way it is played and the satisfaction it gives”. Jarvie and Maguire (1994, p.197) provided another example: “Though some sports are practised by all classes, e.g. golf, both the setting and actual practice itself involves different bodily dispositions and different expectations of returns on type and volume of cultural, symbolic and economic capital invested”. In addition to one’s habitus, forms of “capital” or power essentially determined one’s access to sport (Tomlinson, 2004). The main types of capital that Bourdieu (1986) recognised were: i) economic capital, the command over resources that are essentially economic; ii) social capital, the means of developing relationships with influential individuals and gatekeepers as well as memberships of groups and clubs; and, iii) cultural capital, forms of education, knowledge, behavioural conduct, language, skills and any advantages that allow an

individual to achieve a measure of status, such as high expectations. The extent to which a person was in possession of particular forms of capital necessary within that particular social setting determined their power in relation to others.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is undoubtedly useful in this analysis, shedding light on the types of subconscious cultural knowledge and understanding needed for an individual to achieve status in a voluntary-run tennis club. However, I feel it suffers from a number of shortcomings. Firstly, in some respects, it appears that Bourdieu (1984) only acknowledged power that derived from learning "higher" culture. For example, artisans and poets were regarded as having a high level of cultural capital, but a boxer or builder were not, despite the fact that all of these professions require a great deal of skill, precision and style. The concept needs to be broadened to incorporate a more multi-dimensional perspective of power relations. Secondly, the concept needs to be understood as dynamic and part of the social structure that has undergone a long-term change. While Bourdieu acknowledged that fields are dynamic in nature, and advocated a historical approach to understanding their development, it is felt here that this does not seem to underpin his analyses as fundamentally as it did for Elias. In addition, a number of authors who used Bourdieu's theories can be criticised for being ahistorical, among other things. Both Wilson (2002) and Stempel (2005), for example, in analysing the effectiveness of cultural capital theses on sports participation in the US, i) ignored the historical development of the particular sports under question, ii) underplayed the historical, social and cultural differences between sports in the US and elsewhere, in Britain, for example, and iii) based their studies on largely quantitative statistics, thus, failing to offer suitable explanations for why adults of a particular social class actually chose or approved of certain sports over others. With regards the first two criticisms, it is suggested that greater emphasis needs to be given to the historical development of the sports in question, linked with a processual understanding of changing class power relations over time. In terms of the final criticism, Curtis, McTeer and White (2003) suggested that quantitative studies of participation and spectatorship of this type should be supplemented with analyses using qualitative methodologies with greater explanatory purchase, such as ethnography.

Nevertheless, I feel that aspects of Bourdieu's theory, particularly his concepts of habitus and cultural capital, have much to offer to this present investigation. These

concepts and ideas can be fruitfully employed, particularly in relation to understanding how notions of rank and hierarchy have developed within tennis clubs, and how power differentials between club members, which have the ultimate outcome of excluding or marginalising certain groups, are continually reinforced and sustained through sophisticated means. In this regard, I feel that these aspects of Bourdieu's work and several aspects of Elias's theoretical framework can be used complementarily. As such, an attempt has been made to incorporate these two aspects of Bourdieu's approach into this largely Elias-based analysis. Elias (1939/2000) brought to light how aspects of behaviour and self-control over one's own body came to be regarded as symbolic of power differentials over the course of the civilising process. Notions of gentlemanly amateurism, which underpinned how lawn tennis was characterised and regarded by members of the upper class during the 19th century, were heavily grounded in ideals of the body. Elias and Dunning (1986) showed how important controls of behavioural restraint were for higher classes to maintain their status-distinction in all aspects of their lives. The deferment of gratification that behavioural restraint in sport entailed was particularly important as a basis of sportsmanship. In this way, it is fairly plausible to accept Bourdieu's contention that members of the upper or upper-middle class adopted lawn tennis because of the demands it required on one's own body, to exercise self-restraint. This patronage undoubtedly influenced how the sport developed over the 19th and 20th centuries.

Elias's work on civilising processes also brought to light how the development and establishment of specific codes of behavioural conduct, which fluctuated over the years in terms of their levels of formality, were unintended outcomes of wider social processes and shifts in balances of power between numerous interdependent individuals. The development of specific types of tennis etiquette within clubs was undoubtedly an aspect of a wider formalisation process that Elias was able to bring to light and explain.

Tennis Etiquette as an Aspect of a Wider Formalisation Process

Throughout the 20th century, social mobility opportunities improved for the working classes in the light of rising real wages and expendable incomes, to afford them opportunities to purchase symbols of wealth and status that were previously exclusive to

the wealthier middle classes. This meant that economic differences which had previously marked class boundaries began to be replaced by less ostensible symbolic representations of class. Lines of social class demarcation began to blur, as ties of interdependence grew between social classes. The increasing mixing of the middle and working classes in wider society led to a process whereby the socially-dominant middle classes in clubs came to regulate their behaviour more strictly and formally, in order to demarcate themselves socially from the working classes. Thus, it can be shown here that developments in the social structure of British society went hand in hand with changes in the personality structure of its inhabitants, to the point where the middle classes internalised aspects of their behaviour as part of their habitus.

Elias's theory of the civilising process leads us to consider central elements of how power differentials can be expressed, maintained and challenged by particular groups at particular times. As Elias highlighted in his analysis of relations within the highly formalised setting of the royal court society, strict regulation of conduct with intensive emotional controls and self-restraints were enacted so that socially ambitious and aspirational groups could seek social distinction. Elias did not regard this process as unilinear, but rather sought to demonstrate how processes of formalisation and informalisation occurred unintentionally in waves throughout history, as a result of large-scale shifts in balances of power between groups in society. They moved from one end to the other of the scale between formality and informality in seemingly unintended but recognisable movements over time.

Featherstone (1987, p.205) wrote of the process as follows: "An initial wave is that of colonisation or assimilation in which the tendency of the upper class to colonise the lower and the lower to copy the upper is more pronounced". If power differentials between groups are secure, a process of "informalisation" can occur whereby standards of behaviour and codes of conduct become more relaxed. Wouters (1986) suggested that this process represented, what Elias called, the "controlled decontrolling of emotional controls", rather than an absence of self-restraint altogether. Certainly, waves of informalisation are often followed by waves of formalisation, as power differentials shift between social groups (Featherstone, 1987). Relations between groups can become characterised by either repulsion, differentiation or emancipation, whereby, as Featherstone (1987, p.205) argued: "The social power of the lower group is increasing,

while that of the upper group is declining; this is accompanied by greater rivalry and a movement towards emphasising differences and contrasts which increases the barriers between the classes”.

It is suggested that these waves of informalisation and formalisation have tended to characterise relations between the social classes over the course of the period of analysis in British tennis. They have manifested themselves in differences between the codes of behavioural conduct that have come to signify power and status. In the sphere of tennis, power struggles on the basis of these codes of behavioural conduct and etiquette were most noticeably played out in tennis clubs. The two waves of formalisation that occurred in wider society throughout the 1880s and 1920s (Featherstone, 1987; Wouters, 1986) came to represent, perhaps without coincidence, the two most marked periods of growth in the popularity of tennis. Codes of conduct came to be strongly enforced within the relatively autonomous tennis clubs, which helped to characterise the sport as being bound by class conflict. Somewhat unsurprisingly, therefore, tennis came to be regarded as an exclusive sport for the middle classes, and this exclusive characteristic became part of the sport’s immutable “nature”. Thus, social exclusion came to be regarded as part of the culture of tennis and of tennis clubs. It became a reified term, as though it existed “on its own”, absent from the actions and intentions of the numerous individuals and groups that developed and continue to constitute its apparent culture.

Elias (1939, 1969a) outlined in the court society how the nobles’ expenditures and efforts with regard to prestige and display were integral to their survival in the particular royal court figuration where they found themselves entrapped. They were, as Featherstone (1987, p.206) put it, “locked together in fluctuating power balances”. They were, to a large extent, forced to display themselves in particular ways in order to achieve or even maintain power and prestige. Had they not behaved in such ways, they would have undoubtedly risked being ostracised by other members of their social group, with the prospect of losing status and power chances to social inferiors. It is felt that a similar model of behaviour manifested itself in the emerging tennis clubs of the late 19th century.

Upon examining relations between social classes in this way, and how behaviour towards members of their own or other social groups has tended to fluctuate on a scale of

formality, it is undoubted that a theoretical underpinning is needed that takes into account these dynamic processes of behavioural change as being interdependent with wider social changes. Further, it is proposed that one should attempt a relatively high level of detachment from preconceptions of “right and wrong” or “appropriate and inappropriate”, and attempt to identify through empirical research the particular constraints on individuals or groups to act in certain ways that might actually go against what could be expected in the context of wider society. This is therefore a step beyond what is offered at present with regard to how the “class system” is depicted in static, process-reductive and economically-determinist ways. It is clear that conceptualising differences in terms of access and opportunity along economic lines of social class only provides a partial explanation; it only prevents access on a superficial level.

It is suggested that the work of Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) in *The Established and the Outsiders* provided a suitable theoretical underpinning from which to analyse aspects of hierarchy and status demarcation in tennis club cultures. Their study looked into interactions between groups of residents from different neighbourhoods in a small Midlands town. It is suggested that studies into dynamic “communities” like towns or villages such as this can shed light onto established and outsider relations between groups in almost any community figuration; a voluntary-run sports club is no exception in this respect. Elias suggested that the particular relational characteristics that he and Scotson found in Winston Parva could form the bases of established and outsider figurations found anywhere. As brought to light earlier, contemporary conceptions of social exclusion based solely around dichotomous notions of class or age relations can only provide partial explanations for this types of behaviour. The work of Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) is offered as a more plausible alternative to these more basic models of exclusion. Let me now bring to light the value of this particular theoretical approach, and suggest how it can be successfully applied in this investigation.

The Value of Elias and Scotson in Established and Outsider Relations

The theory of established and outsider relations developed from research begun in the late 1950s into a small community in Leicestershire. The town, under the pseudonym of “Winston Parva”, had about 5000 inhabitants and was divided into three

separate neighbourhoods or “zones”. Zone 1 consisted of large houses, occupied by mainly middle-class families, which was by everyone in the town regarded as “the best neighbourhood”. Zones 2 and 3 were ostensibly less easily distinguishable from one another. They were both working-class neighbourhoods, occupied by a fairly even mixture of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Crucially, people in Zone 2 regarded themselves as more “respectable” or, rather, as being of a higher social standing than the residents in Zone 3. The latter were regarded as socially inferior.

What began as John Scotson’s MA thesis investigating the differences in delinquency rates between Zones 2 and 3, soon engaged the attention of Elias, who “used the research as a vehicle for the development of his own theorising” (Mennell, 1992, p.116). It was interesting to note that by the end of Scotson’s interviewing, the delinquency differences between Zones 2 and 3 had practically vanished, leaving Elias to consider why it was that one neighbourhood continued to view themselves as socially superior relative to the other. Understanding this phenomenon was what fuelled Elias’s motivation. In spite of their ostensible structural similarities, there were a number of marked differences in how residents of each neighbourhood thought of themselves, their neighbours and also residents of the other neighbourhoods in the same community.

Firstly, it was apparent that residents in Zone 2 regarded themselves as well behaved, honest, friendly, clean and tidy, whilst, concomitantly, residents of Zone 3 were regarded as unclean and untidy, rude, irritating, unfriendly, dishonest and poorly behaved. They were subsequently treated poorly, which Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) suggested was typical of many established-outsider figurations, where power differentials can lead one group to regard the other as “anomic”.

Secondly, the residents’ feelings and attitudes towards themselves and the other neighbourhoods formed part of their respective individual and group identities. Elias (1978, p.128) regarded the development of these different level identities as wholly interdependent, as the following passage suggests:

There is no one who is not and never has been interwoven into a network of people... one’s self conception as a separate person, one’s sense of personal identity is closely connected with the ‘we’ and ‘they’ relationships of one’s group, and one’s position within those units of which one speaks as ‘we’ and ‘they’.

Crucially, the “we-identity” that the Zone 2 residents had of themselves was somewhat fabricated, based on an ideal character that was only evident among a minority of their best residents. The identity of Zone 3 residents, however, was one that was assigned to them by the dominant residents of Zone 2; their “they-identity” from the Zone 2 residents perspective had become internalised by the Zone 3 residents. However, this was also fabricated and based on a character that was only evident among a minority of their worst residents. Elias suggested that the ability of residents in Zone 2 to stigmatise the residents in Zone 3 as being of lower status and of a lower “human worth”, despite evidence suggesting that there were scarcely any differences in delinquency rates between the two neighbourhoods, was because the former were an established group with a high level of cohesion. Their cohesiveness was a source of power, through being able to control positions in local voluntary associations such as the council, churches and clubs, as well as channels of gossip across the town.

Thirdly, it was due primarily to this lack of cohesiveness that residents in Zone 3 could not or did not develop a we-identity for themselves to challenge the they-identity they had been assigned with by the Zone 2 residents. Such was the strength of stigmatisation by the established group, moreover, that a significant proportion of residents in Zone 3 seemed to relate strongly to the largely negative identity they had been labelled with; thus they accepted their inferiority with a “puzzled resignation” (Elias & Scotson, 1965/1994). According to Elias and Scotson (1965/1994), the fabricated identities of each group and the tendency for outsiders willingly to accept the established group’s stigmatisation of them, is typical of many established-outsider figurations. They come to internalise the “group charisma” of the dominant group as well as their own “group disgrace”.

Elias and Scotson’s (1965/1994) overall conclusion was that differences in power chances between groups can, in some instances, be related wholly to the extent to which groups are “established”; that is, the extent to which groups are cohesive as a result of the “oldness” of their ties and can, therefore, monopolise positions in local associations. This throws another factor into the equation when attempting to explain power differentials between groups, and questions the validity of explanations based solely around differences in ostensible characteristics like race, class, gender, age, religion or disability. These types of differences, of course, feature heavily and can be identified to

explain power differentials in many if not most kinds of established-outsider figurations, but for Elias and Scotson, while significant, they appeared to be less than central. They wrote of the ostensible differences between Zones 1 and 2 as follows:

There were no differences in nationality, in ethnic descent, in ‘colour’ or race... nor did they differ in their type of occupation, their income and educational levels – in a word, in their social class. Both were working-class areas. The only difference between them was that... one group was formed by old residents established in the neighbourhood for two or three generations and the other was a group of newcomers (Elias & Scotson, 1994, p.xvii).

Differences in the respective extents that the groups were “established” facilitated disparate cohesion rates, and this “integration differential” contributed more than anything else to the greater power chances of members from the older neighbourhood relative to the newer one.

Sociologists such as Bram Van Stolk and Cas Wouters (1987) and Eric Dunning (1999) have noted the powerful potential that Elias and Scotson’s (1965/1994) work has in helping to elicit a detailed analysis of power relations, and specifically how uneven balances of power can lead one group to stigmatise another group in a particular way, bringing to light their position within a particular social hierarchy. Dunning (1999) utilised this theory in his exposition of race relations in USA from the 1950s onwards, and showed how the established-outsider figuration that Elias conceptualised was common to this and many other unequal but shifting balances of power in society.

There are a number of reasons why this theoretical approach was considered to be of use in this particular study, primarily related to the ways in which it extends aspects of *The Civilising Process* to examine micro-scale social structures. Firstly, it is suggested that part of the strength of this theory lies in how it exposes the connections between changes in social structures and the people’s internalised views of themselves and others on a psychological level. Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) showed how the sustained superiority of one group over another partly rested on the former’s ability to stigmatise and label the other group(s) as inferior, either by measurement against their own “yardstick” of specific qualities or by questioning their moral standards against more universal measurements of human worth. It is felt that further research into social exclusion in tennis clubs can reveal the ways in which the particular self-images or

group identities of members are affected in similar ways. It is understood that the exclusion of particular members or member groups within a tennis club is a consequence of uneven balances of power within a hierarchical structure. Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) brought to light the clear hierarchy of Winston Parva residents into distinct groups; the sometimes false boundaries that resident groups erected to distinguish themselves from others, in terms of behaviour and adherence to an agreed and ostensibly important code of etiquette; and, the stigmatisation of certain residents as outsiders. Available evidence from LTA discourse so far presents a similarly hierarchical structure within voluntary-run tennis clubs. Secondly, the work of Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) compliments and extends important aspects of *The Civilising Process* and *The Court Society*, in two other important ways: i) it shows how this theory can be of value and use in helping to understand contemporary social issues; and, ii) it expresses power differentials and power struggles on a micro level, which are the result or at least related to outcomes of interdependency ties on a macro level.⁴ Thus, it can help to “bridge the gap” between the micro and the macro, which will prove useful when coming to terms with how social exclusion is manifested within a specific tennis club.

Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to outline and critique the ways in which social exclusion have been understood in British tennis. The myths surrounding exclusion based on age differences were uncovered. Elias’s (1939/2000; 1998) work on changing balances of power between parents and children over the centuries was utilised to expose the reality that contemporary feelings of benevolence and responsibilities of care towards children are not cultural and historical universals but rather respective outcomes of changing balances of power between adults and children in wider society. They are social constructs. From this perspective, it is possible to challenge the “right vs. wrong” attitude expressed in LTA rhetoric whereby club members who engage in exclusive practices against children are thought of in a wholly negative light. From this, the need to study their attitudes towards children initially in an emotionally “detached” way becomes apparent, in order to expose the relations of power that influence their attitudes and behaviours.

Exclusion based on age was also felt to be linked, in some respects, with aspects of class. However, the adequacy of explaining social exclusion in tennis clubs in terms of social class differences also was challenged. The work of Bourdieu helped to highlight what aspects of “capital” make up social class differences, and how notions of social class have changed over time. The work of other Eliasian-influenced sociologists (e.g. Featherstone, 1987) also exposed the wider social movements towards the formalisation and informalisation of behavioural constraints. This helped to point the discussion away from static conceptions of discrimination based on single causes, towards an appreciation of how exclusion is a manifestation of unequal power relations between groups, which over time can take the form of differences existing on numerous levels, beyond age and class. The usefulness of Elias and Scotson’s (1965/1994) work on “Established and Outsider Relations” is introduced as an alternative framework, which conceptualises exclusion around differences between established and outsider groups. This framework is felt to be more flexible and dynamic, and better suited to understanding long-term changes in balances of power between groups, and how differences are manifested in perceived differences in personal and group inferiority/superiority. Elias and Scotson’s (1965/1994) framework is used explicitly in *Section 4* of this thesis that analyses social exclusion in the microcosm of a voluntary-run tennis club.

The following chapter deals with methodology, setting out and providing a rationale for the types of data collection used. Ethical issues in the research are also discussed.

¹ This process is most evident in the increasing regard for the adoption of children during the mid-late 20th century. Exploring the cost of adoption in the US, Cunningham (2005, p.193) wrote: “Children might be only dimly aware of the value which was being placed upon them, but in effect an economic and emotional transformation meant that parents could easily become... ‘slaves of their children’”. Indeed, Elias (1998, p.195) wrote of the power that even newborn babies have over their parents: “They can call their parents to their aid by crying. In many cases, the birth of a child forces parents to re-arrange their lifestyle”.

² Green and Oakley (2001) showed that children were used in this way in the rivalry between Eastern bloc and Western nations throughout the late 20th century.

³ The relatively recent acquisition by children of the right to bring legal proceedings against their own parents is an indication of how the balance of power across all areas of society between adults and children has shifted (Cunningham, 2005; Hill & Tisdall, 1997).

⁴ Elias and Scotson’s (1965/1994) work has also been criticised by Stacey (1968) and Bloyce and Murphy (2006), for failing to take into account fully the wider social milieu within which the community of Winston Parva developed. They suggested that their micro-analysis could have been better understood with an investigation of wider social processes, locating the particular example of established-outsider relations within its broader figuration, the county of Leicestershire.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

The aims of this chapter are threefold: i) to set out how the research was designed and undertaken; ii) to provide a rationale for the methods employed to gather data; and, iii) to discuss ethical issues that have arisen in this study, related specifically to obtaining consent, ensuring confidentiality and conducting ethnographic research. It is crucial to note that, while a full research strategy and schedule set out from the very beginning would have made this investigation far simpler to conduct as well as to follow, this was impossible to deliver. Indeed, the actual “process” of conducting research should not be understated. As new information was found or new “angles” were developed over time, the emphasis of the research shifted, as did the methods of data collection that were employed. This was regarded as an unavoidable but altogether unintended consequence as issues came to light. Three main methods of data collection were used in this study, namely: documentary analysis of both historical and contemporary texts and materials, semi-structured interviews of stakeholders within British tennis; and ten months of ethnographic observations in a tennis club. For a timetable of research procedures, please refer to *Appendix 1*.

The holistic design of this research, adopting a qualitative approach that combined documentary analysis, interviews and ethnography, was implemented for a number of reasons. Firstly, a qualitative approach was necessary because of the nature of the information that I was seeking. I wanted to understand human behaviour and the values, beliefs and meanings that underpinned it, from the individual or group perspectives of those involved. Adopting a quantitative methodology or positivist approach to the types of questions that I sought to answer would have placed constraints on the methods of data collection employed, the position of me, the researcher, in this process, and the ways in which the data was then analysed and discussed. A qualitative approach allowed a much more flexible research design to develop, which was much better suited to fulfilling my aims and objectives and finding answers to the questions posed in this investigation.

Secondly, the research was designed in this way for the purposes of methodological triangulation, which Vidovich (2003, p.78) defined as a method of “cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research

data". The use of three research methods to examine issues surrounding social exclusion enabled me to produce a more holistic and reliable picture of the British tennis figuration. Because of the nature of the research, however, I had to use a qualitative approach rather than a positivist or largely quantitative approach. By conducting interviews and undertaking ethnographic research, an element of researcher bias was inevitable. Instead of being discouraged by this fact, however, I was motivated to try and understand my biases and how they influenced the direction that my research progressed and the ways in which I adopted certain perspectives and positions in anticipation of or reaction to the particular situations I found myself in. I felt this enriched my understanding of the data rather than discredited it. More insight into my reflexivity is found in *Chapter 13*.

Thirdly, as expressed earlier, one of the main aims of this investigation was to explain social exclusion in British tennis from both a macro and micro perspective. Documentary analysis allowed me to develop an understanding of the growing British tennis figuration from a macro-organisational perspective. The interviews also allowed me to gain an appreciation for the problems and issues in British tennis, by getting to grips with a number of different perspectives; the perspectives of each of the organisations or individuals represented in my interview sample. The ethnographic analysis conducted of social exclusion in a tennis club allowed me to put into context the types of problems and characteristics within clubs that were uncovered in the documentary analysis and interviews. The use of these three methodologies allowed me to gain perspectives from the macro and the micro.

Fourthly, the research was designed in order to learn about the British tennis figuration from different historical perspectives. Documentary analyses of historical sources were especially useful in gaining this perspective, but the analysis of more contemporary LTA material provided me with the opportunity to gain insight into the attitudes and perspectives of the governing body over the last three or four decades under investigation. Additionally, many of my interviewees gave a personal historical perspective, discussing the changes they experienced over the years of their involvement in British tennis. Further, during the ethnographic study of a tennis club culture, a considerable emphasis was placed on gaining a historical understanding of how the club's members came to adopt their various roles in the club structure, positions in the

club hierarchy, attitudes towards newcomers, and the largely agreed-upon code of behavioural etiquette. Personal oral histories were sought from many of the club members, and information was found on the club to help shed light on how it emerged and developed, how it overcame problems and how its changes affected the club over the years. This research design, therefore, allowed me the opportunity to offer historically-rooted explanations to contemporary social phenomena. What follows is an examination of and rationale for the three main types of research method used in this investigation.

A Rationale for Conducting Documentary Analysis of Historical Texts

Gathering data for the historical section in this investigation was achieved through the analysis of two main types of data: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of information that were relevant to this investigation, in the form of sources derived directly from tennis clubs, county tennis associations and old tennis magazines, were rather difficult to come by; so much of this analysis is based on findings from secondary sources. Despite the substantial amount of historical information on tennis and its early origins and development, however, it suffers from certain limitations which needed to be acknowledged prior to data collection.

Baker (1983, p.64) wrote of the lack of historical work on lawn tennis as “one of the most baffling gaps in the entire literature of British sport history. Only coffee-table ‘history’ is available”. Further exploration of historical texts led me to conclude that not enough had been done in the years since Baker’s publication to remedy this omission. While numerous histories of tennis have been produced, with varying degrees of comprehensiveness and acclaim, the majority have been written by tennis enthusiasts rather than serious academics or, what Baker (1983) called, “sportsmen and journalists *cum* amateur historians”. As such, it is suggested that much of their work is underpinned and thus undermined by ideological preconceptions and assumptions. Holt (1989, p.2) was also critical, suggesting the work of many historians of this mould was “little more than the book of Chronicles or the book of Numbers”. Vamplew (2000, p.179) stated that these enthusiasts “often deal with their topic without reference to the wider issues”, but stated that “such work can provide empirical evidence needed to test academic hypotheses”. Undoubtedly, the work of some authors has been enlightening in the quest

to uncover pertinent information on the history of tennis, but the vast majority of this work suffers from at least one of the following criticisms: i) it portrays a romanticised and biased perspective of lawn tennis; ii) accounts of the sport's historical development tend to reduce complex social developments to single-causal explanations; or iii) historical findings are not explained within a suitable theoretical framework. These are discussed in turn.

Firstly, the majority of authors in question could be labelled with the criticism that their work presents a romanticised perspective of the sport. Polley (2003, p.58) suggested: "Many sports establishments have worked hard to promote a straightforward heritage for their sports, a heritage designed to stress both antiquity and legitimacy". It could also be suggested that sports enthusiasts have a similar axe to grind in their historical analyses, by approaching the subjects from a particularly biased perspective.¹ Thus, some writers have constructed a history clearly underpinned by the objective to raise the profile of their sport, something that is undoubtedly status-enhancing for them and for the sport itself.

Many of the books on tennis of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were written in an attempt to assert the exalted position of lawn tennis above other sports and leisure-time recreations. Of course, biased messages about the game during this time can be seen as evidence of the power struggle between the classes in wider British society. The aimed audience was undoubtedly the upper and upper-middle classes as expressed in the types of assertions made; for example, in playing the game in large gardens whilst enjoying the company of "ladies and gentleman" (Cousins, 1899; Heathcote, 1890; Osborn, 1881). Opportunities to enjoy the game in this way were, of course, not available for many of the middle or working classes, but little is said of these marginalised groups or of the ways lawn tennis was used as a tool of distinction during this time.

Secondly, many tennis historians cited single-causal explanations for complex social changes; the most obvious example was with regard to who "invented" lawn tennis. It is a common tendency to attribute the great success of particular events or innovations to a single person (Dopson, 2005). "Origin myths" have, in many sports, been popularised for reasons of political or social relevance in a number of sports (Dunning, Maguire & Pearton, 1993). The Doubleday myth in Baseball (Bloyce, 2004)

and the William Webb Ellis myth in Rugby are two notable examples (Dunning & Sheard, 1979); the inadequacies of both have been exposed sociologically. Connected to this is the often common tendency to reduce a long and complicated process of development to a single incident, event or moment in history; for example, the “moment” when Webb Ellis picked up the ball in 1823 and ran with it. However, it is a common fallacy, according to Elias (1978, p.99), to resort to explanations of this type. He wrote:

We have been reared in a tradition which leads us to expect to find an explanation for every apparently inexplicable event in a single cause. This habit of thought is not in fact properly suited to helping us comprehend the forms of organisation found at the level of integration of human societies.

Adopting this reductionist view neglects the development of the necessary societal preconditions within which the particular incident or event took place, and without which, would not have occurred at all. With rugby as an example, Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.53) argued:

Reductionist origin myths... are common in our society. They reflect the currently predominant atomistic image of social structure and the notion of the historical process as a structureless sequence of events. Such ideas are indicative of the way in which our individualistic values tend to blur the perception of social structure and social process, for it is clear that a complex game such as Rugby could not have developed simply as a result of a deviant act by a specific individual. It must have been, as Norbert Elias would express it, ‘men-made’ rather than ‘man-made’, a collective invention and not the invention of a single individual, an institution which emerged over several decades as part of an unintended social process involving the interactions of numerous interdependent individuals.

In relation to lawn tennis, debates have ensued as to which of the following two men invented the game, Major Walter Clopton Wingfield or Major Harry Gem. While there is little doubt that both men developed versions of lawn tennis with varying successes, it was often the former who achieved most of the acclaim. However, Wingfield’s efforts were often celebrated without acknowledging developments in wider society that impacted upon who played the game, why they found it enjoyable and the

styles in which they played. Descriptions offered of these characteristics have not been couched or explained in relation to wider social processes, such as the mid-late 19th century class struggles, which were characterised by the ongoing insurgence of the bourgeoisie in societal institutions, the formalisation of behavioural conduct by the upper classes and the assimilation of leisure as a tool for social distinction. Referring to these rather limited “explanations”, Dopson (2005, p.1142) suggested the following:

Such ‘explanations’... in terms of leadership are of little value and, unless adequate attention is paid towards understanding the figurations of which both leaders and followers are a part, and the conditions under which particular types of people become leaders, then ‘explanations’ of this kind appear to be little more than a statement of faith in the ideology of individualism and, as such, they are unlikely significantly to enhance our understanding.

A rationale for dealing with these origin myths, according to Polley (2003), is to locate the development of a particular sport in the context of history in general, and to the particular power relations within which the game developed. In the case of tennis, it is suggested that origin myths have played a part in the evidently unbalanced and biased history of the game that is portrayed in the majority of accounts at present.

Thirdly, and undoubtedly related to the first two criticisms of the work of tennis historians, is the tendency for their work to lack a suitable theoretical underpinning. Much of the historical research on tennis has tended to focus on the structural changes to the game, its equipment, courts, and written rules, while other authors have written on changes in fashion and playing styles. However, none of these analyses have acknowledged how changes and developments in a structural sense are linked with changes in the personality structure of the same individuals. Thus, the two types of developments are not expressed as structurally interdependent. Elias (1939) showed quite clearly the connection between long-term changes in the structure of societies with changes in the personality structures of its inhabitants, and it was, of course, apparent that the 140-year historical development of lawn tennis was part of this ongoing civilising process. An endeavour was made in this study, therefore, to highlight the interdependence of these processes, and show how attitudes to how the game of tennis should be played were linked to internalised notions of social status.

Aside from the work of Ian Cooper (1995, 2004), there are no sociological histories of tennis to date. Only his work, which consists of an unpublished Masters thesis and a chapter in the relatively obscure edited text *Sport Histories*, is explicitly underpinned by a sociological theoretical framework for analysis. Cooper's contributions were excellent in the way he acknowledged the influence of wider social processes in the development of lawn tennis, but without being overly critical, they did not offer as comprehensive, detailed or in-depth analysis as this present investigation. In addition, Cooper did not set out to ask sociological questions, but rather attempted a social history of lawn tennis. This present investigation, however, has the objectives of challenging taken-for-granted myths and assumptions about the historical development of tennis; and, of seeking roots of the game's exclusivity, focusing on shifting power balances between the social classes, the rise of the amateur ethos and the connected abhorrence of professionalism. It is this specific focus, buttressed by the sociological theoretical insights of Elias, which highlights the distinctiveness of this present historical analysis of lawn tennis relative to those in existence. Further, it is because of these shortcomings of many secondary sources that further documentary analysis was conducted of primary sources. Details of the specific process of documentary analysis are now provided.

According to Jupp (2006, p.79), documentary analysis consists of the "detailed examination of documents produced across a wide range of social practices, taking a variety of forms from the written word to the visual image". Documentary analysis is a common form of data collection when conducting case studies of particular organisations or institutions, and is especially useful when attempting to gain insight into matters within a particular period of time (Bryman, 2001). Documents provide evidence of particular states of affairs and can be useful when trying to understand the underlying attitudes, beliefs or emphases of those for whom the documents were either written or provided.

Documents, however, need to be analysed much like any other type of data, and Bryman (2001, p.377) suggested that they "cannot be regarded as providing objective accounts of a state of affairs. They have to be interrogated and examined in the context of other sources of data". Thus, in sociological research, the focus of analysing documents should be on the "social production and context" within which the documents

were written (Punch, 2005). According to Punch (2005, p.226), it is important to recognise that “all documentary sources are the result of human activity, produced on the basis of certain ideas, theories or commonly accepted, taken-for-granted principles”. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, p.173) suggested that social researchers should be asking the following questions when analysing documents:

How are the documents written? How are they read? Who writes them? Who reads them? For what purposes? On what occasions? With what outcomes? What is recorded? What is omitted? What does the writer seem to take for granted about the reader(s)? What do readers need to know in order to make sense of them?

Answering these questions will help to examine the four criteria derived from Scott (1990) necessary for considering the reliability of particular documents: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.

In this present investigation, documentary analysis took place in two main phases and in two main areas: general tennis-related historical texts and contemporary LTA-published material. The aim was to uncover all manner of information on British tennis, giving due consideration to the social construction of such documentation; that is, specifically focusing on the motives of the particular authors, their preconceptions, values and assumptions.

The first phase of documentary analysis consisted of more than simply an examination of the information found within historical texts. In order to overcome some of the typical traps outlined above, into which numerous tennis historians have fallen, it was important to gain an appreciation for the social context within which the historical texts were written; essentially, the goal here was to acknowledge, identify and study the ties of interdependence that both enabled and constrained the thoughts, beliefs and actions of those writers as well as those who have interpreted historical data. At the forefront of this phase of analysis was the objective to understand the figuration in which historical documents were written.

The main sources that were found and analysed consisted of published centenaries or 75th anniversary texts of tennis clubs or country lawn tennis associations. These were often written by long-standing club or committee members. Original data, such as club or county LTA AGM minutes and old membership lists were near

impossible to come by, so these written resources proved a worthy substitute. They often provided interesting information on club rules and etiquette, plus dates pertaining to milestone events in the clubs' or associations' respective histories, for example, the year of the first men's singles tournament or the year when juniors were first allowed membership. Approximately forty of these types of documents were found and analysed. Also of particular use were old tennis magazines such as *The Field* and *Lawn Tennis*. These sources, in general, were relatively scarce, but nevertheless helped to supplement the numerous secondary sources that were also found and utilised.

The second phase of documentary analysis began with an attempt to find every single published text from the LTA since the 1980s. This time period was chosen because it was from the 80s when a number of very important interdependent processes began, namely the exponential increase in Wimbledon profits and thus LTA funding, and the initiation of some of the LTA's major talent development schemes. In addition, the availability of LTA documentation before the 1980s was particularly scarce. There were few sources of relevant information in the LTA archives, so I was directed towards the Kenneth Ritchie Wimbledon Library to find most of these documents. LTA annual reports dating back to 1982 were found, as well as other random pieces of information such as LTA presidential addresses and minutes of LTA AGM's from various years. Various studies, reports, reviews and policy statements from the mid-1980s were also found and analysed, including, for example, *The Juniors in Britain's Tennis Clubs*, the response from tennis clubs to the LTA proposals for the development of junior tennis (LTA, 1985); documents relating to the Indoor Tennis Initiative which began in 1986; LTA strategy documents, including the influential texts: *The Development of Tennis in Great Britain 1996-2001* (LTA, 1995), *British Tennis and You 1999-2003: A Strategy for the New Millennium* (LTA, 1999b), *LTA Whole Sport Plan 2004/05* (LTA, 2004c) and *Blueprint for British Tennis* (LTA, 2006b); documents related to the National Tennis Facilities Strategy; LTA sanctioned research on topics including, for example, women's participation levels in tennis and parental involvement in tennis; and LTA market reports on participation levels and recent trends in tennis. A considerable amount of documentary information was also found on the internet, particularly LTA press releases, since 1998, and documents relating to Club Vision. Articles from LTA-endorsed

magazines such as *Ace* and *British Tennis* were also analysed since 2003. In total, over 400 LTA documents over the last 25 years were examined.

The ways in which I analysed the data, or rather my decision to focus on particular sections of LTA material, is related to the types of information that I sought to obtain and the theoretical underpinning that I employed. Chiefly, I was attempting to uncover and analyse information pertaining to the development of new schemes, programmes or shifts in initiative. I sought to find out when and for what reasons new schemes or initiatives were introduced in British tennis, and also how these related to and were influenced by wider social processes or decisions made from other groups or organisations external to the LTA. In other words, I sought to illuminate the ties of interdependence that both enabled and constrained the actions of the LTA. I sought to analyse the types of power relations and struggles the LTA were involved in, how they understood their relationships with others, how they came to deal with issues that arose in the light of shifting ties of interdependence and how the general shape of British tennis developed over time as a result of LTA actions. All information and documentation that was found pertaining to these broad areas was analysed.

As my objective was to locate the LTA both within its broader figuration of British tennis and of British sport in general, I also endeavoured to analyse documentation that was not published, produced or endorsed by the LTA. I sought out publications from the Sports Council, UK Sport and Sport England, as well as early central government policy statements and initiatives such as the Wolfenden Report (Wolfenden Committee, 1960) as well as, more recently, the documents: *Sport: Raising the Game* (Department of National Heritage, 1995) and *A Sporting Future for All* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000). To gain an understanding of the particular ties of interdependence between British tennis, the media and the general public, a plethora of other documentary sources were analysed. These included articles from most of the major broadsheet newspapers, gathered from 1999, as well as debates from online chat forums, namely *tennis-ontheline.com* and *tennisdebate.com*.

A Rationale for Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

In qualitative research, interviews have long been regarded as important and valuable methods of data collection. Interviews provide an excellent means of learning about another person's experiences and gaining insight into their lives and the constraints within which they are bound (Burgess, 1984). Depending on the information sought, interviews can vary in a number of ways, including the structure, the depth of information sought, their underlying purpose and the context in which they are conducted (Patton, 2002). For the purposes of this investigation, semi-structured interviews were regarded as the most appropriate. Structured interviews, where the interviewer follows a prepared script to ensure all respondents are asked the same questions, tend to leave little room for probing or deviation towards particular themes or areas that the interviewee mentions (Gratton & Jones, 2004). On the other hand, unstructured interviews, which are characterised by no formal structure or schedule, can often lead to conversations about topics or issues that only the interviewee, rather than the interviewer, deems appropriate. Semi-structured interviews, however, allow the exploration of standard sets of research questions or themes, which allow probing as and when the need arises (Denscombe, 1998; Kvale, 1996).

For the purposes of this investigation, thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from various tennis-related associations and institutions, which represented what was felt to be a cross-section of the British tennis industry.² Similar to my objectives for the documentary analysis, the goal of these interviews was to obtain a detailed and thorough comprehension of the various ties of interdependence linking members of the British tennis figuration. Any particular organisation, group or individual that I felt had an important stake or role in the British tennis figuration was approached for an interview. Thus, interviewees were purposefully and deliberately selected rather than through any random sampling technique; the latter technique would not have been relevant in this kind of research.

Interviews helped to obtain information and gain insights into various perspectives that neither newspaper articles nor other types of written and published documentation, like that offered by the LTA, could provide. Interviews were conducted over an 18-month period and, as such, the subject content and questions asked were

noticeably different in my initial interviews compared to later ones. This was testimony both to my expanding confidence and knowledge in many of the areas in which dialogue took place and to the shifting emphasis of my research. The first ten or so interviews were conducted as part of a more general “fact-finding mission”. Outside of LTA material and newspaper articles, there were very few written sources from which I could gain this necessary information early on. Because of my relative outsider status and lack of basic knowledge of this subject area, therefore, these initial interviews provided a crucial and necessary opportunity for information to be obtained. I asked very basic questions, but ones which were open and could lead to interesting discussions across numerous areas. In accordance with the semi-structured approach, it was not imperative to obtain data from each person that could be easily compared or charted, so I was not forced to ask everyone the same questions; I was able to ask questions specifically pertinent to the individual, their respective role and presumed knowledge and experience.

Following the recommendation by Gratton and Jones (2004), I began most interviews with an “ice-breaker” question, normally asking about how he/she got involved with tennis or with his/her current job. While all interviews followed a different route from this point onwards, in terms of the questions asked and the specific information sought, there were a number of common themes that stretched across all interviews. Generally, the following areas were discussed: i) the effectiveness, efficiency and success of the current infrastructure of tennis in Britain, related to how tennis was organised, structured and funded across all tennis stakeholders; and ii) problems related to social exclusion in tennis, such as cost, access to facilities, coaching, tennis clubs and general pathways of talent development. I was interested to hear the opinions of my interviewees on issues related to social exclusion in British tennis and what they regarded were some of the other main problems in the sport. However, I wanted specifically to gain an understanding of these issues from their own perspective; in other words, I wanted to understand what exclusion meant *for them*, and what the main problems were in British tennis *for them*. Along with their expertise, for example, coaches would often focus more on problems in coaching, while LTA employees tended to discuss matters pertaining to the implementation of their player or club development schemes. Obtaining these different views allowed me to gain an understanding of the

various perspectives of each individual or organisation. This was necessary in order to build a holistic picture of the various ties of interdependence linking individuals and groups across British tennis. In line with a figurational approach, therefore, semi-structured interviews were thought the most useful primary research tool in these initial stages of the investigation. Green (2000) suggested that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to probe individuals in order to obtain information related to the particular figurations and shifting networks of interdependence they are involved in. In effect, Roderick (2003) claimed that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to identify the “I” and “we-perspectives” of that particular individual. These perspectives could be obtained from the sorts of questions asked. A more detailed account of the interview schedule, or rather a list of the types of research themes or areas that I asked questions about, can be found in *Appendix 3*.

Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggest that analysing qualitative data is never a simple or straightforward process. During this interview phase, data was analysed using a combination of both inductive and deductive analyses. Data from my first ten or so interviews was analysed inductively, which involved going through the transcripts, highlighting pieces of raw data, grouping these into key themes and then arranging them again into broad subject areas (Patton, 2002). This allowed me to look for patterns among the interviewees and similar experiences or points of view. These subject areas included, for instance, the types of problems in British tennis, the major issues and power struggles that impacted on the extent of social exclusion and the success of particular talent development schemes. These emergent themes, then, came to impact upon who I chose to ask for interviews, the questions I asked, the types of information I took from these interviews and the general direction in which my research progressed. Thus, these early interviews served numerous purposes and were particularly influential.

After some time, I began to reach the point of “data saturation”, which, according to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), is a stage where no new research themes or pieces of information are found in the data. For me, this signalled the end of the interview phase. While the process of actually conducting interviews ceased, however, the analysis and utilisation of interview data continued for some time. Later on, my interviews were analysed using a more deductive style (Patton, 2002), which involved assessing further transcripts for information in support of or opposition to the themes

and subject areas drawn from the initial interviews. As fewer and fewer new pieces of information emerged from these later interviews, deductive analysis proved useful in assessing the importance of the key themes that had already emerged. In other words, to reference Goudsblom (1977), I was able to recognise the particular “they-perspectives” of groups, and compare them to the “I” or “we-perspectives” that also emerged in either previous or later interviews. Therefore, when representatives from the LTA, for example, talked about tennis clubs being socially exclusive or resistant to change, they were putting forward a particular “they-perspective” of clubs. After talking with club coaches or other representatives from clubs, however, their own personal feelings, that is, their “I” or “we” perspectives, could be contrasted with this. In this way, interview transcripts could be used and analysed as sources of information throughout the whole process of this investigation into British tennis, in order to give voice to the particular individuals or groups in question. At various stages of this thesis, quotes from these interview transcripts were selected and included that best represented the types of patterns and processes that I was attempting to illuminate or explain.

Dealing with Ethical Issues in Interviews

At the time the research was conducted, Brunel University did not have a formal and structured ethics committee, so no formal ethics approval was sought for this study. Instead, ethical considerations were discussed with experienced researchers in the field, including my supervisor at the time and other senior members of staff. Ethical issues arose in a number of areas of my research, notably during the interview and ethnographic phases. During the interview phase, these included the issues of obtaining consent and confidentiality. Ethical considerations during the ethnographic phase of my research are discussed towards the end of this chapter.

According to Flick (2006), obtaining consent from participants in social scientific research is a fundamental obligation. Consent was sought from each of my interviewees, and was obtained verbally and informally, i.e. no consent forms were signed. It was felt that consent was implicit in the participant allowing the interview to take place in the first instance. Consent forms were not deemed necessary because all of the participants were adults and interviews were conducted in locations and surroundings that they,

themselves, chose. These ranged from private homes, tennis clubs, pubs, cafés, offices and hotel lobbies. On average, interviews lasted approximately one hour, but on several occasions, interviews lasted two or three hours. Prior to each interview, I asked whether the participant would object to me recording our conversations with a Dictaphone and all thirty interviewees agreed. I also offered to email the completed transcript to the respective interviewee so that he/she could have the opportunity to read and make corrections they saw necessary in order that they are correctly quoted. Only two interviewees took this opportunity, and they rewrote some small sections that came across incorrectly to each of them. I happily obliged all of their requests for change.

In social science, issues of confidentiality are also an integral aspect of conducting ethical research (Kvale, 1996). Prior to each interview, I also asked my interviewees whether they would object to me using their name and quoting passages from their transcript in forthcoming published work, which included my final PhD thesis, academic journal articles and any media or press-related work. It was felt important to name each interviewee in this investigation rather than retain anonymity. For example, when interviewing John Crowther, it was important that he be named as “the LTA chief executive” because this was a crucial aspect of who he was and also of what his objectives were. This specific perspective would have been lost had I referred to him as simply “an LTA employee”. Elsewhere, to gain an impression of who each person was and how they fitted within the overall figuration of British tennis, information pertaining to their particular organisation or role was provided. The vast majority of the thirty respondents had no objections to being quoted and most actually said they would be flattered to be quoted or see their name in print. Only two respondents wanted to remain anonymous if quoted, but the work of one of them was never used anyway, while the particular quotes used from the other’s transcript were emailed to him with an appeal for him to reconsider his anonymity. I decided to ask because it was felt his particular title or status was important in giving context to the particular passages from his transcript that I used. After reading through these quotes, and making a couple of minor corrections on two of them, he expressed happiness and willingness for himself and his organisation to be quoted in these ways.

At times during particular interviews, some of my interviewees would express certain points which they requested be kept “off the record”. Some would ask me to

pause the Dictaphone recorder, while others would say things under the condition they be kept anonymous. I happily accepted and respectfully kept faithful to all such requests for confidentiality. Such incidents are not uncommon when conducting interviews because, according to Finch (1993), the establishment of rapport and trust is arguably one of the most crucial objectives for an interviewer. In terms of obtaining responses of the greatest honesty and accuracy, this also highlighted the importance of obtaining a balance between what Elias (1987b) termed “involvement and detachment” in research. Involvement necessitates showing a degree of empathy with the interviewee, to understand better their actions and points of view. Generally, Elias (1987b) suggested the researcher should attempt a “detour via detachment” and aim to distance him/herself from the research in order to better conceptualise “they-perspectives”. Though, what Elias did not fully acknowledge,³ is the extreme difficulty in obtaining a clear picture of they-perspectives if one is unable to get heavily involved in the I and we-perspectives of the particular individual. Thus, when attempting to remain as emotionally detached as possible throughout the whole process of interviewing, one is apt to appear callous and unconcerned with matters of importance to the interviewee. This approach, firstly, might encumber the development of rapport between the interviewee and the interviewer that could lead to the former withholding sensitive information. Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.79) suggested: “Rapport is tantamount to trust, and trust is the foundation for acquiring the fullest, most accurate disclosure a respondent is able to make”. Secondly, this approach could lead to a misunderstanding and biased interpretation of their actions and points of view. In my experience, I felt I had to work constantly in order to strike this precarious balance between involvement and detachment. Greve (1975, p.164) described how, in the past, numerous “social researchers have been handicapped by their approach, manner, accent, vocabulary and image”, having not modified their behaviour in relation to the individuals or groups they are studying. Subsequently, they “failed to establish the necessary trust and rapport to gain access to participants” (Burdsey, 2003, p.26). My own efforts to work at my “presentation of self” were not only conscious in the interviewing phase of the research, but began when selecting suitable people to interview and developing contacts in order to arrange interviews. These efforts were also crucial during the ethnographic phase of my research, which I will now discuss.

A Rationale for Conducting Ethnographic Research

In this section I will outline what ethnography is, how I gained access to the research site, the use of gatekeepers in my research and how the research was actually conducted. I will also acknowledge and discuss some of the ethical issues and challenges that arose during the ethnographic phase of my research.

Ethnography can be defined broadly as a research tool used for describing qualitatively a culture or sub-culture (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), and over the last few decades it has developed from its roots in the early anthropological work of Bronislaw Malinowski (1922, 1926, 1932). Anthropologists have long thought ethnographic methods were particularly useful in illuminating and providing rich data on particular cultures, but more recently sociologists and political scientists have come to recognise how it “opens up vistas of cultures and groups inaccessible to other qualitative methodologies” (Sands, 2002, p.xx). The strengths of ethnographic research lie in the depth and richness of information obtained through the close relations and experiences that the researcher shares with his/her cultural members, and the production of “intimate yet stark representations of cultural reality” (Sands, 2002, p.27). Ethnography thus allows the researcher to gain valuable insights into the meanings that people attach to their own and others’ behaviour. However, ethnographic accounts like Malinowski’s have been criticised for being highly subjective and lacking in reflexive rigour. More recent ethnographic studies, particularly since the publication of Clifford Geertz’s (1973) seminal work, differ from the more traditional monograph ethnographies in several ways: i) they are much more aware of the need for reflexivity, accepting the importance of engaging in personal reflection of the relationship of the researcher to the object or subjects of inquiry; ii) they are more aware of the biases inherent within ethnocentric ideologies, and the need for more heterogeneous conceptions of culture; and, iii) their objectives tend to be focused on a particular topic of interest, rather than on the presentation of a holistic picture of an entire culture of people (Sands, 2002).

Despite these changes over time, there are a number of basic constituents of ethnography that are now largely agreed upon. According to a number of authors (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland & Lofland, 2001; Brewer, 2000; Davies, 1999; Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Sands, 2002), these include capturing

routine behaviour, everyday activities and hierarchy; seeking to understand the meaning of these activities from the participants' perspectives; and going beneath the surface to produce "thick description" of the norms and values of the people being examined. Ethnography differs from other qualitative methods with "its emphasis on intensive, focused and time-consuming participation and observation of the life of the people being studied" (Sands, 2002, p.21). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggested that only through having regular and in-depth contact with a research site and spending a prolonged period of time with the research participants in their culture can the researcher gain an understanding of the participants' lives in this way. Thus, the central feature of ethnography is spending long periods of time within the culture being examined, and observing and participating in the normal day-to-day lives of its members.

An ethnographic analysis was conducted in this investigation in order to gain insights into a British tennis club culture and, more specifically, to gain an understanding of the process of how particular groups within it come to be socially excluded. I felt ethnography offered the most potential for answering the research questions outlined in the introduction, gaining insight into power struggles between members or member groups in a tennis club and understanding how developments in the wider figuration of tennis on a macro-organisational level influenced the thoughts and actions of individuals at a micro-club level. This ethnography consisted of a ten month period of research at "West Regency Tennis Club", a pseudonym given for the club under investigation.⁴

Gaining access to the club and obtaining an agreement for me to conduct research there was not a straight forward process. Ackers (1993, p.214) posited that "access is a central issue in any research exercise; [but] in ethnographic research it is crucial". Gaining access to both the club and to the respective club culture was a very difficult and complicated process. While I might have been able to walk around the club for ten months and play tennis, this would not, necessarily, have provided me with the rich data I required. Thus, I had to strive for a measure of acceptance in order to learn about the sub-cultural norms and values of club members. Burdsey (2003, p.23) clarified this point as follows: "To be successful, the researcher needs a *comprehensive* appreciation and understanding of the characteristics of the group(s) he or she is researching" (original italics). Access to the club was facilitated, at first, through seeking the acceptance and trust of two particular "gatekeepers" or, in other words, those individuals

with control over crucial sources of information and opportunities for investigation (Burgess, 1991; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). These were the Middlesex County Development Officer (CDO), John Love, and the WRTC PR and development director member, “Paul”, respectively. I met with John Love to discuss possible sites for research, and had in mind a number of criteria that the club should fall into. Efforts were made to find “suitable” clubs for my investigation related, firstly, to the extent to which it measured up against specific quantitative criteria and, secondly, to the extent of qualitative evidence of exclusion.

Criteria for the former consisted of the following: The club needed to be fairly sizeable (i.e. at least 100 members and 5 courts) with a good mix both of male and female members and of adult and junior members, but with a substantial junior section of approximately twenty percent; it needed to be open “full time” and not just during the summer or over weekends; it needed to be relatively old and established; and the club needed to have a licensed coach as well as teams competing in the county leagues. After a meeting with John Love, during which I made a list of possible research sites, I began making primary contact with the clubs. This involved making personal visits to them, as well as sending emails and making telephone calls to club committee members or coaches.⁵ Ackers (1993, p.214) pointed out that the process of gaining and negotiating access is often covert and precarious, and stated:

The negotiation of access... is not simply a matter of writing a formal letter to cover a questionnaire or request for a formal interview. In ethnographic research, access is an ongoing process of negotiation: of building and retaining trust and reassuring people of the legitimacy of this form of enquiry.

With respect to finding evidence of exclusion, only a number of informal visits to the clubs would afford me the necessary opportunity to make observations, ask questions and decide whether any particular member groups were marginalised or excluded. Information provided by John Love was particularly helpful in augmenting my knowledge in these areas, and he also provided me with insight into the particular problems at the club. Not only did WRTC fit the criteria for my research, but it was there, as opposed to the other clubs that I visited, where I found the most fruitful possibilities for research into social exclusion.

The fact that I had selection criteria for my club suggests that it is not entirely representative of all clubs in Britain, and that my results would not be generalisable across all clubs. While representativeness and generalisability are important endeavours when conducting more “hard” scientific investigations, it is only due to the arguably unhelpful lingering positivist traditions in the social sciences that such endeavours remain for some in sociological research (Becker, 1990; Stoddart, 1998). Instead, the goal in the latter type of investigations should be to produce research that contributes to knowledge, rather than research that can be generalisable across different populations (Velija, 2007). Velija (2007) points towards the insights provided by Kvale (1996, p.223), who sought what he called “analytical generalisation”, which he described as: “a judgement about the extent to which the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation”. The club chosen in this investigation could never be described as representative, but the insights provided from its analysis will help to shed some light on what goes on in other clubs. It is clear that there are many clubs in Britain of different shapes and sizes, covering a great spectrum of different cultures ranging from very exclusive to very inclusive, and regardless of how these other clubs could be divided, I nevertheless came to realise that the vast majority of clubs were exclusive to some degree, because they are amateur, voluntary-run clubs, founded pre-World War II and share a similar social history.

Opportunities to conduct research at WRTC hinged on the responses I gained from the club gatekeepers. According to Shaffir (1998, p.48), the extent of acceptance and trust by the gatekeepers is determined by two main factors: i) the extent to which “the subjects of the research are knowledgeable about, and interested in, the researcher’s objectives”; and ii) the extent to which the researcher is “seen as likeable, friendly, dependable and honest”. Thus, access was wholly dependent on the respective outlooks of the gatekeepers and inter-personal dynamics in our relationships. Much of this was out of my control. It “just so happened” that Paul found my research interesting and, after trying and largely failing to persuade some of his fellow club and committee members to strive for a more inclusive club structure, himself, he had a personal concern for my research. He offered me full and free membership for up to twelve months, and this was in exchange for me writing a brief but detailed report of my findings after this period of research. I was more than happy to accept this arrangement as long as I was

able to “access all areas” of the club. As he had a vested interest in my research, Paul was a very useful gatekeeper. He often introduced me to other members and people he felt would offer me insight into club dynamics. He was also not afraid to let me discover some of the more negative aspects of his club; therefore, I did not experience some of the problems that Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) warned for when gatekeepers limit access to only the “normal” aspects of cultural life. After Paul had gained my trust, he was also willing to divulge more confidential information about the club and its increasingly precarious financial situation. For these reasons, Paul also became my most useful informant.

Once access was granted at the club, I found that I had to work constantly to balance the roles of both active participant and social scientist, which is a fairly common challenge for ethnographers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Sands, 2002). For figurational sociologists, striking this balance is imperative to conceptualise both “we” and “they” perspectives of the groups being examined. That is, whilst attempting to remain detached in observing and analysing the behaviour of others, one must also experience first-hand how a member of the group I have become part of lives day-to-day. Ethnographic research, more so than interviews or observations, provides excellent opportunities to obtain such rich information (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). While some formal interviews took place at the very end of my period at WRTC, many of my data-collection methods here can be described as structured but impromptu, whereby, as Davies (1999, p.71) comments, “the researcher chooses those [methods] that are most fruitful in the given situation”. These included both passive and active methods.

Numerous ethnographies, like this one, have been conducted in a sports club setting (Crosset, 1995; Macphail et al., 2003; Macphail & Kirk, 2006; Muir, 1991; Toms, 2005; Zevenbergen et al., 2002), and Sands (2002) suggested that, because of the often intense relationships that form between athletes, and the elaborate codes of etiquette or “rules of interaction” that govern relations between cultural members in sports settings, a high level of involvement is recommended. He termed this “experiential ethnography”, which refers to active participation in all of the normal day-to-day activities of the cultural members. Sands (2002, p.32) wrote:

In a more performance-based participant observation, in which the ethnographer becomes a participating cultural member, competency is not only knowing the

rules that guide interaction in the scene but also being able to take part in the interaction in the culturally prescribed manner. In the case of sport, knowing the rules of the sport is only part of the equation. Being accepted as a participating member of that athletic culture by those already in the culture is another, more important element.

It is suggested that this more intense but time-consuming method would serve two main positive functions. Firstly, it would facilitate a greater and deeper understanding of the culture of membership and the lives of the cultural members, because my experiences could be used to validate their experiences and behaviours. Secondly, familiarity and shared experiences with the cultural members would help build trust and rapport, which are crucial when seeking new information or when attempting to obtain honest responses to questions.

The types of information that I sought were varied,⁶ but it was not only limited to contemporary information. Detailed and extensive historical information was available on the club's website, which was compiled by current members. As a not insignificant number of the club's established members were long-standing, historical information was also gained from conversations with them. Paul, a member of over 40 years, was particularly useful, providing not just historical details and statistics about the club but also an insight into the types of changes the club went through, and the struggles its members came to be faced with. Inside the clubhouse, other pieces of historical information were available, such as a list of previous winners of the club's annual tournament, photographs of the club from previous eras, and several plaques commemorating previous members of prominence. To understand better the club's social and historical context, information about the surrounding area and its past development was found from a number of websites, many of which mentioned the prominence of the club in its earlier years.

As part of my endeavour to conduct "experiential ethnography", I also took part in numerous active methods of research including playing tennis, both socially and competitively for the club team; drinking, eating and socialising with other members; as well as attending club "social nights" and events, such as club quizzes and discos. Sands (2002, p.126) wrote of this method: "This process allows the ethnographer access to deeper levels of meaning pertinent to the culture through deeper levels of experience".

In addition, Davies (1999, p.7) felt that taking a more conspicuous approach would help reduce reactivity, “by participating as fully as possible, trying to become invisible in [the] role as researcher”. This was at times challenging, and brought to light one of a number of ethical issues that arose in my research. These are now discussed.

Dealing with Ethical Issues in Ethnography

Numerous ethical challenges arose during the period of my ethnographic research, related to remaining relatively anonymous, gaining consent from the club committee and conducting research in an environment where children are present. These are now discussed in turn.

Whilst a handful of committee members knew that my presence at the club was for research purposes, the vast majority of the 500 or so members were oblivious to this, and this was important for my research. I wanted to be regarded and treated like any other new member, so I undertook covert participation. Reflecting on his own ethnographic research, Sands (2002) suggested that informing cultural members of his research intentions helped rather than hindered their openness and desire to pass on information. Because of the sensitivity of my research topic, however, I felt that informing club members that I was conducting research might jeopardise their trust in me and also the naturalness of their behaviour. I did not want the club members to know that I was, in actual fact, analysing their behaviour and recording their dialogues. I did not want it to be revealed that I was a researcher, so efforts were made to look and behave in accordance with their ideas of “normality”. This impacted not only my behaviour within the club during the sessions of my research, but also when recording my field-notes after I had left the club. On one occasion early on in the research, a club member spotted me in the car park making notes in a journal, and when questioned, I was forced to give an alibi. I learnt very quickly to mentally record observations, and then write about them when I was sufficiently away from club members who might have regarded my actions with suspicion.⁷

Consent was also an important ethical consideration, much like during the interview process. Due to the relatively high sensitivity of the information that was obtained, and the not unsubstantial extent to which outside organisations or associations

might use this information in ways that might threaten the integrity, safety and security of the club or its members, it was felt imperative that the identity of the club and its members be protected at all costs. The name of the club and all of its members and staff were replaced by pseudonyms. In addition, all recognisable features of the club were removed, in order to make it difficult to be identified. Such features included the exact number of courts, all of the particular court surfaces of the club, the precise location of the club, the names of previous or current members, the names of rival clubs nearby, the identification of tournaments or competitions that the club or its members have won, and the name of the club's sponsor or an indication of what type of business it is. All specific information that could be used to learn the identity of the club was removed from this investigation.

In terms of conducting the research at the club, consent was obtained through email. All of the committee members of the club were aware of my presence and knew of my research intentions. At the end of my ten-month study, I provided the club with a report detailing the types of sensitive information that would be included in my final thesis. The committee were then given the chance to respond to my comments and were allowed to ask me to amend certain aspects that they saw as incorrect or unrepresentative of their club as a whole. No such requests were made to me and, in fact, some of the committee members said they were encouraged by the high degree of accuracy and insight that was reflected in my final report.

Conducting research in an environment where children represented approximately twenty percent of the entire club membership, I was aware of my ethical obligations as a social scientist. These are well documented by a number of authors across different disciplines (Alderson, 1995; Brackenridge, 2001; Farrell, 2005; Greig, Taylor & Mackay, 2007; Pellegrini, 1996; Robert-Holmes, 2005). It was both inevitable and crucial that I interacted with children on a number of levels, as this was an important aspect and perspective of my research. However, as with all research implicating children, care was taken to ensure appropriate behaviour. It was important, thus, to set the parameters of my research early on. Aside from one independent meeting that took place with the club coaches during the last month of my ethnography, all conversations with members, regardless of age, were informal and impromptu. They were not "interviews" that were pre-arranged. It must be said that all interactions with children

took place within the safe confines of the club, in open areas. All of the contexts in which I spoke to people were in public places (i.e. in the club house, on the lawns or on the tennis court, etc.), and at no times were individuals “cornered” or forced to talk with me. Because they were unaware of my research, club members were in no position to permit me to use their names. Thus, to protect their identity, all club members with whom I spoke and quoted have remained anonymous.

Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to discuss aspects of methodology and ethics in this investigation. A rationale was provided for the general holistic research design, as well as for the three main types of research method used in this investigation: documentary analysis, interviews and ethnography. It was argued that this holistic qualitative approach offered a great deal in terms of addressing the research aims set out in the introduction, while the individual methods were shown to be well-suited for the types of data that I sought to gather.

Details were provided for the documentary phase of my research, specifically why I chose to do it, what I looked for and how I selected info that was relevant. A critique was provided of the current stock of knowledge in the area of tennis history, and some suggestions were given of the ways my research could add to this. LTA documentation from the 1980s, from which I conducted my analysis, was examined, with a near-comprehensive run-down of all the types of sources that were obtained and analysed.

The strengths and weaknesses of semi-structured interviews were also examined, together with a rationale for why they were conducted in this present study. Who I chose for interview, what questions I asked and what types of information I was looking for, were the main emphases of this section. Ethical issues in interviewing were then approached, focusing on the protection of interview subjects, maintaining anonymity, and the difficulties associated with building rapport and trust among subjects.

The strengths and weaknesses of ethnography as a research method were discussed, and some insight was provided of how access to the club was gained and how the club was selected for research; how I balanced roles at the club, between researcher,

tennis enthusiast and human being; and ethical issues related to conducting research among a large population of children.

With the various methods of data collection sufficiently described and explained, the scene is now set to begin the analysis of social exclusion in British tennis. The following chapter commences with the historical investigation of lawn tennis.

¹ Some were actually commissioned to compile histories by particular organisations, for example Lord Aberdare's (1977, 1989) research for the All England Club.

² A detailed list of all thirty interviewees can be found in Appendix 2.

³ Elias had never conducted primary research necessitating such a heightened degree of physical involvement to the extent that I did. The bulk of Elias's (1939) research for *The Civilising Process* and following examinations into the 17th century British Navy (1950), African art (1970; cited in Goudsblom & Mennell, 1998) and sport (collated in the edited text by Elias & Dunning, 1986), for example, were focused on the historical, so gathering and analysing historical data from books, manuscripts, artwork and the like was most of the primary data collection that he did. While some interviews were conducted in Elias and Scotson's (1965) *The Established and the Outsiders*, the vast majority were actually done by John Scotson. In this way it is questionable the extent to which Elias fully understood the complexities involved in conducting inherently more "involved" primary research of this type, hence the considerable criticism that Elias has come under in these regards (see, for example, Hargreaves, 1992).

⁴ Ethnography was conducted between March 2005 and January 2006.

⁵ Visits to a number of other clubs in the area were taken before deciding on West Regency Tennis Club. These clubs were listed also by John Love as possible research sites, but each in some way failed to meet the necessary criteria for selection. For example, one was far too small while another was only open on the weekends. A handful of other clubs also failed to return my calls and messages, suggesting most probably that they were uninterested in my study.

⁶ For a detailed overview of the types of information that I recorded, refer to *Appendix 4*.

⁷ For a sample of my field notes, see *Appendix 5*.

SECTION 2: THE HISTORY OF LAWN TENNIS

Chapter 4: The Emergence of Lawn Tennis and its Upper-Class Association

This chapter commences the historical analysis of British tennis, setting out the societal preconditions for its emergence and development into a sport characterised by prestige and social exclusivity. While the sport of lawn tennis emerged in the mid to late 19th century, its roots lie in the game of Real Tennis, played centuries earlier. This is not merely through ostensible structural links, but also aspects of its “social” character: in what spirit the game was played, what aspects of its play were most valued and by whom was it played. Aspects of *The Civilising Process* (Elias, 1939/2000) are applied to this analysis, and used to explain the prevalence of lawn tennis’s social exclusivity in the context of broader 19th century class struggles. This chapter concludes with an examination of public school sport and the burgeoning ethos of amateurism.

It is undoubtedly the case that the sport of lawn tennis derived from the ancient game of Real Tennis, which was popularly played during the Middle Ages across much of western and central Europe (Aberdare, 1977, 1989; Chalmers, 2004; Clerici, 1975; Cooper, 1995; 2004; Gillmeister, 1997; Morgan, 1995; Noel & Clark, 1991). As it came to be highly regarded as a symbol of upper-class distinctiveness, only members of the royalty and nobility had opportunities to play the game in its specially-designed indoor courts (Aberdare, 1977, 1989; Clerici, 1975). Lower-status sections of society, especially in France where the game was most popular, built their own outdoor courts upon which to play similar ball games, but these never reached a commensurate level of sophistication or complexity compared to its counterpart among the upper classes (Morgan, 1995).

It is suggested that the considerable popularity of Real Tennis among the upper classes of the late Middle Ages can be explained in part due to its social significance for this group during the period of nation-state formation. Most pertinently, as the royal court came to be the centre for political administration and social affairs, the playing of Real Tennis became a symbol and tool by which members of royalty and higher-status nobility could demarcate themselves socially from nobility of lower status. This was significant during the time when opportunities for social mobility had increased to allow more open and competitive relations among members of the upper class, and it was

significant that through the game of Real Tennis, one could highlight their social rank relative to others through standard of play, playing style, dress style and other means of conspicuous consumption (DRTA, 2004). The game of Real Tennis enjoyed its heyday during the sixteenth century, played extensively during festivals and tournaments between members of different royal courts. Thus, Real Tennis was not only significant as a tool for status competition between the various ranks of nobility and royalty of a respective royal court, but also between the aristocracies of different royal courts.

It could be regarded as somewhat unfortunate that during and after the French Revolution of 1789, the vast majority of Real Tennis courts across Western Europe were either destroyed or put to other uses. However, the game began to enjoy a slight revival in popularity in Britain during the mid-19th century and a number of courts were either repaired or built as new. Some of the more enthusiastic British nobility, nevertheless, began to look for alternative versions of the game, as the huge expense of having an indoor purpose-built court was insurmountable for most members of the landed upper-class. Instead, they were keen to make use of their large well-kept gardens to play games, a phenomenon facilitated, in part, thanks to a number of crucial inventions and technological innovations (Allison, 1980). Todd (1979, p.10) wrote: “Among 19th-century inventions had been the lawn-mower and the garden roller. Together they had combined to give country houses and vicarages an easily kept and smooth lawn... These lawns were to encourage the out-of-doors playing of lawn games”. In addition, the widespread use of rubber and the successful development of vulcanisation by Charles Goodyear in 1838 gave the creators of ball games more options (Birley, 1993). Of course, the growing popularity of garden ball games was symptomatic of the growing encouragement given to outdoor ventures and leisurely games and pastimes generally, in acknowledgment of the physical and psychological benefits of partaking in lightly strenuous activities. Physical exercise was regarded as “a highly effective means of inculcating valuable instrumental and impressive educational goals: physical and moral courage, loyalty and co-operation, the capacity to act fairly and take defeat well, the ability to both command and obey” (Mangan, 1981, p.9). As such, the English upper classes, who enjoyed the most time, space and financial opportunities, increasingly took to developing games and pastimes into what one now refers to as “sports”.

Games resembling Real Tennis began being played outdoors on grass from the late 18th century, for example a game called “field tennis”. Rackets were used in this game and the scoring was the same as Real Tennis. William Hickey, a London merchant, wrote of field tennis in his memoirs of 1767:

In the summer we had another club which met at the Red House in Battersea Fields... and consisted of some very respectable persons... The game we played was an invention of our own called Field Tennis, which afforded noble exercise... The field, which was of sixteen acres in extent, was kept in as high order and smooth as a bowling green (cited in Aberdare, 1977).

Another similar game called “long tennis” was also said to have been played around the mid 19th century (Birley; 1993; Cooper, 1995; Haylett & Evans, 1989; Heathcote, 1890). Cooper (1995, p.38) wrote of these early games: “Participants recognised the similarities with other racket sports and improvised with nets, rackets and balls from other sports. Many variations arose... and there was no recognised version [of tennis] at this time”. Wymer (1949, p.247) remarked on their haphazard development as follows: “Those who tried the game laid out a court of dimensions to suit their gardens and varied the rules as they went along. The whereabouts of trees and flowerbeds played an influential part”. Compared to Real Tennis, therefore, these games were rudimentary and developed in an uncoordinated way, and there is little evidence to suggest they became widespread. It was not until the 1860s when new versions of tennis became extensively played across Britain.

In 1860, Major Harry Gem and his friend J. B. Perera played a game they called “pelota”, named after the old Basque game of “jeu de paume”, in Birmingham (Gibbons, 1986). They played this game for over a decade and founded the first ever lawn tennis club in Leamington in 1872 where it achieved some notable popularity; but Major Gem did not make use of the huge commercial potential of the game, so it was soon superseded by another version, lawn tennis or “Sphairistike” (Birley, 1993; Potter, 1963; Wind, 1979). This was created by Major Walter Clopton Wingfield, a retired army officer, and strong evidence suggests that it was his version that became the sport of tennis which is recognisable today.

The inception of lawn tennis was, of course, part of a much broader process of “sportisation” in Britain generally, which essentially involved the development of

pastimes into sports (Elias, 1986). The significant aspects of this process were that games became more rule-governed, orderly and routinised, as Dunning (1999, p.151) highlighted:

The framework of rules, including those providing for ‘fairness’, for equal chances to win for all contestants, became stricter. The rules became more precise, more explicit and more differentiated. Supervision of the observance of the rules became more efficient; hence penalties for offences against the rules became less escapable.

While it might be plausible to reduce the process of sportisation to the increasing sophistication of the rule structure and the strict observance of the rules, Elias sought to understand the deeper-lying transformations in human conduct as part of long-term civilising processes that initially allowed this type of pastime to emerge into highly organised and more “civilised” sports. Crucially, a level of self-discipline came to be expected among those taking part, and Elias (1986, p.151) suggested: “‘Sportisation’ had the character of a civilising spurt comparable in its overall direction to the ‘courtisation’ of the warriors, where the tightening rules of etiquette played a significant part”. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and for centuries before, Elias (1939/2000) uncovered a marked shift in behavioural conduct across all classes in society generally, but a process which began among the upper classes. Perkin (1969, p.280) referred to a “moral revolution” whereby England from the 18th century “ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, riotous, cruel and blood-thirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical”. Undoubtedly, it was the case that during the 18th and 19th centuries in England people grew to regulate their conduct and abhor violent and cruel behaviour. In addition, the lives of people in wider society arguably became more controlled by routine, and all of these elements found reflection in the games that these same individuals played.

Much of the research published around the same time as *Quest for Excitement* by Elias and Dunning (1986) explained the emergence of sports predominantly for reasons related to changes in work patterns and growing leisure time and expendable income (Holt, 1989; Midwinter, 1986; Vamplew, 1988a). In these texts, connections were made between the way in which people worked and the way in which people used their spare-

time. Additionally, their findings found considerable agreement across the discipline due to the connection between Britain being the first nation to play sports and also the location for the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. Whilst acknowledging the huge impact of industrialisation on the development of modern sports, however, Elias (1986, p.151) sought to explore the connection further, and warned:

The widespread tendency to explain almost everything that occurred in the 19th century as a result of the Industrial Revolution makes one a little wary of explanations in these terms. No doubt industrialisation and urbanisation played a part in the development and diffusion of spare-time occupations with the characteristics of ‘sports’, but it is also possible that both industrialisation and sportisation were symptomatic of a deeper-lying transformation of European societies which demanded of their individual member’s greater regularity and differentiation of conduct.

It is undoubtedly the case that industrialisation created the possibilities for leisure and sport, but it did and could not wholly determine their respective characters. As suggested above, games became more civilised in their rules and etiquette, and this demanded of those taking part the exercise of behavioural self-restraint. It was not just for increasing opportunities, or social change alone, that the upper classes felt inclined to develop pastimes into sports, but also a shift in their attitudes towards violence and appropriate behaviour; in essence, a shift in their personality structure occurred.

These interdependent processes had a marked effect on the particular social character that would develop within many sports with an initial upper-class following, or rather, the behavioural etiquette that characterised the ways in which the sports should be played and the values attached to these sports for the upper classes. The process of sportisation was linked to the changing and increasingly scrutinised ideals of appropriate “gentlemanly” behaviour, which demanded of its participants a level of behavioural restraint that was commensurate with wider changes in upper-class society at large. During this spurt of “formalisation”, exhibiting both emotional and behavioural self-restraint came to signify upper-class status, and sport became a conspicuous symbol of this. More notably, lawn tennis in the 19th century was essentially controlled by the upper classes, as, like in many other sports, their respective members became heads of clubs or governing associations. As such, the deeper-lying transformations in the

personality structure of this group, as Elias outlined, played a crucial part in the social character formation of lawn tennis upon its conception.

Marketing Lawn Tennis to the Upper Classes: The Influence of Wingfield

While the fruitlessness of single-causal explanations centring on who invented lawn tennis has been illustrated above, it is nonetheless apparent that Wingfield was influential in certain respects. He produced and patented his game Sphairistike (Greek for “playing ball”) in 1869, and once the game was marketed in 1874 it was popularly renamed “lawn tennis”. It was also during this time when many other sports came to be formally organised. What ensured Wingfield’s success as its founder was not necessarily the brilliance of the game he developed, as alternative variations had been played earlier that were structurally similar, but undoubtedly his expertise in marketing the game among the upper-classes (Cooper, 2004; Potter, 1963; Todd, 1979). This association was made possible as it combined a number of features from several upper-class games. The United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) (1984, p.26) wrote the following:

From croquet and cricket, the major borrowed the close-cropped lawns which lent an air of elegance to these sports. From rackets came the scoring system, based on fifteen-point games, and from badminton and court tennis came the net and the long-handled rackets. The balls were a compromise between the fluffiness of the badminton shuttlecock and the hardness of the court tennis and rackets balls.¹

While most of its rules and equipment came from other racket sports, it adopted much of its social character from cricket. It was Wingfield’s version that the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) adopted in order to control its development at a time when its growing popularity actually began to threaten the status of cricket as the number one upper-class summer sport. The MCC committee had good reason to feel threatened by its growth as it “began to replace both badminton and croquet as the favoured summer recreational pastime of higher status groups” (Cooper, 2004, p.106). In addition, lawn tennis players took the traditional cricket costume of white shirts and flannels and, as cricket lawns

proved perfect courts to play lawn tennis on, players were often found intruding on cricket pitches (USPTA, 1984).

The initial cost of playing lawn-tennis, five guineas, made it out-of-reach for many outside of the upper classes (Walker, 1989). Nevertheless, Wingfield could not rely on cost alone to create upper-class distinctiveness, as some of the prosperous bourgeoisie in the earliest years of lawn tennis developed economic capital commensurate with some of their status superiors, but one central difference was that they tended not to have the private land upon which to play. Wingfield certainly recognised this crucial feature and, in his original advertisements, put stress on the importance of playing the game on grass in private gardens, a resource that only the landed classes enjoyed at this time.

Similarities between Real Tennis and Lawn Tennis

The upper-class distinctiveness of lawn tennis was further reinforced through its glaring resemblance and association with Real Tennis, using the same equipment, rules and scoring, with only minor modifications made in the light of moving the game outdoors (Allison, 1980; Chalmers, 2004; Reay, 1963). Real Tennis also lent its successor elements of its behavioural etiquette, most notably the stress in immaculate appearance and behavioural self-restraint on court. These connections were established thanks to the way that lawn tennis was initially marketed to the upper classes (Potter, 1963). Wingfield advertised the game only in the most prestigious magazines such as *The Field* and *Vanity Fair*,² and was quick to boast the clientele who had played lawn tennis that included “11 princes and princesses, 7 dukes, 17 marquis and marchionesses, 54 earls, 6 countesses, 105 viscounts, 41 barons, 44 ladies, 44 honourables, 5 right honourables and 55 baronets and knights” (Crace, 1997, p.14).

Connections between the two games were also made through its respective players, as Chalmers (2004) asserted: “In the first 10 years or so the life of Lawn Tennis (say from 1874 onwards), almost all players of Lawn Tennis were primarily players of [Real] Tennis, who dabbled at the new game in the summer months”. Some of the most influential original followers were Real Tennis players or enthusiasts, including, significantly, both J. M. Heathcote, the “outstanding Real Tennis player of his

generation” who became in charge of the first All-England Club (AEC) sub-committee to decide on the first set of rules for lawn tennis; and Julian Marshall, the Harrow racquets champion and “self-appointed custodian of the traditions and customs of Real Tennis”, who was the chairman of the AEC during the crucially decisive period before the formation of the LTA in 1888 (Birley, 1993, p.314). Accordingly, the game acquired an almost instant prestige through its staunch affiliation with Real Tennis.

In the first few years, this was no doubt aided by the introduction of the game at the prestigious AEC and the growing prominence of Wimbledon in the social calendar of the upper classes. While the first “Championships” were held in 1877 to a crowd of just 200 people, it was not long before the “Wimbledon meeting” was ranked equal to Lords, Henley and Ascot (Todd, 1979) in terms of social importance, and became for the players “the clearing-house of the world’s skill, the final assessor of form, the standard by which championship mettle was measured” (Myers, 1972; cited in Phillips (ed.), 1999, p.7). The social scene was of utmost importance to the occasion, as Todd (1979, p.193) illustrated:

A ticket for the covered stand seat on the Centre Court – no queuing with the general public – and strawberries and cream, if possible in the members’ enclosure, followed by a stroll around the grounds all offered a perfect setting for ladies dressed in the height of fashion, who were naturally accompanied by gentlemen correctly attired, to meet friends and engage in light conversation.

It was surely the case that lawn tennis grew in popularity and maintained its social significance among the upper classes in the late 19th century as a result of its exclusion to socially inferior classes. Rader (1990, p.81) suggested:

The significance of tennis and other sports played by the rich extended far beyond the obvious. In a society characterised by an exceptionally fluid social structure, expensive sports provided one of the means by which the wealthy, especially the parvenu, could distinguish their numbers from the masses.

Numerous changes in wider society over the next few decades, however, came to facilitate the game being usurped into upper-middle-class culture, adopting more middle-class values. While it struggled to retain its staunch upper-class association, nevertheless, it retained much of its social character and high status. The insurgent middle classes aspired to play the game in their endeavours to achieve social mobility.

This was a common tendency during the late 19th century, for recreations and sports were used as symbols of status and as tools to achieve a higher social standing. Lawn tennis was popular particularly for this reason. From its conception, thus, elements of exclusion conditioned the social character of the sport, as it became significant as part of the wider societal shifts in the balance of power between the upper and middle classes.

Societal Preconditions for the Emergence of Lawn Tennis

Aside from the shifting work/leisure patterns as a result of industrialisation, what were the societal preconditions for the emergence of lawn tennis in Britain? According to Elias (1986), of marked importance to the emergence of modern sport was the process of “parliamentarisation”, which occurred throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in Britain. Elias (1939/2000) argued that the centralisation of state power and the gradual demilitarisation of the landed aristocracy forced upon the whole upper classes new social constraints. There was a marked “pacification” of the upper classes, manifested most clearly in the regulation of conduct between political parties. The successful and peaceful relinquishing of office between the Whigs and Tories, the use of debating skills instead of violence to settle disputes and the growing trust between members of opposing parties were symbolic of a deeper-lying transformation of human conduct (Elias, 1986). The eventual outcome of this process was an upper class that applied the same regulation of behaviour to their leisure activities. Elias (1986) made the suggestion, therefore, that sportisation and parliamentarisation were interdependent processes. There was no suggestion that the process of parliamentarisation *caused* the sportisation of its games and pastimes; it was simply the case that the

same class of people who participated in the pacification and greater regularisation of factional contests in Parliament were instrumental in the greater pacification and regularisation of their pastimes... Sport and Parliament as they emerged in the 18th century were both characteristic of the same change in the power structure of England and in the social habitus of that class of people which emerged from the antecedent struggles as the ruling group (Elias, 1986, p.40).

Clearly, the upper classes were caught up in two different aspects of a more general process of social development; the sportisation of pastimes and the regularisation of

conduct were different components of the same long-term process towards an increasingly behaviourally self-regulated upper-class society. Dunning (1999, p.56) argued: “The habitus of ruling groups in Britain underwent a “civilising spurt”, leading them simultaneously to transform the political and leisure sides of their lives in a civilising direction”. What was it, therefore, that caused this marked and widespread change in the habitus or behaviour and personality structure among the upper classes? It was no coincidence that a wider shift in the balance of power generally across British society was underway during this period, which, of course, impacted on the process of sportisation.

Most specifically, it is evident that a shift in functional interdependence occurred between the land-owning upper class and the bourgeoisie throughout the industrial revolution. A deep-lying power struggle emerged between these groups, the outcome of which favoured the latter. Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.291) referred to this change as a process of “embourgeoisement”, defined as “the gradual emergence of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class, to their growing control of major institutions, and to the consequent spread of their values through society”. This process had roots in the French Revolution, when the unquestioned “natural-ness” of social hierarchies was first challenged against newer meritocratic principles (Gruneau, 2006). During the 19th century, however, structural changes in British society also provided some impetus for the shift in the balance of power between classes, and this helped cause the formalisation of behavioural conduct among the upper classes.

Power manifested through land ownership, that is, the basis of aristocratic power, gradually lost influence as a power resource compared to wealth found through new industry and commerce, that is, bourgeois power (Birley, 1995a). Further, compared with industry and commerce, land was less easily obtained and enhanced (Wade, 1996). Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.61) offered an explanation of this process as follows:

At the beginning of the [19th] century, the bourgeoisie were a subordinate, ‘middle’ class. However, their power base lay principally in the relatively dynamic sphere of industrial production. Therefore in the long term, they were destined to triumph over the aristocracy and gentry whose power derived primarily from the ownership and control of land, a relatively ‘static’ resource. In short, the bourgeoisie were the future ruling class.

Subsequently, throughout the 19th century, as Birley (1995a, p.1) suggested:

The old ascendancy was crumbling and the aristocracy were beginning a long, slow decline. The basis of their prosperity and social status was land and throughout Europe land values had plummeted... The consequences went beyond the economic. Competition not only brought international friction, but intensified the pressure for social change.

The tail-end of the Industrial Revolution was characterised by a period of consolidation for the upper classes; their previously unequivocal claims to positions of leadership in, most notably, the economic and political spheres came to be contested. The gradual replacement of decision-making power in the Houses of Parliament away from the hereditarily-empowered House of Lords to the more egalitarian and bourgeois-dominated House of Commons facilitated a loss of authority for the upper class (Holt, 1989). In addition, the growth of trade union power also posed a threat to the upper class (Birley, 1995a). Lengthening ties of interdependence between the upper and middle classes over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries made relations between them more complex. The landed classes were unable to resist their relative loss of power to the bourgeoisie, because “they had begun to grow dependent on the latter for the performance of essential functions” (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p.60).

Bourgeois control in society, however, developed to be incomplete in crucial respects, since this process “took place within the framework of an established system of dominance by the aristocracy and gentry” (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p.231); it took place within an established-outsider figuration. The upper classes were an established and cohesive group relative to the “new” middle class, and the challenge to their authority, in fact, actually helped make them stronger and more cohesive, as they united in opposition against insurgent lower status groups. The middle classes were essentially an outsider group that were much newer, less cohesive and more internally divided. They lacked the solidarity of the aristocracy, therefore, and thus in many social and cultural spheres had insufficient power to collectively mount an adequate and successful challenge to their hegemony. In many ways the middle classes were forced to “accommodate to the aristocracy and gentry and to adopt some of their values” (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p.231).

The “old” and established position of the 19th century aristocracy gave them a clear advantage during the process of middle-class insurgence. Their cohesive organisation allowed them to develop a unified code of behavioural conduct that was strictly adhered to, regulated from within and, most importantly, distinguishable from behaviour commonly exhibited by the lower orders. Their code was distinguishable in that it demanded of its adherents a higher level of behavioural self-restraint and greater foresight, and emphasised greater refinement of manners and more elaborate taboos on behaviour. Demands were made on all aspects of upper-class culture, including styles of dress and accent. Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.111) wrote of this process of formalisation as follows:

In order to maintain their distinctiveness and, hence, their privilege and power, the higher strata were forced, as a means of distinguishing between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, to elaborate still further their already differentiated standards, and these new, more elaborate and differentiated standards necessitated the exercise of greater self-control.

Unity was maintained through strict discipline, as members of the upper-class who failed to conform were subject to peer pressure and possible ostracisation from the group. Holt (1989, p.30) explained the enforcement of these codes of behavioural conduct in the following way:

These codes were not so much enforced by law as more insidiously spread by the sanction of ridicule between peers and by the force of social emulation from below. What begins as social constraint is slowly transformed into behavioural restraint, as the wide range of personal controls on behaviour, which people learn nowadays from childhood, came to be seen as the precondition for ‘civilised’ life. Behaviour, in this regard, came to be regarded as a measure or reflection of one’s social standing more generally; it was, thus, regarded as a source of power.

Because the middle classes at this time were relatively internally divided, they were less cohesive than the upper classes, so the restrained code of behavioural conduct of the latter became the standard to which the middle classes aspired to; a code against which they were often found wanting. Regarding the conduct of the upper-classes as socially superior, the middle classes tried to emulate them, not just in their aspirations to rise, but also in order to distinguish themselves from the lower classes below. In this

way, standards of appropriate behaviour throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries were characteristically more restrained the further up the hierarchy one looked. The measure of an individual's cultural capital during this time in wider society was determined by a sliding scale of status, and Elias and Scotson (1994, p.153) wrote:

The relationship between [the] firmly established... and those who do not 'belong'... like many other relationships between the higher and lower status groups, is often marked by a descending gradient of self-restraint; on the ladder of a civilising process the higher social formation usually takes up a position a few rungs above their own lower social formations.

Members of the upper class were able to maintain their social distinction through possession of a higher level of cultural capital, manifested bodily through exhibiting more restrained behaviour. This power resource was most influential as a signifier of social distinction in the social institutions where economic capital between the groups was more equal, for example in fields where the classes were mixing socially. Sport, in general, was one such place where behavioural conduct became more conspicuous as a power resource (Bourdieu, 1978). In fact, compared to the political and economic spheres, sport was a sphere where upper-class hegemony was challenged less successfully. Historically, it had always been *their* domain, with a distinct code of behavioural etiquette, norms and values, which were noticeably "upper-class". Nevertheless, at certain periods over the 19th and 20th centuries, their authority in sport was attacked, forcing the upper classes to adjust their behaviour. There were periods during which behavioural conduct would go through further processes of formalisation (Wouters, 1986). Elias (1986, p.34) stated: "It was this change, the greater sensitivity with regard to the use of violence which, reflected in the social habitus of individuals, also found expression in the development of their pastimes". The games that the upper classes played came to be excellent measures and ostensible symbols of their increasingly restrained behavioural conduct, and thus status superiority.

One such manifestation of the marked shift in behavioural conduct of the upper classes, and their general growing abhorrence of violence more generally, was their assault on popular working-class recreations. Previous to the emergence of a bourgeois challenge to power, many popular working-class recreations such as card games, bowls, animal-baiting, cockfighting, wrestling, cricket, and football were patronised by upper-

class gentlemen (Baker, 1979). It was regarded as their responsibility to teach the working classes positive values, much like they had achieved abroad in the British colonies (Gruneau, 2006). Some of the aristocracy even joined in with their games (Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Holt, 1989), but, from the early 18th century, many of these amusements were undermined by shifting class relations.

It was undoubtedly the case that the behaviour-conscious upper classes began to regard many of these activities as “uncivilised”, especially those involving the wanton “abuse” of animals (Baker, 1979; Dunning, 1999; Holt, 1989). Not only were these activities heavily associated with drunkenness, fighting and gambling, but also increasingly unjustifiable violence and brutality. Holt (1989, p.32) suggested of this gradual process: “From the theological and philosophical viewpoint it became less acceptable to view the world as made purely for man. All species had a right to exist”. Further, the patronage of these activities necessarily meant mixing socially with inferiors, which came to bring embarrassment to the upper classes. It is suggested that this latter point, above all, took precedence in their decision to withdraw support. Holt (1989, p.48-9) reasoned: “Gentry involvement in popular sports depended very much upon an absolute and unquestioned acceptance of the social hierarchy”, but the burgeoning economic prosperity of the bourgeoisie and the threat of disorder among the working-class meant “the gentry were no longer so confident of their position. While their social pre-eminence was still a fact, it was increasingly being called into question”. Accordingly, they began to remove themselves from these activities, as Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.36) wrote:

It is reasonable to suppose that members of the aristocracy and gentry stopped mingling on the sports field with their status inferiors largely as a consequence of the changing balance of power between classes which occurred with industrialisation. As this process gathered momentum, the power of the bourgeoisie increased. At the same time, members of the lower classes grew restive. Faced with a two-pronged threat to their dominance, members of the aristocracy and gentry began to abandon their paternalism towards the ‘lower orders’ and became increasingly status-exclusive in their social relations.

The aristocracy came to exclude social inferiors from their leisure activities, resisting as much as possible the emulation of *their* sports from the lower orders. This was found in

the majority of popular upper-class recreations, which included lawn tennis from the time of its conception.

Sport was initially an area where the upper classes could resist the middle-class challenge to their authority, but this began to change when the public schools went through their own process of embourgeoisement. As “factories” for the maturation of upper-class boys into “gentlemen” (Eisenberg, 1990), and pivotal locations for the expansion of sport and the inculcation of its powerful values, the shift in the balance of power within public schools was a very important process in the development of sports generally. The “cult of athleticism” and the ethos of gentlemanly amateurism that was born in them came to embody the social character of most, if not all, of the sports that were developed first in Britain³ and also characterised the changing ideal of a gentleman.

The Significance of the Public Schools and the Changing “Gentleman”

The process of embourgeoisement across society in general had been set in motion decades previously, thanks to the Industrial Revolution and the resultant changes in work patterns. During this time the landed classes had control of leisure and indulged in it freely and without challenge (Baker, 1979). The middle classes, however, expressed a marked opposition to leisure and recreation, rooted in fears of moral degeneracy and religious disapproval. Protestant values of Methodism and Evangelicalism came to oppose leisure and recreational activities for their inherent idleness (Bailey, 1978; Baker, 1979; Malcolmson, 1973). Bailey (1978, p.17) wrote of specifically evangelicalism in the following way: “Its teachings stressed the need to strengthen personal and social standards of morality and evinced a deep suspicion of all worldly pleasures”. As such, leisure was an issue clouded with doubt for the middle classes (Baker, 1979). From the 1830s and 40s, though, they began to recognise the potential for leisure generally as a means of social control. The growing economy and industry of Britain, which fuelled middle-class prosperity, relied on the continuous labour of the working classes. According to a Marxist viewpoint, controlling the working classes became the main goal of the middle-class owners of production and the control of their leisure time away from work was crucial to this. Sugden and Tomlinson (2000, p.315) wrote:

One of the more pressing tasks... was the reformation of the working rhythms of those whose experience of labour remained anchored in a bucolic past and cycles of seasonal imperatives. Necessarily, the non-work habits of the masses formed part of the equation of reform, for what people did in their spare time had implications for how they related to the process of production.

Growing increasingly fearful of the insurgence of the working classes and/or their resistance to the authority of their status superiors, sport became rationalised (hence the term “rational recreation”) as a means of improving the general “condition” of working-class life (Bailey, 1978; Gruneau, 2006).

The influence of middle-class ideology with specific regards to sport and leisure also reached into the increasingly aristocratic-dominated public schools of the mid 19th century. It was in the public schools that the middle-class sporting code came to predominate and this was followed by a shift towards middle-class dominance in sport and in wider society more generally. What happened at the public schools during this time represented the beginnings of a marked shift in the balance of power between the landed classes and the bourgeoisie, towards the latter. Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.60) wrote: “The power of the bourgeoisie grew with the result that institutions which had previously been adapted to the interests of the aristocracy and gentry began to reflect bourgeois interests and bourgeois values. The public schools were no exception”. The public schools did not just become more populated with members of the middle class, but also more heavily influenced by their value systems.

Prior to the insurgence of middle-class values in the public schools, these educational establishments became notorious locations for social unrest and upheaval, and were regarded as locations of injustice and physical cruelty (Chandler, 1988). Firstly, public schools were brought to attention as locations where social reform was needed. Dunning and Sheard (1979) documented a number of incidents whereby the school boys, many of whom were a higher social class than their teachers, revolted in opposition to being ruled by members of an inferior social group. This resulted in a situation whereby, “the rebellious and lawless conditions” in these schools reached an intolerable level by the 1830s that brought a “public outcry” (Morford & McIntosh, 1993). Secondly, public school boys often partook in field sports that came to be regarded as cruel and uncivilised. Thirdly, the boys engaged in the often degrading

prefect-fagging system, which encouraged brutality and the humiliation of boys of lower status (Chandos, 1984; Goldlust, 1987). During this time, however, public school headmasters had insufficient power to stamp out these rituals, and the self-regulation of behaviour for the public school boys was not at a level sufficient for them to comprehend their apparent wrong-doings. Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.50) wrote: “One might have expected upper-class boys, many of them sons of noblemen and gentlemen, to have exercised greater self-control... However, they were young and, whilst in residence at school, free from direct parental influence”. Rituals of this sort were often encouraged as being part of the formal education in what the upper classes at the time regarded as gentlemanly virtues, or essentially virtues of being upper-class. They encouraged discipline, independence, self-reliance, physical fitness and social adaptability (Chandos, 1984). Whilst these gentlemanly virtues in theory were not contested through the gradual inculcation of middle-class values, there was a noticeable shift in emphasis over time.

Middle-class ideals of sport began to pervade through Rugby School headmasters such as Thomas Arnold. Arnold gave his boys opportunities to play and take control of team-sports and games that developed the types of Christian qualities that he deemed necessary, such as moral responsibility, strength and courage. What emerged gradually was the cult of athleticism, founded on Charles Kingsley’s “Muscular Christian” principles that declared “bodily health a matter of personal responsibility to God and duty to one’s country” (cited in Bailey, 1978, p.72). These principles, according to Lowerson (1993), initially began as an instrument to contain the potentially disruptive youth of the public schools, but grew to become an instrument for preparing the young men for their future roles as influential figures in society. Arnold and other leading headmasters imparted heavily Christian bourgeois values onto his school boys, which was the main impetus towards redefining what it meant to be a gentleman, based more in terms of conduct than heredity. Eisenberg (1990, p.268) wrote of the social arrangement in public schools: “gentleman of right [i.e. noble birth] saw themselves continually accompanied by gentleman of honour or of education, by so-called merchants and gentleman, by officers and gentleman, by Christian gentleman”. Whereas in previous decades a gentleman was confined to those who were either landed or titled, however, its definition began to shift and become less immutable, taking into account one’s education

and profession (Holt, 1989). Society's new "elite" came to be comprised of members of both the upper and upper-middle classes; the latter developed the wealth and education commensurate with upper-class status but lacked the aristocratic family heritage.

The clash between upper and middle-class ideologies manifested itself very clearly on the sports field. As part of this process, games ceased being played for disciplinary purposes but became part of a broader reach of objectives. Wider political and social aims were undoubtedly at the heart of middle-class sporting reforms, and it is possible that these activities, for some at least, became highly regarded as "ends in themselves", serving purposes outside of social reform and social control. Team games, especially, were encouraged for their supposed physical and psychological benefits and their role in teaching skills in leadership, loyalty, obedience, team-work and discipline (Allison, 1980; Bailey, 1978; Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Holt, 1989; Vamplew, 1988b). Mason (1982) summarised the qualities of the ideal Victorian gentleman, those which reformists in the public schools increasingly sought to develop in their boys: generosity, openheartedness, magnanimity, responsibility, leadership and disinterestedness. Also of significance was the quality demonstrated through an all-abiding courtesy to women. Together, these qualities came to infer a high social class or gentlemanly status because their adherence arguably necessitated a considerable degree of behavioural and emotional restraint.

These shifting principles of appropriate conduct in the public schools helped facilitate both a lowering threshold of appropriate violence in sport and leisure pursuits among the schoolboys as well as a growing preference for more organised, structured and rule-governed sporting activities. Linking sport with this changing notion of being a gentleman eventually helped to characterise the ethos of "amateurism" that grew from the public schools from the mid-19th century. This ethos, to a very considerable extent, was based on these gentlemanly qualities highlighted above and shaped the structural and social character of a great deal of sports that developed during or soon after the public school reforms of the mid-19th century. Lawn tennis was no exception.

The Conception of Amateurism in the Public Schools

The ethos of amateurism became, from the late-19th century, the dominant code of sporting legitimation. Amateurism was both an “ideological discourse” and a set of class practices (Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Gruneau, 2006) founded on a more relaxed middle-class attitude to leisure generally, beyond the hesitant Protestant-driven condemnation of sport that had previously characterised their attitudes towards it. However, it was dominated by a value system that was largely aristocratic, focusing on the potential for sport to develop gentlemanly virtues. It was through the ethos of amateurism that both upper and middle-class sporting codes united, taking elements of each, as Holt (1992, p.30) remarked:

In terms of the values of amateur sport, the older aristocratic ones of courage and honour (now called ‘sportsmanship’) co-existed with a newer ideal of beneficent healthy competition, where individual effort and ability were rewarded, preferably within the context of the team. Aristocratic and bourgeois cultures were thoroughly mixed up in amateur sport. The spirit and ethos was mainly aristocratic but the principles and structures were not.

This dominant sporting code spread from the public schools into universities and beyond, into voluntary associations, clubs and governing bodies; it characterised many of the sports that emerged during the late 19th century. According to Dunning and Sheard (1979), sport had to have particular components or social characteristics for it to be legitimised under the amateur ethos of the public school elite, which included: i) the game regarded as an “end in itself”, with an abhorrence of achievement striving, training and specialisation; ii) the exhibition of self-restraint, through the masking of enthusiasm in victory and disappointment in defeat; and iii) the emphasis on “fair play”, stressing equality of game chances, voluntary observance of the rules and friendly attitude towards opponents. On the surface, therefore, the code of amateurism fostered an appreciation for sport in what some would argue as its most pure form, “played for the game’s sake, for personal satisfaction not material gain” (Baker, 2004, p.1). It was to be untainted by the corruption of money and business, and Gruneau (2006, p.572) remarked:

The existence of material rewards seemed to pose the greatest threat to the inherited public school ideal of playing the game for its own sake. It was argued

that money raised the stakes of games to a point where games lost their intrinsic value and were pursued simply as a means to a financial pay-off. Money promotes greed and cheating.

To be paid for sporting performance was entirely “working-class” and therefore abhorred, described as “evil” because it could lead players to care more about winning than the rules they should uphold (Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Holt, 1989). At a deeper level, advocates of amateurism admired the respect, discipline and behavioural restraint that were demonstrated by its adherents. Baker (2004, p.1) argued: “The amateur played the game vigorously and intensely but never took the outcome too seriously; his was a contained competitiveness. The amateur did not engage in unduly elaborate preparation”. Writing in 1909, Whigham (1909; cited in Morgan & Meier, 1995, p.740) suggested of gentlemen’s responsibilities in a similar regard:

The fact that a man is born into the society of gentlemen imposes upon him the duties and, to some extent, the ideas of his class. He is expected to have a broad education, catholic tastes, and a multiplicity of pursuits. He must not do anything for pecuniary gain; and it will be easily seen that he must not specialise. It is essentially the mark of the bourgeois mind to specialise.

Again, these attitudes were couched in what were widely regarded as gentlemanly qualities of the Victorians, derived as part of the established upper-class code of behavioural conduct. In this way, Keating (1964, p.32) regarded the terms gentleman, “sportsman” and “amateur” to be “intimately interrelated”.

The extent of amateur influence, however, was very much sport-dependent. In rugby union and football, for example, the amateur ethos could exclude those of lower status from participation, under the veil of moral legitimation (Holt, 1989). Although this was achieved through sanctions against remuneration for play, it touched far deeper than simply the economic values it despised. Preventing athletes from being paid meant only those that could afford to play and train full-time were included. This, of course, gave the upper classes the opportunity to demonstrate their superiority and dominance both on and off the field, as well as to distance themselves as far as possible from the apparently vulgar, undisciplined and unruly working classes. In this way, the upper classes were able to dominate elite spectator sports for decades.

In cricket, lower status professional players were allowed to play alongside upper-class gentleman for a long time (Dunning, 1999). The sport emerged while the upper classes could still be seen mixing socially with inferiors and, according to Holt (1989), receiving payment for playing cricket was not dishonourable in the slightest before the mid 19th century. Decades later, however, certain class distinctions were introduced both on and off the field in order for the upper classes to conspicuously assert their superiority, firstly over the working classes and then the middle classes who later joined in (Dunning, 1999). For example, the position of batsmen used to be dominated by the aristocracy, while bowlers were almost always working-class (Holt, 1989). Batting was deemed a more genteel and gentlemanly action, relying on finesse and precision, whilst bowling was aggressive and brash. In later years when the middle classes began to play, the batting order would begin with the upper class batsmen down to the middle class (Speak, 1988). When the amateur versus professional debate emerged in cricket, it did not tend to disrupt the game itself, with matches involving both amateur and professional players continuing to be popular. However, a distinction on the score card would reveal status distinctions, as amateurs were written for example “J. Smith”, whereas the names of professional players were written “John S”. (Allison, 1980; Holt, 1989).

In lawn tennis, matters with regards to amateurism did not receive notable attention until around the 1920s when the emergence of a successful professional tour threatened the future of amateur competitions. Up until this point, leading tennis players, clubs and governing bodies in the UK and across the world held steadfast in their opposition to professionalism and its ethos, not unrelated to the fact that these institutions were dominated by members of the upper or upper-middle classes who supported notions of amateurism in most part to maintain the exclusiveness and distinctiveness of their sport. The dominance of amateurism as an organisational structure lasted until 1968 when all the major tournaments including Wimbledon turned “open” in order to enable professionals to compete alongside amateurs for the first time. The underlying ethos of amateurism in lawn tennis was much harder to change, however, mostly because it prevailed at club level. Notions of amateurism were very influential in the development of lawn tennis in its earliest decades and the very ethos of club tennis was originally based on a voluntary and, thus, unpaid and amateur organisational

structure. At this level, the amateur ethos characterised how the game was played, by whom and for what reasons. For the aspirant, playing the game served to help demarcate themselves from those of lower social status. The motivation to highlight class distinction remained intense, especially in the light of the fragmentation of the middle class. Holt (1989, p.113) suggested:

The moral philosophy of amateurism was mixed with social ambition. The rapidly growing cohorts of successful professional men... did not just want to climb the social ladder; they wanted to pull it up behind them and set themselves apart from the massed ranks of the clerks, the managers, and the shopkeepers who made up the rest of the middle classes.

Although much of Victorian sport was argued to have been founded on democratic principles, in practice, the assimilation of lower orders into one's own social circles became fiercely abhorred. For example, an anonymous author in the *Saturday Review* (29th August 1874) wrote: "The eager attempts of persons to wedge themselves into a slightly higher stratum of the social formation by seizing on the favourite amusements of that higher level constituted one of the more prominent features of contemporary leisure" (cited in Bailey, 1978, p.75). Numerous leisure activities were regarded as symbolic of a higher status and used in this way. For lower status groups, they were regarded as sports that one should aspire to play, and lawn tennis was an excellent example. It was regarded by some of the middle classes as symbolic of a higher social status, to which they aspired, and as a tool for their social mobility towards this status (Rader, 1990).

Conclusions

This chapter set out to outline the societal preconditions for the emergence of lawn tennis with its characteristics of prestige and social exclusivity. Origins of the gentlemanly amateur spirit that embodied lawn tennis from its conception were explored, specifically focusing on how lawn tennis became an upper-class commodity and symbol of conspicuous consumption in its earliest years. The similarities with Real Tennis were explored, together with the ways in which Wingfield's deliberate marketing strategy influenced its initial clientele. Class struggles between the aristocracy and insurgent bourgeoisie significantly characterised lawn tennis throughout the late 19th century. In

order to locate the sport in this wider social context, the related processes of “sportisation” and the gradual embourgeoisement of British society were analysed to give meaning to the struggles for control in lawn tennis. Public schools are examined as major sites for class struggles during the mid-19th century, and the public-school-derived ethos of amateurism is studied, as it came to underpin much of the “social character” of lawn tennis.

The following chapter aims to develop some of the ideas introduced here, examining the position and role of lawn tennis within broader class struggles of this time. The focus turns to the emergence and development of lawn tennis clubs in Britain, and how the ethos of amateurism came to be so strongly rooted within them. The various ways in which clubs of this time came to justify membership exclusivity and elitism are also explored.

¹ The rackets scoring system was soon superseded by the Real Tennis system that scored 15, 30, 40, deuce and advantage (Barrett, 1986).

² Vanity Fair, 24th October, 1874

³ In this regard, Mennell (1992, p.147) wrote: “The list of sports which first assumed their modern, internationally recognisable form in England is impressive: soccer, rugby, horse-racing, wrestling, boxing, lawn tennis, fox hunting, rowing, cricket, athletics and (from Scotland) golf”; further, he concluded: “The very word *sport* is English”.

Chapter 5: Gentlemanly Amateurism and the Emergence of Tennis Clubs

This chapter sets out to examine the ways in which the 19th and 20th century class struggles influenced the burgeoning social character of lawn tennis and its clubs. An examination is conducted of the ways in which the strict adherence to the code and spirit of amateurism helped motivate tennis players to both strive to identify themselves among higher status social groups and demarcate themselves from groups that they deemed of inferior status. This chapter seeks to examine these and related developments up until the early-to-mid 20th century.

The extent to which the popular ideals of amateurism spread to the sport of lawn tennis is not clear-cut and obvious, as the game's social character was influenced by numerous factors and motivations of different competing groups. However, developments at both the recreational and elite levels, as set out in this chapter, suggest the driving force behind the inculcation of amateur values in the sport's earliest years was predominantly upper-class. While the game was still enjoyed and widely played within the private gardens of the upper and, increasingly, upper-middle classes, clubs began to form in response to its burgeoning popularity from the 1870s and 80s. Initially, most were focused in the South-East of England but they soon spread throughout the country (Bale, 1982). It was in these voluntary associations or in their private residences where members of the upper classes shared company and also where the spirit of voluntarism became synonymous with gentlemanly conduct and the ethos of amateurism (Baker, 2004). The aristocracy who adopted the game into their social circles first assumed responsibility for its developing rule structure and burgeoning popularity. This came, firstly, with the MCC, as previously noted,¹ then with the AEC. Together, in 1883, they produced the first written rules, and the game continued to spread rapidly across the country. Courts were added to clubs of other sports and new lawn tennis clubs formed, but within a few years it was decided by representatives from leading clubs that the AEC was no longer sufficiently representative of clubs across Britain as a whole (Cooper, 2004). Subsequently, the LTA was formed in 1888, with its initial aims to “advance and safeguard the interests of lawn tennis” in Britain (Reay, 1957). Their

main objectives were to formalise the rules, standardise the court dimensions and equipment used and centralise the organisation of British competitions.

The game also spread overseas with marked rapidity, facilitated in part through British Empire links and international trading networks (Cooper, 1995; Lowerson, 1993; Talbert & Old, 1957). The game spread to America in 1874, where, along with golf, it became associated with upper-class country clubs (Cooper, 1995; Guttmann, 1986). It also quickly spread to a number of other nations.² The globalisation of tennis helped improve the standard of competition at Wimbledon, which was, of course, initially favoured by the British general public, who enjoyed watching the rising standards of tennis and relished the widespread and continuous British domination that characterised the first twenty or so years of The Championships. The Davis Cup was also created in 1900, which was initially a contest between the US and Britain only, but which expanded quickly over the years to incorporate many other tennis-playing nations. By the 1920s there were over twenty nations competing (Burrow, 1922; Clerici, 1975; Haylett and Evans, 1989).

It is clear that, throughout the late 19th century, the upper classes held positions of power and dominated the development and organisation of lawn tennis at both the elite and recreational levels. They adopted their roles of leadership in these institutions on a voluntary basis, but an unintended consequence of the voluntarist spirit, which the upper classes firmly espoused, was that tennis clubs became increasingly populated by members of lower social groups. The spirit of voluntarism that originally encapsulated upper-class values began to pervade all strata of society over the next century (Baker, 2004; Hill, 2002), and this enabled the middle classes to gain access to the sport. In this way, the initial upper-class social character of lawn tennis came to be influenced more markedly by middle-class values towards the end of the 19th century, partly facilitated by the burgeoning “volunteer movement” that allowed this previously marginalised class access to lawn tennis in clubs.

The volunteer movement represented the values driven by Victorian ethics of fairness, association and solidarity. Numerous types of associations emerged throughout the mid to late 19th century that centred around different aspects of culture, for example, trade unions and other associations focused on workplace relations; political associations, the first and largest contingent of which was Conservative; and voluntary

clubs that emerged for more purely social or recreational reasons. The spirit of voluntarism or, in other words, the spirit of upper-class solidarity helped to characterise lawn tennis clubs as wholly amateur organisations, which were always run with the interests of the amateur game foremost (Baker, 2004). Clubs were governed by self-appointed voluntary committees and charges for entry and membership only covered estimated running costs (Lowerson, 1993). Running a club for profit was morally and socially unacceptable for the upper class and represented abhorred values of professionalism and the supposed corruption associated with this. Certainly, profit maximisation was generally not an aim of any voluntary clubs. Clubs were also oriented heavily towards the interests of their members and attempted to remain independent and autonomous from outside “third parties”, including government authorities (Heinemann, 1984).

It is suggested that the persistence of this upper-class affiliation was one reason why tennis clubs retained their respective amateur and voluntary-run organisational structures, despite the inculcation of more performance-driven middle-class values from when they began to take over the membership of many clubs in the early 20th century. Being a member of a club became a conspicuous way to highlight status, as membership invariably implied an agreement from one’s peers of their respective status. One tended to share company only with those of similar social standing. Further, strict membership procedures restricted access based on social class, and internal hierarchies developed to allow opportunities for social mobility within the voluntary committee structures of the club itself. However, whilst clubs were initially out of reach for the middle-classes because of membership restrictions, they were forced to open their doors over time as they struggled to enlist new upper-class members. Many clubs remained patronised by members of the upper class despite this trend, and it is suggested that this phenomenon has, in part, enabled distinctly amateur values to persist in the sport at club level.

Another reason why tennis clubs retained amateur values was because of the participation of women in the sport from the very outset. The game was always more firmly associated with the garden party than with the public schools, and the near equal participation of women in tennis allowed the development of a code of etiquette in clubs that demanded higher levels of self-restraint than what might be found in other sports, like football or rugby. This code of behavioural etiquette that was firmly rooted in

female deference helped characterise how the sport of lawn tennis was to be played and organised in clubs for decades on. This code mirrored the behavioural norms in wider upper-class society more generally.

Conspicuous Consumption through Club Membership

In the light of the power struggles between the upper and middle classes in wider society generally, it is not surprising that the voluntary associations initially dominated by members of the upper class were keen to remain as socially distinct as possible. As more and more clubs began emerging during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and lawn tennis grew in popularity among the higher classes of society, clubs became increasingly competitive with each other in terms of status. The selection of members to the club was something taken seriously by club members, as it bared a reflection of the social standing of the club as a whole. Status competition took place on two levels, firstly, between clubs within geographical areas or regions and, secondly, between members within clubs; they were inextricably linked through ties of functional interdependence.

In the sport's early years, most lawn tennis clubs were exclusive to the upper and upper-middle classes. This was maintained through strict membership procedures and restrictions. Prospective members had to be both nominated and "seconded" by existing club members, and one's success in this regard was often determined by occupation and education alone. Both were significant determinants of class and status, and were justified because they inferred presumed qualities of character, as Todd (1979, p.9) suggested:

Careers in politics, the services, the diplomatic corps, the Church or the law were acceptable to [high] Society. Government service and financial activity, such as banking and the medical and other professions were a little lower down the scale. To be in 'trade', however successful, was undoubtedly middle-class and unacceptable.

To be in trade was regarded as having an unhealthy love of money, which was not befitting of a "gentleman", who exhibited self-restraint in all matters where overindulgence could potentially lead to vice. Regarding the membership of, for

example, Leamington Tennis Court Club, founded in 1846, Wade (1996, p.4-5) wrote that very few of the founding members worked in “gainful employment”, and

the number of occupations which would have been considered acceptable for a gentleman and a club member was very small indeed... Anyone earning his living working in trade of manufacturing, however successful, would not have been considered suitable as a member of the club. As the [19th] century began, there were only five recognised professions: church, law, medicine, army and navy. Even those who pursued these careers could not expect to be accepted in society unless they were unquestionably gentlemen as well. A local doctor and a leading member of the profession was to be black balled (denied membership) by an earl a few years later, on the grounds that he would not ‘meet someone socially whom he might have to call in to visit in the morning’.

The Hove Select Lawn Tennis Club, formed in 1881 provided an explicit suggestion of its selective membership in its very name (Holt, 1989); and, according to its published centenary, West Worthing Club also excluded people working in trade: “You had to be in one of the professions or services and certainly, for want of a better word, a ‘gentleman’” (West Worthing Club, 1986, p.20).

The main qualification for membership at the Isthmian Club, on the other hand, was “educational” and candidates must have belonged to the best public schools, or have attended Oxford or Cambridge (Lowerson, 1993). Whilst lawn tennis did not heavily feature in the public schools, it was nevertheless popularised by public school old-boys and “Oxbridge” graduates (Holt, 1992; Lowerson, 1993). A public school education signified gentlemanly status, and this was important, not just in terms of membership in lawn tennis clubs, but also in terms of their respective patronage. This elite group not only monopolised the membership of most clubs, but also the voluntary leadership roles within them (Lowerson, 1993). Holt (1989, p.110) suggested on this subject: “The running of sport was in practice confined to those with the necessary time, income, and organisational experience. Very few outside the ranks of the liberal professions had such qualifications”. The skills and experience developed by upper and upper-middle class men in their primary occupations were often well suited to those required in their new roles as club volunteers (Baker 2004; Tranter, 1998).

Stacey's (1960) research in Banbury found that all voluntary clubs were in direct competition with each other for the highest status members, yet it appeared that this phenomenon of upper-class leadership was mutually beneficial. For members of the upper class themselves, holding a position on a club committee gave a number of important benefits. It was regarded as a highly-valued status symbol, as it signified more than simply a level of generosity to work unpaid; it brought positive recognition. For many members of the upper class, undertaking voluntary service in associations like sports clubs was regarded as part of their expected duties; through their education they were often bred into these leadership roles and, thus, accepted these positions as natural (Rees & Miracle, 2000). Occupying leadership roles as president or chairman on the committees, as they often did, afforded the upper classes with wonderful opportunities to implant their values and influence club culture more generally. Their polished skills coupled with the status attributed to the club because of their position, meant many voluntary clubs were happy to maintain the leadership or patronage from their aristocratic members with willing acceptance. Holt (1989, p.111) stated:

The hard edge of meritocracy was softened by the allure of social prestige. Everyone loved a lord, and no one more than the upper-middle class men who asked a succession of viscounts and earls to hold honorific office in their associations.

Being on the committee, of course, also let the upper classes retain a degree of control among voluntary sport more generally.

In many clubs, upper-class members came to be outnumbered in membership over time, due, in part, to the sport becoming more available for the middle classes. This was linked to wider social processes allowing them greater access to leisure generally. Despite this process, the persistent participation of women in lawn tennis ensured that many of the upper-class derived norms and values in tennis clubs remained deeply entrenched. It also remained distinct from other more “manly” sports.

The Participation of Women in Lawn Tennis

The process of urbanisation throughout the 19th century forced the working classes into the city centres and the middle classes into peripheral suburbs. As a way of

combating the strains of their new and most likely lonely environments, argued Bailey (1978), the increasingly mobile middle-class families formed voluntary associations. Hill (2002, p.132) also remarked in this vein:

The institutional sociability of clubs and societies helps make up for the more privatised lifestyle of middle-class suburbs... where people were much less in contact with relatives than they had been in the older communities from which many residents had migrated.

In addition, both Lowerson (1993) and Bailey (1978) made comment that a significant factor in the development and formation of clubs was the growth in the number of professional young middle-aged men whose social ambiguity, and the need to extend bonding with potential clients in business meant clubs of most notably golf and tennis provided suitable locations for them to do so. Also of importance was the apparent need for men to spend time together, away from their wives and domestic duties (Dunning, 1986; Lowerson, 1993). Gentlemen's clubs for the gentry and professional middle classes and working-class pub-based associations both fulfilled this purpose, but clubs for sport provided another location for male sociability (Lowerson, 1993). This gave many voluntary associations a distinctly masculine atmosphere, but it is significant that lawn tennis was one of the few sports where men and women played and formed clubs together. In the sport of lawn tennis, women were seen as relatively more equal and this feature influenced the sport in a number of ways.

Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century, the participation of women in sport and physical activity generally invoked heated debate. "Pseudo-scientific arguments" were put forward to rationalise and legitimise the subordinate role of women in Victorian society (Mangan, 1989). Much of this was rooted in seemingly immutable biological facts, with explicit suggestions made of women's natural and thus unquestionable characteristics of "nurturance, domesticity, passivity, affection and intuitive morality" (Mangan, 1989, p.3). In terms of women's suitability to sport and physical activity, arguments were most especially pronounced in relation to concerns surrounding physiological issues, "domestic disruption" and the extent to which "codes of social etiquette" would be disrupted with the "open mingling of the sexes" (Cooper, 2004). However, sport and physical activity became an area where these arguments were contested as a significant part of the process of women's emancipation (McCrone, 1988).

The social position of women during this time continued to improve in Britain and throughout Western Europe, partly as a result of both a “reevaluation of women’s intellectual capacity” and the introduction of demanding physical education curricula in women’s-only fee paying schools, which essentially critiqued common notions of women’s capabilities that had hitherto been firmly entrenched (Birley, 1995a; Fletcher, 1985; Hargreaves, 1985; Holt, 1989; McKibbin, 1998; Tranter, 1989). Competing notions of “femininity” and appropriate dress decorated traditionally-held ideals with antipathy.

Sport was primarily seen as a “male preserve”, as reflected in the patriarchal nature of social relations and segregation of space generally during this time (Dunning, 1990). Women’s exercise and sporting participation were heavily scrutinised, and marked behavioural constraints prohibited the types of activities women could participate in and the manner in which they could do so. Their behaviour had to be considered “feminine” and “lady-like”, whilst not conflicting with established norms concerning gender appropriateness (Hargreaves, 1985; McCrone, 1988; Warren, 1993). There were few sports that women, while still adhering to accepted codes of behavioural etiquette and dress, could legitimately and fully partake in. The whole ethos of sport and appropriate behaviour within it, that is, sportsmanship, was linked to an ideal of the “gentleman amateur”. This ethos placed considerable emphasis on the physical characteristics of manliness. Many games, for example those that emerged in the public schools like rugby and football, were characterised by a greater potential for physical violence compared to lawn tennis. These manly sports emphasised the need for aggression in its game-play, but offered participants with opportunities for the legitimated regression of emotional restraint or as Elias (1986) suggested, the “controlled decontrolling of emotional controls”. In this way, the participant could demonstrate gentlemanly behaviour through the exercise of controlled aggression and sportsmanship, which were both highly valued when conducted within a potentially volatile competitive situation. In addition, playing football and rugby afforded men excellent opportunities to demonstrate the gentlemanly qualities of robustness and fearlessness.

Attempts had been made to introduce lawn tennis in public schools, but these failed as the game was widely regarded as not manly enough (Birley, 1995a; Cooper, 2004; Harris, 1975). Lawn tennis, having developed away from the public schools, was

underpinned by a gentlemanly ethos that was grounded in slightly different ideals. The game sprang from the upper-class garden party, and became fashionable in its earliest stages as a non-serious but physically strenuous accompaniment to social events for especially unmarried men and women (Birley, 1995a). Originally croquet was the chosen game for garden parties, but over the years, this increasingly became regarded as mundane and boring (Cooper, 2004; Haylett & Evans, 1989). However, Cooper (2004, p.107) argued: “Until croquet appeared in England most pastimes were relatively violent and masculine in nature and it was not customary for women or the elderly to participate in them”. The fact that women could compete on equal terms with men at croquet, and then later lawn tennis, meant that both games became popular. Thus, lawn tennis essentially became a more popular fixture for upper and middle-class men and women in these social gatherings, as it fulfilled an emancipatory function for women (Cooper, 1995, 2004; Holt, 1989; McCrone, 1988).

Despite the apparent liberation of women within the game, however, old constraints were often merely replaced by new ones. Lowerson (1993, p.207) wrote: “Where women were allowed into club buildings, as distinct from grounds, their role was essentially an extension of the domestic”. Mangan (1989) suggested that whilst sports like lawn tennis offered women spatial freedom and greater opportunities for bodily and social emancipation, their role within sport was still marginal, submissive, inhibited and generally subordinate. This was strongly reflected in women’s dress (Park, 1989; Warren, 1993), which was substantially more restrictive than men’s. On this subject, Hargreaves (1985, p.42) wrote the following point:

Lavish, extravagant clothes and accoutrements were worn to afford evidence of a life of leisure but they restrained women from performing any but the smallest and meanest of movements. The bourgeois lady remained, even on the tennis court, the wifely ornament of beauty – a physically incapacitated player, inhibited and subdued by convention.

A number of authors writing during the late 19th century remarked on appropriate dress for tennis, and the extent of its detail suggests how crucially important it was during this time. In 1879, a ladies’ magazine recommended the following tennis outfit, as cited in Holt (1989, p.127):

A cream merino bodice with long sleeves edged with embroidery; skirt with deep kilting, over it an old-gold silk blouse-tunic with short wide sleeves and square neck. To complete the ensemble a large straw hat of the coal-scuttle type was to be worn.

Of even greater detail, Peak and Aflalo (1897, p.618) wrote:

It *must* be becoming, as very few of us would come to wear it. As the skirt must be endured, it is important to have it made somewhat short, reaching the ankles, and equal in length... It will then appear uniform in length all round, and will not trip you up when you run backwards in volleying, say, a high lob, which skirts, as normally made, are much inclined to do. It should be about 3 yards wide. If less, it would be rather apt to catch, when one makes sudden springs from side to side, as in volleying; and if wider, the wind blows it about and perhaps it hits the racket when we fondly imagine we are going to drive the ball.

It is important to notice, however, how expectations of women's fashion between 1879 and 1897 had changed. By the 1890s or perhaps even earlier, lawn tennis had become more active for women and tennis attire was less restrictive and more comfortable (Hargreaves, 1985; Warren, 1993). Peak and Aflalo (1897, p.618) stated: "Ladies dress is always more or less of a trial when taking exercise, and the blessings of our sex would be heaped upon anyone who could invent a practical, comfortable and withal becoming costume". In the early 20th century, the consequences of women's restrictive dress were noted by Baddley (1903, p.312) who stated: "Ladies' dress is a matter of grave consideration; for how can they ever hope to play a sound game when their dresses impede the free movement of every limb".

Whilst attitudes to dress had shifted, however, there was not an equivalent shift in ideas of appropriateness for women's sport generally; this continued to determine what activities they should participate in, as well as the extent to which they should aim to actually win. It seemed that appearance was always put before performance for a woman, as Holt (1989, p.127) suggested: "While it was nice for a girl to be able to play tennis, she was not supposed to become good at it". Playing competitively, with a will to win, was seen as unbecoming of a lady, as it demonstrated a lack of behavioural restraint and conveyed immodesty and indecency (Hargreaves, 1985). Albeit to a far lesser extent, however, behavioural restraint in competition was still evident in the men's

game (Holt, 1989). Exhibiting a high level of aggression and determination to win went against the spirit of gentlemanly amateurism in lawn tennis. Player's were careful not to let the drive for competitive success overshadow the larger social purpose of the occasions. The success of victory could only really be enjoyed and celebrated if one's behaviour on court was appropriate and in line with convention, as tennis performance was not necessarily judged by the score line, but by the playing style, sportsmanship and other such elements in which the game was played. This relaxed attitude to competition was part of a wider culture of lawn tennis, which placed more emphasis on polite courtship and the opportunities offered to unmarried men and women for "flirtation and romance" (McCrone, 1988) and the search for "potential marriage partners" (Park, 1989).

It is therefore suggested that the presence of women at these events in both gardens and clubs certainly influenced the type of tennis that was played. The majority of clubs for lawn tennis offered membership to women on relatively equal terms (Cooper, 2004; Lumpkin, 1985), and Lowerson (1993, p.98) suggested of mixed clubs: "The real arbitrating force was often female. Style, etiquette and petty nuances were especially important where club life became the centre or part of a wider social calendar". Deference towards women came to be regarded as a fundamental part of the Victorian gentlemanly amateur ideal and, as lawn tennis continued to develop in line with these ideals, the social character of the game was forever affected by the relatively equal participation of women. This point, of course, makes lawn tennis an interesting sport to examine "figuratively"; that is, because of the fact that women were integral to its development.

Behavioural Etiquette as a Promising Resource of Distinction

Towards the end of the 19th century and into the beginning of the 20th century, it appeared that the popularity of lawn tennis as a sport generally waned (Haylett & Evans, 1989), and this left many tennis clubs in financial difficulty. Whilst some of the more prestigious clubs, like the AEC, Queens Club and Hurlingham Club, were able to survive while remaining entirely exclusive to the upper and upper-middle classes, most other clubs were forced to open their doors to the "proliferating lower-middle classes"

(Birley, 1995b). Many clubs simply could no longer afford to exclude large sections of the population, so they began to relax their stringent nomination restrictions. Connected to this, meanwhile, tennis equipment gradually became more affordable,³ and economic prosperity in the light of the post-First World War boom in industry came to allow a larger proportion of the population, mostly from the middle classes but also some of the working classes, enhanced opportunities for social and geographical mobility. While some were able to join more upper and upper-middle-class dominated clubs, many from these groups simply formed their own.

This marked turn-around helped facilitate a boom in the popularity of lawn tennis during the inter-war years (Noel, 1954). Lusic (1998, p.30) wrote of tennis in Nottinghamshire, for example: “For every club that had closed there must have been at least ten new ones. By all accounts the demand for the game was insatiable”. In Surrey, the number of clubs affiliated to the county LTA after the war was just 70, but by 1937, this number has risen to over 200 (Parish, 1996). Across Britain, the number of LTA affiliated clubs rose from 1,620 in 1925 to 3,220 in 1938 (Walker, 1989), and the vast majority of clubs came to be dominated by the middle classes (Birley, 1995b). Unsurprisingly, this had the unintended consequence of lowering the prestige of lawn tennis as a sport, generally, and many members of the upper class moved on in search of other leisure activities that were status enhancing for them, such as polo and fox hunting. Having said this, many middle-class dominated clubs retained upper-class patronage in the light of their continuing status competition that was played out, firstly, amongst themselves and, secondly, between themselves and the potentially insurgent lower classes below. The middle classes clearly recognised the status-enhancing benefits of lawn tennis and this helped characterise the spirit in which the game was played at both the club and elite levels, as well as the playing style and unwritten behavioural etiquette that governed interactions between club members and players. Changes at both of these levels were interdependent with wider social processes, namely, shifting class relations and growing ties of interdependency between the middle and working classes.

Club-Level Changes: Shifting Club Member Relations

The development of new industries from the 1920s onwards brought economic prosperity and improved transportation networks. The price of a motorcar became affordable for many middle-class families and the railway network was greatly improved. This meant a growing proportion of middle-class families had the freedom to move about the country in search of work. In many cases, they relocated to suburban areas that surrounded urban cities and towns, but this meant that established communities were often disrupted by the exodus of old residents and the influx of new ones. In many cases, traditional kinship ties within communities were lost, but the formation and organisation of voluntary associations undoubtedly went some way towards helping the middle classes cope with their new environments. Upon relocation to new neighbourhoods, however, differences in norms, values and standards of behaviour between the established residents and newcomers or outsiders meant previously secure hierarchies and balances of power became insecure and increasingly contested; thus, power struggles frequently emerged between these groups (McKibbin, 1998). Research by Stacey (1960) of the Oxfordshire town, Banbury, in the 1930s and 40s suggested that newcomers were often uninterested in their new community and its associations and did not share the common values or customs of the established groups.

Because of improved opportunities for social and geographical mobility, a greater proportion of people and groups became tied together through invisible ties of interdependence, and this likely had numerous unintended consequences for voluntary associations like tennis clubs. Most notably, changes occurred to the constitution of club membership as well as to the unwritten codes of behavioural etiquette within them. Clubs began to adopt more middle-class values, and the middle classes became evermore intent on establishing their own identity, now free from the shackles of upper-class dominance but concomitantly fearful of working-class insurgence from below. The emergence of the Labour Party in 1900 and its eventual rise to leadership in 1924 epitomised this fear. Contact in a social sense with the working class came to be avoided at all costs (Holt, 1992), but this became very difficult as working relations between the classes intensified with the growing division of labour and developing ties of interdependency generally.

While the middle classes came to seek refuge in their private voluntary associations like tennis clubs, which were regarded as important locations for them to separate themselves socially from lower-status groups, many clubs, for reasons mentioned above, were prevented from denying access to these lower-status groups. This was not entirely problematic for the dominant middle-class contingent within clubs because they were still able to be selective with members, and this was important in the light of the growing competitiveness that engendered relations between tennis clubs throughout the inter-war years. The status of respective clubs still tended to be measured in terms of the social class of its club members and patrons, but competition between clubs came to be played out increasingly on the court itself through new competitions and tournaments. In Surrey, for example, LTA sanctioned tournaments first began in the 1920s and 30s (Parish, 1996) and, in Nottinghamshire, the first league was formed in 1924 (Lusis, 1998). While competitions for men were often played before the war, women now demanded similar competitions. For example, the Nottinghamshire LTA held its first women's tournament in 1921.

In addition, while Surrey LTA were exceptional in holding their first junior tournament before the war in 1914 (Parish, 1996), it was generally the case that clubs and county LTAs only began to show a particular interest in children's tennis during the inter-war years (Noel, 1954). For examples, Bedfordshire LTA held their first junior tournament in 1924 (Pinnock, 1998), Sheffield and District LTA in 1925 (Sheffield & District LTA), Nottinghamshire LTA in 1930 (Lusis, 1998) and Warwickshire LTA in 1933 (Lerry, 1946; Worley, 1997). Such milestones demonstrated the growing regard for competitive tennis, but it was evident that this emphasis remained undermined by more structural "social" elements within clubs.

In many cases, clubs lowered the minimum age of membership from eighteen to early to mid-teens, but evidence suggests that clubs continued to remain less concerned with providing equal access for this group; they were generally regarded as "second-class members" (Lusis, 1998). Junior members were often severely restricted in terms of when and where they could play, and several examples can be provided as evidence. In Nottinghamshire, Radcliffe-on-Trent Tennis Club allowed 15-19 year olds membership from 1924, but they were not allowed to play on Saturdays or match days or after 6.30pm. In 1928, Woodthorpe Tennis Club admitted boys and girls 15-17 for the first

time, but again they were subjected to limited playing opportunities. In 1929, Musters Tennis Club allowed junior members but they only had access to the courts between 2.30 and 5.30, and on Thursdays, Saturdays and holidays, they were not allowed to play at all (Lusis, 1998). At Sparkhill Tennis Club in Birmingham in the 1920s, it seemed children were not looked upon favourably, as only one child per family was allowed on the premises. In the 1930s, though, the junior section was initiated. At Waverley Lawn Tennis and Squash Club in Edinburgh, junior members were admitted for the first time in 1934, but were not allowed to play after 5.30pm. At Bridgnorth Lawn Tennis Club, juniors were first encouraged to join in 1946 but were restricted to play between the hours of 10am and 3pm. At Aberaeron Tennis Club in South Wales there were still very few juniors in the 1950s, and they were asked to leave the courts by 6pm. Further, in some clubs, children not only had restricted hours, but also restricted courts. Both Cullercoats Lawn Tennis Club in Tyne and Wear and Bowden Lawn Tennis Club in Cheshire denied children access to the grass courts. Noel (1957, p.16) summarised the sentiment for young people in tennis clubs during this time, whereby “you will have courts to play on free whenever you want to play”, but this is “provided that you do not keep the [adult] ‘full members’ off the court when they want them”.

Some clubs also began junior tournaments in the 1920s and 30s, such as Felixstowe Lawn Tennis Club in 1923, Radyr Lawn Tennis Club in 1926, Edgbaston Priory Tennis Club in 1933, Dinas Powis Lawn Tennis Club in 1935, Bexley Lawn Tennis and Squash Rackets Club in 1936 and Bowden Lawn Tennis Club in 1939. Many clubs, on the other hand, did not introduce junior tournaments until after the Second World War, such as the AEC, Bramhall Lane Lawn Tennis Club and Pit Farm Lawn Tennis Club in 1948, Frinton-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club in 1950, Hoole Lawn Tennis Club in 1953, Lymm Lawn Tennis and Cricket Club in 1955 and Finchley Manor Lawn Tennis and Squash Rackets Club in 1961.

In the light of the influx of new members, “playing-in tests” became an established part of membership requirements, ensuring that only the most skilled prospective members be entitled entry (Holt, 1989; Lowerson, 1993). Thus, playing skill became part of the cultural capital necessary for entry, but it was clear, however, that members of a higher social class had better opportunities to play from a younger age, so these tests often facilitated the exclusion of lower-class members. Nevertheless, whilst

admittedly some members of lower-status groups became club members through their tennis talent, others were actually employed by the club in order to undertake particular club tasks. While the work of the secretary and treasurer was often cheerfully and effectively performed by unpaid higher-status voluntary members themselves, ground staff, ball boys and club coaches or “professionals”, were often employed by clubs. Evidence by Holt (1998) and testimony from Maskell (1988), however, suggests that these individuals were often marginalised, deemed “social inferior” and treated poorly by club members as a result of their lower status.

Holt’s (1998) research was conducted in golf clubs, but it is of relevance due to the similar social standing that golf and tennis clubs shared during this time (Bourdieu, 1978). He cited an example when an older female member in 1911 complained about a boy who was unshaven and seen without his collared shirt and coat during one afternoon. “He was subsequently cautioned for this breach of good manners”; indeed, it was found that club members took as many opportunities as possible “to insist on the proper respect due from inferiors” (Holt, 1998, p.85). Club professionals were also treated poorly and often denied entry into the clubhouse or changing rooms (Hill, 2002; McKibbin, 1998). Maskell’s (1988) personal testimony of being a ball boy at Queens Club and club professional at both Queens Club and the AEC from the 1920s onwards also suggests that those employed by the club tended to be regarded as lower status. Much like in cricket, distinctions were often concealed by tradition; for example, the club professionals had separate changing facilities and stayed in separate accommodation when travelling as coaches with players. Club professionals were also often denied access to particular rooms in the clubhouse that were reserved for gentlemen.

These examples do more than merely suggest that status differences existed between the upper and middle classes in clubs. They also highlight the fact that those of higher status felt compelled to demonstrate their status superiority in conspicuous ways; in other words, they felt threatened by the lower status groups and used their superior access to particular resources as a source of power against them. If they did not feel threatened, they would not have felt so uncomfortable mixing openly with them or felt inclined to distinguish themselves through their behaviour. These examples also support the suggestion that, as the membership of tennis clubs became more diverse in terms of

social class, a code of behavioural etiquette emerged that enabled those of higher status sufficient opportunities to distinguish themselves from those believed to be of lower status. As the functional interdependence of these groups began to shift, allowing the lower-middle classes greater opportunities to mix socially with members of the upper or upper-middle classes, the enforcement of this code became necessary in order to make conspicuous their status differences. This could be regarded as another “wave of formalisation” specific to the sport of tennis in Britain.

Despite their diminishing numbers, many from the upper or upper-middle class were intent on retaining their authority within the club, as well as retaining their hold on how the game was to be played. Thus, upholding the code of etiquette was part of the cultural capital, used as a source of power for most of the elite upper and upper-middle-class club members. The specific and unique figuration of voluntary-run tennis clubs meant the former had greater access to sources of power here than in wider society; voluntary associations remained largely autonomous and outside the influence of wider societal shifts in power. As such, despite the embourgeoisement of wider society, codes of behavioural etiquette rooted in the traditional ideals of upper-class gentlemanly amateurism were allowed to prevail in tennis clubs (Baltzell, 1995). Members of this elite upper and upper-middle-class group were intent on establishing these codes of etiquette as being more civilised, demanding a higher level of behavioural self-restraint and greater foresight, and emphasised greater refinement of manners and more elaborate taboos on behaviour. This was manifest both on and off the tennis court. Unwritten rules of etiquette were imposed in terms of playing style, to adhere with stringent conventions of sportsmanship, and also extended to other areas such as showing hospitality to visiting players, reacting to arguable umpire decisions and appropriate behaviour expected of spectators. Etiquette was reinforced through behavioural expectations in accordance with one’s respective rank in the social hierarchy of the club; deference was shown to higher-ranked members, whilst concomitantly expected from those below. Members came to know their place within the club hierarchy and this was reflected in behaviour both on and off the court.⁴ These norms over time were internalised by club members and became a part of their respective identities.

Playing Style and Sportsmanship

It is notable the extent to which the spirit of amateurism and sportsmanship were seen as attributes of a gentleman around the turn of the century. They were the exclusive qualities rooted in upper and upper-middle-class notions of status superiority. The supposed requirements of a competent lawn tennis player were also couched in these terms or, more specifically, in terms of the extent to which the exhibition of behavioural self-restraint, foresight and the refinement of manners were an essential part. In earlier texts on lawn tennis, mention was often made of the physical characteristics needed for success, but specific emotional and psychological characteristics were also often put forward as necessary prerequisites. In the following way, Osborn (1881, p.44) wrote of the supposed qualities of a lawn tennis player as, most notably:

observation and reflection, presence of mind, judgment, determination and good temper... Players at lawn tennis are not uncommon who have acquired considerable skill and certainty in making returns, but who are liable to be vanquished at the hands of inferior players, because they exercise no judgment in their play. They never look beyond the actual stroke they are making to its probable consequences. They never plan a game, never try to anticipate the designs of an opponent, and consequently, never thwart them. The ideal lawn tennis player would play almost as much with his brain as with his hand.

Similarly, Paret (1904, p.vi) made mention of the need for foresight in the following way:

The game presents all the same elements of attack and defence, of finesse and coupe, as does the mimic warfare of the chess-board. It requires severe physical exertion, coupled with activity of mind in constantly thinking out the rapid problems that present themselves during the course of the play; it needs coolness of nerve and eye.

Noticeably, these same qualities were regarded as pivotal in the game of Real Tennis centuries earlier, deemed as wholly upper-class qualities that were couched in an internalised belief of their innate superiority over others. Their strict adherence then, as in the 19th and 20th centuries, was regarded as a power resource.

While notions of innate upper-class superiority had undoubtedly weakened by the late 19th century, challenged by bourgeois insurgence on many levels and broadened to incorporate the commensurately wealthy upper-middle classes, it is nevertheless significant that these same qualities were highlighted in both Real Tennis and lawn tennis. Self-restraint and foresight were part of the code of behavioural conduct that the established upper class developed and refined in order to distinguish themselves from lower status groups, notably the lower-middle classes. They were widely regarded as gentlemanly qualities, suggesting the attributes of a fine tennis player were also those of a fine gentleman. While the playing requirements of Real Tennis undoubtedly demanded of its players the exercise of behavioural self-restraint and foresight in decision-making, however, this is questionable in lawn tennis. In terms of its rule structure and game-play, lawn tennis was much simpler, specifically after the removal of the complicated “chase” rule as well as the tennis court walls off which the ball could bounce. It did not demand such a high level of concentration as did Real Tennis and, fundamentally, it demanded more impulsive play. In addition, as evidenced in the direction in which the game has progressed of late, there was also considerable scope for more aggressive play, based on strength and speed alone. However, this type of play was not customary, which raises an interesting sociological question: What prevented earlier lawn tennis players from playing aggressively and showing a competitive will-to-win on court?

The answer cannot be found in changes to the rules or court dimensions, as these have not changed since 1882; nor can recent technological advances be solely responsible for changes in game-play, since players were still using wooden rackets up until the 1970s and, while the playing surfaces and the balls have both evolved over time to influence bounce, these changes have been relatively subtle. This would suggest that a change in the widely-held, institutionalised and strongly-enforced behavioural etiquette of tennis players was primarily responsible. In short, it is suggested that the developing styles of play in tennis were not independent of wider social processes, but were, in fact, heavily bound up with notions of appropriateness derived from the upper classes in wider society generally. Did the game of lawn tennis in the late 19th century actually *demand* of its players the exercise of self-restraint and foresight in order to be successful, as the authors above suggested? Or, was it more the case that these attitudes to the

successful playing of lawn tennis were conditioned by widespread and agreed-upon notions of appropriate gentlemanly behaviour, and not from requirements in the context of the game's play-structure itself?

Attitudes in relation to self-restrained play gained such widespread credence that they came to be internalised by the upper-class and later middle-class elite who controlled the development of lawn tennis in Britain and, thus, conditioned the style in which the game was to be played at all levels. It is argued here that these notions of appropriate playing style were internalised to become part of the habitus of the elite classes who played lawn tennis. They were, in fact, merely specific cultural expressions of a particular social group or class, one which valued the qualities of behavioural restraint and foresight over aggression and overt competitiveness. This embodied habitus was reflected in several aspects of tennis club etiquette that Newcombe and Mabry (1981, p.9) illustrated, recommending that parents should educate children on several points that were seemingly "universal" and "common sense" in the following way: "When you take your children to the courts, explain the simple rules of etiquette that are recognised universally. Good manners are just as important as good play". Specific mention was made of the level of restraint necessary so as not to disturb play on a neighbouring court, in the following way:

Watch the players go on and off the courts. Explain the reasons for hurrying between points and games to 'cross over' a neighbour's court. It is usually best to cross courts at the fence line... Most important, move as rapidly and as inconspicuously as possible (Newcombe & Mabry, 1981, p.9).

Advice was then given for when a ball strays onto an adjacent court. Note the detail provided by Newcombe and Mabry (1981, p.9) in the following passage:

Players wait for their neighbours to complete the point and return the ball. The ball is returned in one bounce. 'Thank you' is the only response. When the ball rolls on to your court, it is proper to stop play and return the ball.

Expected actions such as these were internalised and regarded as part of a common sense understanding of "sportsmanship", rooted in expectations of self-restraint. Similar codes of etiquette were described in Bourdieu's (1978; 1984) work on sport and, specifically, research by Zevenbergen et al. (2002) on golf. The latter authors suggested that children's socialisation into golf clubs was conditioned by their gradual accumulation of

cultural capital, specifically referring to knowledge of expected desirable behaviours involving facial expressions, appearance, dress styles, language, body language and informal interaction. Status was ascribed to individuals who best adhered to the widely-understood model of an “ideal” club member.

Also strongly detested in the early years of tennis was over-aggressive competitive play, even for gentlemen, and this markedly influenced the developing playing styles, as new tactics and techniques were often questioned on grounds of appropriateness or, rather, the extent to which the particular action was deemed as “good form” or “good manners”. Most notably, as prime examples, were Spencer Gore and William Renshaw, who famously developed the tactics of the volley and overhead smash respectively (Allison, 1980). Despite these players demonstrating that their new techniques brought improved chances of success, players at the club level who attempted the same were often argued to have breached the code of appropriate behavioural conduct. Demonstrating over-aggressive play suggested that they took the game too seriously. Regarding the tactic of volleying, Peek and Aflalo (1897, p.612) wrote: “Many of the older players desired to forbid or penalise volleying, and for a long time any man who played at the net at a garden-party was accused of bad form, and was sometimes boycotted in consequence”. Similarly, Myers (1972, cited in Phillips, 1999, p.15) wrote: “The volleying incident provoked heated debate. The volleyer became the target for abuse. Not only, declared his enemies, were the best strokes of his adversary killed; he even invaded the latter’s territory”. These attitudes suggested the volley was deemed inappropriate because it denied the opponent a chance to return the ball; it “killed the rally” and was deemed unsporting as such. An example from women’s tennis in the early 20th century further illustrates this attitude. Dorothea Lambert Chambers, seven-time Wimbledon winner between 1903 and 1914, once took part and won a match against an opponent in which she won point after point with drop shots. At the end of the match, the defeated lady told Chambers that she did not admire “her length” nor think it “fair to play sneaks” (Wade, 1984). While the particular skill of the drop shot did not demonstrate aggression, it did show a will-to-win that consequently prevented rallies being extended.

Other Forms of Etiquette in Lawn Tennis

It is evident that behavioural expectations stretched deep into all areas of tennis club life. Three-time Wimbledon winner in the late 1920s, Helen Wills, provided perhaps the most enlightening account of tennis club etiquette in her writings of 1928. She suggested that conduct and procedure, both on and off the court, made “a perfect sportsman”. Wills (1928; cited in Phillips, (ed.), 1999, p.288) gave specific consideration, firstly, to showing good manners to visiting players, in the following way:

Since international tennis has become so popular, court etiquette is even more important, because to visiting players every consideration must be shown. The foreign player comes into the court first; he is greeted by the umpire. His opponent spins his racquet, asking, ‘rough?’ or ‘smooth?’. The ‘toss’ made for court, the players take their positions. As they change courts on the odd game, and if they meet at the net, the player who is at home allows the visitor to pass first. Little things like this help the match to run smoothly and pleasantly. They are the expression of a natural feeling of goodwill toward the opponent.

Secondly, Wills (1928; cited in Phillips, (ed.), 1999, p.289) noted the etiquette expected of players in reaction to poor umpire decisions in the following way:

If the decisions are bad, as they cannot help but be sometimes – no one is infallible – they should be ignored by both players, unless the umpire decides that a ‘let’ should be called. Then the point is played over again and it is fair to everyone.

Thirdly, she recounted a list of suggestions for behavioural etiquette of spectators that she found on the back of a tournament programme in the early 1920s. Note the detail.

- 1) Do not applaud except at the end of rallies. Sudden noise disconcerts the player.
- 2) Do not move about during play. It is hard to see the ball against a moving background.
- 3) Parasols interfere with the view of other spectators.
- 4) Do not try to attract the attention of a friend who is engaged in a match, or about to go on the court.

5) Do not make remarks about the players. Their friends or relatives may be sitting nearby.

6) Do not question the decision of umpire or linesmen. They are in a better position to judge the ball than you are (Wills, 1928; cited in Phillips, (ed.), 1999, p.291).

The demonstration of sportsmanship in lawn tennis, as evidenced in the writings of Newcombe and Mabry (1981) and Wills (1928), was inextricably related to and part of the arguably more civilised code of behavioural conduct that helped the higher-status groups distinguish themselves from groups they regarded as being lower-status. What is interesting sociologically is the extent to which these elements of the game were widely regarded as natural and rational. As suggested earlier, Newcombe and Mabry (1981) regarded them as universal and common sense, while Wills (1928) called them “very logical and sane”. Such examples indicate clearly the extent to which these aspects of the game, much like the expectations of playing style above, were internalised by players and thus taken for granted as the assumed appropriate way to play.

Generally, these examples demonstrate the extent to which exhibiting appropriate behaviour on court was deemed more important than playing success, even at the elite level. This was a manifestation of upper and upper-middle-class dominance of the game, which, at the time, regarded restrained behaviour as a distinguishable and thus important feature of their social class. At the elite level, however, the processes of professionalisation and commercialisation gradually gave aggressive play a level of acceptability, especially in the men’s game. Nevertheless, the spirit of gentlemanly amateurism continued to be highly influential in the way tennis was played and organised.

Conclusions

This chapter examined the unintended consequences of the shift in the balance of power and influence in lawn tennis between the upper and middle classes from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries. The main focus of this chapter was on tennis clubs, how they developed and in what spirit they were run. The spirit of voluntarism that prevailed during this time seemed to strongly influence tennis clubs, characterising them as being

not-for-profit, amateur-run, upper-class led and patronised, hierarchical and with a social rather than sporting emphasis. The reasons why clubs and club membership came to be valued as symbols of status were also scrutinised, focusing on three main areas: the ways in which clubs were selective with membership, denying entry to those with educations or professions not befitting members of a higher class; the role and influence of women in clubs, and the ostensible deference shown to them by men as a symbol of higher-class power and authority; and, the ways that behavioural restraint in tennis clubs became a measure of high class and status, particularly through sportsmanship, an established code of etiquette and the abhorrence of aggressive play.

This chapter concluded by examining some of the changes that took place in lawn tennis clubs during the early-to-mid 20th century. Attention was paid to the ways and reasons why clubs “opened their doors” to new members and appeased formerly excluded membership groups. Children and members from lower classes came to obtain memberships, and this influenced the social character of many established clubs during this time. Growing popularity of tennis across Britain, generally, also led to the formation of thousands of new clubs that were less exclusive and more professional and competition-oriented than their older and more established counterparts. These latter developments were regarded as being unintended consequences of a burgeoning and accelerating middle-class influence in tennis clubs. The following chapter seeks to illuminate these same developments and struggles towards professionalisation at the elite level throughout the mid 20th century.

¹ Of the 111 Presidents of the MCC between 1825 and 1939, only 16 were neither knights nor peers (Holt, 1989).

² Lawn tennis was introduced to Brazil and India in 1875, to Germany and France throughout the 1870s and also to Australia during this decade as well (Walker, 1989). Further, a number of countries began national championships as well: Canada in 1890, Spain in 1910, South Africa in 1920, Denmark in 1921, Egypt in 1925, Italy in 1930 and Sweden in 1936 (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1988).

³ In 1899, Cousins gave the following prices for tennis equipment, which, in total, amounted to significantly less than the 5 guineas (105s) paid for Wingfield’s original set: Racket, 12s 6d to 35s; net and poles, 50s; and balls, 12s per dozen.

⁴ Noel (1954, p.17) suggested that a well-established process of socialisation helped to guide new players and children into their appropriate “place”: “Within reasonable limits tennis is stimulating and satisfying only when played between players of the same class. This does not prevent a better player playing with ‘rabbits’ for instructional purposes, or just for fun; but it is not for him lawn tennis as he plays it. The knowledgeable player realises this and no more seeks to play with those above his class, save as a useful experience, than he does with those below it”. Art Hoppe, in 1977, suggested anecdotally of the unspoken expectation to “know your place”: “No tennis player, no matter what his calibre, wants to play tennis with any other tennis player who is not better than he... If they are seen playing with inferior players, superior players with whom they wish to play will identify them with the inferior players with whom they are

playing and will never invite them to play. Worse yet, players slightly inferior to the inferior players with whom they are playing will make the same identification and will besiege them with invitations to play. Such a path can only lead inexorably downward to the depths of degradation” (Hoppe, 1977, p.9-10).

Chapter 6: The Professionalisation and Commercialisation of Tennis

This chapter aims to outline and analyse the gradual infusion of “middle-class” values and attitudes onto the upper-class dominated establishment of tennis and its players from the early-to-mid 20th century. Particularly at the elite level, the gradual professionalisation, commercialisation and globalisation of tennis came to challenge the traditional amateur organisation of tennis in Britain. A brief case study of Fred Perry is conducted in order to illustrate the increasing divergence of amateur and professional structures and values at the elite end of the sport, examining, specifically, the rise of professional tours, the charade of “shamateurism” and the institutional resistance to professionalisation. The influences that these developments came to have in tennis clubs is then examined, noting the rise of the issue of social exclusion in public discourse from around the 1960s.

Before the formation of the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF), it was clear that the British LTA regarded themselves as *the* tennis authority of the world (Baltzell, 1995). Britain had the premier tournament and was the birthplace of the game, but it became apparent that the end of their reign was imminent. This was reflected most clearly on the tennis court itself as the Americans and Australians came to challenge successfully British dominance after the 1910s. Between 1900 and 1912, Britain won the Davis Cup five times, but did not win it again until 1933. Between 1877 and 1909, a British male won the Wimbledon single’s title every year bar one, but from 1909 onwards until 1933, a British player only very occasionally even reached the final. Despite having been the major force in international tennis, their dominance both on and off the court began to wane. It subsequently followed that, in 1913, the LTA relinquished its control of the game on a global scale to the newly formed ILTF.

Together with its representative national governing bodies such as the LTA and the USLTA, the ILTF remained staunch advocates of amateurism, both its formal sanctions and its underlying spirit. As largely an unintended consequence of the sport’s globalisation, nations and players themselves came to regard success in the game with a growing seriousness. This can be explained in large part by the growing American dominance and their more performance-driven approach to success, which came to be at

odds with the upper-class British-born ethos of amateurism. Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.231) remarked on the persistence of amateur values in British society as follows:

The development in British sport of an amateur-dominated structure can be regarded as symptomatic of the structure and development of British society as a whole... Its counterpart in industry is a managerial and employing class in which 'gentlemanly' values continue to loom large. However, just as these values have come, in recent decades, to form one of the principal sources of Britain's inability to compete effectively with other industrial nations, so, too, the amateur-dominated structure of British sport has created difficulties for competition with sportsmen from elsewhere.

From the beginning of the 20th century when British dominance in lawn tennis competitions began to subside, authorities felt no remorse in their staunch promotion of amateur ideals over more performance-oriented ones. Success internationally continued to be regarded as less important than maintaining their integrity in opposition to the corrupting ideals of commercialism and professionalism (Holt & Mason, 2000).

Burrows, writing in 1922, encapsulated the general indifference that surrounded Britain's inability to compete internationally in lawn tennis. Continuous defeat by rivals and the gradual decadence of the English playing-style were not regarded as humiliating embarrassments, but rather as acceptable and honourable rites of passage. He wrote:

All recent developments in play have been made by players of other countries... and that the game has been improved by those developments few would deny. They, first, learnt from us; the pupil became as good as, and then better than, his teacher; now, in our turn, we must learn from them (Burrows, 1922, p.6).

Of course, resting on its laurels from the successful defeat of Germany in the First World War, Britain was able and happily willing to relinquish its apparent authority in the sphere of international sport without fear of losing status as a nation overall. The British became astutely confident in the moral, social and political superiority of their own values generally, thus the underpinning ideals of gentlemanly amateurism continued to permeate through all areas of British culture for many years, if not decades (Baltzell, 1995).

In 1926, a professional tour led by American football promoter Charles C. Pyle began in the US, which offered lucrative inducements to elite amateur players (Koster,

1976). Much like in other sports during this time, commercial opportunities arose when mass spectator sport became increasingly popular. However, professional players were regarded by tennis authorities as tainted with “wickedness”. “Heroes had to be pure” argued Lowerson (1993, p.171). Thus, the ILTF sanctioned the behaviour of professional players and enforced a ban on them playing in any of their events, which included the four major Grand Slams and the Davis Cup. While tennis authorities were resistant to professionalism, however, this was not only limited to payment for play; for it also touched upon the opposition to what was regarded as inappropriate behaviour and an unhealthy overly-competitive attitude towards practising the game, which they assumed was increasingly characteristic at the elite level. Thus, the authorities were concerned with attitudes resembling a professional ethos more generally. Being patronised and led mostly by members of the upper-class,¹ both the AELTC and the LTA continued to uphold the gentlemanly amateur values of sportsmanship, and were outspoken in their resistance to more aggressive win-at-all-costs attitudes that they regarded as “unhealthy”.

When Fred Perry emerged on the scene and subsequently won the first of his three successive Wimbledon Championships in 1934, it was not heralded by the authorities as a triumph for British tennis, but to many, an embarrassment. Because of his unashamed arrogance and aggressive playing style, his behaviour was regarded as ungentlemanly and generally detested as such. His was a case of a man disliked by British tennis authorities because he lacked the behavioural restraint commensurate with being a gentleman and an amateur in the eyes of the British tennis authorities. However, his accession into the lawn tennis elite suggests, on a grander scale, a shift in the balance of power between the established upper and upper-middle-class amateur values towards the more middle or working-class-derived values driven by success. His example highlights the complex power struggles stirring in British tennis during this time.

The Case of Fred Perry in the Resistance to Professionalism

Success, it seemed, was not a prerequisite to being accepted within British tennis social circles even in the 1930s. Exhibiting behaviour that was everywhere regarded as appropriate was the basis of sportsmanship that prevailed still during this time. Arbiters

of what tennis “ought to be” and how it “ought to be played” were vociferous in their staunch support of the amateur ethos and their condemnation of principles regarded as oppositional. While Fred Perry today is celebrated and commemorated with a statue at the gate of the AEC, he wrote in his autobiography that despite his success, winning three consecutive Wimbledon Championships (1934-36), he was a relatively disliked figure in British tennis. Perry (1984, p.78) wrote:

They had never really seen an Englishman of this era who didn't like to lose... I didn't go out there to lose and it hurt me very much if I did. I was confident and I was arrogant, because in one-on-one confrontations like tennis you have to be... You have to try and impose your superiority on [your opponent] as forcefully as you can. Give him a beating to remember. Well, I don't think this was an approach generally favoured in England at the time. It was un-English. It wasn't done old bean. Not in tennis, anyway.

He put his unpopularity down to the aggressive playing style and success-driven attitude that he displayed. “Fred's burning ambition was considered just a little bit too blatant by a generation who still considered the result far less important than the way you played the game” (Haylett & Evans, 1989, p.30). Perry (1984, p.10) agreed: “Some elements looked down on me as a hot-headed, outspoken, tearaway rebel, not quite the class of chap they really wanted to see winning Wimbledon, even if he was English”. A report by the prolific American author, John R. Tunis, stated the following in an article for *Esquire* magazine during the 1930s:

To put things bluntly, Perry is not a popular champion at home... Why? Simply because Wimbledon is the most snobbish centre of sport in the world. The members of that Holy of Holies... seem to resent the fact that a poor boy without a varsity background should have yanked himself to the front – even though in the process he yanked England back into the tennis picture from which she had been absent since 1909 (cited in Perry, 1984, p.78).

Perry (1984, p.78) continued: “I'd always been regarded as an upstart who didn't really belong in such exalted company. I was someone who didn't have the right credentials for this noble game”. Despite Fred Perry's success, therefore, British tennis authorities disapproved of him and the more working-class, professional ethos he employed (McKibbin, 1998).² It is apparent, however, that the behaviour of Fred Perry, as an

example of an individual bound within a certain limiting framework of appropriate behaviour, was not acting independently of the particular environment within which he attempted success. Whilst the tennis authorities in England disapproved of Perry's demeanour, they were complicit in promoting an achievement orientation that, ironically, they explicitly abhorred.

By the time of Perry's arrival in the early 1930s, the British tennis authorities and general public were eager for success, having not had a men's Wimbledon winner since 1909. Success in sport was deemed an important reflection of British national prestige, but for it to be celebrated as such it had to be achieved within a limited framework of appropriate behaviour. In the following passage, Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.238) wrote of the bind that elite players must perform within:

Top-level sportsmen are not and cannot be independent. That is, they no longer play solely for themselves but as representatives of wider communities such as cities, countries and nations. As such, they are expected to produce a 'sports-performance', i.e. to produce the sorts of satisfaction that the controllers and 'consumers' of the sport demand, e.g. the spectacle of an exciting contest or the validation through victory of the 'self-image' of the community with which the controllers and/or consumers identify.

Part of the "sports performance" that Perry was obliged to produce, or indeed any other British amateur lawn tennis player during this era, was success on the court whilst adhering to stringent and restrictive behavioural constraints. Players, especially British amateur players, were not free to behave as they wished, but had to perform, and were expected to win, within a framework that demonstrated the qualities of the gentlemanly amateur sportsman. Again, these qualities included emotional restraint, honesty, fair-play, voluntary compliance with the rules and the downgrading of achievement-striving, training and specialisation. Overt competitiveness was also deemed unhealthy and working-class, so was widely abhorred. Further, they were not allowed remuneration for their efforts (Noel, 1954). However, achieving success at this elite level came to demand an increasingly professional approach. Pancho Gonzalez insightfully alluded to the professionalism of amateur tennis players in this passage he wrote in 1959:

Day after day he runs countless miles swinging at a wool-covered ball with strings made from a lamb's intestines. Physically, the game exacts its toll. He's

dehydrated as a squeezed sponge. His feet take a terrific pounding on the cement, clay, and the slightly kinder surface – grass... His heart and body are taxed to the limits of physical endurance. While he may not realise it – he's in business. And he's putting as much into it as the business man carrying the brief case under his arm. Sometimes much more (Gonzalez, 1959; cited in Phillips (ed.), 1999, p.94).

It became clear that the qualities required of an amateur lawn tennis player desirous of success were unreasonable and, in reality, completely at odds with what could be possibly achieved under that system. McKibbin (1998, p.382) wrote:

The amateur code justified both exclusion and inhibition. Since those who might not fit in were more likely to be professionals, amateurism justified their partial or complete exclusion. Since they were also more likely to be competitive, and hence disruptive of a social harmony based upon inhibition, amateurism again justified their partial exclusion.

The following anecdote by Perry (1984, p.10-11), after winning his first Wimbledon singles title in 1934, is testimony to the paradox of being an amateur in the professionalised elite tennis circuit. He wrote at length in this regard:

In those days there was no formal presentation of the championship trophy on court. You simply shook hands with your opponent, picked up your gear and walked back to the dressing room. I had beaten the Australian Jack Crawford, and I went for a long soak in the bath... Suddenly, out in the dressing room, I overheard the distinctive voice of Brame Hillyard, Club committee man, talking to Crawford. 'Congratulations', said Hillyard. 'This was one day when the best man didn't win'. I couldn't believe my ears... Hillyard had brought a bottle of champagne into the dressing room and given it to Jack, whom I so clearly remember having beaten in straight sets not half an hour before. I leapt from the tub, rushed out and, sure enough, found Crawford holding the bottle. True, I hadn't been quite forgotten: there, draped over the back of my seat, was the official acknowledgement of my championship, an honorary All England Club member's tie. Nobody said, 'Here's your tie, Fred. Welcome to the Club'. Nobody even said, 'Congratulations'. The tie was just dropped there for me to

find when I came out of the bath. Instead of Fred J. Perry the champ, I felt like Fred J. Muggs the chimp. The Perry balloon was certainly deflated.

It is suggested that the British tennis authorities completely underestimated both the extent to which success could be achieved legitimately within the framework they assiduously promoted, and the extent to which players themselves were prepared to forgo payment in order to remain amateur (Noel, 1954). What came to develop primarily in the men's game over the years was what was called "shamateurism", which Wind (1979, p.32) described as "the hypocritical system under which a tournament had to shell out, under the table, to the ranking amateurs sums of money far exceeding their expenses in order to secure their appearance". Payments would happen in secret so that players could remain amateur in order to continue competing in ILTF sanctioned events. Koster (1976, p.11) wrote on this subject in the following way:

According to their international rankings, players demanded, and received, whatever fees the particular tournament's economic traffic would bear. Top players refused to participate in tournaments unless they were promised 'full' expenses, which ran well over the amount necessary to cover travel, room and board. There was always a nice bonus added on to the essential check.

Gonzalez (1959; cited in Phillips, (ed.) 1999, p.93) clarified this as follows:

In tennis the difference between an amateur and a professional player is related to a phantom table. The amateur received money under it, the professional over it. Today, a sought-after amateur can make from \$8000 to \$10000 yearly, yet in the eyes of the public he is pure as a virgin snow drift.

When Fred Perry and most other men's Wimbledon winners for the next 30 years left amateur ranks to sign up to the professional tour, their dissent became a considerable problem for the governing bodies.³ Because professional players were subsequently denied entry back into ILTF events, the financial viability of many ILTF amateur tournaments and competitions was called into question. "Public loyalty to an event which excluded some of the best players in the world was starting to wear thin", argued Holt and Mason (2000, p.56). Essentially, throughout this time, the tennis authorities had come to be reliant on the elite players to attract large audiences, but with the growing attraction of the professional circuit, players came to chose financial security over national glory (Koster, 1976). However, the success of the professional circuit also

depended on initial player exposure in the largest tournaments, that is, the amateur Grand Slams and the national associations also depended on these tournaments to raise revenue. Therefore, although a notable shift occurred towards professionalism generally, the gradual onset of this process meant new ties of interdependence developed within the existing figuration; in other words, the figuration of British tennis began to expand. This ultimately led to the process of functional democratisation, whereby all groups came to exert increasing constraints on the actions of others to the extent that social change took a course that no single group intended or expected. The emergence of shamateurism was one such unintended consequence. However, if the damaging ethos of shamateurism was evident decades earlier, why was the onset of “open tennis” delayed until as late as 1968? From where did the major resistance to professionalism at the elite level derive?

Firstly, it seemed that the ethos and code of amateurism, probably more so than its more formal rules, remained appealing to many because “it suggested that sport could serve a higher cultural purpose beyond mere amusement or crass commerce” (Gruneau, 2006, p.575). The ethos of amateurism, which implied sport should be played “for its own sake” and as an end in itself, remained deeply entrenched, even in professional sporting organisations like the IOC; incidentally, it was because of the growing Olympic ideal in the 1950s and its “self-professed moral overtones” that new life was brought into the amateur argument. Avery Brundage, IOC president from 1952 to 1972, strongly defended the “anti-professional” stance on sport, which undoubtedly influenced how other national and international sports governing bodies responded in relation to the escalating debate (Gruneau, 2006).

Secondly, it seemed there was considerable internal resistance to professionalism inside governing bodies, as association members became reliant on their positions to satisfy personal ambitions. They wanted to protect the privileges that these positions afforded them, as the USPTA (1984, p.31) remarked:

All these federations were amateur, and almost always the officials performed their tasks voluntarily. However, as tennis grew, amateur tennis officials came to relish the power they wielded and the perquisites they were granted as a result of that power. So the national federations worked very hard to maintain tennis as an amateur game.

For the privileged members of tennis governing bodies and authorities, the move to adopt a more professionalised operational structure was arguably tantamount to relinquishing some of their decision-making power (Thibault, Slack & Hinings, 1991). Opposing professionalism in tennis also meant the governing bodies had more control over the players. Whilst initially they did not resent restrictions on their personal freedom, when opportunities for commercial success arose, many players were persuaded, partly motivated by the increasing autonomy they were promised (Brasher, 1986).⁴ In these ways, the associated benefits that amateur status afforded members of these governing bodies compelled their strong resistance to professionalism.

Thirdly, for open tennis to have been viable, considerable commercial investment was needed. The major ILTF events needed to attract the best amateur and professional players in order for them to gain much-needed exposure and investment and, essentially, justify their claims of being the leading international tournaments (Holt & Mason, 2000). However, for these tournaments to be able to attract the professionals and to afford to offer prize money for all competitors, considerable financial investment was needed from external sources (Noel, 1954; Rader, 1990). While some sponsors, such as Slazenger, have been involved in tennis for over a century, it was in the 1960s and 70s when sponsorship noticeably “took off”. Along with the TV rights that were purchased both nationally and internationally, the necessary revenue for open tennis to be financially viable at Wimbledon was raised. Holt and Mason (2000, p.56) wrote the following: “The willingness of the tournament committee to keep up with the prize money on the international circuit combined with the value of the event in terms of advertising and sponsorship for leading players has ensured its viability and prestige”.

The success of open tennis was also related to the “tennis boom” of the 1960s and 70s (Lumpkin, 1985; Noel, 1954). The emergence of stadiums to hold greater numbers of people and the introduction of the tie-break in 1973, which made the game more exciting and easier to televise, meant the general public increasingly were willing to part with their money (Cooper, 1995; USPTA, 1984). Thus, the commercialisation of lawn tennis, selling television rights and securing corporate sponsorship, was closely tied to its professionalisation. While it was in Britain where the first “open” tournaments began in 1968 at the British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth, professional values were arguably largely derived in the US, and it was from there where they

gathered momentum and spread across the globe (King, 1975; Rader, 1990). This confirms what Dunning and Sheard (1979, p.231) suggested regarding the resistance of capitalist values in Britain compared with the US:

This difference in the degree of commercialisation of American and British sport is largely a reflection of the fact that American society represents a ‘purer’ type of capitalism. That, in its turn, reflects the fact that industrial capitalism in Britain developed within the frame-work of an established system of dominance by the aristocracy and gentry whereas, in the US, no serious or lasting barriers to the establishment of bourgeois dominance existed.

In this way, the globalisation of tennis throughout the late 19th and 20th century played a significant role in the drive towards embracing professionalism. If Britain was to retain its rights to holding the most prestigious grand slam tournament, it was forced into a position whereby it had to adopt the professional game. In many ways, it had to go against its own established ideals in order to protect or rather legitimate its claim as the “home of tennis”. Thus, for the LTA and AELTC, the protection and maintenance of Wimbledon as the world’s premier tournament became their main objective (Holt & Mason, 2000; Wind, 1979). In the light of the growing figuration of tennis, the LTA became tied to other tennis governing bodies across the world, as well as television and corporate partners, which evidently came to bind the governing body with respect to their actions. As an unintended consequence of the professionalisation and commercialisation of tennis, they lost some of the autonomy and control over the direction that lawn tennis was to develop. The unintended consequences of this process are returned to later, but for now, let me explore some of the changes that took place during this time in LTA-affiliated tennis clubs.

The Prevalence of Upper-Class Ideals in Tennis Clubs

It is evident that aspects of the upper-class derived amateur ideology continued to prevail in lawn tennis throughout the mid 20th century, with consequences to the way the sport was played and organised at both the elite and club levels (Baker, 2004). In many clubs, this was achieved in two main ways, firstly, through the continuously high value that was placed on restrained behaviour and, secondly, through the prevalence of upper

and/or upper-middle-class patronage. In the light of the relative autonomy that voluntary-run tennis clubs enjoyed throughout the 20th century, these two phenomena had the combined effect of retaining the dominant ideals of amateurism within most tennis clubs.

Overt competitiveness and aggressive play continued to be regarded as a vulgar working-class ideal of sport and, as such, “competitive play was discouraged in favour of social compatibility; anything which disrupted sociability, like over-competitiveness, was deprecated” (McKibbin, 1998, p.382). This antipathy and resistance to working-class-derived competitiveness stretched deep into many voluntary associations and impacted upon their internal political and organisational structures. In the 1950s, Noel (1954, p.14) wrote of the prevailing social character of lawn tennis in England as follows: “Up to county standard in England the game is still very much of a relaxation. People play in clubs and parks, and although some play more than others and get better, they regard it purely as a pastime”. Specifically of Banbury, Stacey (1960, p.88) remarked that,

Banbury people do not engage in sport as an exercise in competitive athleticism, but as an occasion for social intercourse: as a competitor remarked of a tennis tournament in which he was playing, ‘these do’s are 75 per cent social and 25 per cent tennis’.

During the 1950s and 60s, Gare (2000, p.15) remarked that at Bramhall Lane Lawn Tennis Club in Stockport, the social scene was evidently more important than the tennis:

Afternoon teas became a tradition in the new clubhouse, and legendary in reputation... Everything stopped for tea... It was an unwritten rule that once teas had started then anyone continuing to play tennis would be reprimanded by club officials and all present. So it was just not done.

Unsurprisingly, an unintended consequence of such a prevalent phenomenon was to render uncompetitive many British sports, especially tennis, which were largely occasions for “middle-class sociability” (McKibbin, 1998).

Meanwhile, the upper and upper-middle classes, regarded as the staunchest advocates of the gentlemanly amateur ethos, continued to hold posts of leadership in many voluntary sporting establishments throughout the mid-20th century, despite them as a class being outnumbered within them. Evidence from a number of community studies

around the 1950s and 60s suggests a disproportionate pattern of higher-class leadership in many types of voluntary associations. Williams (1956, p.124) wrote that in Gosforth, Northumberland:

Status within the village organisations tends to reflect the status system within the community generally... The position of President is confined to the upper-class... The posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Vice-president are distributed in such a way that the upper class, who form little over 6 percent of the total population, occupy more than half these positions... Lesser official positions are filled from the lower classes.

Frankenberg (1966) also highlighted a similar pattern of elite leadership in his analysis of the Welsh town, Glynceiriog. Outsiders were accepted into the community according to their status and money, with voluntary associations mostly presided or patronised by the higher-status outsiders. Working roles like club secretary were filled by “intellectuals” who lacked status, but were nonetheless accepted because of their clerical skills. Frankenberg (1966, p.76) then argued that this represented evidence to suggest the formal organisations were seen as “determinants of class position, maintainers of social prestige and providers of opportunities for social advancement”. Similarly, Stacey (1960, p.81) found that in Banbury, upper-class members often held leadership positions in the voluntary associations, and she wrote: “The committee tend to have a higher social status than the membership... The higher occupational-status classes concern themselves with voluntary associations to an extent out of all proportion to their numbers”.

The ruling elite were a cohesive group and it was common for members of the upper or upper-middle class to hold positions on numerous voluntary committees at once. Meller (1976) gave numerous examples in Bristol of families that held multiple positions on the city council, and two further examples are given of upper-class individuals who held committee positions in over ten different voluntary associations, ranging from sport to politics. Williams (1956, p.128) also provided examples of upper-class individuals who held committee positions in over ten different associations, noting that,

a small minority are able to exert considerable influence on the affairs... since the same people sit on nearly all the committees of village organisations. Since

they are mainly upper-class people this influence is naturally in accordance with upper-class standards.

The dominance of upper-class patrons within voluntary associations well into the 1950s and 60s can be partly explained through highlighting economic differences. As voluntary work in associations and clubs remained generally quite time-consuming, it was still the case that only those who were able and willing to perform these tasks without remuneration were able to occupy positions on the committees. This structure continued to favour the professional classes, or those either retired or self-employed, who had fewer time constraints in the workplace and, therefore, greater opportunities to be effective in their voluntary roles. Their supremacy, however, cannot be reduced entirely to economic differences. McKibbin (1998, p.97) pointed out that leaders within voluntary associations were required to have certain qualities that the upper and upper-middle class gentlemen were taught at school, remarking:

What was sought was maturity, ease of conversation and ability to deal with highly placed people... Such a style came fluently to men who had been to public school; and the smarter the school the more affluent the style... The result was that... social origin and hence education largely determined the extent to which men were promoted.

Whilst McKibbin was commenting on the qualities necessary for relations in business, it would not be wholly presumptuous to suggest that a similar attitude was given to decisions regarding leadership roles in voluntary associations.

It is evident that, what could be described as an “old boy network” prevailed in voluntary associations throughout the 20th century, and the relative autonomy of many of these associations meant they could continue unchecked and with little external resistance for decades. Sports clubs tended to fulfil what were argued at the time as positive social functions within society, promoting physical activity whilst creating solidarity and a sense of community among the middle classes. Sports governing bodies were also supportive of clubs as they helped develop their respective sport. Moreover, it would not be presumptuous to suggest that the paternalism of voluntary-run sports clubs by members of the upper and upper-middle class was significant in their continuous support for them in government, the positions of which were largely filled with members from these same classes. Presiding over voluntary-run clubs was regarded as a natural

extension of the philanthropic duties for these members. It is unsurprising, thus, that support for the autonomy of these clubs continued and, due to the mutual benefits of high-class patronage in clubs, there seemed to be little effective challenge to their position.

The Emerging Issue of Social Exclusion in Lawn Tennis

It is suggested that the downgrading of competitive play in favour of more restrained behaviour on court and the continuing value placed on high-class patronage of tennis clubs helped to marginalise the problems of exclusion for many decades. Members of the lower classes as well as children struggled in many clubs to obtain membership. However, the issue was neither raised nor deemed of concern to dominant groups like the LTA at this time. So, up until the mid 20th century this was most certainly not an issue of “social” importance. The denial of playing or membership opportunities to particular groups in clubs was not regarded as problematic for powerful groups capable of raising the issue on a larger scale. For this reason, few had legitimate grounds to try and prevent it. The marginalised groups, themselves, had little power to label their own exclusion as a problem, and the power of groups acting on their behalf, if there were any, was comparatively small. Essentially, they had insufficient power chances to effectively challenge their subordination and, as such, it was not until well into the mid to late 20th century before the inequalities within British tennis gave substantial cause for concern.

It was not until the 1960s that the problems associated with unequal access and opportunities in British tennis became regarded as a social issue, primarily because these problems threatened initiatives for talent development and elite success. The escalating processes of commercialisation and professionalisation of sport in general facilitated the emergence of new ties of interdependence, which had the effect of shifting the balance of power in the British tennis figuration more towards those groups with specific interests in developing elite success. Further, the emergence of government interest in sport from the 1960s, and opportunities for financial assistance from the newly-established Sports Council, brought new demands on sports governing bodies, especially those who wished to compete for grants. Funding came to be offered in exchange for proposals to remove

barriers to participation and develop talented athletes. Increased competition for funding, commercial sponsorship, the sale of television rights and media coverage, therefore, facilitated a lengthening of interdependency ties between sports and their representative governing bodies. The LTA, for example, were forced to be competitive with other governing bodies on an economic level, as well as in terms of attracting athletes. Thus, they also underwent a marked internal change and became more professionalised and more focused on developing talent; principally, these were unintended consequences of the wider social processes outlined above.

It is understandable that anything that came to resemble an obstacle in the pursuit of elite-level success for the governing body and its commercial partners was challenged. The increasingly performance-oriented LTA placed heavy demands on tennis clubs, which came to be regarded as the prime sights for talent development initiatives. Whereas once the LTA were staunch advocates of amateurism as an ethos, and were unmoved by its persistence in its affiliated clubs, towards the 1960s and beyond they came to regard its legacy as detrimental to their new performance-driven objectives. Clubs, on the other hand, retained their relative autonomy throughout the mid-20th century, and remained less concerned with producing talent in support of the LTA's initiatives in this direction. In this regard, a power struggle gradually emerged between the LTA and its affiliated tennis clubs, as many of the latter attempted to retain their elitist and exclusive membership restrictions. The competitive struggles for power between these two tennis institutions led to numerous unintended consequences, which influenced the general direction in which British tennis developed, as well as the way the sport was played and organised at all levels.

Conclusions

This chapter sought to tie together some of the threads from the previous two history chapters, identifying how underlying social class struggles in wider society impacted upon the social and structural development of lawn tennis in Britain. The predominant focus was at the elite and administrative levels of tennis in Britain, where marked changes as a result of the gradual globalisation, professionalisation and commercialisation of tennis gave increasing cause for concern to the largely upper-class

British tennis authorities, and questioned the amateur ideology upon which their sport was built.

The influence of a more middle or working-class ideology was noticeable during this time, as commercial and business values helped instil a more professional mentality among the elite-level tennis players of this time. Players began to show an aggressive will to win that gradually came to be at odds with what amateur-led tennis authorities felt was appropriate. However, tennis authorities were complicit in a growing state of hypocrisy in the game, through the business of “shamateurism”. The case of Fred Perry is examined as an example of a British athlete severely constrained by the mounting expectations of success, with the seemingly incompatible and conflicting expectation to remain amateur and to play for “fun”, rather than for financial remuneration. These developments led many to question the adequacy of the amateur ideology, and this signalled a shift in the balance of power towards advocates of professionalism and “open” tennis. Advances abroad, particularly the growth of professional tennis tours and commercial sponsorship in the US, also helped to push the British tennis authorities in this direction.

This chapter concluded by examining the influences that the broader professionalisation and commercialisation of tennis has had on its traditional clubs. Evidence suggests that they have not been influenced to the same degree by these new values and ideologies. The continuing patronage of the upper classes in clubs, and the influence that these positions have afforded, has helped to maintain a strong hierarchical culture of social aspiration within voluntary-run clubs. While some clubs have adopted a more egalitarian, competitive and performance-driven approach to tennis, a very significant proportion have not. It is partly because of their relative autonomy and the growing disparity between these clubs and the LTA that the issue of social exclusion has surfaced. It could be regarded as an unintended consequence of the complex and long-term developments at the elite and administrative levels of tennis discussed here. It is towards this growing issue that *Section 3* is directed.

¹ Since 1910, the AELTC has been patronised by the reigning monarch, and the club’s president has always been a member of royalty. Further, aside from its first and third presidents, the LTA presidency between 1888 and 1982 has always been held by a titled member of the upper class. In order after Renshaw (1888-1896) came the Rt Hon Earl of Cavan (1896-1897), Mr. W.H. Collins (1897-1906), the Rt Hon Lord Chief Justice Desborough (1907-1926), the Rt Hon Viscount D’Abernon (1927-1932), the Rt Hon Viscount Templewood (previously Sir Samuel Hoare) (1932-1956), His Grace the Duke of

Devonshire (1957-1962), and Sir Carl Aarvold (1963-1981). From 1982 onwards until 2007, it is recorded that only two of the nine LTA presidents were titled (LTA, 2007b).

² That his father was a Labour MP gives an indication of his social class.

³ A list of other players that forfeited Wimbledon success to turn professional included Bill Tilden, Ellsworth Vines, Don Budge, Bobby Riggs, Jack Kramer and Pancho Gonzales. Out of the fifteen players ranked world number one between 1946 and 1967, ten turned professional (Brasher, 1986).

⁴ Professional players associations or 'unions' began forming from the 1930s, but with varying degrees of success. It was not until 1972, however, that the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) was formed as "an attempt by the players to prevent themselves from being used as pawns in the political power game and to create an independent block so that they too could contribute to policy decisions" (Brasher, 1986, p.207). It seemed the formation of the WTA in 1973 took place along similar lines.

SECTION 3: TENNIS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN

Chapter 7: Developments in British Sport since the 1960s and their Influences on Tennis

From the late 1960s onwards, some notable changes took place within the wider figuration of British sport that impacted upon tennis, making the whole system of its governance and organisation more complex, and increasingly outside of the realms of control by any single governing body. The most notable developments included the increasing focus on sports development, in the light of falling playing standards internationally across many traditionally British-dominated sports; new commercial influences in sport, for example, the emergence of televised sport and sponsorship, and the subsequent growing importance of sport as entertainment; the drive towards talent development and the growing focus on elite-level performance; and, finally, the concomitant increasing focus on children within wider social and political objectives generally, and the developing role of children in delivering elite-level sporting success. This chapter aims to closely examine these notable developments, in order to gain an understanding for how and why tennis at the elite and administrative levels has continued to develop in the direction of increasing professionalism. Through an illustration of these developments, it is easy to see how and for what reasons a disparity and power struggle gradually came to develop between tennis clubs and the LTA. This chapter and the next, which examines the development of tennis clubs into the present day, set the scene and outline the wider societal preconditions for the emergence of this power struggle. *Chapter 9* examines it more specifically using an Eliasian *Game Models* framework.

The Increasing Concern for Sports Development

Sport in general became a subject of public political interest from the 1960s and 70s, suggested by a number of developments on a national scale, and these influenced policy objectives across most national governing bodies of sport. The emergence of the welfare state post-World War II signalled the intentions of the British government to emphasise provision based around equality for all, and sports development was influenced by this trend to a considerable extent (Bramham, 1991; Houlihan & White, 2002). The Wolfenden Report of 1960 made a number of assumptions of a functionalist

nature regarding the values of sport, implicitly suggesting that it served particular social, cultural and health-related functions. The politicisation and manipulation of sport for the perceived benefit of the welfare state of the 1950s onwards, led to the continued over-emphasis of sport in addressing particular societal problems. The GB Sports Council formed in 1965, and this signified the Labour government's intention to intervene in the organisation of sport to a growing extent. Its main aims initially were to provide facilities and encourage participation on a wide community level, but the suggestion that they continued to regard sport as serving particular political and societal functions was most clearly highlighted in the main locations and target groups of their increasing intervention, targeting the "disadvantaged" of the inner cities (Green, 2004; Tomlinson, 1987). During the 1970s, the recognised disadvantaged groups were women, the elderly, ethnic minorities, the unemployed and people with disabilities (Gratton & Taylor, 2000; Tomlinson, 1987).

Provision for elite sport was comparatively less important, as Houlihan (1991, p.98-99) commented, with respect to the consensus surrounding provision: "There was little discernable tension between the interests of the elite and of the mass, as there was a consensus... that an increase in facilities was the first priority". Provision of facilities continued to be geared towards mass participation into the 1970s, and a subsequent House of Lords Report (Cobham Report, 1973) and two White Papers (Department of the Environment 1975a, 1975b) reaffirmed the target of disadvantaged groups in inner cities, mainly as part of the broader objectives of promoting good health and preventing juvenile delinquency (Gratton & Taylor, 2000; Houlihan & White, 2002).

From the 1930s to the 1960s, physical education came to be redefined in schools, from being regarded as a form of physical training and drill towards a more recognised subject in its own right (Houlihan & White, 2002). Further, the re-entry of the Soviet Union into Olympic competition in 1952, the emergence of Australia as a dominant force in Olympic swimming in 1956 and a series of embarrassing defeats in football led to a growing concern over falling playing standards in international competitions across all sports, generally, and signalled the need for government intervention in British sport (Houlihan & White, 2002). A more professional approach to sports development and an early introduction to competitive games were now deemed necessary for the benefit of Britain's sporting prowess. Much of this necessity was focused on sport and physical

education in schools, because, as Kirk (1992, p.5) noted, “the demise of school sport was equated with Britain’s poor showing in international sport”. As well as striving to fulfil the wider social objectives for disadvantaged groups previously mentioned, government intervention in sport and physical education from the 1960s onwards also came to be couched to a greater extent in attaining international prestige. The emergence of the Sports Council itself signalled the implied relationship between school physical education and elite sports performance (Kirk & Gorely, 2000), both of which were regarded as essential components in a single system that contributed to “the national interest” (Hargreaves, 1986). This approach implied a “pyramid” structure to talent development, whereby developing a large pool of grass-roots-level players would supposedly and inevitably lead to the production of a small crop of elite-level players. The argument was thus: “The broader the base of support, the higher the pinnacle of achievement” (Kirk & Gorely, 2000, p.122). This logic became regarded as self-evident from the 1960s onwards and characterised models of sports development for many decades to follow.

Into the 1970s, the wider social, economic and political environments within which the provision of sport ultimately rested became unstable. The decline of the welfare consensus in the late 1970s meant the provision of sport as an entitlement for all people was heavily challenged by the new Conservative government. Elite sport success grew in importance over the next few decades, and talent identification and development, especially focused on children as potential champions, drew focus in this direction (Green, 2004; Houlihan, 2000; Oakley & Green, 2001). Striking the balance between provisions for the mass versus the elite sport, however, proved difficult as the general organisation and funding structure of sport, and tennis in particular, became more complex. The growing commercial interests in sport, most notably television broadcasting and sponsorship, undoubtedly helped shift the emphasis towards the more profitable avenue of elite-level sport.

New Commercial Influences in British Tennis

The inter-related growth of televised sport and sports sponsorship throughout the mid to late 20th century facilitated a number of marked changes in British sport, and also

helped to unsettle the balance of power in British tennis, between staunch advocates of amateur ideals and those more driven by the influences of professionalism. Outcomes in this respect were often unintended, and, coupled with wider developments in sport, they acutely impacted on tennis in several ways.

Broadcasting had been a central feature of modern sport since the inter-war years, since radio licenses began to be sold in abundance; by 1939, 71 percent of all British households owned a wireless receiver (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). While the first ever broadcast of televised sport came in 1937, it was not until the 1960s when the majority of households in Britain owned a television (Holt, 1989). In spite of the emergence of ITV in 1955, by the 1960s the BBC had developed a monopoly in broadcasting sport, and this affinity was mostly related to the perceived status of the BBC as a respectable amateur organisation, in the sense that profit was not its main objective. Holt (1989) suggested that in many respects, the pattern of televised sport in Britain has followed the “natural preferences” of the amateur establishment. Their elevated status was also influential in establishing its traditional affinity with British tennis and, specifically, Wimbledon. From very early on the Championships had become part of the BBC’s annual cycle of major sports events, together with other “blue-chip” events like the Boat Race, test cricket and the Grand National (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Holt (1989, p.321) explained:

Historically, the BBC has been in a privileged position to negotiate coverage with the ‘gentleman amateurs’ of the... All England Club... ‘I have never attempted to conceal my belief that ‘Wimbledon’ treated us generously’, wrote the Head of Outside Broadcasts in 1952. ‘I assumed it was the deliberate policy of an amateur sport towards a ‘public service’.

The dominance of the BBC in televising tennis continued mostly unchallenged, especially after it launched BBC2 in 1964, and Wimbledon has continued to remain one of an, albeit, decreasing number of “untouchable” national sporting events reserved for terrestrial television. Despite its status as a non-profit-making “public service”, the BBC was able to offer relatively sizeable broadcasting fees for Wimbledon, and the AEC enjoyed the kudos they gained from being broadcasted by the BBC. The unique nature of the Championships also allowed them to secure lucrative contracts with international television corporations. In terms of proportion, the majority of outside investment in

British tennis came from television corporations, all of which were international apart from the BBC; but the influence of television was also felt in less ostensible ways.

Whannel (1986) suggested that the marked increase in sponsorship from the 1960s was directly related to the growth of televised sport. Sport sponsorship in Britain amounted to less than £1 million in 1966, but grew to £16 million by 1976, £46 million in 1980 and £100 million in 1983 (Whannel, 1986). McCormack (1984) argued that this marked rise in sponsorship was particularly responsible for the 1970s tennis boom in the US. For television and sponsors, the attractions of sport and specifically tennis were numerous: it had a relatively “clean” image, the action on court was simple for spectators to follow and there were numerous tennis “personalities” like Rod Laver, John Newcombe and Bjorn Borg that helped augment its appeal as entertainment (McCormack, 1984). Particularly in the US, therefore, tennis began to attract considerable commercial sponsorship from the early 1970s (Gratton & Taylor, 2000).

Financial support from sponsors and the impact of television forced tennis authorities across the world to consider the image of the sport and its market value as a source of entertainment. As such, they became more aware of the need to entertain. Whannel (1986, p.130) noted the following:

One of the characteristics of any form of capitalist entrepreneurship and rationalised production is the attempt to reduce the uncertainty of the commodity. The increased penetration of sport by capital and resultant infusion of spectacular, internationalised and glamorised forms of entertainment can be seen as an attempt to reduce the certainty of the sporting commodity.

This was first made obvious in the emergence of the tie-break in 1973, which was designed to make the game more exciting, climatic and more unpredictable. It also made the finishing times of particular matches easier to calculate, which was favoured by television corporations with timing constraints to consider (Cooper, 1995). The “image” of tennis came to be called into question as sponsors and television corporations developed expectations and placed demands on governing bodies to promote the game in a particular way. Securing the best players in tournaments and maintaining the image of Wimbledon as the world’s premier tournament were the most important goals for the British tennis authorities. However, as the LTA became more concerned with the

development of British talent, the image of tennis became of importance to the general public. In 1986, the LTA (1986a, p.8) wrote:

In the dramatic growth of sport and leisure in recent years, British tennis has not kept pace with its competitors... It is clearly the LTA's responsibility to try to reverse these trends and, in order to do so, much has been done in connection with... the image of the game in the UK.

LTA objectives in this regard focused on projecting the game as a “modern, physical sport with qualities to appeal to males and females” (LTA, 1986a). Brasher (1986, p.208) put these ideals into context, by suggesting that “tennis would appear most attractive”, to both spectators and commercial sponsors, “when it maintains an image that is a reminder of its Corinthian origins – healthy and athletic young men and women competing with integrity and sportsmanship for the honour of being the best”. Thus, the image of tennis was also clearly of concern in a commercial sense, and Whannel (1986, p.130) added: “Television's conventions as to what constitutes good entertainment have become a determining factor upon sporting cultures themselves”.

It was undoubtedly the case that the growing reliance on external forms of funding from television and sponsorship placed constraints on how the LTA should or could promote the game. Whannel (1986, p.136) summarised the burgeoning power relations between television, sponsors and sports governing bodies in the 20th century in the following way:

Sports organisations increasingly came to identify sponsorship as crucial to survival. It was believed that television coverage was essential to attract the more lucrative sponsorship deals, so consequently sports have increasingly emphasised the need for coverage. Television's own practices, then, became particularly important. Sports were more eager than ever to ensure that they could provide what the television professionals wanted.

The marked expansion in televised tennis and the concomitant growth in sponsorship was to have a number of unintended consequences, however, particularly as the governing bodies of sport, tied to the “traditional amateur, benevolent paternalism of sports organisations”, relinquished some of their power to these commercial organisations as a result of their increasing reliance upon them (Whannel, 1986). New

ties of interdependence were created that constrained the actions of everyone within the British tennis figuration.

Together, these processes helped accelerate and strengthen elements of competitiveness between all groups involved. Houlihan and White (2002), for example, showed how the advent of financial support, particularly that which governing bodies had to bid or apply for, made national governing bodies in all British sports increasingly competitive with each other. The LTA was no exception. Although they tended to accrue most of their funding internally from the profits of Wimbledon, since the 1970s the LTA came to look for external sources to fund their development projects. For example, considerable financial injections came from commercial sponsors and the sale of Wimbledon television rights as previously noted, as well as grants from governmental organisations such as the Sports Council, UK Sport and National Lottery funding from the mid 1990s. The central government were also able to intervene through “Sportsmatch”, which began in 1992 to help encourage commercial sponsors to invest in grass-roots sport, by agreeing to match their investments pound for pound (LTA, 1993; Oakley & Green, 2001).

In terms of the numerous elements of sports development mentioned above, the extent to which tennis in Britain became involved in a competitive struggle with other governing bodies is readily apparent. Their interdependence with aspects of media, broadcasting and communications, and investment and sponsorship, has had the unintended effect of forcing the LTA to compete against other governing bodies in these domains. Poor results on the court in the year of 1994, for example, pushed the LTA chief executive, Ian Peacock, to declare in the annual report (LTA, 1994, p.5):

The knock-on effect of British teams’ inability to perform on the international stage has led to the game being relegated in terms of importance by the national media and the space and journalistic resources allocated to the game by the sports editors being significantly reduced... The limited exposure tennis is receiving reduces the appeal of the game to potential young players and makes it all the more important that the development of the game in Britain is given greater focus and resources... Tennis has to compete in a very tough market for sponsors, TV time, media space and commitment of young athletes. Other competing sports

are all very actively endeavouring to increase their share of the market, and if tennis stands still it will be the loser.

Competitiveness between governing bodies also became manifest in terms of attracting and targeting children as potential athletes and providing opportunities for their early introduction into a respective sport (Macphail et al., 2003). Houlihan (2000, p.179) suggested the following with regard to competition between governing bodies:

Those within the elite development community perceive young people as the seed-corn for future elite squads. They are to be identified, trained, protected from poaching by other sports and gradually assimilated into the competitive culture and routine of the particular sport.

Steve Bean explained this phenomenon succinctly as follows:

Tennis is competing with all these other sports, and you know if all these 4, 5, 6-year olds are all playing rugby, football and cricket then tennis won't even get a look in. They need to get tennis right at the very beginning (personal communication, May 26, 2004).

It is suggested that competition for funding, over the last few decades, helped push the LTA towards the expansion of children's talent development programmes. There was a growing awareness of the perceived need to develop talent from a younger age, in order to "produce" elite tennis players and potential Wimbledon champions. As a result of these competitive struggles, overall, the LTA were forced to demonstrate more foresight and the "deferment of gratification" in a shift towards long-term planning and development. This was particularly the case in terms of how and where they invested their funds, which groups were targeted for facility or talent development provision, as well as considerations related to which sponsors they should target for investment and which sources of media they should target for publicity.

The Drive towards Talent Development

The frustration of persistent poor results particularly in the men's game, coupled with the admiration of apparently successful talent development models in other countries, most notably the USA, Australia and Sweden,¹ provided the impetus necessary for the LTA to take a more serious approach to talent development. The

widespread benefits of nurturing players from a young age and coaching them in a specialised and focused way became widely acknowledged. However, the persistence of an amateur ideology within the LTA continued to hinder their development of a more progressive talent development programme until the 1980s. While this neglect came to the attention of the CCPR in the early post-war years, however, it appeared the LTA remained unresponsive to the needs of individuals at the lower end of development (Walker, 1989). Maskell (1988, p.192) reflected on tennis in the early 1950s in the following passage:

It was quite apparent... that people felt the LTA were not terribly concerned with the development of the game. Park superintendents felt that they were being neglected, some schools felt much the same and all too often the counties were not really trying to spread the game to a new generation of players.

Certainly up until the late 1960s, the LTA's main concerns surrounded the amateur versus professional debate at the elite level. Only marginal attention was paid to the development of talent in clubs, schools or public playing areas. Further, where schemes were introduced, they tended to do very little to challenge exclusion in the sport (Walker, 1989). Maskell (1988, p.192) wrote the following:

It is sad to think that despite my reports... and the similar views of other experienced individuals... the LTA is only now, in the 1980s, beginning to market the game properly to widen the base of the playing pyramid. This surely must be the first step in raising national standards.

By remarking on his "reports" and the "views of other experienced individuals" between the 1950s and 80s, Maskell's passage suggested there was considerable resistance at the LTA regarding where the focus of their efforts should be directed. It was clear that the governing body needed to adopt a more long-term approach, exercising more foresight in making decisions in order to help develop tennis in the future. However, this awareness was not demonstrated at the LTA until other nations had begun to show their prowess over the British on court. Sue Mappin, former LTA National Team Manager, spoke of British tennis in the 1970s and 80s, as follows:

The women were very strong. We had Sue Barker, Jo Durie, Ann Hobbs, and Virginia [Wade] was still playing, and a good crop of very good juniors. We knew that the LTA needed to look further into the development side of the sport

and really get more people playing, not just children but people. On the continent, tennis was really taking off, in Sweden particularly as well as France, Italy, Spain, and Germany, and we could see that we were going to be left behind if we didn't do something, and I have to say at that stage Paul [Hutchins – LTA Men's National Team Manager] and I were sort of banging our heads against a brick wall really because the LTA could see we were in the final of the Federation Cup. We won the Wightman Cup, and the men had got to the final of the Davis Cup. Everything in the garden was rosy as far as the hierarchy was concerned (personal communication, Aug 24, 2004).

Evidently, the LTA's vision of talent development during this time was very much couched in the short term and lacked foresight. Houlihan and White (2002) agreed that it was not until the 1980s when an approach was taken suggesting the LTA were making concerted and significant efforts in the area of sports development. They focused on four main strands: short tennis, tennis academies and improvements in coaching and facilities. It is suggested, however, that some of these programmes were introduced with little understanding of what was actually needed. In short, they were knee-jerk reactions to the growing issue of falling playing standards in British tennis and, as such, they did little to challenge the source of these problems.

Firstly, "Short Tennis" was introduced in 1980, based on the successful Swedish version which commenced in the early 1970s. It was a more child-friendly version of tennis designed to improve children's introduction into the full-size game, played with softer, slower and bouncier balls and smaller rackets. Games were played on half-size courts with lowered nets. Whilst the primary aim of Short Tennis was to make the sport easier for children to learn, the concealed motivation to push children towards engaging in competition brought with it unexpected consequences, as it failed to develop successfully the skills required for the full-size game. National championships for short tennis successfully developed, but there occurred a huge drop-out rate when children grew too old for it and failed to progress to the adult version (Houlihan & White, 2002). Other variations were introduced to bridge this gap such as "transitional tennis" and "starter tennis", but these suffered similar problems until the introduction of Mini Tennis in 2001, which was established as part of a more comprehensive overall structure of talent development that incorporated children's coaching in schools and clubs.

Secondly, tennis “academies” were built, most notably the National Tennis School at Bisham Abbey in 1982. These centres for tennis excellence, founded on the premise that children would receive coaching and tuition on top of their normal studies while boarding at the school, were modelled on tennis academies in other countries, such as the US, and academies for other sports in Britain, such as football. Their sole aim was to help burgeoning tennis players reach the professional ranks. However, the success of live-in training academies in developing elite players was marred through ignorance to the special needs of the children within them. Marc Cripps told me of stories that emerged of problems related to removing children from their home environment as well as removing children from their original coaches; both came to be regarded as counterproductive to their talent development. He spoke of Swedish research in the 1980s and 90s that stated:

An integral and critical part of their formula for success of elite players... was that their training should be done in their home club. So it was like a home away from home, not taken away to miles away to a separate home from home where they haven't got any of their friends, they can't see their parents (personal communication, June 15, 2004).

Brian Linskey, Group Racquets Manager for David Lloyd Leisure, added the following:

I would think in performance, if that coach is improving that player, and they're getting great results, I'd pretty much leave them alone. I'd put my funding in there, rather than saying 'right, I want all that stopped and put the focus over here which is completely different'. How do they know that it's gonna work for that player when they move over? They don't (personal communication, July 16, 2004).

Thirdly, talent identification and coaching at county level were improved through a network of County Development and Coaching Officers from 1988 onwards. Top coaches across the country were selected to identify and develop talent in promising children, and the LTA introduced the Training of Coaches Scheme “in order to raise the standard of coaches and coaching throughout Great Britain” (LTA, 1987a, p.8). It seemed poor foresight and lack of planning, however, led to poor results from these county redevelopment initiatives. Very few of these officers were actually qualified in sports development and, instead, many were merely coaches with the objective to seek

out new talent to coach. In addition, they were not linked effectively to schools or local authorities, so were not working under the direction of a structured national development plan (Houlihan & White, 2002).

Fourthly, the LTA began to focus on tennis facilities and undertook a survey of playing conditions across clubs and local authority courts across Britain. It was found that: i) only 10% of the 1.3 million tennis players play during the winter; ii) 20,000 out of 34,000 outdoor courts are in the public sector, but are in poor condition and generate little income; and iii) the majority of indoor courts are located in the South-East and are commercially operated (LTA, 1986b). From this rationale the LTA devised the Indoor Tennis Initiative (ITI), which opened its first centre in 1988. The push for indoor tennis facilities, according to Gratton and Taylor (1991), was part of a rapid increase in indoor facilities across all sports during the 1970s and 80s. The ITI's main aim was to build facilities that were predominantly funded by the public sector, specifically the Sports Council and Local Authorities (LTA, 1986a), but a further goal was to implement the LTA's demanding talent development initiatives within these indoor courts all year round (Pattison, 1987). The underlying implication was that building more and better facilities would solve the problems of poor playing standards.

The results of the Indoor Tennis Initiative suggested relative success in its main objective, increasing the number of indoor courts from 67 in 1987 to 910 in 1999 (LTA, 1999b). However, as many of the new courts were in either "commercial" or private tennis clubs, where the LTA had little control over matters of access and inclusion, results in terms of talent development were relatively less encouraging than expected. Further, it was not until the mid to late 1990s when the LTA considered the possibility that poor playing standards were related to more deep-rooted social issues, and that simply building more facilities would not reach the root of their problems.

It is evident that the main emphasis of the LTA gradually shifted from the 1960s onwards, from solely mass-provision towards a more comprehensive investment plan, which came to incorporate elite-level development. Monies accrued from external sources, as noted above, made the introduction of these schemes possible and, despite problems in their implementation, they can nevertheless be taken together as an indication that the LTA began to adopt a more proactive stance, instead of a merely reactionary one, to the development of tennis in the future. The numerous plans put

forward by the LTA, on the back of recommendations from the Sports Council and other such institutions and organisations, suggested that intervention was needed in British tennis to an increasing extent. Problems arose, however, as the LTA failed to acknowledge the considerable socially, culturally and historically-rooted depth of the particular problems they aspired to overcome. Only several years later did the LTA demonstrate awareness of the sheer complexity of relations that made up the rapidly expanding figuration of British tennis and, with more foresight, were able to conceive of initiatives and schemes that would make lasting changes for the fulfilment of their aims. This achievement was undoubtedly related to the internal professionalisation of their organisation, and the higher standards that were imported on their organisational environment (Thibault et al., 1991).

Prior to the onset of the professionalisation and commercialisation of tennis in Britain, the LTA, together with their partners at the AEC, had power that was relatively incontestable. Bound by fewer ties of interdependence, the British tennis authorities had considerable control over decision-making processes and over the course of how the sport developed at a national level. When new ties of interdependence developed as a result of these processes, however, it meant that commercial sponsors, television corporations and associations like the Sports Council (UK Sport), made greater demands and placed constraints on the LTA and the AEC that grew to challenge and compromise their supreme authority over the sport. Whilst ostensibly these organisations supported the LTA's aims, their own agendas invariably were focused in different areas, most notably and predominantly towards developing the elite end of tennis. Despite the LTA growing in economic power over time, providing them with enhanced opportunities to bring to fruition their development plans, they became more answerable and accountable to the other groups and organisations that invested in them.

The Increasing Focus on Children

In line with the growing concern for talent development in sport, children became a focal point for sports development attention. However, while competitions and coaching opportunities were available for some children from before the Second World War, children generally were not part of a wider development plan for tennis

clubs or the governing body generally. Further attention on children only came in tandem with the commercialisation of tennis and the professionalisation of sports development, and this development was part of a wider acceptance of children in government policy generally. Central government became gradually more concerned with them over the course of the mid to late 20th century, mostly amid speculation that their specific needs were not met through the traditional educational system.² Further, children's rights were also called into question (Hill & Tisdall, 1997), with implications related to the role of sport in serving particular educational and health-related functions for them.

In the light of welfare-reform policy throughout the 1960s and 70s, sport was seen as a vehicle through which the process of children's socialisation into society could be made more fluid, with sport regarded as important in teaching children particular life-skills and educational objectives (Dyck, 2000). In this way, the report from the Wolfenden Committee in 1960, as well as the recommendations of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Sport and Leisure in 1973 and the 1975 government White Paper, *Sport and Recreation* (Department of the Environment, 1975a), suggested the provision of sport and recreational opportunities was both a right and a need and reiterated the potential for sport to be used as a vehicle for pursuing educational objectives, as well as promoting a number of other social benefits (Bramham, 1991; Gratton & Taylor, 2000). In essence, sport came to be regarded by the government as an educational tool. Yet, this ideology was not something new. Indeed, sport was regarded as helping boys develop characteristics of "manliness" and integrity in the public schools of the mid 19th century. However, during this time it served less of an ostensible role in central government policy. Nevertheless, it is evident that contemporary conceptions of sport serving particular educational functions have strong roots in the Victorian public school amateur ideologies.

In the context of sport, one can witness throughout the mid 20th century an escalating concern for children and their physical educational development. Numerous policies and schemes were introduced over the post-war decades, each with their own objectives that, in some instances, were conflicting. Whilst governing bodies reiterated the rhetoric espoused by central government and the Sports Council of the role of sport in fulfilling educational objectives, they largely had objectives of their own that were

unrelated to this ideal. Children became evermore valued as potential champions, and this helped create, as largely an unintended consequence, a noticeable conflict in the “manufactured polarisation” between school sport and physical education during the 1980s. Thus, in the light of the growing importance of elite sporting success, “PE was seen as being at best well meaning but essentially muddled, whilst sport was lauded as promoting positive personal and social values and outcomes” (Houlihan, 2000, p.173). The growing concern for elite-level success throughout the 1990s and the growing evidence suggesting the importance of schools in fulfilling talent development objectives, meant this dichotomy was further reinforced through the formulation of Specialist Sports Colleges. However, this development seemed to mask an overall trend towards the increasing disregard of school sport and education by burgeoning young athletes and national governing bodies. Houlihan (2000, p.191) suggested the following:

Promising athletes in an increasing range of sports and the NGBs to which they are affiliated are now less likely to see school sport as a significant opportunity to develop, refine and practice skills. The pressure from Sport England that NGBs develop more sophisticated talent identification procedures will make the system of school sport a safety net rather than an essential part of the elite sports development process.

Thus, there can be observed a trend towards the pursuit of elite-level sporting success against more purely educational objectives in the provision of sporting opportunities for children in schools.

One can conceptualise these changes in terms of functional interdependencies, whereby children and governing bodies came to be connected on a growing number of levels. Governing bodies of sport grew to rely and depend on children for the production of talent and elite-level sporting success, whilst children grew to rely on governing bodies for their sporting opportunities. The growing political focus on child protection was also, undoubtedly, important in helping to bind both governing bodies and children together in new ways (NSPCC & NCF, 1998). What occurred was a shift in the balance of power, generally, towards children and those adults working on their behalf, away from the governing bodies. Children became pivotal as a target group for sports development initiatives. While important developments occurred that impacted markedly on the social position of children in wider society and wider sport structures, to

what extent was this replicated in the more autonomous voluntary-run tennis clubs? What remained of their elitist and status-exclusive social structures?

Conclusions

This chapter sought to chart some of the wider social processes that impacted on British sport from the 1960s, and the developments specific to British tennis. The first process examined was the growing concern for sports development, which was most certainly influenced by the report from the Wolfenden Committee (1960) that stressed the centrality of sport in British culture. Target groups were formulated by the government, in order that facilities are provided for those most marginalised or excluded. Commercial developments were then examined, focusing on the growth of televised sport and the consequential explosion of sport sponsorship. This development came to push the LTA towards considering the ways in which tennis is marketed and promoted, and the “image” of tennis in Britain. The growing drive towards the talent development was the next process examined. Falling standards of performance across numerous British sports helped push national sports governing bodies towards providing more adequately for elite-level athletes. Their success came to be regarded more clearly as a symbol of national prestige, and therefore came to demand more funding. These developments led quite naturally to the process of children becoming more focused as target groups for provision. The focus was on their potential as elite international-level champions, hence the increasing government attention and funding in sport over the last few decades.

The following chapter seeks to examine the consequences of these developments within British tennis clubs, specifically focusing on the decline of voluntarism, the emergence of new commercial tennis clubs and the growing consciousness of “problem areas” in British tennis.

¹ Swedish talent development initiatives had begun in the early 1970s, and achieved widespread success that culminated in the late 1980s with Davis Cup victories and a handful of men in the world’s top twenty (Cox & Gould, 1990; Houlihan & White, 2002).

² Anxiety over British educational standards emerged after the publication of several “Black Papers” in the 1960s and 70s, but education did not become a key issue in public policy until the mid 80s (Smith, Smith & Wright, 1997).

Chapter 8: Tennis Clubs into the Present Day

Despite the marked professionalisation of tennis at the macro-organisational level from the 1960s onwards, it is suggested that tennis clubs throughout this period changed little with regards their underlying emphasis or social character. Tennis clubs remained “class-prejudiced” bastions of supremacy for the middle classes, locations where they could demarcate themselves socially from status inferiors. Moreover, like the majority of other voluntary-run sports clubs, tennis clubs largely have retained their relative autonomy from government into present day (Kuhnle & Selle, 1992). This is in both a financial sense, in terms of not receiving government subsidies, and in an organisational sense, in terms of communication and contact with government agencies (Deckers & Gratton, 1995). Their relative autonomy allowed them to maintain their more social emphasis and middle-class dominant structure, and outside pressure was not sufficient enough to force clubs to change markedly, despite attempts in this regard. The power struggle between clubs and the LTA intensified, emphasized by the divergent notions of how, why and by whom tennis should be played. The aims of this chapter are to examine this power struggle in closer detail, charting some of the wider societal processes that affected the financial security of clubs from around the 1960s that allowed a shift in power to take place away from clubs towards the LTA. These included the emergence of new “commercial” sports clubs and the decline of “voluntarism” across British society more generally. This chapter also begins to document changes within the LTA from around the 1980s, when problems related to elite-level performance came forward, and continues to look at the marked changes that took place into the 1990s. It was during this decade when a change in leadership helped the LTA to adopt a more proactive and “business-minded” approach towards attempting to fulfil their objectives. Some of these developments and their unintended consequences are examined in this chapter.

New Commercial Tennis Clubs and the Decline of Voluntarism

With their new talent development initiatives, the LTA looked primarily towards tennis clubs to put them into practice. However, wider social processes that began

decades earlier came to place pressures on tennis clubs for their mere survival. Lusic (1998) reported that in Nottinghamshire, for example, a considerable proportion of tennis clubs collapsed throughout the 1950s and 60s amidst financial pressures. During the post-war boom in the British population, the growing housing crisis made land a more valuable and profitable commodity, thus the rising land-values made setting up voluntary clubs more complicated and difficult. Lusic (1998, p.66) wrote the following:

Until the war, a club could be started with little more than a spare piece of land and a few willing hands. Since then, such land has become less readily available and costs have escalated, turning the formation of a club from scratch into a major enterprise.

While the number of clubs in leagues began to decline, the number of teams taking part actually increased. This was because clubs were able to enter third and fourth teams into competitions (Lusic, 1998). This is a clear indication that larger clubs began to dominate suburban and urban areas, both in membership as well as in competitions.

Around the late 1970s there was a shift in the types of sport and leisure activities in which people were participating. As well as the numerous rival attractions for people's leisure time generally, commercial sports clubs emerged as alternatives to the voluntary-run private clubs for tennis and other sports. Of pertinence to tennis was the emergence of leisure clubs like David Lloyd, which were able to boast superior facilities for tennis and other sports as well as bar and catering facilities.¹ With the stimulation of a consumer economy from the Thatcher government of the late 1970s and 80s, commercially-minded leisure providers filled a niche in an expanding market (Slack, 1999). For an annual or monthly subscription, the member could expect and demand certain services. Paid members of staff were hired to cook, clean, take bookings and manage the club much like a gym or leisure centre. Moreover, for the growing body of consumers who have become more economical with their time, commercial clubs offered greater convenience (Deckers & Gratton, 1995). These clubs tended to cater for the wealthier sections of society, with members who were arguably socially aspirational as well. Membership at a prestigious tennis club remained a powerful symbol of status, and commercial clubs challenged the hegemony and monopoly of voluntary clubs as such.

The increasing competition provided by these new commercial tennis providers meant voluntary-run clubs were put under pressure to remain financially solvent, and many were forced to fold as a result (LTA, 1987b). The provision and maintenance of good quality facilities to retain members and compete with commercial clubs, thus, came to be regarded as the most important objective for a growing number of voluntary-run clubs, and those with committees that were forward-thinking took measures designed to improve the chances of their survival. For example, it became common for clubs to begin replacing their grass courts with surfaces upon which members could play all-year round and in all types of weather, as well as build indoor facilities. Not only were grass courts more expensive to maintain, but also unavailable for six or seven months of the year. Further, many clubs attempted to extend playing hours into the evenings through the use of floodlighting, which became an evermore attractive option in the light of improving technology.² Generally, it became widely acknowledged that the opportunity for all-weather, winter and night-time play was conducive to retaining members, and this became an important objective for a growing proportion of voluntary-run tennis clubs.

The added pressures of retaining members or attracting new ones for the existing clubs of the 1970s onwards meant club committees were forced into a position whereby they had to be more proactive and progressive. They were also forced into competition with each other, not just on the court itself, but also in terms of attracting members; thus, “building for the future” and taking a long-term perspective became objectives for a growing number of tennis clubs. The development of children’s talent became a greater priority for some clubs with committees that recognised juniors as future adult club players. Further, it became regarded as unfair to deny access to children whose parents had met at the club, got married and made a family. While some clubs were opposed to “family” memberships, others came to accept them, in the light of the growing necessity to build a membership base for the future survival of the club. Evidently, the financial insecurity of many clubs made them less selective with memberships. Clive Carrigan, chief executive of PTR UK, outlined the current problems facing voluntary-run tennis clubs across Britain, in the light of competition from new commercial venues as follows:

Traditional tennis clubs, only the strong are surviving now. There are clubs closing, traditional clubs closing down. People aren’t playing and new members are hard to get. Who wants to play outside in the winter when you can play

indoors in a David Lloyd and have a coffee afterwards... People don't want to have a shower in a crappy run-down shed, when you can go to David Lloyd and Esporta and have one of the best showers in the world. There are only so many people staying in these things (personal communication, July 9, 2004).

While most voluntary-run clubs were unable to compete with commercial clubs for standard of facilities, however, they were able to retain and attract members through identifying themselves as more sociable and friendly places, oriented towards a more collective community feel. In other words, as commercial clubs came to be largely identified as impersonal, cliquy and "anonymous", it became common for voluntary-run clubs to begin marketing themselves in terms of their unique environment and heritage, focusing on the less ostensible social benefits of membership, the comparatively lower cost of subscriptions and its "non-commercial" nature (Heinemann & Schubert, 1999; Stamm & Lamprecht, 1999). Nick Walden, of David Lloyd Raynes Park, identified the challenge attempting to compete with voluntary-run clubs in these particular regards:

We have a social programme, and there's a coaching programme. And they are both what really make it a club. If you just have people booking courts with their mates and walking out the door again it would be like a public facility, like a leisure centre... The challenge that David Lloyd has is to create the small club feel within a big club (personal communication, June 15, 2004).

When asked specifically what constituted the "small club feel", Nick clarified:

Well, back in the old days... I used to belong to a club, and we'd get sixty members pitching up and you would go on and off court. You would be equally happy having a beer off court as you would going on court... And there was a lot of member involvement. You get some member being the treasurer, someone being the secretary; someone would make the teas, make the barbecues. So it was a club for members, run by members. Whereas what David Lloyd is, is a club for members, but it's run by a management team. There's a different dynamic, and our skill as a management team here is to try and create that club feel (personal communication, June 15, 2004).

It is suggested that it is this partly intangible ill-defined small club "feel" that continued to attract members to voluntary-run clubs over the last few decades, however, the

“member involvement” and general altruistic community feel that made up what could be classed as the spirit of “voluntarism” undoubtedly declined.

The growth of commercial clubs signalled the decline in voluntarism and the willingness of paying members of voluntary associations to undertake unpaid work for the benefit of a club. This decline was related undoubtedly to wider religious, political, social and economic processes affecting British society more generally, some of which took place over a long time. Studying the effects of secularisation on British society throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, for example, Prochaska (2006) suggested this process partly facilitated the decline in voluntarism in members clubs. Koski (1999) also identified how the secularisation of sports clubs in Finland came to threaten “voluntary work” in clubs. Wider political developments more recently such as the decline in the welfare consensus throughout the 1970s and the stand against trade union power and “collectivism” by the Thatcher government throughout the 1980s also undoubtedly accelerated this decline. The growth of consumerism helped to change gradually the attitude to what being a member of a voluntary club entailed and how a “club” was defined. Heinemann (1999, p.29) remarked on the changing concept of the club as “a community of like-minded people on the one hand and the increasing orientation towards a modern service industry on the other”. Gratton and Taylor (2000, p.139) also suggested the following:

The essence of being a voluntary club member is being a producer as well as a consumer; where through altruistic reasons people recognise the collective benefit to be produced within the club, by collective effort... [There has been] an increasing emphasis on market exchange, where payment of membership is seen as purely a consumer choice, for participation opportunities, without necessarily obligating the member to anything further.

Essentially, whilst expectations of leisure provision rose for many consumers, their willingness to volunteer time and effort declined. Research conducted by a branch of the English Sports Council (LIRC, 1996) suggested that time constraints had become a barrier to working within the voluntary sector. However, this tendency was not limited only to British voluntary sports clubs, for similar problems recruiting and retaining volunteers were also experienced in Denmark (Ibsen, 1999), Belgium (De Knop et al., 1995), Switzerland (Stamm & Lamprecht, 1999), Germany (Heinemann & Schubert,

1999) and Finland (Koski, 1999). With regards to the changes in Swiss voluntary sports clubs, Stamm and Lamprecht (1999, p.129) wrote the following:

Insofar as voluntary work becomes more fastidious and the opportunity cost of time rises with income levels and expanding leisure opportunities, many clubs experience serious difficulties in finding members willing to do unpaid work just for the sake of sport and the club.

Specific to British tennis, Lusic (1998, p.67) commented similarly: “With people indoctrinated in the ways of consumerism, many expect their leisure pre-packaged and off the shelf. They do not want to spend time painting clubhouses or mending fences before they can play tennis”. From their emergence in the late 1970s and 80s, commercial clubs offered an alternative to traditional voluntary-run tennis clubs, therefore, being more closely aligned with the burgeoning leisure service centred on comfort and convenience (Ibsen, 1999). A number of interviewees from this study remarked on changes in work patterns and requirements of leisure users over the last decade or so, and how provision in commercial clubs was better suited for these requirements. Brian Linskey alluded to the benefits of providing fitness and gym facilities together with tennis and stated:

The way society is going at the moment, people are looking for ‘instant’. So they want to get up in the morning and instantly go for a run, swim or the fitness thing. Or they wanna go to the gym in the evening if they finish early. Everything’s quick and easy (personal communication, July 16, 2004).

Rebecca Miskin, in a similar vein, commented:

The key reason why people drop out [of tennis] is time pressure... For adults its work commitments, family commitments. The number one reason is they don’t have enough time for it. And if you think about it, it’s a lot easier to organise tennis, where you have to organise it with one other person, or 3 other people, than football where you’ve got another 21... That’s why the gym phenomenon has taken off. People know they can go in, have their hour and then 15 minutes change. And they’re out in an hour and a half (personal communication, August 19, 2004).

Despite the growth of large multi-facility commercial clubs, however, there has not been a growth in the participation levels of tennis. Results published in 2003

suggested that the number of people in Britain who played at least half an hour of tennis in the past twelve months fell from 11% to 5% between 1994 and 2003 (LTA, 2003c). Further, the LTA suggested that commercial tennis clubs have pulled a considerable proportion of members, particularly those new to tennis, away from voluntary-run clubs into commercial clubs (LTA, 1995); this has caused a fall in the number of smaller voluntary-run clubs overall (Lusis, 1998). The 1986 LTA Annual Report, for example, published results that suggested a drop from around 3,300 affiliated clubs in 1970 to around 2,700 in 1985 (LTA, 1986a). By 1996, the number of clubs hit an unprecedented low of 2,341, but has since recovered slightly (LTA, 1996).

While the emergence and burgeoning popularity of commercial clubs cannot be to blame entirely for the decline in smaller affiliated clubs, it must have influenced huge numbers of people to move away from their voluntary clubs and into these new facilities. Lusis (1998, p.64), for example, spoke with some trepidation of the new commercial club that opened in Nottinghamshire in 1997, and asked: “How many clubs lose members and struggle to find new ones when such an attractive facility exists?” It is suggested that the commercialisation and professionalisation of tennis generally have placed more constraints on clubs over time. Forming a club, attracting and retaining members, attracting and retaining volunteers and remaining financially solvent, were seemingly much simpler objectives for all types of sports clubs in previous decades than at present (Nichols, Gratton, Shibli & Taylor, 1998). Club committees are now required to exercise greater foresight in the light of these new difficulties and constraints.

Prior to the marked expansion of the British tennis figuration from the 1960s, clubs were more autonomous and the exercise of foresight was less crucial for their survival and/or prosperity. There were fewer constraints on tennis clubs, their decision-making processes and the direction in which they chose to develop. The increasing competitive pressure placed upon smaller voluntary-run clubs and the related decline in voluntarism undoubtedly placed all tennis clubs under pressure to survive. Thus, over time, the LTA have been forced to help support the clubs that are most struggling financially, either through subsidies like interest-free loans³ and grants or through offering guidance and advice on how best to retain volunteers.⁴ Of course, whilst the benevolent stance of the LTA helped many clubs develop into more financially stable associations, the governing body was able to use their growing economic power as a

bargaining tool. They began setting standards and making stipulations for clubs that wanted financial support. The LTA, therefore, was able to intervene and successfully challenge the relative autonomy of tennis clubs, facilitating a gradual shift in the balance of power between tennis clubs and the LTA, towards the latter. This was deemed an important process for the LTA, if they were to influence or persuade tennis clubs to adopt an approach which prioritises inclusion and talent development.

The Increasing Professionalisation of the LTA and British Tennis

From the mid 1990s, there is evidence to indicate that marked changes occurred in many areas of British tennis that impacted upon how the sport has since been organised and structured, and also influenced where the LTA directed their efforts and investments. Overall, one could argue that the period from the mid-1990s represented for the LTA a spurt of modernisation, but also, it seems, a period of self-reflection. It is apparent that the culmination of a number of inter-related factors and wider social processes influenced the LTA to take action in a number of areas that had hitherto been largely ignored or taken-for-granted. Most notably, profits from Wimbledon grew markedly from the 1980s as a result of commercial investment, with a growth from just £1.1m in 1981 to almost £12m in 1991 (LTA, 1991). From 1994, the Wimbledon surplus levelled off at an average of between £25-30 million per annum, all of which was given to the LTA to invest in British tennis. Overall, this meant the governing body had greater options for their investment. Nevertheless, they chose to focus primarily on talent development.

The continuous shift in emphasis in this direction was symptomatic of developments in the wider sporting political agenda. Oakley and Green (2001) suggested that the period from the mid-1990s represented a further increase in political interest in sport, a process reflected in the growing number of government initiatives and policy statements that were produced. In 1994, the Minister of Sport, Iain Sproat, announced that Sports Council activity would “withdraw from the promotion of mass participation and informal recreation, and leisure pursuits and from health promotion, instead shifting its focus to services in support of excellence” (McDonald, 1995, p.72). According to Oakley and Green (2001, p.81), this policy statement represented “the end

of a broad definition of sports development to a more focused, achievement-orientated provision”. In 1995, the Conservative government under John Major published a sports policy statement, its first in twenty years, entitled: *Sport: Raising the Game*, which aimed to develop elite performers and elite academies, develop higher education institutions for fostering elite athletes and allocate funds to governing bodies that supported wider government objectives (Houlihan, 1997). Not only was the shift in focus away from elite sport to “sport for all” further clarified, but also for the first time it received focused government attention, notably through the “emergence of an organisational, administrative and funding framework for sport at the elite level” (Green, 2004, p.371). The subsequent publication of *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000) in 2000 further re-emphasised the focus on elite sports development (Green, 2004).

This shift in emphasis was also evident in discourses of physical education in schools, which came under more reform from the 1990s and clearly reflected the growing desire to pursue elite-level sporting excellence (Houlihan, 2000).⁵ However, this shift tended to stress a distinction between physical education and sport in schools that was divisive and somewhat fabricated, and also tended to separate elite sport development from education (Houlihan, 2000). The endeavour to achieve “excellence” within PE became less an educational goal and more of a sporting one (Penney, 2000). From the central government’s burgeoning concern over sport, particularly its perceived role in fostering national pride as well as education and health-related functions, more funding became available for which governing bodies could compete. Commencing in 1994, the National Lottery became a primary source, bringing an estimated £200m to £250m per annum of additional investment for sport in its first five years (Green, 2004). In 2004, the government offered the LTA £9.4 million over three years and Sport England awarded £750,000 for the school/club links programme and £500,000 for club development; the vast majority of this money went directly towards the expansion or construction of club facilities, particularly in areas of higher deprivation (LTA, 2004a, 2004b). This allowed the LTA to focus funding allocations derived from the profits of Wimbledon towards elite-level development. The construction of the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton that began in 2004 and is reported to have cost an estimated £40 million, is an excellent example of the strengthening emphasis towards elite-level tennis development.

It was not necessarily the case that the vast majority of funding from the 1980s and 90s went in the direction of the elite level, but rather that the underlying objectives of the LTA gradually became more elite-level-oriented. Sue Mappin in 2004 stated: “There has certainly been a change in the LTA... they very much focus on the performance level and a lot of money is thrown in at that level” (personal communication, August 24, 2004). Whilst substantial amounts of funding went towards the grass-roots level, initiatives such as short tennis were largely developed with elite-level objectives in mind. Evidence of this is seen within the LTA annual reports published during this time. Remarking on the role of Short Tennis as a talent development programme, the 1982 LTA Annual Report stated that each county had been asked to implement such schemes “to help widen the base of tennis in Great Britain” (LTA, 1982, p.23). This was also repeated in subsequent LTA Annual Reports (LTA, 1988, 1989, 1992). Even tennis played at a grass-roots level in schools, parks or clubs was explained in terms of developing “the base of the pyramid”, with the implicit assumption that increasing the pool of low-level players would inevitably lead to the production of a handful of potential winners at the top level.

Changes in this regard became more noticeable into the late 1980s and 90s, evidently couched in terms of elite-level talent development. LTA annual reports began devoting more space to describing talent development programmes, and mentioned their changing aims. The 1989 annual report, for example, was the first LTA publication that stressed the goal of producing a “Wimbledon champion” from the base of junior players (LTA, 1989). A year later, suggestions were made of numerous ways that the governing body were focusing their attention on this age group. The main areas where changes occurred were in the Junior Championships, the identification of talent through an improved regional coaching structure, and the expansion of junior tournaments (LTA, 1990). In 1995, the LTA published a development strategy called *The Development of Tennis in Great Britain 1996-2001* that further emphasised the apparent importance of juniors in the LTA’s objectives, and stressed that “the retention and progression of children is at the heart of this Development Strategy” (LTA, 1995, p.7). John Crowther remarked even more categorically in the 2002 Annual Report, as follows: “Unless more children play tennis in an environment that nurtures performance, our dream of achieving a stream of international players will be elusive” (LTA, 2002a, p.5). The

growing emphasis on children's talent development for the wider objective of elite-level success therefore became evident in LTA discourse throughout the 1980s, 90s and 2000s.

In tandem with this process, there was continued investment in tennis facilities by the LTA. The focus on building indoor courts intensified in the 1990s as ITI centres continued to open year upon year. In 1993 the LTA launched its *Facilities Strategy*, which aimed to generate £63 million of investment from the public and private sectors within five years (LTA, 1993).⁶ The proportion of LTA investment in indoor courts in particular rose considerably from 29% in 1992 to 60% in 1994 (LTA, 1993, 1994), therefore highlighting the specific area towards which facility provision has developed.

British Tennis in a Growing State of Crisis

Whilst a purely romantic sentiment might have underpinned the desire for success many decades ago, the increasing commercialism and professionalism of British tennis and the burgeoning political concern for elite sporting success globally, has forced a growing proportion of people involved in sport to take the pursuit of success much more seriously (Green & Oakley, 2001). Whilst this process was evident throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the mid 1990s represented a period when the pursuit of elite-level success began to dominate the efforts and investments of the British tennis governing body in much more pronounced ways. This issue arose out of a shift in the balance of power in British tennis.

What is interesting, of course, is the extent to which success in British tennis, and therefore the extent to which the LTA is seen to be doing a good job, became measured more in terms of elite-level performances. It has been noted previously how the LTA throughout the 1980s began to focus more on the elite level, either directly or indirectly, through providing grass-roots schemes for the purpose of developing champions. The growing focus of elite-level success as a measure of British tennis, generally, is a significant consequence of this development. However, some have argued that this presented a skewed image of the relative success of tennis in Britain. For example, Phillip Sandilands of the LTA said in a speech in 1987:

We are judged by our lack of Wimbledon success as a tennis nation, which is unfortunate because it does negate a lot of good work that is being done... There is the success of short tennis... and various schemes run by local authorities. We have to live with that type of publicity (Sandilands, 1987).

When condemning the “state of British tennis” in the late 80s and early 90s, journalists gave much less consideration to the quality or quantity of players developing through the grass-roots systems, in clubs or schools, to the standard of facilities and coaching, or to the quality of tennis clubs and parks where the game was played predominantly. While these areas were undoubtedly important, prominence was only given to them in the light of poor performances at the elite level. Recently, Brian Linskey argued that the measure of success has changed very little since then:

The LTA are here to grow the game of tennis. That is why they exist. Their line is ‘more players, better players’. When you flick to the back page of the papers, does it say ‘The LTA are doing a fantastic job. More people playing tennis, more people hitting more balls, more clubs, more tennis rackets being sold.’ No one gives a stuff about it! How did Tim Henman do in the last tournament? How did Greg Rusedski do in the last tournament? They are only interested in performance. So performance becomes the barometer of how well British tennis is doing. And that is simply not true (personal communication, July 16, 2004).

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, performances on court by British players were particularly poor. The sporadic successes of British women such as Jo Durie, Virginia Wade and Sue Barker only served to mask the dearth of potential champions coming through the system. The men’s game during this time was even poorer, with only a handful of players reaching the top 200 throughout the late 80s and early 90s. With the increasing television and media coverage of Wimbledon, it became more noticeable that the standard of British players was relatively poor, even compared to players from countries with arguably poorer facilities, fewer coaching opportunities and lack of what could be called tennis “heritage”. For example, the emergence of Bjorn Borg from Sweden in the 1970s, and the subsequent materialisation of Swedish tennis talent throughout the following two decades, suggested what could be achieved by a country with a population just an eighth of Britain’s, in an equally poor climate and with a tennis tradition only a few decades old (Cox & Gould, 1990). The LTA’s frustration

became obvious during this time. For example, in the 1994 LTA annual report, after detailing a series of elite-level disappointments, President John C. Robbins admitted that “it was so difficult to explain to the media and public why, with all our resources, our results have been so disappointing” (LTA, 1994, p.2).

The media had become vociferous in their condemnation of British tennis and particularly the LTA with regard to poor performances of British players, and the growth in LTA turnover gave them more ammunition to use against the governing body. In 1992, after the men’s Davis Cup team and the women’s Fed Cup team were both relegated from their respective Cups’ World Group’s, the LTA president, I. A. King, commented on “the usual chorus of criticism from certain sections of the media”, related to the “frustration... of the British public who have been starved of success in tennis for so many years” (LTA, 1992, p.2). In this way, those working in the media used the Wimbledon fortnight, especially, as a window of opportunity to criticise the LTA for failing to capitalise on the growing levels of investment (Houlihan and White, 2002). As an example, at the end of 2000 Wimbledon Championships, Sue Mott, wrote:

A sport was reborn as it is every year, old tennis rackets were dusted for cobwebs and swished in approximate homage to our new heroes... and was the next British Wimbledon champion made in those few precious moments? Doubt it. Did every park in the land thrum to the sound of budding genius with a post-Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Road show – balloons, banners, prizes, free-admission – in full swing nationwide? No. Was the surge in interest and energy capitalised upon in any way? Or was the only sound you could hear on park courts from Hackney to Dundee that of ominous moss-gathering silence? Our big chance to follow Wimbledon was a fever-whipped Davis Cup tie. [So we lost to Ecuador.] There goes the fever... It is such a shame, such a waste (Mott, 2000, July 17).

Aside from implicit suggestions of the LTA’s poor management, they were also described as such more explicitly. Sue Mott (1999), for example, described the LTA as “inept and arrogant” and others labelled the LTA as being “bureaucratic”, “incompetent” or “wasteful” with investment (“Hagelauer Leaves,” 2002, December 17; Honigsbaum, 2006, May 7; Ward, 2004, January 2). For example, Clive White, in 2003, wrote the following in *The Daily Telegraph* after Tim Henman lost in the Wimbledon quarter-finals:

It is arguable who is under greater pressure at Wimbledon each year: Tim Henman or the Lawn Tennis Association, who will shortly be accepting – one assumes shamefacedly – their usual £30 million handout from The Championships before going to the nearest drain and throwing it down it (White, 2003, July 6).

In the light of the growing vociferousness of the media throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the importance of promoting a positive image of tennis and of the LTA itself became evident for the governing body. Thus, the LTA extended its efforts in the area of marketing, visible in the construction of the LTA Marketing Department in 1993. Their main objectives were to raise the profile of tennis in Britain relative to other sports, market particular schemes and programmes more effectively, adopt a more planned approach to communications with external groups, and critically review the LTA's corporate identity (LTA, 1994). Thus, the aims of the new marketing department were not just centred on improving the image of tennis, but also on improving the image of the LTA. It is suggested that this latter aim developed in the light of increasing competition between governing bodies across all British sports, particularly in terms of obtaining external funding from government organisations. The LTA demonstrated a keenness to “be seen to be doing the right thing”, as Sue Mappin remarked:

The LTA are reliant on money coming from the government, from Sport England. They have to tick all those Sport England boxes. Whether they actually tick them and actually do what they are ticking, I don't know, but it's a lot of money (personal communication, August 24, 2004).

The LTA also promoted themselves as a professional and modern governing body. In 1994, the LTA continued its renovation with a total organisational restructuring, and the appointment of John Crowther as LTA chief executive in 1997 was another step towards the LTA adopting a more professional approach. In 2004, John Crowther made the following comments in relation to structural changes:

We have now established a business framework for the LTA, whereby we have a business plan, we have key performance indicators, we have deliverables, we are professionalising the counties, so that each county there will be a person responsible for delivering that plan. So from the top of the organisation right to

every single county, we've got accountability and responsibility. We didn't have that before (personal communication, September 28, 2004).

In his 1998 LTA presidential address, Sir Geoffrey Cass said of his immediate debt of gratitude to Crowther who "is making the LTA more business-like, in a way which is entirely in harmony with its prime sporting objectives... giving the LTA a contemporary image which will help attract newcomers to the game" (LTA, 1998c). Sue Mappin, however, was frank in her criticism of the LTA:

The LTA have spent an awful lot of money marketing the LTA, and really they should be promoting tennis. That is the brand, tennis, not the LTA... The goal should be 'let's sell tennis'; that's all we need to do. 'It's a great game, wonderful to play, wonderful to watch, a world wide game'... Instead of spending a lot of money redesigning a logo that didn't need redesigning, why don't we spend it getting people to think actually 'Tennis is great. Tennis is fun. Tennis, not the LTA, is doing a good job'. I think they need to do more with that (personal communication, August 24, 2004).

By 2004, it became especially evident that the LTA regarded its own image as crucial to the development of tennis, and in its new agenda, the *Whole-Sport Plan*, it firmly outlined its "values" in relation to tennis itself, stating: "We are committed to making tennis an accessible sport which is open to all. As an organisation, we value partnership and actively encourage an inclusive culture which thrives on teamwork" (LTA, 2004c, p.7). Further, the LTA stressed its own organisational "dynamism", courage, expertise and professionalism as a guide to the way it operated (LTA, 2004c).

It is apparent the LTA felt it necessary to justify their principles and actions, most specifically towards those who questioned their investments. In 2001, the LTA underwent further organisational restructuring that also included an endeavour to make their financial accounts and transactions more transparent. Annual reports became more detailed, with specific breakdowns given for each area of investment and expenditure (LTA, 2001). In addition to this, the LTA began publishing their annual accounts for public view on the internet. The first year this occurred was 2003. This section became even more prominent in the 2005 annual report (LTA, 2005) and the 2006 annual report included nothing but a financial review (LTA, 2006a). John Crowther wrote in 2004 (LTA, 2004a, p.7):

Clear business plans and targets will give my executive team real accountability for the first time and an opportunity to be judged by our results in the areas of both grass roots tennis and the development of our elite players.

The responsibility of having to justify actions to external groups undoubtedly placed added pressure on the governing body to reconsider their structural operations.

Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to examine the developments in wider society that influenced the balance of power between the LTA and tennis clubs, focusing on the growth of “commercial” clubs and the general decline of “voluntarism” across British society. Economic problems throughout the mid-20th century challenged the financial viability of many voluntary-run clubs, which was escalated with the growing popularity of consumer-oriented “commercial” clubs, which pulled members away from these more traditional establishments.

This chapter also identified the point at which the social issue of falling standards in British tennis noticeably took off, by examining some of the important changes that took place during the 1990s. British tennis came to be thought of as being in “a state of crisis”, thanks to the escalating funds accrued from Wimbledon profits and tennis’s increasing media attention. Pressure on British players and the LTA grew markedly as a result of increasing public expectations during this time. Together, these developments facilitated a marked change in the way the sport was organised and funded by the LTA; they began to embrace a more professional approach in their management and organisation; they gave more attention to marketing, branding and producing a successful LTA image; and their overall motives began to shift to give more attention to the development and production of champions for the benefit of the elite performance end of the sport.

It is argued that this shift in emphasis was influential in the emergence of the power struggle between the LTA and tennis clubs. With their divergent aspirations, tennis clubs and the LTA have grown apart, and the following chapters examine the consequences of this.

¹ The first David Lloyd club was opened in 1982.

² Research published in the 1998 LTA facilities strategy suggested that floodlighting could provide 33% additional playing time over a twelve month period (LTA, 1998b).

³ The amount available to individual clubs has increased as well as the total amount that the LTA were able to offer to all clubs. Up until 1980, the LTA were only able to put aside less than £100,000 a year to provide clubs with interest-free loans (LTA, 1986a). By 1989, however, this amount rose to £2 million and continued to grow throughout the 1990s (LTA, 1989). In some cases, grants were offered instead of loans, available largely thanks to the increase in LTA sponsorship and Wimbledon profits over the years.

⁴ Despite the consequences of the decline of voluntarism having been felt in the realm of sport since the early 1980s, it was not until the late 1990s when the government, through Sport England, made attempts to draw special attention to the role of the voluntary sector in sport as well as help subsidise this sector (Nichols, Gratton, Shibli & Taylor, 1998). The launch of the Volunteer Investment Programme in 1996 coincided with the LTA's own Volunteer Support Programme that same year, "aimed at recruiting, motivating and helping tennis players to invest some of their valuable spare time in supporting tennis in their local areas" (LTA, 1996, p.3); the publication, in 1999 and 2000 respectively, of a "best practice guide" to help recruit, train, reward and motivate volunteers (LTA, 1999a); and an LTA document called *Volunteers in British Tennis*, which provided detailed information for clubs and county associations on how to employ and retain "volunteers" (LTA, 2000b). In 2002, Sport England continued its involvement in encouraging volunteers through its "step into sport" initiative (DfES & DCMS, 2003). The mere fact that the LTA felt inclined to launch such a programme and produce such a document is testament to the severity of the issue, and the perceived importance of voluntary involvement in tennis across the country. In the opening statement of the 2000 document, the LTA (2000b, p.2) wrote: "Volunteers are the lifeblood of British tennis... Quite simply, the entire fabric of the sport in this country relies on the commitment of thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds who want to put something back into a pastime that continues to give them so much pleasure". It is clear, however, that wider social processes have put added pressure on the voluntary sector of sports provision (Nichols, Gratton, Shibli & Taylor, 1998), especially in tennis with the fourth largest voluntary workforce of all sports in Britain (LTA, 2000b).

⁵ The National Curriculum for Physical Education was designed in 1991. In 1994, the Youth Sport Trust was formed, a charity focused on the financial support of PE and school sport for children. In the introduction of *Sport: Raising the Game*, John Major stressed the huge importance of schools in developing sporting success and declared: "My ambition is simply stated. It is to put sport back at the heart of weekly life in every school... I am determined to see that our great traditional sports – cricket, hockey, swimming, athletics, football, netball, rugby, tennis and the like – are put firmly at the centre of the stage" (DNH, 1995, p.2-3). In 1996, the government launched Specialist Sports Colleges to further "reinvigorate" school sport (Houlihan, 2000).

⁶ £78 million in capital investment was the total actually achieved (LTA, 1998b).

Chapter 9: The Burgeoning Power Struggle between Tennis Clubs and the LTA

Utilising Elias's (1978) *Game Models* theoretical framework, this chapter examines the growing figuration of British tennis from the 1980s, focusing on the growing divergence between tennis clubs and the LTA in terms of their respective values, outlook and objectives. Despite escalating investment in clubs since the 1980s, the LTA identified that many were playing "lip service", by accepting funds generously offered to them, whilst ignoring some of the LTA's requests for change. In order to combat this growing trend, the LTA tightened up their investment stipulations, forcing clubs to be accountable for structural changes within them. This trend culminated in the formation of Club Vision, designed as a guide to assist clubs that sought investment to make changes. Clubs were told to broaden their outlook, look for external funding for construction projects and open their doors to a more diverse membership spectrum.

These developments made the network of interdependency ties in British tennis increasingly complex, and this had consequences for the LTA in their management of these new interest groups. The *Game Models* framework brings to light the constraints placed on each association or group as a result of an increasing number of stakeholders with various and sometimes conflicting personal objectives. It also helps to shed light on some of the LTA's problems of implementation.

Analysing LTA Control in British Tennis: A Game Models Approach

In its formative years, the LTA's main role was to support clubs and the tennis that was played within them. The meagre subscription fee that clubs paid to the governing body was in receipt of assistance in organising tournaments and competitions, maintaining facilities and offering advice on retaining and attracting members. There were no stipulations placed on clubs in relation to membership, such as particular groups they could or could not exclude, such as the working classes or children; procedures for accepting new members, such as nominations and playing-in tests; and regulations regarding playing attire, such as an "all-whites" rule. The LTA's main goal was the standardisation of rules and playing procedures across its clubs.

In line with Elias's (1978) Game Models approach, the figuration of British tennis resembled a multi-tier game of an oligarchic structure. The LTA, as a governing body, were internally divided but on no more than two or three levels. The executive team that made decisions was small, and they delegated tasks to their county associations "on the ground". The voluntary clubs, themselves internally divided on two levels – the committee members and the regular members – were interdependent with the LTA, but only "played" with the representatives from county associations. Only occasionally, for example during LTA AGM's, did club members themselves actually engage with members from the upper tier of the LTA. This model of interactions between players in British tennis was relatively simple; although there were a number of different levels or tiers, there were only a small number of different types of players. In terms of putting forward their initiatives and gaining support for them, it was much more manageable for the LTA; they were only answerable to the AEC and its other affiliated clubs, all of which tended to share similar objectives. However, the professionalisation and modernisation of the LTA and the influences of commercialism throughout the mid-late 20th century set the governing body down a pathway increasingly divergent from that of the clubs it had helped to support in the past.

As the LTA became more professional as an organisation, within it the number of tiers or levels of decision-making increased. Low-level LTA employees no longer "played" directly with members from the executive committee, but were instead answerable chiefly to their supervisors, who were answerable to members of the executive team only several links down the chain of command. Also, the LTA became interdependent with, and often answerable to, a growing number of players, such as other British sport governing bodies, local and central government, schools, colleges and universities, television corporations, commercial sponsors and the media. The figuration of British tennis became increasingly complex, resembling a model with multiple levels and multiple players at each level. These new ties of interdependence helped facilitate a shift in the LTA's emphasis of how tennis primarily should be played and organised. Essentially, there was a shift away from tennis played socially, which would be found mostly in voluntary-run clubs, towards a type of tennis that was more focused on what could be described as "performance": the production of players to compete at potentially the highest level, with a more competitive and instrumental approach to developing

talent. The shift in emphasis towards supporting the development of this latter type of tennis, which tended to be found only in a minority of voluntary clubs and the handful of tennis academies that emerged from the 1980s, gradually pushed apart the aims of tennis clubs and the LTA. John Parsons, of the Daily Telegraph, described the “cultural divide in British tennis” as follows:

The traditional social atmosphere from the past, which deep down all too few really want to lose, and the highly energetic, professional approach to the future which deep down we all know is essential, if British tennis is to become a realistic force in the world again (cited in LTA, 1985, p.5).

Aside from a shift away from the social culture of tennis in clubs rooted in the amateur ideology of the past, tennis clubs and the LTA also became divided on the issue of junior tennis development. The LTA were increasingly vociferous in promoting the need to develop children’s talent for the future of the sport, whilst clubs remained reluctant to adopt this same approach. Paul Hutchins, Britain’s Men’s National Team Manager at the LTA, stated in 1984:

Clubs must get off their backsides and start encouraging juniors. They must stop treating juniors like second-class citizens: make sure that there are courts for them at decent times of the day, play them in senior matches if they are good enough etc. They should remember that they are the senior members of the future (cited in LTA, 1985, p.5).

These combined and inter-related differences led to the emergence and escalation of a power struggle between these two institutions. Upon its emergence, the power rested in the hands of the tennis clubs. As the LTA and clubs grew apart in their divergent development plans from the mid-late 20th century, the LTA could not exert any real pressure on them. Tennis clubs were relatively autonomous from external, even LTA, control; and, in terms of functional interdependence, the LTA served few functions for them. The latter did not depend on the former as much as the former began to depend on the latter. As the LTA’s focus on talent development sharpened, they grew to rely and depend on clubs more and more, but for many clubs there were few reasons to support the governing body. Thus, the LTA had no stick to beat them with, so to speak, nor had they the economic power to offer them worthwhile incentives. “Persuasion” was the only tool the LTA could use to force change in the clubs.

As explained below, the balance of power began to shift over time, as the LTA were allowed a measure of force to exert against clubs. They became proactive, rather than reactive, as clubs came to depend on financial help from them. Concomitantly, as the economic power of the governing body grew, they were able to offer greater incentives for club affiliation. This was acknowledged in the 1998 LTA Annual Report, where John Crowther wrote that while the present system of club affiliation was deemed satisfactory, there was a need for “much greater emphasis given to member benefits” (LTA, 1998a, p.3). This desire was also repeated in *A Strategy for the New Millennium: British Tennis and You, 1999-2003* (LTA, 1999b), and by the beginning of 2000s, the list of affiliation benefits had grown to around twenty.¹ In addition, greater financial help was offered to clubs in the form of interest-free loans (LTA, 2001, April 30).² The LTA were supportive of clubs that wished to develop, but many were reluctant to change, and showed resistance to their proposals for development in the ways desired by the LTA.

This reluctance is clearly evident in an LTA document published in 1985 after consultation with clubs on the subject of “juniors in tennis clubs”, arguably one of the main “bones of contention” in respect to the development of British tennis at that time. In 1983, all 2,495 LTA affiliated tennis clubs in Britain were sent two letters asking for responses to twelve proposals designed to “encourage clubs throughout the country to provide more help to young players... to raise standards of the game at individual, club and national levels” (LTA, 1985).³ Only 112 clubs, a meagre 4.4% of the total, responded to these letters, giving an initial indication of how clubs were reluctant to even engage in discussion with the governing body on these matters. Whilst many that did respond offered encouraging views, the overwhelming attitude of clubs to change was generally felt to be “disappointing”. An Honorary Secretary of an anonymous county LTA wrote:

I am sure that the proposals you make are very sensible, but my own experience tends to make me think that it is going to be very difficult if not impossible to persuade many, if not a majority of affiliated clubs to provide a better service for their junior members (LTA, 1985, p.5).

It became clear that the junior and performance-oriented approach was strongly resisted in individual clubs, despite the feeling that elite British success was thoroughly desired by these same individuals.

“Managed Change” at the LTA: Club Vision and a New Club Culture

In line with the increasing concern over elite-level performance, the LTA began to exert more pressure on tennis clubs. Around the mid 1990s, the LTA’s main aim became the creation of a new culture within clubs. In 2004, Rebecca Miskin spoke of this need in the following manner:

There is a phenomenon here in this country which doesn’t exist abroad, which is a member’s only club... the majority which are these kinda traditional members owned... It’s very much, the members don’t want more people because otherwise there might be a queue for a court. For the members, it’s an extension of their back garden... Some clubs here will say ‘we don’t want competition because it will take up our courts, and where will I play’. Or, ‘I don’t want the coach coming in between 6 and 9 every evening because that’s when I play and it will take up the courts, two courts or three courts’. So it’s that mindset, the mindset... changing the club culture means changing that mindset (personal communication, August 19, 2004).

The LTA suggested that it was because of this particular club culture that the implementation of their projects throughout the 1980s produced little noticeable and lasting change in the areas where this was most needed. In their 2001 annual report, Malcolm Gracie, LTA President admitted: “A major review of the structure of our organisation has taken place, and there is general acceptance that changes are needed” (LTA, 2001, p.3). Further, “one major objective has been to change the structure of clubs in Great Britain, so that more emphasis is put on improving competition and making it easier for young players to progress from club to county level” (LTA, 2001, p.15). Rebecca Miskin reiterated this desire in 2003 when she remarked:

We’ve been trying to make British tennis more inclusive and available for years... However, some of the steps taken proved too small and uncoordinated to make a significant difference. Which is why we launched Club Vision, our club modernisation programme in 2000 (LTA, 2003a, p.13).

The LTA suggested that this club culture was responsible for the poor level of competitiveness and the social construction of barriers to the talent development of children.

While it is undoubted that, before the mid-1990s, there were some who foresaw problems with the British tennis club culture, there is very little evidence to indicate it was regarded as a central and important issue specifically for the governing body. Mention of this objective did not appear in mainstream LTA discourse until 1995, where, in the LTA development plan, they claimed that “clubs *should* be producing better players and be given the means to do so” (italics added) (LTA, 1995, p.11). Out of the nine action points put forward in this plan, top of the list appeared “the creation of a new tennis club environment open to all those wishing to play tennis” (LTA, 1995, p.5). It also appears the LTA developed knowledge of club structures elsewhere in Europe, as they made comparisons and suggestions that a “progressive club infrastructure” can help build participation levels and encourage competitiveness, which were both regarded as positives for the sport. It is clearly indicated, therefore, the considerable extent to which the LTA came to regard clubs as crucial locations for their talent development initiatives. In 1996, Phillip Sandilands finished off his action plan for facility redevelopment by making the following suggestion:

It is hoped the major thrust over the next few years will be the evolution of the traditional tennis club into a more welcoming and accessible environment for the development of the sport at all levels. With the increasing number of public and commercial centres it will become necessary for clubs to change in order to survive (Sandilands, 1996, p.3).

More and more, this ambition was repeated by the LTA. In the 1998 annual report, John Crowther wrote in the very first paragraph of his address: “A key priority will be to work with clubs, ensuring that they provide a welcoming and helpful environment for all players” (LTA, 1998a, p.3). In the 1998 facilities strategy, the importance of having a “strong, vibrant club structure”, like other successful European countries, was repeated (LTA, 1998b). In 2002, John Crowther wrote in the LTA Annual Report of the need to change “the culture of British tennis clubs, breaking down traditional barriers and making them enjoyable, welcoming environments... A change in attitude in many of our clubs is required if we are to attain more British players in the top 100” (LTA, 2002a, p.5).⁴

This objective became the underlying message behind Club Vision, introduced in 2000 (LTA, 2000, August 17), as a programme “providing a robust framework for

practical and financial support” for club modernisation and development (LTA, 2004b, p.7). Club Vision, which Julian Tatum referred to as “the LTA’s assault on the clubs, to try and get them to improve themselves” (personal communication, October 7, 2004), focused on developing a network of clubs that were affordable and accessible with “children and performance at their heart” (LTA, 2004b). Thus, clubs were encouraged to be more accountable to the governing body at both the county and national levels, with an underlying objective to eradicate exclusion based on class and age. The focus on juniors and performance was in alliance with the LTA’s other main focus, its “Performance Plan” (LTA, 2004c). Thus, Club Vision was a culmination of ideas surrounding how tennis *ought* to be played, organised and delivered.

In its objective to transform club culture, the major areas where the LTA attempted to implement change were in how it funded clubs, most specifically placing stipulations on those in need of LTA financial assistance; its implementation of plans at ground level, that is, the introduction of new talent development schemes; and in the way the LTA obtained its information and implemented its initiatives, increasingly utilising its major stakeholders. Further, developments in the wider sphere of British sport also influenced the LTA and placed added pressure on clubs.

LTA Investment Stipulations and Talent Development Schemes

The largest amount of pressure for change came from the growing number and seriousness of LTA stipulations for clubs requiring loans. Recognising the absurdity of continually assisting clubs that showed little evidence of supporting their talent development projects, the LTA became intolerant with regards to their financial assistance. In 1991, the LTA chairman wrote:

We continue to provide assistance both in advisory and financial terms to the clubs... Whilst helping the clubs we are tightening up on the criteria for clubs to qualify for loans. Amongst a number of requirements clubs must have a five-year plan and charge realistic levels of subscriptions. There must also exist an acceptable junior programme... There are many clubs which organise an excellent junior programme with full encouragement to the junior players.

However, there are many playing lip-service to this vital area of British tennis (LTA, 1991, p.2).

Exactly what a “realistic” level of subscription or an “acceptable” junior programme was were clearly questionable terms. However, clarification came over time as the LTA became more stringent with funding applications. In the 1998 facilities strategy, it was written: “Financial assistance will be made available through the LTA’s club loan scheme to those clubs which promote programmes in line with LTA policies and which have the structure in place to prove themselves viable for development” (LTA, 1998b, p.8). This objective was also repeated in the 1999 LTA development strategy, in which clubs were regarded as the “key medium for delivery” (LTA, 1999b).

The increase in the number of stipulations for clubs seeking funding is evident from the early 1990s onwards, and led to the formation of Club Vision in 2000, which put in place strict performance targets for clubs desirous of LTA money (LTA, 2000a). Patrice Hagelauer was an influential figure in this development, and in the following passage, he described the absurdity he encountered with regard to the funding of clubs when he arrived in Britain in 1999:

In the past, the LTA were supporting all the clubs, but the LTA is not that rich... When the LTA were supporting all of the clubs, building indoor courts, floodlights, or replacing the courts and so on, this was a huge amount of money. They were supporting even the clubs not running the junior programmes. It was just ridiculous, so I said to the LTA, ‘stop this’. It’s like an investment. Don’t put a penny in the clubs unless you will get something for that penny. If you help a club to build an indoor court, then they must have a competitive programme and they must have a coach. They must have a junior programme. If they don’t then don’t support the clubs. Don’t even give them Wimbledon tickets. These people in the clubs wanted more and more and more, always money coming from the LTA, and not doing anything for British tennis. It was ridiculous (personal communication, November 9, 2005).

The LTA evidently came to regard control over clubs as important to their overall objectives and also, importantly, within their remit. In 2003, John Crowther, stated categorically: “To become a great tennis nation, we need a vibrant network of accessible, affordable clubs with juniors and performance at their heart. We will only continue to

financially support clubs that share this ethos” (LTA, 2003a, p.5). Rebecca Miskin, in 2004, elaborated on this point in the following way:

We have a number of clubs in Britain where it is ‘all whites’ policy, the kids are kicked off court, it’s stuffy, it’s not a place that I’d want to join now or when I was 17 either. Some of these clubs will continue, and that’s fine, but they won’t get funding from the LTA... If they are wanting funding to resurface their courts, redo their clubhouse, get us to help with the floodlights, or wanting indoor facilities, they’re not gonna get any funding from us. We’ve only got that as the stick really. We’re only going to fund the clubs... where clubs are wanting to have this type of club that we believe is open access and affordable (personal communication, August 19, 2004).

LTA stipulations, in this connection, focused on a number of key areas that were first introduced in the mid-1990s. Even so, their implementation was unclear. In the 1995 development plan, the LTA summarised key problem areas in the region of providing a “welcoming environment”, which focused on concerns such as the insufficient number of tennis clubs welcoming junior players; “cultural aspects” such as the playing-in test and the all-whites rule that together “portray a staid and elitist image and actively discourage player participation” (LTA, 1995, p.19); and the poor interpretation of what is actually required to make tennis environments welcoming. While recognising these problems was a positive step for the LTA, they were only able to offer vague recommendations in order to remedy them, for example the introduction of a “national club initiative” that ensured juniors have better access to facilities and coaching, the offer of “support” to those who adopt a more friendly and welcoming environment, and the formulation of “standards of good practice” for clubs. Little detail was actually given of what the national club initiative would entail or how it would be implemented. No information was provided which explained what support would be given to clubs nor was there any indication of what standards of good practice actually were. It is suggested there was a considerable amount of confusion as to what the roots of the problems actually were and how the LTA should resolve them.

Over the course of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the LTA began to offer more information in each of these areas, to demonstrate a clearer focus of development and a more comprehensive level of understanding. One of the largest and most successful new

schemes was Play Tennis (LTA, 1998, June 22), which began in 1998 and offered the chance for children to have free sessions with coaches at over a thousand clubs across the country (LTA, 1998a). Clubs and coaches were subsidised for these programmes. Mini Tennis was another successful programme that provided accredited clubs with greater access to financial assistance (LTA, 2000, June 22). However, whilst in published discourse the LTA did not want to appear to bully clubs, it nevertheless adopted “bullying” tactics in their attempt to force change within them. This was in direct contrast to their merely reactionary “persuasive” stance towards clubs from years previous. For example, in 2004, the LTA remarked that already 70% of the 2,600 affiliated clubs had “participated in a regular review of their operations and state of development”, which took into account aspects of club management, coaching, programmes, competition, facilities and infrastructure and communication, promotion and marketing (LTA, 2004c, p.21). Advice and guidance were offered by club development officers, and information was provided for clubs to access, such as guidance notes and videos to help with marketing and funding. This was all in order to establish if particular clubs were eligible for funding.

By 2004, Club Vision had already invested £10.6 million into 56 facility development projects as well as £3.1 million in club loans for 51 other projects. Almost 130 indoor courts had been built and basic facilities had been improved as a result, but this was all “in return for agreed and expected tennis payback” (LTA, 2004c, p.21). The LTA further reiterated their target, in terms of “investment, resources and products”, of clubs that “have the opportunity to give the best return on investment measured against our... key performance indicators” (LTA, 2004c, p.22). Thus, the LTA had essentially isolated and marginalised those tennis clubs that were unwilling to change and focused only on those clubs that fit LTA requirements: “Club Vision is aimed at all tennis providers, but we recognise that it is important for us to work closely with those that are prepared to change and will help us deliver growth and achieve our objectives” (LTA, 2004c, p.22). In 2006, the LTA reiterated its commitment to ruthless implementation in this regard; amidst criticism that they had previously spread their resources too thinly; they wrote: “We will prioritise our resources, focusing on a smaller number of clubs that offer a full range of performance programmes from Mini Tennis right through to a high performance player programme” (LTA, 2006b, p.11).

British Tennis Stakeholders in an Expanding Figuration

The central government, through Sport England, also came to place pressure on clubs to change across all sports through the formation of “school-club links”, designed to link schools that lacked or had poor facilities with local clubs (LTA, 2000a).⁵ Many of the participating clubs were subsequently rewarded for their services, receiving funding from the government-run PESSCL scheme (LTA, 2004a).⁶ Of course, the school-club links programme was essentially one product of a wider social process that was apparent in British sport, that of the need for organisations to work in partnership with each other. The growing complexity of funding provision has, largely as an unintended consequence, forced organisations to work together or at least recognise their stakeholders (Houlihan & White, 2002). This process undoubtedly commenced in large part from the advent of television coverage for sport and sponsorship.

John Crowther of the LTA stated in 2004: “I think that we have broadened our view, very substantially, on partnerships. We believe that there are a whole host of great other providers that we can work with. The LTA can’t do everything” (personal communication, September 28, 2004). There is certainly evidence to support this view that, from the mid-1990s, the LTA began to recognise and utilise their stakeholders. The 1995 development plan was the LTA’s first major enquiry into the main problems in British tennis that took into account the views of the major stakeholders (Houlihan & White, 2002). Consultations involved over 2,000 people across the county involved in developing tennis at all levels, including LTA councillors, county associations’ officers, and school, club and local authority representatives. Discussions were also had with members of national and international sporting bodies such as the Sports Council, the National Coaching Foundation, the Youth Sport Trust and the CCPR. In addition, 2,500 schools took part in a survey (LTA, 1995). In this plan, the primary aim put forward in order for the governing body to “create the right climate and the best results” was to “work in partnership”: “Encouraging the active involvement of all parties interested in the prosperity of the sport, including local government, education and grant aiding bodies, sports brands, sponsors and the media” (LTA, 1995, p.8). Further, they suggested that “the most effective strategy to develop the sport in the shortest possible time” involved the partnership of specifically three institutions in British tennis, namely

the schools, clubs and local authorities (LTA, 1995). Pertinently, the LTA wrote that clubs “must form the central core of this strategy and provide the necessary outlet for players wishing to develop” (LTA, 1995, p.15).

In 1996, the LTA continued to develop its relations with stakeholders, as it began piloting its “Community Tennis Partnership”, designed to incorporate the resources of clubs, schools and local authorities again (LTA, 1996). This worked in tandem with the school club links programme “to make courts and coaching expertise available to youngsters, giving tennis a more prominent profile in schools” (LTA, 1998a, p.11).⁷ Working in partnerships was identified repeatedly in LTA discourse. In the 1998 LTA annual report, John Crowther wrote: “The LTA is determined to meet the needs of all our customers, whether they are players, volunteers or tennis fans” (LTA, 1998a, p.3).⁸ In the 1998 *National Tennis Facilities Strategy*, the importance of partnerships was reiterated in the following passage: “Delivery of the National Facilities Strategy will depend on effective working partnerships with clubs, local authorities, schools, the commercial sector and external funding agencies, in addition to the efforts of the LTA” (LTA, 1998b, p.4). Further, the LTA regarded working in partnership as the main emphasis for delivery of their 1999 development strategy, working especially with groups such as “national and local government, schools and grant aiding bodies, the tennis industry, commercial tennis clubs, sponsors and the media” (LTA, 1999b, p.11). In 2000, John Crowther reiterated the importance of working in partnerships in the following way:

To make the biggest impact, we have to work in partnership. We need help from the government and the Lottery to provide additional funding for modern facilities and training academies, and we must work with industry and private enterprise to provide a better product to consumers at an affordable cost (LTA, 2000, November 10).

Further, in the 2004 *Whole-Sport Plan*, a comprehensive list was published of the growing number of partnerships that the LTA had developed (LTA, 2004c), and the most recent LTA publication, the *LTA Grassroots Tennis Review* (LTA, 2007a), was conducted entirely off the back of consultations with a wide range of LTA partners and stakeholders.

Related to the shifting power relations between tennis clubs and the LTA, one can witness a more general process or shift between the public and voluntary sectors of sports provision. Upon examining the increasing intervention into the voluntary sector by associations of the public sector, that is, both local and central government as well as sports governing bodies, Gratton and Taylor (2000, p.140) asked the simple question: “Why should support for voluntary clubs be offered by the public sector, given that they operate largely for a self-contained set of beliefs which are exclusive to members?” It is apparent that since the late 1970s, funding for voluntary tennis clubs, from the LTA as well as from external public sector organisations like the Sports Council and the National Lottery, has markedly increased; this is despite the lack of ostensible “pay back” on their investment. Voluntary clubs for tennis have neither produced a significant number of players of elite-level standard able to compete internationally, nor have the majority embraced the changes the LTA deemed necessary for player development. Gratton and Taylor (2000, p.141) made the following point: “The voluntary sports club is typically independent and inward looking, not explicitly seeking to provide collective benefits”. Papadimitriou (2002) suggested that the poor implementation of policy change within local sports clubs was typical of attempts to professionalise and bureaucratise existing voluntary associations, especially those that are older and more established. Despite divergent interests, investment in the voluntary sector is deemed an attractive option for both the public and private sectors, due to the perceived savings that may be generated through unpaid work as well as, of course, the sheer scale of the voluntary sector (Gratton & Taylor, 2000).

Aside from television corporations and sponsors, it is apparent that the LTA’s strongest partnerships have been with organisations from both the public and voluntary sectors. A number of individuals involved in British tennis, including broadsheet journalists and a handful of the interviewees from this investigation argued that private sector partnerships have been weak, underpinned by an element of reluctance from the LTA. This was perhaps rooted in ties to an embedded amateur ideology that stressed a certain amount of trepidation towards working with groups whose main objectives were making profit. For example, the reluctance throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s to team-up with David Lloyd clubs, to use their facilities, coaches or expertise was noted by Sue Mott (2006, February 28) in 2006, as well as Steve Bean, who suggested: “The

LTA don't understand that they're in there to make a profit, and so they can't do things the LTA way" (personal communication, May 26, 2004). At least up until mid-2006, when a partnership was finally struck between these two organisations (LTA, 2006, July 6), it is suspected that the LTA were unwilling to invest in a business with profit-making interests that were entirely divergent from those of the LTA, despite the fact that this relationship would offer a valuable service aligned with the LTA's goals.

It is evident that the LTA's "choosey" and cautious nature of forging partnerships and making investments in outside organisations was not only limited to private enterprises, but seemed to be inveterate within the organisational culture of the LTA. Julian Tatum remarked on a noticeable change in the LTA's outlook towards developing talent in recent years, suggesting:

I think you'll find that the LTA have broadened its outlook. In the past it was a question of nurturing its talent, keeping it hidden, keeping it closeted, but now they will provide the means for children to go to Spain, to a training camp, to American if necessary... there is money available (personal communication, October 7, 2004).

When asked if, in the past, the LTA had "closed its doors" to alternative methods of talent development, Julian Tatum replied:

Yes, no question. No question. They've done that because they wanted to nurture our UK talent themselves, but you can't fly in the face of success. You listen to the people who have been to Bollittieri's camp, and you listen to the people who have been to Spanish camps. They've got to be doing something right. Their coaches have got to go to these places so they can come back and say 'this is how you do it' (personal communication, October 7, 2004).

It is suggested that the growing willingness of late to fund players in training academies abroad is testimony to the LTA's increasing foresight in this regard (LTA, 2004a). Nevertheless, it seems this more inclusive change has not been universal across all the stakeholders in British tennis. Tony Hawks, director of "Tennis For Free", explained his own situation as follows:⁹

The LTA... their attitude is shocking. It's not like 'how can we help', 'how can we get involved'. It's like 'they'll give up soon, and then we can just carry on'. We are a pain in the arse to them. Now, if you're in charge of tennis, and there is

a voluntary organisation setting itself up to help British tennis... how you don't put your arm around them, embrace them and invite them in and say 'how can we all work together'?... I couldn't get to see them... All the time, you're thinking, 'well why hasn't the head man, the CEO of the whole thing, at least written us a letter, or got in touch or invited us to lunch or anything'? (personal communication, June 3, 2004).

In response to this claim, Rebecca Miskin cited both personal and structural reasons why funding had not been given at that time:

Tony is a guy who is very much anti-establishment... always going to be anti-establishment... We'll offer funds when we know what his concept is and the sustainability of it. What we don't want is to initiate something, then for them to turn their back and go do something else (personal communication, August 19, 2004).

It is apparent that while the LTA have come to appreciate the importance of their stakeholders in the fulfilment of their objectives, they have demonstrated less inclination to recognise divergent interests between them. This might be the stem from which confusion over the poor implementation of various LTA schemes and programmes has come. Dopson and Waddington (1996, p.545) suggested the following:

People who are involved in developing and implementing policies rarely understand fully the constraints within which either they or other key players work and, as a consequence, they frequently misunderstand, or at best only very partially understand, the actions and intentions of other players.

It is suggested that organisations engaged in sports development, for example governing bodies like Sport England or the LTA, tend to misunderstand the complexity of the respective figurations within which they seek to implement change, as well as the numerous visible and invisible ties that constrain their actions and impact on the extent that the consequences of their actions will be what was intended and expected. In order to understand fully the divergence between intended and unintended outcomes, especially those that come about as a result of managed change – i.e. change that is actively sought through policy amendments as in the LTA's case – Dopson and Waddington (1996) and Dopson (2005) utilised Elias's (1978) Game Models theory.

It is important to note that Game Models are essentially “trials of strength” between individuals or groups whose interests might be considerably different from each other. Thus, in very complex organisations or figurations, different groups are likely to have different self-interests, and the pursuit of these might not necessarily coincide with the self-interests of others (Dopson & Waddington, 1996). Essentially, it appears that the direction of social change comes as an unintended outcome of all of these groups vying for position in wider struggles for power.

Exposing the Divergent Interests in British Tennis

There is evidence to suggest that, while the LTA came to recognise their stakeholders and utilised their expertise in developing new initiatives for the fulfilment of their own objectives, they seemed reluctant to acknowledge what were their seemingly divergent or oppositional interests. A critical understanding has been absent of the divergent interests of all the various organisations and associations with whom the LTA has become functionally interdependent. Thus, they have tended to put forward rather simplistic conceptions of what British tennis *should* be, with the underlying consensualist assumption that all groups *should* share the LTA’s objectives. Mennell (1992) suggested it was important to overcome the assumption that all relationships within a given figuration “tend inevitably towards co-operation, harmony and equilibrium” (Mennell, 1992, p.260). It is altogether quite possible and ultimately most probable that groups and individuals which are interdependent with the LTA each have their own interests that they seek to serve. Television corporations and sponsors, as well as the British media and general public, also have their own interests they seek to fulfil. Most pertinently, however, it has become clear that tennis clubs have interests a number of which are very different to those espoused by the LTA.

The LTA’s tagline of “more players, better players” suggests that progress is determined and defined by both a widened base of participation and the production of champions. Even so, for a member of a voluntary club committee, the latter aim might be of lesser importance or of no importance at all. This exact power struggle was highlighted in a letter published in *The Observer* in 2006, written by Eric Leach:

Sport is comprised of two quite separate communities. The first community, and the most important one, involves lots of people playing a sport in clubs, public places and at school. The other community is primarily the entertainment industry involving a few highly paid sports people, and many other people who pay to watch them play. In its role as the national sporting association for tennis, the LTA should be channelling the Wimbledon profits into supporting the first community, and ensuring the survival of tennis in the UK. This money could and should [be] spent on renovating public parks' tennis courts, funding new tennis clubhouses for the 100s of tennis clubs with 50+ year old clubhouses and providing resources for schools to offer tennis at an early age. The 2006 Wimbledon profits could be used for these purposes (Leach, 2006, January 29).

It is posited, therefore, that had the LTA a greater comprehension of the interests of tennis clubs and of their committees and members, they would have been in a more informed and ultimately better position to implement change. As it stands, however, knowledge of some of the more complex sociological processes and issues involved is decidedly lacking. For example, as highlighted in the introduction, the very definition of “culture” is evidently misunderstood by the LTA, who regard it as something quite malleable that can be deliberately changed or managed with intended outcomes. Knowledge of club culture that crucially underpins the LTA's schemes to change British tennis has also been handed over to anecdotal and speculative deliberation, which has left the LTA slightly confused over the poor results of their implementation.

While the implementation of the new LTA or Sport England schemes has kick-started new interest in tennis, and while consultation with major stakeholders has been important in providing a solid base of practical understanding, these changes have done little to address the deep-rooted social aspects of tennis club culture that required consideration, or provided much in the way of theorising the complex problems surrounding the implementation of change in tennis club culture. A detailed theoretically-grounded analysis of what tennis club culture is and how the structure of power relations within the tennis club are produced and maintained has remained absent from an LTA agenda. This study has demonstrated coherently thus far that there is little evidence to suggest the LTA understand the complex sociological concepts that this issue relates to, or the “unintended consequences” of their actions.

Despite their movement in largely opposite directions, the LTA and tennis clubs have, nevertheless, become constrained by the actions of each other. Their increasing functional interdependence has had an inhibiting effect on their respective developments, and this has led both institutions to progress in directions that neither have intended nor expected. All of the developments that have occurred in British tennis are part of, what Elias would have called, a “blind social process”. However, underlying much of the governing body’s discourse over the last decade or so, as well as the responses from the majority of interviewees, there was an implicit assumption that with careful planning and informed decision-making, implemented change would yield intended results. The LTA came to expect that a change in tennis club culture could and should be achieved through the implementation of its numerous schemes. When outcomes differed from what they expected, however, blame was apportioned to the various individuals or groups who “failed to deliver”. Mennell (1992, p.258), however, reminded us that “unanticipated consequences are not a curious footnote to sociology but nearly universal in social life... Their effects are felt, not at random, but according to the structure of the figuration in which they are enmeshed”. A greater understanding of the figuration of British tennis and how it has changed over time is offered by this present study.

Conclusions

This chapter sought to apply the *Game Models* (Elias, 1978) theoretical framework to enhance our understanding of changes in the British tennis figuration since the 1980s. The growing divergence between tennis clubs and the LTA is understood as a “blind social process”, which came about as a result of numerous directive changes by the LTA. Clubs came to be regarded generally as staunch opponents of change and progress, and many were seen to be playing “lip service” to LTA stipulations for change in the receipt of their financial support. The formation of Club Vision can be regarded as the LTA’s answer to clubs that sought investment, but with little intention of structural change to make them more performance-oriented and inclusive. The LTA’s over-riding goal was to change “club culture”, by placing stipulations on clubs that sought investment from them.

Marked changes to the organisation and infrastructure of British tennis throughout this time, however, made the whole process of LTA governance increasingly complex. Over time, the LTAs were forced to accommodate some of the wishes and objectives of external groups and to recognise stakeholders. This process of appeasement was fraught with problems, though, as the LTAs were initially unwilling to appreciate the divergent and sometimes oppositional interests of their stakeholders. Only in the mid 2000s can evidence be seen of the LTAs coming to accept and appreciate the sheer complexity of the British tennis figuration and to show real willingness to set aside differences and work together with groups with interests outside of tennis. Nevertheless, the LTAs aggressive course of action throughout the 1990s came to place a wedge between themselves and clubs, and this can be seen to have further complicated the relationships between them. Clubs were forced to take affirmative action in opposition to the LTAs, the consequences of which were largely unintended and unexpected by both parties.

While *Sections 2* and *3* of this study have attempted to offer a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the British tennis figuration and how it has emerged and developed over its 140-year history on a macro level, the following section attempts to illuminate the British tennis figuration on a micro level. Adopting an Eliasian approach, one is apt to reject the false dichotomy between the macro and micro (Elias, 1978), so this present analysis has attempted to conceptualise all “levels” of the British tennis figuration as interdependent, with the thoughts and actions of single individuals within tennis clubs presented as inextricably connected to the actions and developments of tennis governing bodies or of British society as a whole. They are tied together through often invisible ties of interdependence. While recent developments in British tennis at a macro-organisational level were examined in the preceding section, this following section utilises an ethnographic study in the aim of illuminating the consequences of these changes within a voluntary-run tennis club. The overall objective of this next section is to make visible these ties of interdependence, between governing bodies, clubs and clubs members, in order to gain a better understanding of how social exclusion continues to manifest itself.

¹ These affiliation benefits include, but are not limited to: insurance packages for property and buildings, eligibility for loans, Wimbledon ticket allocation, business advice service, access to a County

Development Officer, participation in national and county competitions and leagues, Ace and British Tennis magazine subscription, assistance with organising tournaments and competitions, and advice/guidance on a plethora of areas including coaching, junior training, sponsorship, facility development and child protection.

² As an indication of the extent to which the LTA were in a position to exert pressure on clubs, it is documented that by 1996, 40% of LTA affiliated clubs had taken up loans (Sandilands, 1996). In addition, in 2006, the LTA considered dropping the affiliation fee for clubs that followed LTA directives, whilst still receiving affiliation benefits (LTA, 2006b).

³ The twelve proposals were: 1) enable junior members to use the club courts with as few restrictions as possible; 2) if sufficient courts are available at the club, then make one exclusively for junior use; 3) clubs with indoor facilities, to look at the possibility of opening up their courts before 7.30 am, free to young junior members; 4) enable junior members to play with senior members as often as possible; 5) if a junior member has reached team standard, whatever their age, they should be given the opportunity to play for the team; 6) encourage junior members to work in the club, building projects such as a practice wall, cleaning and weeding; 7) get the juniors to run a tennis sponsored event to raise money for club projects; 8) form a junior committee so that youngsters begin to contribute to club matters; 9) the club coach, if one is available, to set up junior programmes and competitions in the club and between clubs; 10) adopt a school in your area, using their facilities and inviting their pupils to join in your coaching programme, so becoming members of your club; 11) encourage parents to become involved in junior activities, they will enjoy the social side and see their efforts improving standards; 12) use your spare spaces at the club to mark out a short tennis court (LTA, 1985).

⁴ This same attitude was also stressed repeatedly in both the 2003 and 2004 LTA Annual Reports (LTA, 2003a, 2004a).

⁵ In 2002, Sport England introduced the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSCL), which incorporated a number of existing programmes, such as “school-club links”, as well as introduced new ones, such as “Specialist Sports Colleges” and the “Gifted and Talented Programme” (DfES & DCMS, 2003). “School club links” developed across a number of sports.

⁶ The 2004 LTA Annual Report stated that 222 school-club links had been established in British tennis; 56 (approx 25%) of them received funding from the PESSCL initiative (LTA, 2004a, p.15).

⁷ By 2000, 90 partnerships had been created (Mott, 2000, July 17).

⁸ Using the term “customers” to describe the LTAs stakeholders is a strong suggestion of how the professional orientation of the governing body has become more apparent.

⁹ “Tennis for Free” is a charity that helps local authorities turn run-down or derelict park courts into workable tennis courts with coaching. The campaign suggests that making park tennis courts free to use will increase participation, give economic value to taxpayers, reduce vandalism and lower costs associated with collecting fees (Greater London Authority, 2005).

SECTION 4: ETHNOGRAPHY IN A TENNIS CLUB

Chapter 10: Ethnography in a British Tennis Club

This chapter sets the scene for the ethnographic micro-analysis of a tennis club culture, providing information regarding its social and historical context. A critique is provided of current LTA measures of detecting social exclusion, for the purpose of allocating funding on the basis of perceived “tennis payback”. Basic information about the club is provided in this regard, suggesting how it came to “tick boxes” in order to obtain funding; however, socially exclusive practices of club members have drifted under the radar of LTA detection and become increasingly covert and sophisticated. This can be regarded as an unintended consequence. There is a return to the discussion of dominant social exclusion myths perpetuated in LTA discourse, and their relative adequacy.

The club under investigation is then more comprehensively introduced, with important background information provided that focuses on its historical development, recent problems that have come to affect its outlook and objectives in the light of growing economic insecurity, and the club’s dominant and established social hierarchy of member groups. Some detail is also provided of ethnographic observations of member interactions. It is from here and from the following two chapters where the unintended consequences of the LTAs aggressive funding stipulations from the late 1990s can be seen, demonstrating on a wider scale how clubs have come to show resistance in order to preserve their integral “social” and exclusive characters.

Unintended Consequences of Recent LTA Stipulations

From the mid-1990s, the LTA undertook what could be called “managed change”, whereby they initiated a number of schemes to widen participation, remove barriers to participation, eradicate social exclusion and change the culture of tennis clubs. Dopson (2005, p.1126) suggested, however, that “managing such processes of change within organisations is anything but straightforward”; they almost inevitably have unplanned outcomes. Much has been said previously about unintended outcomes of managed change. It was suggested that Club Vision, the scheme introduced in 2000

offering incentives to encourage clubs to transform their respective club cultures, led to a host of outcomes for clubs, which no single individual or group could predict.

With LTA directives stipulating the need for better provision for children and other excluded groups, many clubs have been challenged in the way they are run. In some, perhaps those with a proactive membership or particularly forward-thinking committee, where resistance to change and the manifestation of power struggles has not been so strong, change has taken place gradually in the overall direction of increasing equality of all member groups, without much contestation or aggravation. In others, especially those with long-established histories and a tradition of exclusive membership, the supposed need for change has caused turmoil. Within this latter group of clubs, power relations between adults as an established group and children and new members as an insurgent outsider group have become increasingly insecure, with social interactions between them becoming more volatile. In many cases, established members have “dug in their heels” and resorted to sophisticated means of exclusion or marginalisation in order to retain control. Dopson and Waddington (1996, p.529) found that unanticipated consequences, as a result of the implementation of particular schemes, were often “not only unexpected, but were actually the very reverse of what had been intended and hoped for by those responsible for initiating these changes”. In this respect, it is suggested that in crucial ways the outcomes of Club Vision within some clubs were the complete opposite of what was expected and the very antithesis of what the LTA actually wanted and intended. While the LTA aimed to eradicate social exclusion in its aim to make the sport of tennis more accessible and make tennis environments more friendly and supportive, evidence provided in this study suggests the exact opposite occurred. It is argued here that the LTA’s means of detection or measurement of exclusion in clubs is fundamentally flawed, allowing clubs the opportunity to play lip-service to the LTA in pursuit of their financial assistance.

The procedures for acquiring funding through Club Vision were outlined in a recent article in *British Tennis* magazine by Liz Austin, Investment Manager in Capital Projects for the LTA (Austin, 2005, November). It is not necessary here to provide specific details of these procedures, but it is enough to say that measurements for determining suitability and eligibility for LTA financial assistance, whether it be through interest-free loans or grants, is almost entirely quantitatively measured. Funding is only

provided to clubs whose proposed projects contribute to at least one of the LTA's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): "increasing the number of affiliated club members; increasing the number of juniors playing regularly; and increasing the number of performance players in the world's top 100" (Austin, 2005, November, p.21). One of the main assessments made on the club is related to its inclusion of children, as well its "performance orientation". The main statistic used by the LTA in order to highlight the extent of children's inclusion within a club is the simple percentage of child members compared to adult members. An assumption is made that more child members mean better provision for children within the club. John Love, County Development Officer for Middlesex LTA, suggested that a "good" percentage would be between 30 and 40 (personal communication, February 2, 2005). Along with other more quantitative measures, such as the price of membership, whether a club has a licensed coach or not, whether children have similar booking rights to adults and whether a club has a dress code or playing in policy, the assessment of funding eligibility, which essentially labels clubs as either "problematic" on the one hand or as a "model club" for others to follow on the other, is often assumed. Based on decisions from county Club Development Officers (CDOs), the LTA can offer financial assistance to clubs based on these statistics and measures. Clubs that have, for example, at least 20% membership of children, a licensed coach, no dress restrictions or playing-in tests and offer near equal booking rights to children, are regarded, therefore, as being in a good position to apply for LTA funding, providing their project "ticks the boxes" of LTA KPIs. No qualitative measures are gathered in order to understand the experiences of children in the club, to analyse whether new members are included or treated as equals by the established members or whether children are actually playing within an encouraging and supportive environment. Further, the infrequent visits to the club by the CDO provide few opportunities to actually gather such data. With little reliable qualitative data, these aspects are all "left to chance", and this is a fundamental flaw of the current system, as this present investigation will highlight.

Ethnographic research was undertaken at one particular club, and quantitative measures here gave little indication of social exclusion: children appeared to be taken care of, their performance development was encouraged and supported and they had few restrictions or barriers to participation. Children amounted to just over twenty percent of

the club membership; the club had three licensed coaches, with coaching as well as membership fees offered at a subsidised rate for children; performance pathways were established; the club was Mini Tennis accredited; and there were no all-whites dress restrictions or playing-in tests. In addition, statistics showed that the membership of children and new members at the club was on the increase from previous years. While ostensible evidence thus suggested that exclusion was non-existent, in fact the established members had developed methods of exclusion that were particularly sophisticated and covert; they were undetected by the LTA's radar of quantitative measures. This made evidence of exclusion difficult to unearth and detect, therefore creating an even greater nuisance for the governing body.

Fundamentally, it was because long-standing members of this club had come to develop sophisticated methods of exclusion and social status demarcation and that these methods persisted largely undetected by the LTA, which made this club very interesting, sociologically. Of course, the depth and sophistication of the exclusion uncovered at the club only became apparent after a considerable amount of time. It has only been from a detailed sociological examination that the undercurrent of exclusion has been uncovered, with an attempt made to explain this behaviour not as a one-off occurrence related to the particular personality traits of the individual club members themselves, but rather as a series of patterned and organised behaviours played out within a wider set of power relations, as part of the imbedded culture of the club. This was predominantly expressed in qualitative, not quantitative, terms.

This evidence also cast a considerable amount of doubt over the relative effectiveness of LTA Club Vision stipulations in fulfilling their main aims and desires, thus posing two questions: i) Does Club Vision actually target the heart of inequality and thus provide means to eradicate social exclusion effectively? ii) Are the LTA's means of detecting exclusive practices sophisticated enough to deal with the equally sophisticated means of exclusion accomplished by club members in many clubs? It was not within the remit of this present investigation to provide a comprehensive analysis of Club Vision, or to analyse the outcomes of Club Vision across the country as a whole. These could be very useful subjects of future empirical investigations. The main aim here was to provide an analysis of just one tennis club, in the modest expectation that it will provide insight into how Club Vision has been received in the majority of clubs that share similar

characteristics and ties of interdependency to the one investigated here. This case study can be looked on as a “point of departure” therefore.

“West Regency Tennis Club” (WRTC) was described as a large club with a rich tennis history, but one that had currently come under increasing financial problems. It had been going through a considerable period of change and development. Nevertheless, Middlesex CDO John Love suggested the club was “fairly typical” of older clubs; it had a strong established membership, internally-elected oligarchy and voluntary-run organisational structure. It competed in inter-club matches and tournaments and held its own internal competitions. Also, like many clubs over the years and increasingly so recently, it experienced financial problems and sought external investment, mostly in order to build a new clubhouse and maintain its courts. This came in the form of commercial sponsorship. In addition, it had a diverse membership of juniors and adults and a thriving senior membership, as well as registered and licensed professional coaches. Further, because of Club Vision stipulations, like many clubs it sought to open its doors to children and new members, and relaxed its membership restrictions in order to qualify for LTA funding. It also became Mini Tennis accredited, one of only approximately 700 in the country (LTA, 2004c).

Because it is regarded as being fairly typical of voluntary-run tennis clubs, therefore, it is suggested that the experiences and outcomes of this club could act as a guide and an illustration of how other clubs up and down the country will deal or have dealt with problems that seem to be shared by a great deal of clubs in the present day, that of financial solvency and future membership security and survival. It is undoubtedly the case that, because of the new LTA Club Vision stipulations, the process of change will be accelerated and intensified in many clubs that may or may not lead to consequences and outcomes that might be unintended, unexpected and/or unwanted. Evidence suggests that this was most certainly the case at WRTC.

The emergence of unintended consequences is most powerfully manifest in terms of relations between club members, especially between the old established and new outsider members. It is a central aim of this ethnography to analyse the changing power relations between these two groups in the light of internal development as well as wider social processes. Struggles for power within the club have intensified over the last few decades, and the changes that have emerged in this club brought to light the various

balances of power that each group within WRTC must compete within. More recently, these power struggles have reached a higher intensity, as the overall balance of power has begun to swing towards the new members in the light of changing functional interdependencies. Due to their relative loss of power, the established members actively sought to form lines of demarcation in order to make themselves appear as distinct among the membership as a whole. In other words, as the dominant groups in the club grew to feel threatened by the outsider groups, they sought to make themselves feel and appear as recognisably higher status. Distinctions were strongly noticeable in their behaviour, specifically behaviour towards those of apparently lower status in the club. This process of formalisation, the gradual shift in the balance of power, has come predominantly as a result of marked changes in the wider figuration of British tennis, most specifically the implementation of funding stipulations put forward as part of the LTA's Club Vision programme. Another important aim of this present investigation, therefore, is to uncover the changes in functional interdependency that have influenced these struggles for power within this tennis club.

It is suggested that stipulations put forward in order to "modernise" the club, as part of the Club Vision programme, have only managed to "scratch the surface" in the LTA's quest to produce real cultural change at the club. Club and committee members have been able to manipulate Club Vision in sophisticated ways, making modifications to the ostensible structure of how the club operates, but forcing very little change to how members actually behaved within the club environment itself. The underlying ways that member groups treated each other changed only marginally, and not fundamentally as the LTA would have hoped. It is suggested that these unintended consequences are by no means unique, but are in fact part of a crisis affecting many clubs to various extents across Britain. It is argued, therefore, that Club Vision has not facilitated the types of cultural change that the LTA intended or expected, principally because the problems they attempted to solve were arguably more complex and deep-rooted than they foresaw. This is directly related to their inability to overcome the assumptions of exclusion based on social class and age. While a critique of these assumptions was undertaken in *Chapter 2*, what precedes this ethnographic analysis is an attempt to advance our understanding of these powerful myths in British tennis.

An Extended Critique of Dominant Social Exclusion Myths

It was suggested previously that throughout the 20th century, class boundaries in Britain became less rigid and identifiable, in the light of the shifting functional interdependence between classes in society. Thus, there underwent a process of functional democratisation between the social classes, an equalisation of power chances, as ties of interdependence grew between them. This impacted on tennis clubs, specifically, in the way that its traditionally upper or upper-middle-class members derived status and power chances, in two primary ways. Firstly, clear and recognisable class differences, such as one's education or profession, no longer served effectively to demarcate social groups within the clubs; thus, a code of behavioural etiquette emerged in many that served to distinguish those who regarded themselves as socially superior from those below. Secondly, as an unintended consequence, established notions of rank derived from age began to change, and status was achieved not necessarily through being advanced in years, but rather through the longevity of club membership. When mixing with members of lower status, one's "class" heritage was deemed of greater significance in determining rank than one's age.

It is suggested that while these measures of status developed to become more sophisticated, how the problems within British tennis clubs are conceptualised is still firmly rooted in these untested and arguably outdated assumptions. This ethnographic analysis provides evidence to critique these assumptions; namely, that it is because of one's social class or age that particular individuals are excluded from playing the sport. The shortcoming of adopting a perspective for analysis based on false dichotomies was most apparent in the particular figuration investigated by Elias and Scotson (1965/1994). In their analysis of power differentials between two almost identical neighbourhoods, one was apt to look for obvious differences in race, social class, gender, age or religion in order to explain why one thought the other as inferior and had the means by which to treat them as such. What was observable there in reality, however, was that these differences were less central to the extent of status difference than of access to other sources of power. The authors explained the status differentials between the two neighbourhoods in terms of, simply, the ability of one group to label another group as being inferior and to sustain this identity as mutually acceptable. So, the established

group had greater power chances relative to the outsider group through their positions of authority in political and social organisations as well as their ability to control neighbourhood gossip channels. Their dominant positions and, therefore, their access to relatively greater power chances, were maintained through the strong cohesion among their group members. This cohesion allowed the development of a specific code of etiquette that was used to determine status within the community. Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) put forward the suggestion that, in this instance, power chances were not reducible to categories such as race, class or age, but rather were hinged on the more obscure power source derived from “length of association”. This type of power source, for the dominant neighbourhood, developed as part of their structural interdependence with the other neighbourhoods over time. It was because members of the other neighbourhood were newer that length of residence became such a decisive factor, and it was because one attained certain advantages from greater length of association, which could be used as power resources, that these members found value in this. In short, it provided the means by which established members could derive, what Bourdieu would refer to as, cultural capital.

It is suggested that structures of power within the figuration of WRTC, and many other tennis clubs, are similar in this way. It is put forward that the duration of one’s tennis club membership and their voluntary involvement in the club during this time, came to be the predominant mark of status and rank over time; this replaced more traditional economic or social class-based differences such as education or profession. Playing standard also, gradually, became a measure of status in the tennis club, but only because of a shift in the functional interdependence between local clubs. As clubs grew more competitive with each other in tournaments and competitions, one’s success in this connection came to be regarded as a mark of status; very competent players achieved a higher status in the club hierarchy, and this was independent but not necessarily regardless of their social class.

In tandem with the functional democratisation between social classes and the blurring of social-class lines in wider society throughout the mid to late 20th century, the existent code of behavioural etiquette, allowing club members to determine their status relative to others, became more formal. As part of the code, deferential treatment was demanded towards those above in rank, whilst concomitantly expected from those

below. It was longevity of membership and playing standard, enforced and highlighted through their underlying code of etiquette, which became measures of status. It should be clarified that the code of behavioural etiquette found in WRTC, and likely many British tennis clubs at present, does not exclude, by matter of course, members of a particular class or age. Evidence suggested that whilst the code was developed by the middle classes from earlier decades, and whilst there are certain aspects of tennis club behavioural etiquette that closely reflect contemporary middle-class culture, for example, sportsmanship and the ethos of amateurism, it was not uncommon for members who were ostensibly “lower-class” to achieve high status within the club. Many actually did. In other words, while the lower classes might not have learnt and obtained the necessary cultural capital to ease their access into this exclusive tennis club, it was clear that power and status in the club was derived from other sources not contained within Bourdieu’s (1978; 1984) conception of cultural capital, with sources of power and access wholly determined by socialisation according to one’s social class. For this reason, it is felt that Elias’s theoretical framework, compared to Bourdieu’s, offers greater opportunity to obtain knowledge of the greatest reality congruence.

What is being suggested, therefore, is that while elements of social class like material wealth, education and parental involvement undoubtedly feature as influential in determining opportunities for participation in tennis, this only takes place on a base level. As stated previously, these factors only offer a partial explanation for power and status when inside tennis clubs. In addition, it is also suggested that whilst children are often denied access to playing opportunities in clubs, this feature actually has less to do with their age and more to do with what they represent, which, in many cases, is a threat to the hegemony of the established members. Thus, they are not excluded because they are children, but because they are, invariably, new members who fail to show enough respect to established norms and values. In essence, they fail to adhere to the established code of behavioural etiquette, which demands deference be shown to members of higher status. What follows in this micro-analysis is an exposition of these complex power relations between club members and the particular aspects of club life that determine status.

Background Information on West Regency Tennis Club

The club was founded in the 1880s and had occupied its present site, within a prosperous area of Greater London, since before the Second World War. Most members of WRTC were derived from the local area,¹ but others who lived further afield were attracted to the club because of its facilities, namely its numerous well-kept grass courts. Only a handful of other clubs in London had grass courts of such good quality and quantity, most likely because of their high maintenance costs and the fact they can be used for only five months of the year. The club also had a number of other outdoor and indoor courts, as well as a spacious clubhouse with other additional facilities.²

During the period of research, the club had approximately 500 members, with a roughly even split between the sexes. Judged by their field of work, the cars they drove and the houses they lived in, as well as other details that were described to me in casual conversations, it is suggested that the majority of the club members were relatively wealthy. This is also reflected in the high cost of adult membership, which stood at £350. For new members, there was a joining fee of £100. This was well above the average cost of tennis club membership in London, which at the time stood at around £130 a year (Greater London Authority, 2005).³ Approximately twenty percent of the club's members were "juniors", under 18 years of age. They paid a considerably subsidised membership of £80 and a joining fee of £20. Coaching on a one-to-one basis was available for all members with the licensed head coach "Mark". Juniors could also arrange coaching sessions with the junior coach, "Sergey", during the afternoons, but more commonly, he ran children's group sessions that were very popular. These sessions offered children, what appeared to be, some of the few chances to actually play tennis at the club; at all other times adults had command of court allocation. There was also another coach, Abdul, who assisted in the children's development and ran private sessions with members.

The club was and always had been a voluntary-run club. There was a relatively large committee of around twelve to fifteen members, responsible for the various technical and administrative aspects of the club's organisation. Over the years, as this had become an increasingly difficult and time-consuming task, the committee grew to allow the input of more members.⁴ Interestingly, the coaches were not official committee

members, although they tended informally to contribute to the decision-making process as and when their opinions were needed and wanted.⁵ In addition, there were no children on the committee, and no one specifically acted on their behalf.

WRTC took pride in its tennis performance, but this was largely restricted to adult competition. There was just one junior among the seven men's teams and four women's teams, which reflected the orientation towards supporting adult tennis, rather than the development of juniors for the future of the club.

Club History and Contemporary Issues

In terms of tennis performance, WRTC was relatively successful, with both the men's and lady's first teams playing in the county premier league. However, relative to other clubs in the county as well as nationally, it is clear their standard had fallen in recent years. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, WRTC was one of the most dominant clubs in British tennis; several of its members were Wimbledon champions and this helped enhance the prestige of the club. Recent success, however, had been more modest. Although the women were recent county champions, the men had not won the county championships for a number of decades. In terms of national success, it was also a number of decades since the last time WRTC won a national club championship. Despite this lack of success, however, established members at present still believed their club was superior to others in the area. Much of this belief was built upon success in the distant past rather than the present. Numerous tangible references were made to these past successes,⁶ but these were not limited to events on the court. Constant reference was also made to the club's history in terms of its mere survival, with numerous problems in the living memory of some members. Difficulties in recent memory, also documented on the website, included when various property developers in the 1970s and 80s threatened to seize the land and build housing on it. This period was characterised with marked and continuous instability for the club and its members, but one particular event proved particularly crucial, when in the late 1980s the club's land was finally bought and thus owned by the club and its members. Some consolidation was required, however, which ultimately meant that several of its grass courts were lost.

Clearly, the shared experiences of overcoming difficulties helped build the cohesion that was evident among the established members. Those that shared this common past often spoke with enchantment of how they were successful in opposing the club's impending closure. It was clear that these successes were particularly meaningful in building a shared identity of the club and its members as being strong, determined and resourceful. The prestige of this identity was powerful and compelling to the extent that many members, regardless of whether they actually held membership during this time or not, basked in its glory. The most socially aspirational members attempted to position themselves among the few who were members during this earlier period, in order to advance their own position within the club's social hierarchy. These members would often talk of the challenges that "we" faced at the club, as though they, themselves, were actually there.

The need to overcome adversity and strive for a common objective was not merely an aspect of the club's history, however, but also something necessary for the club members during the recent period of my research. At this time, severe financial difficulties threatened the survival of the club, as the eighty year-old clubhouse had fallen into a state of disrepair and proposals for a new clubhouse, deemed as absolutely necessary for the club's survival, had been drafted. The total cost for construction of a new clubhouse was near £500,000, of which half was being subsidised by their sponsor, a local businessman. The club's financial situation had become insecure over the last decade, but the LTA, in line with its Club Vision programme, only offered financial assistance if the club changed some of its policies, especially those regarding new members and children. These changes included, firstly, the removal of the club's all-whites clothing policy and the common playing-in test, deemed as promoting exclusiveness and elitism that would serve to deter new members and children. Secondly, coaches needed to be licensed and qualified, thus both Mark and Sergey were brought in to replace the incumbent coach who was unwilling to change. Within a few months, they had acquired LTA Mini Tennis accreditation and began to build a performance squad who would use the facilities like an academy. Thirdly, although not directly connected to LTA requirements, the club began to seek new and innovative ways of raising money for itself and began a marketing campaign that involved raising the profile of the club within the local area. This was achieved through press reports and

articles that encouraged new members to join. Links with local schools were also forged to encourage children to become members.

It was clear that as more and more groups became functionally interdependent with the club and specifically the established members, the extent to which the latter could retain control over the direction of change at the club was lessened. Utilising Game Models theory, I would propose that in tennis clubs with fewer members, relatively autonomous from LTA sanctions, the likelihood of intended actions producing intended outcomes is quite considerable. The figuration within which the club members must act out their intentions is small with relatively few ties of interdependence. They are more or less autonomous, self-governing, self-regulating and answerable only to themselves in terms of the decisions made within the club. WRTC, however, was a large club with a diverse tennis playing population and expansive committee. In addition, due to their financial requirements, they became answerable to the LTA as well as their local sponsor, not to mention, as well, the local government and the local community, within which they must serve the needs of its people more generally. Over time, they had lost the autonomy that smaller or financially secure clubs might have enjoyed, and their interdependence with and reliance upon outside groups increased. The extent to which the club could determine their own future development, in the light of these changes, had decreased.

Club Member Stratification

Despite the committee's attempts to make WRTC more inclusive, it was very clear even after just a few weeks that there were some pronounced inequalities between members. There were distinct "cliques" in the membership, as some groups seemed to enjoy aspects of club life that others, notably new members many of whom were children, were either discouraged from or simply denied access to. It was evident that I was examining an established-outsider figuration, but much like Elias and Scotson's (1965/1994) investigation, it was not obvious at first glance the power differentials between the two groups. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xvii) remarked: "Walking through the streets of the two parts of Winston Parva, a casual visitor might have been surprised to learn that the inhabitants of one part thought themselves as vastly superior to those of

the other”. As stated earlier, differences between the established and outsider groups in Winston Parva were neither manifest through nationality, religion or race, nor in terms of elements of their social class, such as occupation, income or education. The only difference was that one group was formed by residents who had lived there for a number of generations, and the other was a group of relative newcomers. Similarly, at WRTC, much of the social exclusion that the outsider groups experienced tended to be covert. Much like in Winston Parva, the more customary variations were absent, as neither social class nor age distinctions could explain the divergent power chances of the groups; some members of the club committee regarded themselves as working-class and, while some children were denied access, others were openly accepted. The main difference between the groups appeared to be their longevity of membership at the club, which also subsequently led to marked disparity in their relative levels of group cohesion. WRTC members were divided into three distinct groups, which will now be set out.

The Established Members

Established members were those that had been at the club for the longest time and in regular attendance. This included committee members, their respective spouses and children, and a large number who had been members for a substantial time. It was clear that they regarded themselves as the most important group at WRTC; they often referred to themselves as “the core” and “the backbone” of the club. The vast majority of social events, competitions and major club matters were dominated, directed and organised by members in this group. They controlled the club effectively, even though they did not make up the majority of its members. While they represented a fairly large proportion, approximately thirty to forty percent, they did not represent a majority. As children were not allowed to vote and many new members were unaware of club elections or did not see the point in voting, elections were vastly dominated by established members. Therefore, their positions of authority were self-reproducing as they took turns in positions on the committee and voted for each other in club elections.

Members in this group were also, often, socially aspirational. They enjoyed the deference they received from other members lower in the club social hierarchy, and they

recognised and valued the social benefits of the club and the extent to which their own status as an individual could be heightened through association with it and with other established members. Climbing the social hierarchy seemed meaningful for many established members, approximating a fundamental theme of their membership. The self-esteem of individuals in this established group was dependant largely on what other established members thought of them, in other words, their status among other established members; a criterion against which they measured their “self-worth”. In this way, an individual’s self-esteem was explicitly connected to their group’s collective esteem, which meant essentially the power relations that he/she was involved in. So, the I-perspective of each member was evidently related to the we-perspective of their social group. Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) exposed the connection between developments in power relations and developments in feelings of self-worth and self-esteem of individual members. They showed how the unequal power balance that developed between the two neighbourhoods in Winston Parva was reflected in the feelings of these residents. Van Stolk and Wouters (1987, p.481), who conducted research into established and outsiders relations between men and women and between heterosexuals and homosexuals in the Netherlands, also suggested the following: “The unequal balance of power was recognisable by the feeling of superiority and gratifying self-esteem felt by the established, and the outsiders’ feeling of inferiority”. Similarly, at WRTC, the established group were mutually supportive in this way, through promoting and supporting their collective status and prestige.

Within this group, however, there were real competitions for power, hidden underneath all of the friendly banter between established members. Members knew very well “their” place within the clear but complex internal social hierarchy of the club. Although informal rank within this hierarchy went unspoken, distinctions became evident in the interactions among members. One’s relative position was reflected in the extent that deference and respect was afforded to them in the conversations and general interactions between the established members, as well as in interactions on court. Those at the top of the hierarchy tended to be the longest-serving members, who had worked on the committee. Many of the club’s best players were also highly regarded, although it was clear that playing standard alone did not guarantee high status. Nevertheless, it was clear that those that could play well seemed to have easier access into and movement up

the hierarchy, and also entered the group higher up the social ladder, so to speak. This observation was also found in Muir's (1991) analysis, according to which playing standard was the most significant determinant of social rank within the tennis club. Being a good player meant others aspired to play with and against you, and this meant that the best club players had more scope to select players for a game. Lower standard players were never picked to play against the best players because this meant a poor match for everyone. In addition, when lower standard players picked better players to play with or against, the latter would make excuses not to play. All of these subtle manoeuvres were used by the better players in order to demarcate themselves and highlight their superior status within the club social hierarchy (Muir, 1991). Aside from playing standard being the most significant determinant of status, nevertheless, parallels can be drawn between Muir's (1991) findings and those obtained for this study in this specific regard.

Notably, men tended to be higher than women in the hierarchy. Most of the committee were male and the top two positions of club president and club chairman were occupied by males. Some of the committee positions or jobs taken on voluntarily by the women were closely aligned to what could be described as "traditional female roles", for example, being responsible for cooking the meals on match nights.

Uncommitted Members

Uncommitted members made up approximately twenty to thirty percent of the club membership, and did not hold positions of authority at the club despite some of them having been members for many years. Some of these members drifted in and out of the established membership, but because they did not attend regularly or attended regularly but only for brief periods of time, their access to power and their influence in the decision-making processes of the club were limited. This might have been through choice, as they did not want to get involved with "club politics" because of its inherent commitment requirements or because they had little interest in them. In fact, none of these members were on the committee and, individually, they tended to hold little sway in the actions or directions of club policy because of their non-commitment.

While many of these members were relatively long-standing, thus, invariably sharing the same feelings of club experience as the established members, they were only seemingly able to exercise their power when in support of this dominant group. Thus, in some ways they could be regarded as, what Hogenstijn and van Middelkoop (2006) called, “the locally indifferent”. These authors proposed that in some established-outsider figurations, a third group may develop and emerge over time that actively attempts to maintain its distance from both the established and outsider groups. They suggested of this process: “Loosening yourself from local relationships is increasingly possible in present-day society. People can remain indifferent to local problems and choose to focus their energy on something else” (Hogenstijn & van Middelkoop, 2006, p.4). Yet, established members within a given figuration may try to claim this group as their own and attempt to mobilise them during times of conflict or necessity. Even though this group actively sought to maintain some distance from club affairs, they were nevertheless entwined in the power struggles between the established and new members. At WRTC, uncommitted members tended to support the established members’ decisions and did not challenge in club affairs. They showed respect to the established norms and values; therefore, in effect, they helped maintain the established members’ superior positions and, as such, this meant they were generally liked and respected by them.

This is not to say, however, that all uncommitted members were individually relatively weak in power. Some members in this group did achieve a high status at the club, especially those who played tennis for the men’s’ and women’s’ first teams. This group was an exceptional selection of players who did not pay membership fees, but competed for WRTC in all of the club and inter-club competitions. By outside groups, they tended to be referred collectively as “ringers”; a term that has a derogatory connotation, leading one to question the extent to which they were “proper” or “legitimate” club members. Within WRTC they were, nevertheless, simply referred to as “the club’s best players”. There was no shame attached to allowing them free membership in exchange for their competitive services to the club. Such was the intensity of inter-club competition that WRTC and other rival clubs resorted to this arguably unsporting behaviour.

It was interesting to note that these subsidised club members only ever played tennis amongst themselves or with the very best established club members. Junior coach

Sergey often attempted to get these players to hit with juniors because of the immense benefit this would have for the kids, but he found that:

It was very rare for kids to be allowed to play with adults because the adults don't want that. What we [the coaches] want is for the adults to invite the better kids to play with them and for the kids to be comfortable playing alongside the adults. This is how it is at other clubs... What we would like is for some of the top club players to hit occasionally with our top juniors but this hasn't happened yet. Maybe, because they don't pay membership they should be asked to play with them as payment (WRTC field notes).

Such an arrangement had yet to be agreed, however. Further, these players very rarely turned up to Wednesday "club nights" and, if so, they did not engage in the random player selections for games that most other players were involved in. They tended not to engage with club activities outside of competitions, but were still held in high esteem. It was clear from conversations with established club members that these ringers seemed to represent for the club something of a reminder of past achievements and a reinforcement of the club's positive identity. The vision of the club's special character was kept alive through new achievements that seemingly confirmed the greatness of the past. This was what the established club members referred to when they sought confirmation of their superior status among rival clubs in the local area. The club's best players were therefore seen as modern day heroes, celebrated in plaques on the walls and stories in local newspapers. Their achievements represented a tool with which WRTC members could reaffirm their positive we-group identity. The ringers, therefore, despite rarely appearing at the club outside of competitive situations, represented the most influential section within the group of uncommitted members.

New Members

These members were likely only to have been at the club for a few years at most and, as such, they were not particularly cohesive. There was a high level of attrition from this group of members; nonetheless, they were almost equal numerically to the established members. This group consisted of the vast majority of the children/juniors at the club, who represented approximately twenty percent of its membership, and new

adult members who were a further fifteen or twenty percent. Children of established members were not part of this group. Parallels were drawn between the experiences of both adult and junior new members, hence why they are grouped together.

The first and prevailing impression I had of WRTC was that it was an adult club. Despite a fifth of its members being juniors, one rarely saw children playing outside their allotted coaching slots. They were rarely seen in the clubhouse, and they did not engage in conversation with adult members unless they were related to them (e.g. as sons and daughters). For the most part children kept to themselves and it appears at first glance that they learnt not to interfere with the adults at the club. The children described adults as “mean” and “rude” and one group of children complained: “we always get kicked off the court. And they are not even polite about it. They just say ‘get off!’” (WRTC field notes). It was very rare to see juniors playing tennis on a casual level or “hitting” with adults. If they were it was with new members. Established members, both male and female, avoided playing tennis with children at all costs. The exception would be the children of established members, but even so, it was rare to see the coaches’ own children playing with established club members, even though their standard was comparable. Most children would come for coaching, then go straight home afterwards. One parent, when asked why adults did not want to play with children, said: “There is this old-fashioned mentality, where if you lost to a kid your status would be lowered”. This phenomenon was also described in Muir’s (1991) investigation. Children tended to be avoided by the better adult players for fear of defeat and “loss of face”, and it was clear that children were seen as being of lower status. They were cajoled into playing only amongst themselves away from the adults, as Muir (1991, p.72) stated: “Juniors, some of whom could beat top club players (but, perhaps consequently, were excluded from club tournaments) were exiled to two isolated hard courts whenever the clay courts filled”.

Adult new members also tended to be ignored on the playing front. It was quite rare to see a male established member playing with a male new member, despite some of them being of a fairly decent standard. Female established members, on the other hand, often played tennis with new members, but preferred to play with men. This observation highlighted three important things. Firstly, it was a clear indication that adult new members had a higher status in the club compared with child new members. Secondly, it

was an indication that male new members were of a higher status than their female equivalents. While a handful of staunch female established members refused to play with both male and female new members, these women tended to be a minority. Most, it would seem, were happy to play with men regardless of their status because this tended to guarantee a higher standard of match. Thirdly, it suggested that women recognised playing standard as less important in highlighting social status within the club compared to men. Nevertheless, established female members were never seen playing with children.

Interaction between established members and new members tended to be different to what was seen among established members themselves. Established members seemed to be easily aggravated by new members and showed contempt, disrespect and intolerance towards them. Upon observation, I mostly felt this conduct towards the new members was inappropriate and rarely deserved. One particular incident highlighted this feeling. An established member played a match with three new members, which was a rare occurrence in itself. Just twenty minutes into the match, the score had become heavily one-sided against the established member's pair. To partner up with a new member was bad enough, it seemed, but to lose was indefensible. The established member clearly felt his status at risk when some established members came to watch, and he actually stopped during one of the games, made a questionable excuse and left the match. Leaving during a match was very much against the code of etiquette at the club, which suggests the pressure to avoid defeat at the hands of socially inferior members was stronger than breaking a common taboo along lines of sportsmanship.

New members seemed to be disregarded at times and their feelings, opinions and even suggestions were often only an afterthought for the established members. The latter were unwilling to negotiate with new members and children on any issues that threatened their authority. Their needs were rarely considered of primary importance over the needs of the established group. Many new members felt there was a clear divide between them and the "core" members, who they regarded as being "intimidating". Some mentioned that they were treated like "second class club members", and many felt they were "disliked" by the established members. Others mentioned they felt "out of place" or "unwelcome" at the club, and that some of the established group did not make an effort to talk with them or get to know them. Others

mentioned that the club hierarchy served to affect “who gets what” at the club, existing as a real determinant of the extent to which club members could enjoy all the club benefits. This negativity towards the new members was puzzling to them, however, and few could explain this treatment they were receiving. My initial thought was that perhaps the behaviour of the new members was inappropriate to what was expected at the club. In terms of the unwritten code of club etiquette, perhaps they were ill-behaved, foul-mouthed or disrespectful of the norms and values of the club. In other words, perhaps their poor behaviour somewhat justified the harsh treatment they received from established members. While initially I saw little evidence to support this early hypothesis, it did become clear that new members broke certain unwritten conventions, especially in relation to how rank and status were conveyed. Established members used deference to highlight status, being deferential to higher status members but concomitantly expectant of deference from those below. It appeared that the influx of new members into the club threatened these traditional “paternal” relations. Thus, it is suggested that the challenge posed by the new members was aligned to what they represented rather than who they were as individual people. This further initial hypothesis gained credence when interactions off the court, in the bar for example, tended to be more open and friendly. Having said that, even interactions in the clubhouse were governed by strict unwritten rules of engagement, suggesting the code of behavioural etiquette stretched to all areas of the club.

It appeared that rank in the club was determined by three inter-related measures: i) length of membership and occupation of committee positions; ii) playing standard; and iii) embodied aspects of cultural capital: the extent that members adhered to the club’s established code of behavioural “etiquette”, the deferment of gratification through sportsmanship, the exhibition of deference and acknowledgement of rank between members. These valued aspects of club membership were dynamic and fluctuating; the relative extents to which they determined status were always dependent on wider social processes. In adhering to these club values, the established group came to view themselves as the most important group of club members and, concomitantly, as socially superior. This brought them a number of noticeable advantages and benefits that outsiders were denied as such.

Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to introduce West Regency Tennis Club and to set the scene for its detailed analysis. Evidence presented here from ethnographic research goes some way to demonstrate how the club in question has been able to continue with its socially exclusive practices despite the LTA placing stipulations on aspects of how the club is run. It shows the inadequacy of contemporary LTA policy in this area.

The background information on the club that is provided helps to understand the social and historical context for some of the behaviours that will be brought to light in the following two chapters. To a considerable extent, the historical development of the club can explain how member relations have ossified and how antagonisms between member groups have intensified over time. One can build a picture of how the club came to be structured over time in the hierarchical fashion as laid out here. Simply speaking, overcoming difficulties at the club pulled members together and helped create a special club character or “group charisma”, to which all new members aspired to share. To be sure, the background information presented on the club was crucial in understanding many of the attitudes and behaviours exhibited by the club members. The following chapter provides insight into the socially exclusive practices of established club members, and illustrates the ways in which both overt and covert practices in some instances can lead to an internalisation of inferiority by the relatively weaker outsider group of new members. It is from here when the explanatory power of Elias and Scotson’s (1965/1994) theoretical model becomes apparent.

¹ Large and expensive Edwardian-style houses made up most of the residential area surrounding the club, which was commonly regarded as affluent.

² There were both male and female changing rooms and showers and a bar that opened every evening, serving a range of snacks and alcoholic drinks. The bar had two televisions, one of which was connected to Sky TV. There were also car parking facilities and a large open grassy area where tables and chairs were placed during the summer months for people to sit and congregate outside.

³ This price represented, however, the average cost of membership for a small tennis club with three or four courts. Information on the average price of membership for a large club could not be obtained.

⁴ Initially, the club had the “typical” administrative positions of a voluntary organisation (e.g. chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer), but as the club expanded its functions, there was an increasing division of labour, for example with individuals now responsible for ground keeping, membership, entertainment, advertising, marketing, the website, and bar keeping.

⁵ It is apparent that the situation with regards the head coach not being on the club committee is widespread across many tennis clubs in Britain. In 2006, the LTA wrote the following in their *Blueprint for British Tennis*: “There are about 3,500 coaches active in LTA affiliated clubs. Although coaches can play a key role in club tennis, particularly in terms of attracting new members, less than 30% of coaches sit on club committees” (LTA, 2006b, p.8).

⁶ Former Wimbledon winners who were members at the club were celebrated with plaques, and the inside of the clubhouse was decorated with numerous other plaques celebrating past winners and finalists of the clubs' coveted grass-court championships. On the WRTC website, there was a large section documenting the history of the club, with particular reference to the previous successes of its members.

Chapter 11: Manifestations of Social Exclusion at WRTC

At WRTC, the playing of tennis always seemed secondary to the enjoyment of the occasion, and this was for men as well as women. Although this was not the case for all club members, the social aspects of club life were still an integral part of what club members actually did. This was central to what is meant by being part of a club, and it was clear that the particular sport enjoyed was less important. Certainly, this was what helped distinguish WRTC from large commercial clubs like David Lloyd that were regarded as less personal and sociable. The many and varied social events like “race nights”, balls and quiz nights, as well as the generally large congregation of members in the clubhouse bar every night was testimony to this. It seemed drinking was a central feature of their relations and, in fact, a number of club members mentioned how this was part of tennis etiquette; the two were inextricably connected. One established member suggested that “It was rude to simply have a game of tennis with someone, then ‘buggar off’ afterwards” (WRTC field notes). Sharing a drink over conversation was an important aspect of club life and essential behaviour if members wanted to fit in. In many respects this could be one valid suggestion as to why children in general were deemed to be lower social status than the adult new members. One established committee member suggested: “One of the problems with playing with kids is that you can’t enjoy the more social aspects of the game. You can’t enjoy a drink with them in the bar afterwards” (WRTC field notes). The implication of this was that: “when you’re old enough to have a drink, then you’re old enough to play with adults”. In this way, playing against adults or rather a child’s exclusion from doing so was regarded as a rite of passage.

In addition, there were many other areas of tennis club life at WRTC that reproduced social exclusion through the ways in which particular established members were able to assert their superiority over new members. Together they represented formidable obstacles to the subordinate groups’ abilities both to enjoy fully all of what the club had to offer and to develop their tennis talent. This chapter identifies these areas of club life where socially exclusive actions by established members take place. Evidence is presented of the sometimes covert and highly sophisticated ways that established members were able to convey a superior status over new members, for the

purposes of excluding or marginalising them and denying them access to certain resources that other more established club members could enjoy. The main aim of the following two chapters is to bring to light how and why established members were able to determine not just the access that outsider members had, but also how they thought about themselves, their self-esteem, in the overall WRTC club hierarchy.

The Courts

During the summer months when the grass courts were open, there was a clear appreciation that these courts were regarded as the best to play on. The well-kept grass courts were part of what made WRTC so special for its members and a good number alluded to the “summer garden party” atmosphere to be experienced at the club. The grass courts were clearly a symbol of status compared with other clubs in the area, as they conveyed a message to other clubs of its relative wealth and prestige. Grass courts are expensive to maintain and obviously associated with Britain’s most prominent grass-court clubs, for example the AEC, Hurlingham Club and Roehampton Club. The importance of the grass courts was highlighted clearly in the widespread agreement to retain them despite the club’s terrible financial situation. Although turning the grass courts into an all-weather, year-round playing surface would have been a profitable and shrewd move, the mention of such a proposition tended to bring uproar among the established members. They enjoyed, among other reasons, the status-enhancing benefits the courts brought. Burrow (1922, p.9) wrote of grass courts: “For mere pleasantness to the sight and to the tread, the grass court beats the hard court every time; and a really first-rate grass court is the ideal surface on which to play”. My own personal experiences tended to support this notion, and brought to light a particularly special feeling of prestige when playing on them. I wrote the following after I had played on the grass courts at WRTC for the first time:

I played on the grass courts today for the first time. Beautiful! I can now see why club members take so much care of them. But it seems they care for the grass courts more than other areas of the club. Perhaps this is due to the extent to which having grass courts is a signal of status within the local area. WRTC have some of the only and best grass courts in the area and their status is associated

with this. This seems to be of paramount importance to the members (WRTC field notes).

In most cases, children were not allowed to play on the grass courts, for reasons such as “the kids scuff them up”, “they are expensive to maintain, and we don’t want kids on them”, or “they are a privilege for the adults”. However, not once did I see any evidence of children “scuffing them up” when on the odd occasion they were allowed to play on them. I did see established members, on the other hand, smashing their rackets into the ground causing damage, but it must be noted that I did not see other established members judge this behaviour as inappropriate, and then reprimand them. Another example of such “double standards” that I witnessed was the unwritten rule of “relaxing the net” after use. I found out how important this rule was by being openly reprimanded by an established member for failing to do this myself, as the following anecdote highlights.

Apparently, over the summer months it is common for the two net posts to become strained under the high tension of supporting the net, and to pull or uproot themselves from the ground causing damage. It is therefore customary for members to relax or unwind the net after use in order to release the tension and prevent potential damage. Being a new member I was unaware of this custom, but on one particular occasion I was severely told off by a female established member after my partner and I forgot to relax the net. There was absolutely no sign of compassion or empathy from this particular member, despite my sincere apologies and obvious excuse being a new member. I felt she was unjustifiably rude and clearly rather contemptuous of me and my partner as new members, and completely exaggerated the consequences of the problem in order to make her point felt and appear justified in her anger. What surprised me, however, was the number of established members who also forgot to relax the nets after playing but were not openly reprimanded or made an example of as I was. It was evident that the issue represented a means by which the established group could make examples out of new members and also highlight their power over them through talking to them in ways that could be regarded as condescending.

During the summer, children were forced to play on the inferior hard courts or indoor courts, which most adults regarded as too hot. During the winter, with the grass courts out of commission, the indoor courts were regarded as superior and the adults

competed for these in the same way as for the grass courts. New member, Wayne, talked of court allocation as follows: “The problem is mainly during the winter months when availability of courts is limited. During the summer it is less of a problem” (WRTC field notes). During the winter season, when court allocation was more tightly regulated and stretched, children also tended to get kicked-off more regularly. They generally had fewer opportunities to play, as they were denied access to priority courts or the best courts at peak times. This often meant they were relegated to play outside in the cold and wet.

The manner in which the adults, especially from the established group, went about exercising their court priority showed contempt and disrespect for the outsider groups on the receiving end. Being “kicked-off” a court was also not something limited or particular to children. Adult new members expressed similar sentiments when established members would quote particular “club rules” in order to assert their authority and justify kicking off court new members. Wayne noted:

There are a group of old ladies who are really bitchy and they will tell you to leave your court after 45 minutes on the dot. There is no compromise. They feel as though they are in control of the club, that they own it. They are mean and unfriendly. It’s funny. They are really nice to you for now because they want your money. But in six months time they’ll be really bitchy and mean. They can be really rude to new members especially (WRTC field notes).

At times when established club members had disagreements with each other, for example when there was competition for a court, they were mostly settled calmly and in, what most would agree as, an appropriate, fair and adult way. Heated arguments were uncommon. However, when an established member had an issue with new members, this was characterised by raised voices, rude comments and aggression, as well as discourteous, childish or unfair actions by the established group. This observation would also concur with my own personal experiences, as a new member. During one particular match I was playing,

four ladies marched onto our court and were very aggressive in their attempts to get us to hurry up and leave. One of them actually walked right across the court in the middle of playing a game. I felt their behaviour to be very inconsiderate and they used what could be described as ‘bullying tactics’. They would not even

allow us to finish our game, which *was* apparently allowed in the club rules (WRTC field notes).

Regarding situations when disagreements became heated, it was particularly interesting that many of these club members behaved differently off the court. In fact, during the incident noted above, one of the club members actually came and whispered an apology to my partner and me. Why couldn't she have done this openly and stood up for what she obviously felt was the considerate course of action? The pressure to conform to what other established members expected clearly prevented her from doing so. Had she acted in such a way, she would have risked lowering her status, something she had undoubtedly worked hard to build over the years.

Club Rules, the Constitution and Established Behavioural Etiquette

In an article entitled *The Arcane Rules of Courtly Behaviour* written in *The Daily Telegraph* in 2005, novelist Daisy Waugh wrote anecdotally of her tennis club experiences in London. She wrote specifically of club rules, stating: "All clubs love rules, of course. But English tennis clubs, thronged as they are with so many sensible, healthy, middle classes, seem to love rules better than anything. Better even, I sometimes suspect, than they love the tennis". She provided some examples of what she called "teeny-tiny rules designed for no better reason . . . than to curtail its members' most innocent, innocuous enjoyment", as follows: "No parking there. No standing there. No smoking. No coloured clothing. No mobile phones. No booking courts. No playing singles. No second sets. No trainers" (Waugh, 2005, June 29). The numerous anecdotes and examples of tennis club rules and etiquette provided by Waugh suggest the extent and prevalence of a code of behavioural etiquette in voluntary-run tennis clubs today. While it was certainly the case that WRTC club rules were not as strict as those in other clubs, it was nevertheless evident the widespread "endemic" nature of rules and behavioural codes in British tennis clubs generally. Also, as a general observation, it seemed the older and more established the club, the greater the extent to which club rules and behavioural etiquette were strictly enforced by its established members and committee.

At WRTC, the first club rules and constitution were drawn up by the original committee over 120 years ago. Throughout this time period, the committee continued to be responsible for establishing an agreed-upon system of rules and an implicit etiquette to which all members adopted and strived to adhere. Change and resistance to club rules was a rare occurrence, and so democratic votes for potential policy change tended to support and uphold prevailing policies rather than challenge and request new ones. Modifications that did occur tended to be brought in slowly, with organisational change as members came and went providing the best opportunities for pushing through new ideas. Because change was slow, members had ample time to learn club policies and, as the organisational structure became more complex as the club's membership grew in both number and diversity, both formal policies and unwritten conventions became more specific, detailed and complicated. Adaptations were easily learnt by established members, but both adult and child new members tended to struggle with the rules. The club rules were available for all to view on the club website, but consisted of over forty regulations on the subjects of dress, court availability, match courts, outdoor court booking, indoor courts, visitors, outside tournaments, club tournaments, conduct, coaching and court etiquette.

On the specific matter of court booking, it was clear that established members used their extensive and comprehensive knowledge of club rules to “kick” new members off courts. In most cases, and also speaking from personal experience, problems were normally the result of a simple misunderstanding, and one would expect its polite resolution. However, some established members were very uncompromising and obdurate in these situations and were known to actually stand on the court quoting lines of the club rules verbatim to gain the upper hand in a dispute: “According to rule 3.14 of the club constitution, it is a requirement that...” This would not suggest a polite conflict resolution, but more the aggressive exercise of the power of one person or group over another. It was certainly not very “democratic” or fair.

Some members openly described to me the situation of court allocation as “every member for him/herself”, or sometimes like a “rat-race”. New members were always disadvantaged in this area as their knowledge and experience of club rules and the WRTC constitution could never match that of the established member. It was as though knowledge of club rules was used as a power resource or even as a “weapon” against the

new members and children. The club's written rules and constitution, together with the unwritten code of behavioural etiquette that governed appropriate behaviour, were largely unknown to the new members and children, and had to be learnt over time. It seemed, however, that a large proportion of the established members were impatient with new members as they learnt these rules and conventions.

The established code of etiquette at WRTC prescribed appropriate behaviour in all areas of the club, but was more regularly observed in relation to sportsmanship on the tennis court. I can account for many of these behavioural norms, which club members simply referred to as "tennis etiquette", as detailed below:

- 1) It is necessary to keep as quiet as possible while playing, which means no shouting, swearing or abusive language, even to oneself.
- 2) Striking a ball in anger or throwing a racket in frustration is particularly abhorred and, generally, one strived to make as little distraction as possible for other players on the same or an adjacent court.
- 3) Players tended to applaud the shots of team-mates as well as opponents, but with noticeably restrained enthusiasm when celebrating their own good play.
- 4) Apologies are offered for lucky shots and, often, questionable calls were happily conceded by one of the players. Disagreements were normally settled with replayed points or a "let".
- 5) A let is also offered if a point is disrupted because of a stray ball from another court. If one of your own balls strays onto another court, it is customary to wait until their point is over before asking for it back.
- 6) Waiting for play to finish on an adjacent court was also required when wanting to pass behind their court, for example, when arriving at or departing from the courts.
- 7) Upon leaving the grass courts, unless players are waiting to use your court, the net should be relaxed in order to release the tension on the grass.
- 8) The aggressiveness of one's play should be adjusted according to the standard of his or her opponents, making the game as fair as possible.

To supplement these behavioural customs, in a recent issue of *TEAM* magazine, the official magazine of Middlesex LTA, tennis etiquette was discussed at length, with a comprehensive list given of over thirty "ABCs of good tennis etiquette and

sportsmanship” that all club players should adhere to (Bone, Gale & Hess, 2004, Autumn). These included, but were not limited to: appropriate ways to deal with questionable calls; how to communicate with team-mates and opponents; how and when to retrieve and return balls from other courts; when and how to call serves and shots “out”; and what to wear on a tennis court. The resemblance between this widely accepted modern code of tennis etiquette and aspects of the traditional gentlemanly amateur code of earlier generations, such as that described by Wills (1928) and Newcombe and Mabry (1981), is striking.

Noticeable aspects of this code of behavioural etiquette were the deferment of gratification and the exercise of self-restraint by the members. The enforcement of this code remained, over time, the substitution of individual goals for the supposed collective goals of the club or, rather, of the established group and their charismatic group identity. These rules of sportsmanship or “tennis etiquette” were well respected and strongly adhered to because they were widely agreed as necessary. This was, firstly, in order to protect the game from unsavoury influences, such as over-aggression, impatience, petulance and dishonesty and, secondly, to maintain good order on the tennis court; good order, of course, always supported the behaviour of the established group, in line with their needs and desires. Thus, a very important part of adhering to club etiquette was that each member accepted their place within the club and did not cause conflict or unnecessary aggravation to destabilise good order. For new members, adhering to the club etiquette actually meant accepting their marginalised position in the social hierarchy, therefore not challenging their evident exclusion. Causing turbulence to the club’s organisational structure and balance of power was against the norms of club behaviour. Members that disregarded the established code of behavioural etiquette risked alienation and humiliation; they were effectively excluded or marginalised. Zevenbergen et al. (2002) recognised a similar phenomenon in their analysis of how club cadets learnt golf etiquette. Those who ignored the unwritten rules were effectively marginalised.

For new members at WRTC, a period of socialisation occurred during which time this appropriate behaviour was acknowledged, accepted, learnt and eventually internalised. Adopting a largely Bourdieuan perspective, Zevenbergen et al. (2002, p.2)

wrote of the socialisation process for children within the field of a golf club in the following way:

Within a field there are certain dominant practices, which confer power and legitimacy to some practices, while relegating other practices to marginalised status... To gain authority and power, agents take on board the culture, or the habitus of the field, and as they amass more capital they become more powerful, gaining more control and legitimacy.

The process of socialisation at WRTC invariably took much longer and was more complicated for children as opposed adult new members because, for many children, being a member of a tennis club was likely to be one of the first and only times when they entered voluntarily into an enclosed adult-dominant environment. The necessary behavioural etiquette to be adhered to within a tennis club, for example, was very different to what they had learnt and to what was expected of them in other places; rather, locations where children either outnumbered adults, such as school or in the playground, or places where their needs were taken into greater consideration, such as the family home. Because of this, children within tennis clubs invariably needed a considerable amount of time as well as special guidance in order to develop the cultural capital, specifically the level of self-restraint that tennis club etiquette required, when interacting in the clubhouse with adults as well as when playing on court.

For children at WRTC, exhibiting a lack of self-restraint was seen as misbehaviour, and established members tended to highlight these incidents as evidence against having children at the club, and to legitimise their poor treatment of them. Established club members would highlight the misbehaviour of one child as being typical of all children at WRTC, but evidence did not support this accusation. In addition, it was apparent that children learnt of the correct behavioural etiquette through a process of trial and error. Unlike the analysis by Zevenbergen et al. (2002), where they were actually taught these unwritten rules by senior club members, what I found at WRTC was that established club members actually orchestrated ways in which they could prevent the socialisation of child new members. Aside from the club coaches and, perhaps if they were also members, the respective childrens' parents, there were no other adults who saw it as their role to teach the children how to behave appropriately. Established members, on the whole, saw no responsibility to help the children, and

tended invariably to steer clear of them. In other words, the organisation of social interaction at the club did not facilitate the smooth process of children's socialisation to take place, or encourage the provision of opportunities to learn appropriate behaviour. Unlike at other clubs, for example some David Lloyd clubs, which have a designated Juniors Tennis Manager, WRTC had no member elected from the established group to oversee and nurture the development of juniors, to teach them established behavioural etiquette in order so they could more easily "fit in". Generally, established members made it very difficult for children, as well as adult new members to a lesser extent, to learn the established code of behavioural etiquette. This was because they were mostly ignored and avoided, so children had very few chances to play tennis with adults or interact with them socially. As such, their lack of understanding in this respect tended inevitably to more "misbehaviour", which was seen as a failing on the child's part, rather than on the part of the established members, accepting his or her respective responsibility to teach the child appropriate behaviour. Excluding, marginalising, making examples out of children and highlighting their inadequacies were all part of the established groups' efforts to close rank against these outsider new members.

The established code of behavioural etiquette was most strongly enforced among the female established club members, who used it as a subtle way of establishing themselves within the club social hierarchy. The code of etiquette actually favoured them, providing access to sources of power unavailable to male members. Characteristic of many tennis clubs throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, female involvement brought for them an increasing respect and expected deference (Holt, 1989; Lowerson, 1993). This deference was most clearly evident on the court, as it tended to characterise the type and level of play that was expected and required for good order. Point eight, above, highlights this clearly, as it was deemed inappropriate to hit the ball hard at older women. Tim Blackman commented that his role as a tennis coach was to actually enforce the observance of etiquette among his junior players, stating:

I think the etiquette thing is important. You don't want the kids slapping a ball at an old lady at 100 mph. Its ridiculous, so they've got to learn to temper their game. But when they are on court with the men, yeah, hit the ball, because men can normally defend themselves. If the men want to be on court with them, hit the ball. I say to them 'hit the ball, do what you would normally do', but with the

ladies, use your common sense basically (personal communication December 6, 2004).

The enforcement of this deference to women, of course, had unintended consequences.

Firstly, older women used this deference as a source of power, to control the standard or style of a particular match. An aggressive will-to-win and competitive spirit were discouraged, as the following anecdote illustrates. During one particular match, I was severely told off by an older established female member for returning a ball that was called out on her serve. Such an action is customary in order to keep the surplus of balls on the server's side of the court, but this particular lady reprimanded my behaviour, perhaps because she felt threatened by my actions. The other two players on the court, also new members, appeared confused by her comments as well. Nevertheless, it clearly affected the tennis that was played throughout that match. I felt as though I couldn't hit the ball too hard at her, and that my behaviour was constantly regulated by this older female established member. Thus, I found myself playing weaker shots and deliberately lowering my standard of play. This, subsequently, made the game rather farcical and the result unrepresentative of the actual differences in standard between the two pairs. In this way, the playing standard of the older woman could be inflated in order for her to appear more equal; this would not only serve to maintain her high social standing, but ultimately also threaten to lower the social standings' of those against whom she was playing.

Secondly, the quotation from Tim Blackman and my own personal experience illustrated above demonstrated again the extent to which "tempering" your game was an expected and "common sense" aspect of etiquette in British tennis clubs. One could question whether expecting children to adhere to this aspect of behavioural restraint would be beneficial to their overall talent development. The expectation on developing juniors to temper their game against particular players might, in fact, be partly responsible for a failure to develop, sufficiently, a "will to win" or "killer instinct", which countless tennis pundits have commented on in the British press. At WRTC, these concerns carry considerable weight, despite the new measures to develop children's talent.

Junior Talent Development and Team Tennis

The importance of having a junior membership at the club was expressed repeatedly in order to secure LTA funding for the future. The subject of the new clubhouse was often brought up in conversation, but most agreed that this project would only go ahead providing the LTA financially supported it. Of course, LTA requirements stipulated the club needed to have an active and vibrant junior membership. Seeking Mini Tennis accreditation and developing a performance programme was additionally advantageous for the club in terms of achieving LTA financial assistance. Some members on the WRTC committee, especially the PR and development director Paul and the club coaches, recognised this need and had been pushing strongly in this direction for a number of years. However, it seemed that some of the other committee members as well as the vast majority of other club members did not want children or a large cluster of new members at the club. However, at this stage they were widely regarded as necessary for the club's survival, and so were tolerated, but not accepted as equals. This was supported by the club president, who highlighted the power struggle between clubs and the LTA. One evening, he made the following remark to me:

Why do the LTA think tennis clubs will be able to produce performance players? Why do they put so much of their money into clubs? I mean, we'll take it, because we have to, but we're not a club to produce performance players. We're here to have a good laugh (WRTC field notes).

Most established club members, it seemed, would have preferred the club to be kept as an adult enclave, absent of children. It was clear that the children themselves felt intimidated by or perhaps even scared of the established adults. Judged by the intolerance that some of the established members showed towards the presence of children, it was certainly understandable. A group of children recounted to me a time when during the previous summer, they used to play impromptu games of football, but these were stopped:

We used to play football on the grass but then someone said 'It's not a football club so it's not allowed'. They put a sign up saying 'no ball games allowed because of chemicals on the grass', but it's rubbish because there aren't any chemicals. They just put up the sign to stop us having fun (WRTC field notes).

During Sergey's coaching sessions, away from many of the established adults, the children appeared more relaxed. They behaved differently to how they would in the communal areas of the club such as the clubhouse; they appeared to have more fun, and enjoyed themselves. Even for some of the older children, of 15 or 16 years of age, it was only in these types of coaching sessions where they appeared happier and comfortable.

After observation of Sergey's coaching as well as conversations with a number of the children's parents, it was clear that a divide also existed between them and the established club members. I only very occasionally saw parents go to the bar for a drink, but in most of these cases they would be ignored by established club members. I also very rarely saw an established club member make conversation with a parent. Generally, the only time when parents or children would enter the clubhouse was to use the toilets and changing facilities, which they would do quietly and quickly. The two groups kept themselves very separate. The established members seemed to resent the parents and children being at "their" club. When in conversation with parents, a number of them acknowledged a certain distance they felt between themselves and the club members. One parent, when asked of her impression of the club, said:

You walk in the door of the clubhouse and suddenly all eyes point at you. They don't say it but they most definitely think it - 'who are you, what do you want?' They won't come and talk to you and introduce themselves. You have to approach them and even when you do, you can see it in their eyes (WRTC field notes).

There seemed to be a very strong reluctance for parents to join the club, despite the fact that some of their own children were members there. Some played tennis elsewhere and made comparisons with how much more friendly or welcoming their respective other club was compared to WRTC. All of the parents mentioned the fabulous club facilities and the high standard of coaching as reasons why they brought their children to WRTC, but some recognised the club as being "cliquey". Parents found it hard to react to their apparent exclusion, perhaps because they felt alone and isolated. Most of these parents would simply drop off their children, drive away, and then pick them up after their coaching sessions. Others would stay to watch but tended not to speak to anybody else, "keeping to themselves". As such, there seemed to be little cohesion between many of the respective children's parents. Only on occasion were the

different families seen interacting. However, possible reasons for this could be the perceived language or cultural barriers,¹ or the facts that very few of them were members themselves or that they had only been in contact for a short period of time.

As children were only encouraged to join the club order so it could secure financial ends, WRTC was, essentially, playing lip-service to the LTA's Club Vision programme. One particularly influential committee member remarked with conviction that, as soon as LTA funding was secured, "these children would become expendable". Basically, children were seen as a problem for the established members at the club, but a necessary one. I suggest, albeit rather cynically, that the majority of club members were secretly hoping that after this testing period WRTC would go back to being by and large exclusive to the established adult group. As briefly mentioned before, however, not all children at WRTC were seen as outsiders and excluded from elements of club life. The children of the established members were happily welcomed. I often saw them enjoying themselves on the grass, with club members often joining in, wrestling or playing with the children. They were accepted, and their boisterous behaviour was happily tolerated and sometimes even encouraged. However, the behaviour of children whose parents were not established was seemingly less tolerable. One particular entry in my field notes read:

Today I saw the fun that was had by some of the established adults while playing with John's (a well respected and long-serving club member) two kids. I watched as they had some fun with ice cubes, putting them down other club member's backs. These adults did not seem to mind at all (WRTC field notes).

Perhaps this was because they were children whose parents were well liked and members of the core established group of adults. On occasion, I also noticed that some of the established members showed reluctance for their own children to play with children of a new member or a child new member him or herself. This suggests that despite their age, there were clear status differences between the children of different social groups.

During junior inter-club matches in the covered dome, it was normally the case that very few of the established club members watched. Only very occasionally did established club members take an interest in these matches, or even know which other club they were playing against. In most cases, the children's names would not even be known, apart from a few exceptions, for example the particular child of an established

member. On one particular Sunday a junior tournament was being played, but it was largely ignored by all the club members. During this time, I began chatting to an established member who firmly stipulated the need to encourage junior tennis at the club. He said:

If the club wants LTA funding, it needs to have kids' programmes and play in junior tournaments and things with other clubs. But some members can't see the bigger picture. They are selfish and only wanted things for themselves like the right court at the right time. They couldn't see the importance of encouraging junior tennis programmes at the club (WRTC field notes).

The irony, of course, was that, when pressed for information on the junior tournament currently being played, this particular member could offer very little. This highlights the facade of "encouraging junior tennis programmes" under the veil of financing a new clubhouse.

Generally, most club members took little notice of the competitive junior tennis played at the club, which was in stark contrast to adult competition. During these matches, most of the other members knew who the opposition was, and would even provide regular updates on the score. It was clear that adult inter-club matches were important to the club; the results were important and the standard of tennis being played was scrutinised. Junior tennis was much lower down the rank of importance, even though some of the better children may in a few years be representing the adult club teams. Junior fixtures or team lists were rarely matters discussed with other club members and there was little information on the clubhouse notice boards about them.

Trials for the seven club teams took place on particular afternoons in the spring. I was invited to the 5th, 6th and 7th team trial. Apparently, five juniors were also invited to that same trial but none of them made an appearance and, in all of the seven men's teams, only one junior gained a place, coach Abdul's son. Having watched some of the WRTC juniors play, their absence in the club teams seemed odd as many were playing a very good standard of tennis. I actually made the tail end of the 7th team and would have been easily beaten by some of the older WRTC juniors that I watched. Why were they not playing for WRTC? It is posited that they felt excluded or intimidated by the established adult members. Some children who I spoke to had no intention of trying out for the club teams because they said that they "didn't know if they were allowed to".

Others stressed little importance in the WRTC club teams because they played competitively elsewhere, which could imply that they were not encouraged to try out.

Playing “for the club” was an honour, and established members undoubtedly enjoyed the prestige associated with this. For men, one’s respective position within the seven club teams was not entirely determined by standard, but by association, status and rank. New members would very rarely get the opportunity to play in the first four teams; even very talented new members had to “play their way” through the club teams. An established member explained the process as follows:

Members can only progress through the club teams one team at a time, beginning with the seventh team in the first year, then working your way up. It’s unfair if new members jump straight in ahead of someone else who’s been there waiting ages (WRTC field notes).

Two points are worth noting in this area. Firstly, little consideration was given to the fact that incorporating better players in the teams would actually help the club to win. Secondly, it might take an exceptionally skilful new member seven years to progress up through the club teams to take his rightful position in the first team. This not only highlights the difficulties new members have of infiltrating the club teams, it also suggests that some established members care more about their own individual social position in the club hierarchy than about the club’s overall success on-court.

While the top four teams tended, therefore, to be dominated by established members and ringers, greater opportunities for new members to play were found in the bottom three teams. However, teams here were internally divided, mixed with new and established members; therefore, it was not a surprise to discover ostensible power struggles between members here. Established members attempted to assert their superior social position through aspects of behaviour, and my own experiences playing a match for WRTC provides testimony to the apparent status divisions between members.

One particular evening I joined the WRTC seventh team in a match against a local rival, a smaller club, but one with a well-structured junior development programme. I was teamed up with an established member in his 60s, a man of similar standard but with half my pace, strength and agility around the court. It being my first ever inter-club match, however, I was nervous and at times played rather poorly. I expected my team-mate to offer encouragement and support in order to settle my nerves

so we could win, but almost the exact opposite occurred. Still rather disappointed, after the match, I wrote:

It is difficult to explain the frustration and embarrassment of playing poorly and losing in a game of doubles, seeing the expression on your team-mate's face. At one time, after I had 'dumped' an easy volley into the net, then missed a succession of easy back-hand volleys, he said to me indignantly: 'I have never been passed down the middle so many times in a match in my entire life'. I could have died! (WRTC field notes).

It felt as if my team-mate was more concerned with the possibility of losing face rather than losing the match. After he had made his point, his performance became noticeably lacklustre, not bothering to stretch for difficult shots or running after balls. He had clearly given up trying to win, and focused his efforts on trying to make me look incompetent; this was in order to rescue his own floundering status.

The Club Coaches

The position of the club coaches was intriguing. Mark and Sergey were new coaches and invited to work at the club in adherence with LTA Club Vision stipulations demanding that clubs have licensed coaches. They were both highly qualified and experienced, having previously coached at a commercial tennis club with a good-standard performance squad. They were determined to improve the standard of tennis at the club, especially at the junior level, which the previous coach had neglected. Sergey took over children's development at the club and, while Mark catered for all members, it seemed that very few of the established group went to Mark for lessons; thus it was mostly new members who were in direct contact with the head coach. In this way, the club coaches were seen as leaders or representatives of the outsider new member contingent, the responsibilities of which brought them new challenges.

Because of their expanded remit for individual and group tuition, the coaches brought new demands on court use, especially during the winter months when there were fewer courts available. Their introduction to the club, thus, caused an instant negative reaction. Wayne, a friend of Mark, highlighted the head coach's situation: "The coach Mark has some stories to tell! He is probably the one person where much of the

negativity is focused. It is like ‘Mark versus the rest of the club or the old people.’” (WRTC field notes). Mark described the club members as “the rudest, most obnoxious people he had ever met” (personal communication, January 17, 2006). Sergey also received a large amount of disapproval. Many of the established club members refused to even say “hello”, openly ignoring him, and he said: “They would treat me like I’m scum. I really could not believe how rude the people were to me. And they had no reason for it” (personal communication, January 17, 2006). The coaches would often have problems with members kicking them off courts. It was clear that their presence caused frustration for the established members, as minor discrepancies often turned into heated exchanges of words. The coaches often took their subordinated positions with a puzzled resignation, much like some of the new members. Mark no longer booked coaching classes during normal hours anymore because “it just wasn’t worth the hassle. Members come on court and they stand their waiting, looking impatient at their watches, making rude comments and gestures” (personal communication, January 17, 2006). While Mark continued to battle with club members in the ways he was treated more generally, with specific regard to his private coaching sessions, however, he accepted the fact he was regarded as an annoyance and as a second-class club member and so merely decided to keep his coaching to special designated hours. This was also despite the consequence to his financial situation. He did not want to upset anyone, because, essentially, it created problems for himself and the person he was trying to coach and it was not good for business.

Both Mark and Sergey were generally seen as outsiders, but with their particularly influential positions they were seen as more threatening to the hegemony of the established core members than others at the club. Because of this, interactions they had with uncompromising established members sometimes led to aggressive interpersonal exchanges. While they were influential as spokesmen among the outsider groups, it was unclear what role they played in the decision-making processes at the club. It was unclear whether Mark and Sergey were part of the club committee, and when asked, Mark simply laughed and said, “I have no idea!” He apparently found his situation rather farcical in relation to the influence he felt he had. Because of this, however, there was no formal representation of coaching or of children’s tennis on the club committee.

The phenomenon of the club coach being treated as a social inferior might be linked to his “professional” outlook, with exclusion of professionals prevalent from a period when amateurs were seen as socially superior. Whilst evidence to this end in tennis has not been found, research into golf suggests that status differentials in many clubs have remained entrenched. Club “pros” were often regarded as being of a lower status simply because they were servants of the club (Hill, 2002; Holt, 1998). Also, it was thought that the club pro played and coached the game seemingly not as an end in itself, but for pecuniary gain and represented the performance-driven values of achievement striving, training and specialisation. These were, of course, values abhorred in earlier decades of golf and, indeed, tennis when it was governed by the unwritten codes of amateurism. In short, the club pro displayed and represented qualities not befitting an amateur and also tried to bestow these qualities upon other club members. Because of this, the club professional was often treated poorly (Hill, 2002; Holt, 1998; McKibbin, 1998). While the prevalence of an amateur ideology is undoubtedly apparent at WRTC in other aspects, it could not explain how the other club coach, Abdul, was a highly regarded established club member, whilst both Mark and Sergey were disregarded. Abdul had been a member at WRTC for almost two decades and so his social position in the club was different to the other coaches. He was well-respected both in terms of his high playing standard and for his useful role in the club. Abdul also had a son who was one of the best junior players at the club; he was one of the few children who was generally liked and treated well and, as already stated, the only child to achieve a place in one of the men’s club teams. Essentially, Abdul and his son were part of the established group.

Club Tennis Nights each Wednesday

The primary purpose of club tennis nights was for all members to play amongst themselves. These were the club’s busiest nights and they offered good opportunities for new members to meet, socialise and play with other members, either new or established. To be sure, it was one of the only nights where the stated focus was on the integration of new members into the club, but, even so, established members made use of opportunities to highlight their superior status. Muir (1991, p.72) highlighted in his study that

“temporal segregation” was a “principle mechanism for avoiding weak players”. By avoiding play on the “open” nights, the best players could keep to themselves, without facing the possibility of playing a lesser player and risk testing their superiority (Muir, 1991). At WRTC, the same principle applied, whereby despite the higher-standard male established members often turning up to club tennis nights, they would rarely play. If they did, they uncompromisingly sought to maintain their exclusiveness by playing only amongst themselves at all times; they would somehow manage to avoid engaging in the random “fours” selection with everybody else. In all the Wednesday club tennis nights that I attended, I never once played with one of the established male club players. This was not through lack of trying. Whilst, admittedly, their standard might have been a little too high to match most of the average club players for a game, there were undoubtedly some new members who could have matched them in playing standard.

During my period of investigation, one of the main complaints repeatedly raised by the established members was in relation to the poor standard of tennis played by new members during these club tennis nights. Emails were sent round and letters were written to the club committee on a number of occasions. Despite the fact that the primary purpose of these club tennis nights was for new members to meet other members to play tennis and socialise, it was suggested that the sudden influx of new members had over-run the club with players not up to the expected standard. The committee, comprised totally of established members, felt it necessary, therefore, to introduce a minimum playing standard and declared that those players “not up to scratch” would have to book private coaching before they could rejoin the club tennis nights. Being picked out for this coaching, however, was a humiliating ordeal and it was no surprise that only new members were selected. Martin, a new member of less than a year, highlighted the paradox with regards to who the complaints were coming from:

When it came to the issue of Wednesday nights and ‘club tennis’, I think it is unfair that the newer members who aren’t so good get penalised and have to endure hours of coaching before other members will play with them. One hour a week isn’t much . . . and it is ironic that many of the members who make these complaints are the ones who play the worst anyways (WRTC field notes).

It was of course interesting, but not surprising, that new members were grouped together and were collectively thought of as being poor players. Evidence actually

suggested, in accordance with Martin's assertion, that the playing standard of new members was not too dissimilar, on average, to that of the established club members who frequented the club tennis sessions. However, in the same ways that outsider members at WRTC were collectively judged by the standard of their worst behaved, the same became evident for playing standard. Exceptionally talented players were used as examples of the general standards of the established group. Examples of very competent new members or of very weak established members were both regarded as exceptional cases.

In terms of playing tennis with new members or children, it was very clear that a number of the established club members were unwilling. Was this simply because the game itself might have been boring for some of the better players, or were there more complex reasons? Muir (1991) suggested that top players at the club under his investigation avoided lesser-standard players for two reasons. Firstly, Muir (1991, p.75) noted the lack of challenge, and wrote:

Weak players tend to make weak returns or hit shallow lobs. Neither of these presents a challenge for a superior player, both being routinely 'put away'. Moreover, weaker players by definition make more errors, so there are fewer opportunities to hit even easy shots. Thus, playing with significantly weaker players is not only boring but provides little opportunity to relieve this boredom by practicing strokes – given that top play typically involves much harder, lower, deeper shots, usually with topspin.

Secondly, he noted the fear that top players had of potentially lowering their status, because all forms of association related to tennis were seemingly judged and used as measurements. Muir (1991, p.75) wrote: "Top players accepting challenges from weak opponents needlessly exposed themselves to public tests of relative ability which, if lost, impugn their superiority". Even if success was achieved, status was further measured by the relative effort that was put into the victory, thus placing more pressure on the top player to "avoid humiliation by winning decisively". Muir (1991, p.75) stated: "Winning against such opponents must be accomplished without visible effort since, trying to win implies only a marginal difference in ability".

At the club under Muir's (1991) investigation, however, it seemed that this arrangement did not exclude people from playing tennis or engaging in the more social

aspects of club life; it merely provided a means by which players could “find their place”. The callousness of the top players towards the lesser-standard players was neither taken personally, nor did this arrangement seem to imply a level of social status within the club overall. Muir (1991) offered no insight into how these top players were treated off the court, whether their status was transferred as such and whether they also regarded themselves as a superior group within the club more generally. It seemed, in fact, that the top players felt threatened and intimidated by the lesser-standard players, as much as the latter did of the former. Perhaps the balance of power between top players and lesser-standard players was more equal at Muir’s (1991) club than at WRTC, with playing standard only serving as a measure of status on the court, not off of it.

It was clear at WRTC that all types of association, either tennis-related or not, were deemed to determine one’s status or rank in the club’s social hierarchy. When some of the male established members avoided playing with the new members, it put forward the implicit suggestion that they were intolerant and not accepting of them as worthy club members. A number of new members expressed to me their feelings of being treated like “second class club members” partly because of this. Martin and his wife Sarah, also a new member, reflected on their personal feelings when joining the club: “If we hadn’t been so persistent, we probably would have packed this membership in a long time ago and not bothered” (WRTC field notes). They lived very close to the club, but sometimes felt reluctant to come down more often. They drew on the importance of living close and being married, that is, coming down to the club with a partner. Of the difficulties for new members, Sarah said:

The effort to head down when an enjoyable evening was not always guaranteed was not as much as if they might have lived away or been single individuals. I can see how for someone who is alone, lives a distance away, is not very good and is not willing to persevere, the chances of them dropping away are high. And this is for an adult. Having someone to share the experience with makes it easier to get somewhere (WRTC field notes).

Established members were most strongly against playing with children, as this would severely test their social status. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xxiv) stated:

Outsiders are felt to be anomic. Closer contact with them, therefore, is felt to be disagreeable. They endanger the built-in defences of the established group

against breaches of the common norms and taboos upon whose observance depended both a person's standing among his or her fellows within the established group and his or her own self-respect, pride, identity as a member of the superior group.

Close contact with outsider groups tends to threaten a member of an established group with what they termed "anomic infection", as Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xxiv) remarked: "He or she might be suspected of breaking the norms and taboos of their own group . . . Hence contact with outsiders threatens an "insider" with the lowering of their own status within the established group". It was interesting that over time I also became sensitive to this pressure to avoid being seen playing with lower status members, particularly children. I wrote the following on one occasion, after playing with one of the best junior players:

When playing today with two performance standard juniors, I actually felt slightly embarrassed at one point, when an old established member showed up. He spotted me at the end near the clubhouse and apart from saying 'hello' as I normally would, I also felt I had to justify myself or take his mind off the fact that I was playing with two juniors, regardless of their skill level. I made some arbitrary comment about the weather in the hope of diffusing his near scornful look. I surely would not have got that look had I been playing against an older established club member whom he highly regarded (WRTC field notes).

By playing with these juniors, I actually felt that I had lowered my status in the club.

I also witnessed other adults make excuses not to play with children, but then end up playing with their friends minutes later. Over time, children soon realised they would be unable to persuade an established club member to play with them, so they stopped asking. New members tended to react the same way when wanting to play with established members. They began to accept their fate and stopped asking established members, from then on only asking other new members, or the occasional female established member, to play.

The Bar and Clubhouse

The inside of the club was completely devoted to adult needs. The bar served a wide range of alcoholic drinks, but very few children's drinks like milkshakes, juices, cans of soda pop or children's sweets and chocolate bars. In addition, at the time of research, the bar allowed smoking, which was not entirely conducive for entertaining children. There was no separate "play room" for them, which essentially meant that they were denied their own specific indoor area in the clubhouse. Ostensibly, the bar was like a pub; it was not a place for children to congregate and socialise. For new members, however, the bar area represented an arena for them to get to know club members and share a drink. However, in the early stages of membership at the club, it was during this time when established club members actually formulated an opinion of the new member as to whether he/she was the right sort of person for the club, a process that took place in tandem with the new member's socialisation into the club. It was like a trial or probation period for new members. I felt this personally, and one particular evening I wrote:

I feel as though I am still fitting in slowly into the club, but there are certainly some members who I feel uncomfortable around. They do not talk much to me, unless they have had a few beers or they feel obliged to for whatever reason. Generally, I get the feeling that some members do not like me or they do not even want to get to know me or give me a chance. I find myself making a huge effort to actually try to fit in, but often in vain it seems. Having said this, I feel much more comfortable around some of the younger and newer members (WRTC field notes).

I did find, however, that when holding conversations on a one-to-one basis, away from their social group, many of the established members seemed friendlier. In this regard, I wrote: "Separated from the group I can have nice comfortable chats with most members, but it seems as though when they are together, maybe in a group of four or five, it is much more difficult to make conversation" (WRTC field notes).

After speaking with a number of other new members, many said they felt the same way. "It was a real challenge to continue membership", one new member said. Some felt they were being excluded in the "little things", but which were important for

establishing that feeling of “belonging” that was enjoyed by the established club members. Such things included going “rounds” with buying drinks, invitations to club social events and being included in conversations. New members Martin and Sarah said there were times when they really had “to fight the desire to pack it all in”. They went home some evenings “wondering why [they] bothered”, but other nights they enjoyed the company at the club. It was clearly a hard place for new members to feel welcome, and some of the established members were difficult to get to know or to feel a sense of belonging whilst in their company. It was not as though these people were unfriendly, but that their behaviour switched when they were among their peers at the club.

Status in the WRTC clubhouse and bar was earned and measured in different ways in comparison to the tennis court. The ability to hold one’s drink was something highly regarded. This, of course, encouraged excessive drinking among the established members. Often, in their intoxicated state, they would gossip about current members, both new and established, as well as reminisce with stories of previous times at the club. It was clear that heavy drinking was an important part of their collective identity, but one aspect that often excluded new members. My own experiences were varied in this respect, but one evening I wrote that

on many instances I would start a conversation, for it to be cut very short or to be completely ignored. Members would also quite happily let me sit or stand right next to them at the bar in complete silence, without saying a word to me (WRTC field notes).

The paradox was that while the influence of alcohol often opened up channels of communication between new and established members, it also solidified the group identity of the established.

Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to examine the ways in which social exclusion was manifest at WRTC, marginalising the outsider new members at the hands of the established “core” group of members. A number of different spaces or spheres of club life were examined, as locations where member groups could assert their superiority over

each other, as well as demonstrate and reinforce the code of behavioural etiquette of the established members as a symbol of status over new members and outsiders.

The courts were regarded as status symbols of the club as well as the most crucial location for the reinforcement of behavioural etiquette and social hierarchy. Knowledge of club rules and aspects of the club constitution related to playing tennis and the use of the courts was perceived to be a weapon that established members used to assert their superiority over new members. The process of socialisation through which all new members passed was rigidly controlled to enforce power differentials between groups. Many new members were denied the chance to learn club rules without open reprimand.

The code of behavioural etiquette at the club was by far the most telling aspect of power and status among the club members. It was used as both a measure and determinant of rank in the club and also a means by which socially aspirational members could push for status advancement, through exhibiting particular behaviour towards and in the company of other members. The role of behavioural etiquette was most pivotal for the status enforcement of women at the club, through the regulation of conduct both on and off the court and the demand for behavioural restraint and deference from male members.

While tennis competitions were not major aspects of all club members' experiences at WRTC, the performance by members on the club teams was important in two main ways; firstly, it was symbolic of the club as a whole, signifying its social rank among other clubs in the local area; and, secondly, the selection of players on the upper club teams was a crucial aspect of a club member's social rank among other club members. To play for the club was regarded as a special honour, but was reserved almost entirely for established members.

Of all new members, children were regarded as being of the lowest social rank. They were also treated as such, being denied access to many of the club's social and structural resources; also, they were often the targets of much of the "abuse" from adult established members. The new club coaches, however, were the major recipients of abusive or discourteous behaviour from established members. They seemed to act as symbolic representatives for many of the negative changes that many established members felt the club was implementing.

The organisation of club tennis nights on Wednesdays was also a sphere where established members could assert their status superiority over others, through the ways in which they got preferential courts, playing partners and time slots. Afterwards, in the bar or clubhouse, the club hierarchy was enforced still further, through more subtle means involving the buying and consumption of drinks. This was a location where open sociability mixed sometimes uncomfortably with deliberate hierarchy reinforcement by established members.

While this present chapter illustrated the numerous areas where socially exclusive practices were manifest, the following chapter seeks to illuminate these phenomena further using Elias and Scotson's (1965/1994) Established-Outsider Relations theory as an analytical framework. This is regarded as a point of departure towards an explanation for the social exclusivity found in this tennis club microcosm.

¹ There seemed to be a wide array of nationalities other than British among the children in Sergey's sessions, particularly Polish, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Greek and Japanese.

Chapter 12: The Development of Established and Outsider Group Identities

This chapter attempts to analyse the findings from my ethnographic analysis by using Elias and Scotson's (1965/1994) theoretical framework from *The Established and the Outsiders*. It focuses on illuminating why inferior status members were bound within a complex structure that forced them to either seek constant approval from established members or openly resist their subordination and risk alienation. The framework also helps to illuminate the ways in which established feelings and beliefs came to influence people's self and group-identities, which, in this case, were determined in accordance with measures of suitability for membership among the established group. Examining how a figuration of the kind illustrated in the previous two chapters was able to develop at WRTC, with its inherent social hierarchy that allowed established members to treat new members in ways that could be described as callous or even discriminatory, is one of the two main aims of this chapter. The other is to understand why established members came to feel the need to exclude new members or deny them access to certain resources at the club, and why new members could not better resist and challenge their subordinate position. The considerable strength and explanatory purchase of Elias and Scotson's work here becomes apparent, as evidence presented earlier is explained within their theoretical framework.

The Emergence of an Established Group Identity

Difficulties during the 1970s and 80s helped strengthen the club members' solidarity and cohesion into a powerful group identity. Established members came to feel pride in their identity and recognised the benefits that it afforded; they regarded themselves as very fortunate. As new members joined the club, this identity became something charismatic; new members that were socially aspirational also, in many cases, recognised the benefits that membership of the established group might afford them. As members became more accepted over time, they moved slowly up the club social hierarchy; they became part of the established group themselves. This was not guaranteed, however, as members had to work hard to gain the acceptance of established members. Over time, opportunities for social mobility presented themselves and new

members sought the approval and acceptance of the established group in order to share in their charismatic group identity. Not only did this take a long time but also acceptance by the established members required a willingness to adhere to their code of behavioural etiquette, aspects of which were inherently undemocratic and discriminatory. In this context, however, the established group would not identify the exclusion of particular groups as something immoral, but simply as a necessary tool for their survival.

New members at WRTC were stigmatised upon their arrival and, for individual members to break free from that, they had to prove themselves to be “good” club members. This stigmatisation was manifest under the veil of what they regarded as superior club member characteristics: oldness of association, superior standard of play and correct adherence to the code of club etiquette. New members were generally regarded as socially inferior because they could not share in such valued characteristics of club membership. While they could be good tennis players, they were unlikely to be accepted if they did not show respect to established etiquette, the intricacies of which needed to be learnt over time as part of a distinctive club habitus. These feelings of social rank had been internalised by many of the established and, due to the compelling charisma of their group identity, some of the new members who had failed to be accepted into the established ranks had begun actually to “accept” and be resigned to their inferior status. It became apparent that both the established group’s feelings of superiority, or group charisma, and the concomitant new members’ feelings of inferiority, or group disgrace, were reflected in their own levels of self-respect when at the club. In both cases, their self-esteem was directly related to their collective esteem. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xxi) remarked:

Attaching the label of ‘lower human value’ to another group is one of the weapons used in a power struggle by superior groups as a means of maintaining their social superiority. In that situation the social slur cast by a more powerful upon a less powerful group usually enters the self-image of the latter and, thus, weakens and disarms them.

However, the identities that the established members had of both themselves and of the new members were based on exaggerations and tenuous examples. Established members regarded the behaviour of child new members as poor or unruly, without much

evidence to compare with their own children. Their identity was, thus, formed around examples taken from a “minority of the worst”. This was also true in terms of playing standard, with new members often thought of as being worse than established members, but little evidence was found to support this contention. Conversely, the identity of the established group as being superior in playing standard also came from a minority of its members, for example the first-team players or “ringers”. This is similar to what Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) identified in Winston Parva, where the established group used evidence from a minority of its members, a “minority of the best”, in order to bolster their own self-image and feelings of superiority.

The Importance of Group Cohesion

Why were the new members and children not able to create an identity for themselves, and thus mount an effective challenge to their subordinate position in the club? Because attrition in this group was high, many found it difficult to maintain relationships with other new members. The group lacked cohesion and therefore the means by which to come together and forge links with each other. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xix) remarked of the importance of group cohesion in mounting an effective challenge for power, in the following way:

One group has a higher cohesion rate than the other and this integration differential substantially contributes to the former’s power surplus; its greater cohesion enables such a group to reserve social positions with a high power potential of a different type for its members, thus in turn reinforcing its cohesion, and to exclude from them members of other groups.

It is suggested that the high attrition rate of new members, both adults and children, their lack of cohesion and the concomitant lack of representation on the club committee, meant that these groups had fewer means by which to challenge the negative identity attributed to them, or challenge club policy as a whole in their favour. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xviii) remarked on the established group in Winston Parva as follows:

Here one could see that ‘oldness’ of association, with all that it implied, was, on its own, able to create the degree of group cohesion, the collective identification, the commonality of norms, which are apt to induce the gratifying euphoria that

goes with the consciousness of belonging to a group of higher value and with the complementary contempt for other groups.

The cohesion of the established group brought with it considerable power in being able to effectively build a gratifying positive identity for itself, as well as a shameful negative identity for outsider groups. For the new members at WRTC, a positive group identity, which they had procured themselves, had not developed. Instead, their identity was based on the ignorant understanding that established members had of them. In short, the established group built an identity for the outsider groups, a they-image, as opposed to a we-image of the outsiders themselves. Van Stolk and Wouters (1987) found that the self-esteem and self-respect of established members was dependant primarily on what other established members thought of them, but the self-esteem and self-respect of outsiders was also measured by what the established thought of them. Thus, members of these outsider groups were always found wanting.

The new members lacked the charisma of the established group and the means and confidence to challenge the club hierarchy. They felt inferior through this lack of power potential and so many tended to accept their position instead of causing conflict through resistance. Thus, it became what Robert Merton (1968) would have called a “self-fulfilling prophecy”, as the new-members who had learnt the futility of resistance tended to act as though they were, in actual fact, inferior. They had learnt, either consciously or subconsciously, that this was the only way they could gain acceptance, by adhering to the undemocratic system of rank and deference. Initially, gaining acceptance as a socially inferior new member meant showing deference to established members and accepting poorer access to tennis resources. Because of its charisma, a number of new members aspired to join these ranks and so accepted this inferior position. They had learnt that resistance to their inferiority would not gain acceptance; it was not what being a “good” club member was about. Being excluded initially was regarded as a “rite of passage”. Subsequently, as new members climbed the social hierarchy themselves over time, they learnt to expect deference from even newer members and to treat them poorly if they did not observe this protocol. Of course, this led to further disintegration among this already socially inferior new member group, and prevented them from mounting a collective attack on the negative identity the established group had created for them. It was very much a “catch-22” situation, as they had become entangled in the very web that

prevented them from enjoying more power in the club, because they constantly measured themselves against the yardstick of their oppressors. Instead of rallying together with all the new members and juniors, they often conceded to the authority of the established group, giving the impression that they accepted their subordinate position with a resigned obedience; they behaved exactly according to the established norms and values. They were arguably unable to detach themselves effectively enough to see the bigger picture; thus reinforcing the structure of power differentials. Those who were less accepting of their inferiority made complaints, which tended to be ignored, and/or they simply left the club.

One new member, David, recognised the club's social hierarchy, and admitted he felt grieved paying the same as the established members but getting treated worse: "These guys are oblivious... or at least they don't really care that other members are not getting the value for money that they are". David acknowledged how longevity of membership as well as playing ability suggested your rank in the club hierarchy, by suggesting: "If we were much better, I suppose we'd be able to play with these guys". This shows that he regarded the onus to be on himself; he felt he had to become a better player in order to curtail the poor treatment he received by the established members. He tolerated his subordinate position and the poor treatment his status afforded with, what Elias and Scotson (1965/1994) might have described as, a sort of "puzzled resignation". While some new members were more openly resistant, others were more accepting. Wayne, a new member of two years, acknowledged that "the club is for them (the established members) and not us. But, I'm beginning not to mind". He acknowledged his inferior status within the club, and had begun to tolerate or perhaps even accept it. This might have been in order to secure ends to achieve social mobility for himself or because he had found it impossible to change the way established members thought of him as one of the new members. Van Stolk and Wouters (1987) and Wouters (1986) referred to this phenomenon, of inequalities that continued unchallenged, as "harmonious inequality". Muir (1991) also found this phenomenon in his study, related to the image poor players had of themselves. The better-standard club players regularly treated the weaker-standard club players poorly and with obvious contempt, but the latter group of members seemed to be resigned to their lower social status. Muir (1991, p.73)

explained: “It was difficult to understand why the members subjected to such apparent public rejection and even humiliation showed little or no emotion”.

Developing Relations between the Groups

To a certain but limited extent, opportunities were available for determined and aspirational new members to achieve a degree of social mobility and become established members themselves. However, rising up through the ranks was an arduous, time-consuming and often prostituting endeavour. One had to fit in, be the right sort of person and a good club member, which, for most, meant subscribing to all the club norms and values and undergoing a process of socialisation into the club. My own experiences as a new member were testimony to this process. During the first few weeks of membership, I was introduced to many of the established members of the club. Most new members would not have gone through this process but, as I was conducting research at the club and brought in by Paul, one of the most senior established members of the club, I was introduced to all of these people who were his friends. During the first month or so, however, it became clear that I was under careful watch by these members. Just because I was friendly with one of the senior members, this did not make my passage into the club hierarchy straightforward. The club members had to decide whether I was the right sort of person for the club. Evidently, they realised I was not after a couple of months when the behaviour of the established members who were once very friendly, forthcoming with conversation, generous with buying drinks, and willing to play tennis with me, soon began to change. They started to ignore me, made excuses to finish conversations, turned their backs to me at the bar, stopped offering to buy me a drink, refused to accept my offers to buy them drinks and refused to invite me to play tennis. This same phenomenon was reported by Muir (1991, p.71) in his analysis, as he remarked:

During the first few days of membership it seemed that the club was one of the friendliest places imaginable. I was often invited to play, and anyone sitting around was delighted to play a set or two. By the second week, however, this first impression gave way to a growing suspicion that some of the players were avoiding me. Those who had beaten me badly no longer welcomed me to play

and, when I invited them, they were found to be ‘too tired’, ‘going home’ or had ‘promised someone else’.

Like Muir, I had gone through the trial period for early acceptance into the established group at the club, but had not met the mark for what they required.

Embedded in these club norms and values were implicit relations of power and understandings of social hierarchy. For a new club member to fit in, he or she had to accept his or her inferior position and, thus, the superiority of others in the established group. To a considerable extent, however, this went against the seemingly “democratic” structure of what one might expect of a voluntary members club. Disdain and contempt were shown to members who did not exhibit the appropriate behavioural etiquette and deference to socially superior members. Therefore, club members were expected to substitute the normal values they might adhere to outside of the club in wider society for established values in the club that were inherently elitist at best or discriminatory at worst. However, without undergoing a full process of socialisation, how were new members and children to know of the deference expectations or general codes of behavioural etiquette of the higher status members? Examples were made out of those who were ignorant in this regard; thus, it was used as a source of power for established members.

Described in these terms, it seems hard to imagine an individual happily accepting these circumstances in order to achieve a reasonable level of status within the club. However, such was the compelling extent of the established members’ group identity and mutually supportive group charisma at WRTC that new members could often be found adopting established members’ values in order to try and fit in. New members, in their struggle for acceptance at the club, would measure their self-worth against that of the established members. Because a new member’s individual self-esteem was constantly dependant on what the established group thought of them, the established group identity was constantly reinforced by new members and was only seldom challenged. Those who decided to stay and attempt to challenge these norms and values risked alienation. This was one plausible reason why membership attrition from the new member group was so high. Those who took up membership often found the sacrifices they were forced to make outweighed the benefits and simply did not return. Several of the new members I met during my research said they were unlikely to renew

their membership, mainly due to the feeling that they did not “fit in” or lacked a “sense of belonging”. Others said they did not like the way they were treated and felt as though they were “not looked after”.

Attitudes to Change among the Established Group

A picture has been painted of the core established group being entirely cohesive and mutually supportive, but disagreements within this group were not uncommon. Relations within this group were dynamic and constantly in flux, as members fought for higher levels of status while others fell lower down the hierarchy. As in any social circle, differences of opinion between members were bound to occur. Within the established group at WRTC, much of their behaviour was geared towards advancing their own position up the social hierarchy. For some, it was competitive in nature, but this endeavour never overshadowed the larger purpose, that of fostering a superior collective identity and position relative to other groups within the wider figuration of the tennis club. During times of conflict with an external group, differences were temporarily forgotten as they supported one another through a common objective. It was clear that during the time of my research, power struggles between groups of this very character were evident. Members seemed more concerned with defending their group identity rather than their individual position within that group. This was because the club was in severe financial danger and had relinquished some of their autonomy to the LTA in exchange for their financial assistance. Difficulties at the club forced it to look extensively for new members and also shift its emphasis more towards children. This meant that the established group’s functional interdependence with outsider groups changed. The increasing financial difficulties thus placed WRTC members in an unfortunate position.

It became clear that the resultant changes, namely the increase in children’s membership, the change in coaching staff with Mark and Sergey and the slight shift in emphasis towards the new members and children, had caused a significant amount of upheaval among the established membership. Complaints were filed in the form of formal letters and verbal disagreements with committee members and coaches.¹ Whilst the concerns voiced by the established members tended to regard issues such as the loss

of court priority to the coaches, misbehaviour on court by new members and the disruption of peace and quiet by the influx of new children at the club, it was clear that feelings of resentment ran much deeper. Even so, little could be done to halt these processes in the light of the club's heightened state of financial alarm; a shift in emphasis and thus power chances towards new members seemed inevitable. Relations between the established group and the new members had, I strongly suggest, always been governed by strict rules and a substantial degree of inequality. The progression of new members up the social hierarchy, from being marginalised initially towards obtaining an increasing amount of influence, was regarded as a natural "rite of passage". This system of socialisation into the club was understood implicitly and, during times of harmonious power relations, I suspect it was more secure and uncontested. However, when the balance of power shifted in these last few years, the inequality became less harmonious and more contested. In effect, the power of the established group became increasingly insecure and, in their frustration and fear of losing their heightened positions of status, their behaviour towards the now threatening new members changed in two important ways.

Firstly, the established group came to demand of themselves a higher level of behavioural self-restraint, as evident in the demand for knowledge of club rules and the club constitution, for example during matters of court allocation; the need to understand and enforce playing rules and conventions, for example relaxing the net on grass courts; and the demand for behavioural restraint in playing etiquette, for example avoiding overly-aggressive play, particularly when playing with older females. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xxii) said of the established members' willingness in this regard:

Pride in the incarnation of one's group charisma in one's own person, the satisfaction of belonging to and representing a powerful and, according to one's emotional equation, uniquely valuable and humanly superior group is functionally bound up with its members' willingness to submit to the obligations imposed upon them by membership of that group.

Membership of the established group came to demand a stricter and more formalised self-regulation of behaviour, and this was the price of established membership. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.1) remarked further: "One of the standard devices of an establishment under strain is that of tightening the restraints that its members impose

upon themselves, as well as upon the wider group ruled by it". Because of the need to tighten restraints in order to demarcate themselves from their status inferiors, individual members of the established group were forced into regulating their own behaviour. The strength of this imposition was considerable, because "the power ratio of a group member diminishes if his or her behaviour and feeling runs counter to group opinion" (Elias and Scotson, 1994, p.xxxix). Members of this group, however, were offered "status and power rewards" as compensation for the "frustration of restraints and the relative loss of spontaneity" (Elias & Scotson, 1965/1994). Certainly, for their troubles, those who strictly adhered to the code of behavioural etiquette could reserve a share in the gratifying group charisma; thus, they could lay claim to being a member of the socially superior group. This further reinforced the collective identity of the established group relative to new members who failed to adhere to this code of etiquette, which helped to justify the poor treatment of outsider members.

Secondly, the established group increasingly resorted to unsavoury behaviour, showing contempt, disdain, disrespect or plain and simple rudeness towards members of the subordinate outsider groups, including both adult and child new members and the coaches Mark and Sergey. Interactions between the two groups had become contentious, and this was the outcome of changing balances of power. This can be exemplified through the established members' apparent ignorance and intolerance of juniors and those associated with them, such as their parents and the club coaches, and through avoiding playing with or against new members, especially on Wednesday club nights. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xlvi) offered an explanation of this phenomenon, as follows:

The very existence of interdependent outsiders who share neither the fund of common memories nor, as it appears, the same norms of respectability as the established group, acts as an irritant; it is perceived by the members of the latter as an attack against their own we-image and we-ideal. The sharp rejection and stigmatisation of the outsiders are the counter-attack. The established group feels compelled to repulse what they experience as a threat to both their power superiority and their human superiority, their group charisma, by means of a counter-attack, a continuous rejection and humiliation of the other group.

The power of the established group was no longer secure, so they began to exclude others who posed a threat to their way of life at the club. This was in order to retain their

dominance as well as the meaningful and enjoyable aspects of club life they had worked hard to achieve over the years. It seemed, of course, that the outsiders had little intention of attacking the established members' ways of life at the club, their norms and values. Nor, perhaps, were they even aware of the threat they posed to them. Their main objectives were to make friends and play tennis. Nevertheless, as an unintended consequence of wider social processes, both groups were tied together in an unhappy and often humiliating interdependence.

What Happens Now? Power Struggles in Future Directives

There is a sense of irony surrounding the situation at WRTC in relation to their attitudes towards change, namely their ability, or lack thereof, to reproduce a sense of belonging among its membership. In the light of its recent problems, the balance of power shifted to allow the inclusion of previously outsider groups, which was regarded as necessary for the club's survival. However, many established members continued to hold on to the belief that continued exclusivity would "save" the club; closing their ranks was the solution to their problems. Whereas, in the past, the collective bonding and cohesion actually facilitated the survival of the club, it now threatened to collapse it. It is not outside the realms of possibility that WRTC, a club of over 500 members and over a dozen courts, could collapse under the weight of its financial insecurity. Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xliv) warned us of the extent to which an overgrown and inaccurate perception of a group's identity could lead to problems if they are challenged and positioned in an unfamiliar situation, writing:

The discrepancy between the actual and the imagined position of one's group among others can entail a mistaken assessment of one's power resources and, as a consequence, suggest a group strategy in pursuit of a fantasy image of one's own greatness that may lead to self-destruction as well as to destruction of other interdependent groups . . . An overgrown we-ideal is a symptom of a collective illness.

An example of this "collective illness" was given by Van Dantzig (1974), cited by Elias and Scotson (1994, p. xlv), in the following passage:

The author described the fortunes of a group of 452 people who had lived all their lives in a small Dutch village community, when in November 1944 they were suddenly uprooted and as a reprisal sent – as a group – to a concentration camp. They remained, as a matter of course, obedient to the old village norms, i.e., they worked as hard as before, took the pauses they thought justified, showed their indignity over several aspects of camp life, etc. In short, being together, they were unable to behave in a manner of which public opinion in the village would have disapproved. The automatic reciprocal control of the villagers did not allow them to adjust their standards of conduct to the completely different conditions of life in a concentration camp. Only 30 of them came back to Putten, where 3 more died. One can, of course, not be certain that their survival rate would have been greater if they had not been sent there as a still reasonably integrated group. What one can say, however, is that this fact – the fact that they were sent to a concentration camp as a group (which in other cases is often considered as a positive factor of survival) – in this case contributed to their very low survival rate.

In short, the inhabitants of Putten were unable to detach themselves sufficiently from the ways of life that had previously ensured their endurance, but which, in this instance, probably contributed to their low survival rate. While this example presents an extreme example of how a lack of emotional detachment can be a collective illness, it is felt that established members of WRTC could be under threat, in a similar way, as their strengthening and hardening group identity, and connected stubbornness and resistance to change, could incapacitate them as a result of their inability to exhibit a measure of detachment in the light of their current struggles.

It was undoubtedly the case that for most of the established members at WRTC, the increasing inclusion of new members, particularly children, and perhaps even the gradual shift in emphasis towards them and their development was a bitter pill to swallow. However, in terms of the challenges to the established group's hegemony, the situation at the club was likely to get worse for them before it got better. The strength of resistance to change at WRTC was shaped by the established group's uncompromising inability to foresee the changes that were needed in order to survive financially. Their strong we-ideal had contributed to their inability for detachment. The ability to detach

oneself from immediate concerns in order to attempt to foresee changes and recognise appropriate actions ahead of time is undoubtedly a powerful tool in particular situations. During the time of my investigation, only a very small number of established members were able to detach themselves sufficiently, in order to recognise what changes were needed to prolong the life of the club, however difficult to accept. One of them was the club PR and development director Paul, and his story provides testament to the complex struggles of the establish group.

Paul personified the growing conflict for change at WRTC. It was upon his recommendations that the club employed the two new coaches and strove for Mini Tennis accreditation, a club sponsor and LTA financial assistance. Largely going against the grain of established opinion at WRTC, Paul had the foresight required to help the club survive, but he was not widely supported by the established membership. This was despite being a leading member of the club and thus an individual high up the social hierarchy.

Put simply, while Paul conformed to all the norms and values of the established members, he tended to stand out and stand up for what he believed was necessary for the club's survival. In effect, he led the resistance against his own group. To some members, thus, he could be regarded as a rebel or traitor, but he did not justify his behaviour because of an openly expressed altruistic motivation to help remove barriers to participation, in order for the LTA to develop a British champion, or because of a moral obligation to provide equality of access for members old and new. Rather, put simply, he believed the club needed to change if it was to survive. Underlying this expressed motivation might have laid these altruistic intentions, but he did not express them outright because to do so might have threatened his own status and the credibility of the plans he proposed.

The extent to which he was seen as a threat to the established ideals reached its peak during the WRTC AGM in 2005, where he publicly challenged the club chairman for leadership. In the crowded clubhouse, heated arguments ensued between the competing men and the club had a vote for the chair. It was clear that merely showing the slightest bit of resistance to the norm was unacceptable for most members, as they openly questioned why Paul was "turning his back" on his own group. To challenge openly the established figure of authority in this way went against the code of etiquette,

and, not surprisingly, the majority of votes ended up against him. On the night of the meeting, which I attended, I wrote:

The resistance to change as evidenced tonight was huge. ‘The incumbent is always at an advantage’, Paul said to me after his loss... Before the election, members actually came up to Paul and challenged him: ‘You can’t do that. You can’t challenge him. This isn’t what we do here’ (WRTC field notes).

Paul believed the club would be at a huge risk if it did not change its attitude with regard to the inclusion of new members. However, he was one of only a handful in the established group who openly acknowledged the dangers of being stubborn in the face of change, and resisting what was necessary for survival. Perhaps, therefore, it was not necessarily Paul whom the established members feared and resisted, but what he represented, which was an indication of their diminishing power chances. However, for the club to survive ultimately, at least a majority of its established membership would have to accept the inevitable necessity of marked change.

Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to analyse the findings from WRTC using the theoretical framework of “Established and Outsider Relations” from Elias and Scotson (1965/1994). The strong group cohesion of the established members was the first and most fundamental feature of this group, and this stable characteristic made it incredibly difficult for new members to mount an effective challenge to their subordination in the club. The new members, conversely, were not cohesive; they had no shared history and there was a high level of attrition from their group. This meant that, in effect, new members could not oppose the negative image or identity that they had been labelled with by the established group.

Some evidence was provided that illustrated the futility of opposing the established code of practice and social etiquette. For new members to be accepted in the club, they had to acknowledge their inferiority as a temporary rite of passage, and act in accordance with perceived behavioural norms associated with inferior groups. This meant they had to show deference to others of higher rank, but also contempt for and an expectation of deference from those lower in rank. This created a difficult “catch 22”

situation in the club with regard to how more established and socially aspirational new members would treat the newest and lowest ranking new members. The evidence presented helps to paint the picture that, for many new members, trying to fit in and be accepted among the established group is more important than treating all members equally and fairly. I feel that by applying Elias and Scotson's theoretical framework to this dynamic social structure helps to tease out its inherent complexities.

The chapter finishes by examining the club in the context of future directives. The shifting functional interdependence between established and new members is set to continue, and the fear is that by ignoring this development, the precarious financial situation at the club will only worsen. It is at this juncture where the Eliasian developmental framework helps to illustrate the connections between developments on a broader macro level and a narrower micro-level figuration of a tennis club.

The final concluding section of this thesis reflects on the practice of conducting research, putting some of the underlying issues of class into context, and also ties together the main strands from all three sections to offer general conclusions, which are both theoretical and applied. *Appendix 6* offers some policy recommendations to the LTA.

¹ As they were private and confidential documents, I was not allowed to see the letters written by the club members themselves, but nevertheless I was told of their content and emphasis.

SECTION 5: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 13: Personal Reflections on the Research Process: Reflexivity and Involvement and Detachment

The endeavour to produce objective research has characterised the development of science for centuries. Especially in qualitative social scientific research, there has been a growing recognition that researchers can not possibly produce either entirely objective or subjective research (Bryman, 2001; Davies, 1999). Davies (1999, p.3) wrote that “we cannot research something with which we have no contact, from which we are completely isolated. All researchers are to some degree connected to, a part of, the object of their research”. Some sociologists, however, have even gone so far as to critique the false dichotomy posed by the terms “objective” and “subjective”. Elias (1956) preferred to think in terms of conducting research with varying degrees of “involvement” and “detachment”. Contrary to common criticism (e.g. Hargreaves, 1992), though, Elias did not suggest that complete detachment was necessary or even possible, noting that sociologists are always part of the phenomenon being examined. Van Krieken (1998, p.7) stressed that “social-scientific knowledge develops within the society it is part of, not independent of it”; a social scientist, thus, is inevitably involved in his or her research. Elaborating on this point, Murphy et al. (2000, p.104) wrote:

One important implication of Elias’s approach is that researchers can realistically only aspire to develop explanations that have a greater degree of adequacy than preceding explanations. Notions such as ‘ultimate truth’ and ‘complete detachment’ have no place in his approach.

Along these lines, Elias (1956) called for an attempt to balance one’s “values”; thus, the role of a sociologist, particularly one adopting a figurational approach, should be to recognise as much as possible their involvement, and strive to distance oneself as far as possible from one’s own values. In this way, Elias argued more “object-adequate” information can be generated through research.

Elias noted that whilst recognising one’s involvement, though, it does not mean he or she should necessarily strive to avoid it throughout the whole research process. There are many instances where involvement with the object being examined can actually help to uncover what Elias called more “reality-congruent” information. In this way, navigating the “correct” path to obtain information of this type becomes incredibly

complicated, but it is widely acknowledged that being reflexive, that is, “turning back on oneself”, questioning the position of the researcher and his or her values throughout the research process, will help in the endeavour for achieving more adequate explanations for social phenomena (Davies, 1999; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Burdsey (2004, p.14) made the suggestion that the researcher is as much a participant in the research process as those being examined; thus he or she does not and cannot “operate in an impartial, asocial context”. Brackenridge (1999) also made the point that being reflexive provides an ideal opportunity for the researcher to explore the reasons for choosing their particular research topic and to reflect on the methods used.

An attempt was made to be reflexive in this investigation, to recognise the values that I, as a social-scientist, imparted on all aspects of the research process. The “research process”, can be divided, broadly, into three main parts: i) the “research strategy”; the identification of the subject to be examined, the production of research aims and research questions and the decision of what theoretical underpinning would be of most use in answering the questions formulated; ii) the research methods; the decision of which methods to use, the selection of and arrangements made for possible participants or sites of research and the actual conducting of research; and iii) the analysis; the selection of which information to use in the investigation and which to avoid, as well as the application or testing of theory upon the research findings.

The main aims of this chapter are to reflect upon some of the aspects of my methodology that were introduced and described in *Chapter 3*, and to provide a “reflexive” account of any issues that arose during the entire research process, particularly those issues that significantly influenced the ways in which this investigation into British tennis was conducted. Another aim of this chapter is to reflect upon the ways in which I sought to balance my “involvement and detachment”, and set out how this was achieved through the various stages of research. Firstly, I will consider the origins of my research ideas, to reflect upon where the roots of my own fascinations, understandings and preconceptions of the issue lay. Secondly, documents were analysed as a starting point to the research, so I intend to examine the values underlying some of these documents. I begin by exploring the socially constructed relationship between the LTA and the print media, to bring to light the nature of their interdependence. This provides some insight into the constraints with which the LTA must deal on a regular

basis. Thirdly, I give some consideration to the challenges and opportunities faced during the interview phase of my research, in doing so, also providing insight into some of the inherent social class issues that came to, at times, undermine my research intentions in what I came to realise was an environment with real and strong structural norms and values. Finally, I reflect on the challenge of balancing roles in my ethnography.

The Initial Stages of Exploration: Challenges and Opportunities

The choice of topic for investigation developed out of a personal fascination with the long-term changes noticeable in the social position of children in British tennis. My first initial research aim was to investigate why, despite the numerous schemes and programmes implemented by the LTA, children continued to be excluded or marginalised in many tennis clubs. While this question was primarily related to the issue of children's relative inclusion/exclusion at present, I was disinclined to limit my investigation to this specific period. I became attentive to the possibility that a long-term developmental approach would help to uncover answers to questions that related to a relatively recent social issue. In this way, I focused on the long-term developments in British tennis since the mid-late 19th century. Essentially, therefore, the main motivation was to seek the roots of social exclusion, or the power struggles between social groups in which exclusion emerged, both in wider society and specifically in tennis. This emerged many decades before the actual social issue emerged.

My second aim, initially, was to compare the respective historical developments of the LTA with tennis clubs in general. While the LTA had become more commercialised, professionalised and, essentially, more convinced of the general benefits of inclusion in tennis, the question arose of why tennis clubs have not undergone the same marked process of change as the LTA with regard to the centrality of children and of other excluded groups like the working classes. For both of these aims, documentary analysis was thought the most useful starting point. As with all documentary analyses, however, it was inevitable that a substantial amount of information was left undiscovered. Nevertheless, upon reflection, it is felt that the documentary analysis conducted was fairly thorough and comprehensive, in terms of its

remit to gather information to illuminate the many ties of interdependence in the British tennis figuration. It is important, in this regard, to show an awareness of the extent to which these sources, or rather their respective authors, have expressed a relatively biased or overly-involved position. This is especially the case with regards to the stance of both the LTA and journalists. Thus, a critique of these sources now follows.

Both the LTA and journalists are enmeshed within binding figurations, the unintended outcomes of which continue to force them into writing about issues from a particularly biased perspective. It is evident that up until the early 2000s, much of the LTA literature has tended to give a one-dimensional perspective; that is, from the LTA's point of view solely, which was often supportive of themselves as an organisation and the progress they had achieved, to the disregard of potentially conflicting and negative opinions. For example, during times when the standard of British players in major tournaments had been particularly poor, the LTA chose to focus on the positive changes that had happened elsewhere, such as in the realms of coaching or club development. Further, statistics were often manipulated to "paint a rosy picture" of British tennis, when ostensible evidence suggested otherwise. For example, John Crowther remarked in 1997, when Rusedski and Henman were both in the world's top-twenty, that Britain was ranked 4th behind only the US, Spain and Sweden on the international rankings based on the two best players (cited in Parsons, 1997, November 26). This statistic took the attention away from the fact that the third best British player was ranked 145th, and also that neither of the top two players had won a major tournament despite their high rankings. During this time, therefore, the LTA presented a rather skewed picture of British tennis in a false-positive light. On this subject, Bierley (2002, January 10) wrote the following:

The LTA persistently fails to achieve anything... the situation is desperate, parlous and getting worse... yet the LTA continues to produce any number of meaningless statements claiming that progress is being made and that the infrastructure has been put in place that will ensure tennis will be at the future forefront of British sport. It is a sham, a charade... the decline is obvious, except to the LTA.

From the early 2000s, after constant and relentless condemnation from the press over the years, it seemed the LTA began to acknowledge openly its failings and also its

new responsibilities. John Crowther (cited in Mott, 2001, June 29) remarked in 2001, for example:

If any other Grand Slam nation kept on producing results like these, they would be called absolutely pathetic. It would become a national issue. Yet we have allowed this to be regarded as the norm. It's not good enough. It's time for radical change. The time is now.

Mott (2001, June 29) declared of this statement that, "No leader within the governing body of tennis has ever spoken so forcefully", and there was a strong suggestion that this gradual shift in position represented an important and positive step for the LTA. More crucially, however, this shift in stance also clearly brought to light the ongoing power struggle between the LTA and the British press; it showed how the LTA's actions were constrained by others. Perhaps the LTA felt compelled to adopt a new stance in order to satisfy its critics and stakeholders, most notably, the press and the general public. They are also answerable to their corporate partners who demand progress or, if no progress is being made, at least a suggestion that the organisation has a "realistic" and "rational" grasp of what needs to be done in order to obtain positive results. Sponsors would not want to associate themselves with a brand that has a negative image, and Crowther undoubtedly recognised that the continuous denial of problems would have tainted the image of the LTA.

To emphasize the continuation of this trend for self-reflection, the 2006 *Blueprint for British Tennis* explicitly set out to highlight weaknesses in the structure of tennis in Britain and of the LTA's management in general. In the light of the growing pot of money that has become available to invest, facilitated in part by the successful 2012 London Olympic bid, it is clear that governing bodies like the LTA have come to recognise the strong competition they are in with other governing bodies. While results might remain poor, the suggestion that the initial steps towards progress are being taken nevertheless indicates a proactive position, one which the LTA have come to accentuate recently in order to receive over £9 million of Sport England funding.

While the LTA are concerned with responding to their critics through either positive or negative means as described above, in many ways, journalists are concerned with focusing on primarily negative aspects of tennis in Britain or of the LTA as an organisation. This is because journalists, themselves, are bound within a figuration that

is highly competitive and demands that stories and news reports are as interesting as possible. Stories are often dramatised and sensationalised, giving the impression that the respective journalist was able to uncover something particularly “new”, and evidence of newspaper articles taken from the mid 1990s until now suggests that British tennis has tended to be presented in negative ways. Focus has often been unduly laden with the poorer aspects of the sport, presenting bad results by British players, internal problems at the LTA, falling participation rates and falling numbers of clubs, with comparisons made with other countries, particularly those in Western Europe. In an article entitled *Looking up from a long way down*, Buckley (2001, June 24), for example, wrote of women’s tennis in Britain as follows:

Women’s tennis in this country in the run-up to Wimbledon is in something of a state. Things look bleak, as the panel of losers detailing British players’ results on grass this season shows. Getting past the qualifying rounds is an achievement.

Henderson (2001, March 4) also wrote of the women’s game as follows:

The statistics could hardly be more damning. There are 33 different countries with players in the top 100 of the women’s game, among them such tennis hotbeds as Luxembourg, Columbia and Uzbekistan... Great Britain, the nation that invented the game just over a century ago and still boasts the most important tournament in the calendar, has none.

Of the LTA’s responsibility for this situation, Henderson (2001, March 4) continued:

For 20 years now the All England Club have handed over millions of pounds every year from the profits of Wimbledon to the LTA for the development of young – male and female – talent in this country... The return on that investment has been spectacularly poor.

Arguments in these regards are set against high British expectations, given the fact that this country hosts the most prestigious tennis tournament in the world and the LTA ranks as one of the wealthiest British governing bodies for sport. Claire Ward wrote in *The Guardian*, for example, of high expectations for success as follows:

We British live in a false hope when it comes to our sporting chances... We have not had a British Wimbledon men’s champion since Fred Perry in 1936... It’s just not good enough and it leaves me wondering where the millions of pounds

that are taken in the Wimbledon fortnight are spent as it seems that little of it is finding its way to the grass roots (Ward, 2003, June 30).

Evidence suggests that only rarely do journalists praise the LTA.

It is clear that the relationship between the LTA and journalists is complex and underpinned by ties of functional interdependence. While these two institutions consistently present diametrically opposing viewpoints, they have developed to become functionally reliant on each other. Primarily, the LTA have come to rely on the media to promote the sport of tennis, while the media have come to rely on the LTA to get news stories. Of course, this relationship has come to bring problems to the LTA in terms of the way it manages itself, as Rebecca Miskin brought to light in the following passage:

Governing bodies generally tend not to get praised. When things aren't working then it's the governing body's fault; it is part of what the media does. Every lack of success has someone to blame, and it might sometimes be... it goes round and, ooh it's the governing body's fault. How do we deal with that? We take it on the chin. We listen to the merits of some of the points. If there is, then you take action. But equally, not to run the sport based on the latest fad in the media. I think it's important to have a cohesive strategy with focus. And this doesn't mean necessarily that it's whatever the latest thing is. You see with Beckham, he goes from hero to villain. If the media chose the team all the time, they would love the managers and then hate them. This is part of the insatiable media frenzy we have in this country. That is part and parcel of it. The main thing is the more we can get tennis in the media the better it is. We can get a lot of opportunities to inspire people to play (personal communication, August 19, 2004)

It is clear that while the respective positions of journalists and the LTA can be regarded as biased or too "involved", the use of their written sources became, nevertheless, particularly valuable. However, this was mainly through supplementing the information obtained from primary research, which, in the earliest stages of the research process, included the thirty semi-structured interviews conducted. The following section offers a reflexive account of my position as a researching during the interview phase.

The Interview Phase: Challenges and Opportunities

The process of arranging, conducting and analysing the interviews was crucial in the light of my endeavour to be reflexive and balance my involvement and detachment. Two important areas are now discussed in this regard. Firstly, some of the problems in relation to involvement and detachment in interviewing are considered. Secondly, the interview phase is analysed as part of the research process, in which my own personal development is considered in the light of developments in my research ideas.

It is important to note that prior to this investigation, I had little involvement or specialist knowledge of what went on in British tennis. While I had learnt to play tennis from an early age, I had neither been a member of a tennis club, nor had I ever followed the fortunes of British players with anything more than casual interest. I had not experienced, personally, any type of exclusion in tennis, and I did not possess anything more than a basic understanding of the important issues in the sport. For these reasons, I was a relative outsider in the world of British tennis. This was not regarded necessarily as a disadvantage, though, as my position as a relatively “detached” outsider afforded me a unique standpoint. I was unhampered by major preconceived ideas or taken-for-granted assumptions of what the main problems were, who was responsible for them or how best to solve them. In the past, there have been a number of individuals responsible for conducting investigations in British tennis, like those commissioned by government or governing bodies like the LTA, ITF, the DCMS or Sport England; media groups like the BBC or newspaper journalists; and, even relatively independent groups like the AELTC or charities associated with governing bodies, like the Tennis Foundation. Unlike the researchers commissioned by these organisations, however, I had no “axe to grind” and was not persuaded to focus unduly on any particular perspective due to my particular job or position within the industry. My endeavour for relative detachment was neither forced nor unnatural. I did not have to try to remain detached; this was largely unavoidable. Over time, my knowledge of British tennis grew, together with an understanding of some of the inherent issues that people face in the sport, through the process of conducting interviews as well as other forms of involvement in the sport.

My first involvement in British tennis came when I had negotiated a voluntary position in the organisation of the “Tennis Show” held at Earl’s Court over a long

weekend in May, 2004. Representatives were present from the LTA and David Lloyd, as well as other businesses and charities involved in British tennis. Guests also included a number of elite-level coaches, and the event was mainly visited by members of the public with an active interest or involvement in the sport. My roles were, essentially, the first port-of-call for visitors, offering information on all aspects of the event; a media liaison, responsible for distributing information packs to media representatives and collating basic information for them to use in press releases; and, effectively, lodging the visitors' complaints, of which there were many. My voluntary position of assistance in the organisation of the event was agreed upon in exchange for the opportunities offered for me to make contacts and establish leads upon which to organise interviews for my research at a later date. Even from these early encounters, I had to ensure that my behaviour towards the potential interview subjects was respectful, courteous and, generally, professional. I found the relentless subscription to these behavioural requirements challenging at times, however, as the following anecdote highlights.

On the last day of the show, after having received and dealt with countless complaints from visitors on numerous subjects, such as the poor quantity of purchasable tennis apparel on offer, the lack of fun activities for children, the relatively poor value-for-money of the event and, pertinently, the lack of LTA presence, I recounted these criticisms to some of the younger coaches with whom I had made an acquaintance. Within earshot, however, was the LTA Director of Development, Rebecca Miskin. Minutes later she gave me a severe telling off, having felt I was in no position to condemn the organisation she worked for on account of largely anecdotal criticisms. It was clear to me that her defensiveness was related to my inappropriate behaviour as I broke a severe taboo by speaking, essentially, out of turn. This was not "the done thing" in British tennis. As I wanted to interview her, I offered an apology and, in this action, I demonstrated to her my respect for the norms of behaviour expected in the particular sub-culture she was involved within; I showed courtesy and restraint.

Over time, as I moved on to interview my initial contacts from the Tennis Show, there took place a process of accommodation with respect to the behavioural expectations of those in the British tennis figuration. I worked constantly at "fitting in", and this need facilitated a noticeable change in a number of aspects of my behaviour when in contact with these people. Not only did I take extensive measures to make

certain I was seen as genuine, credible and professional, but, specifically, I found myself speaking more politely, with an arguably softer and more refined accent, and dressing more “professionally”, wearing a suit and tie. These behavioural adjustments occurred not just in the inter-personal encounters of the interviews themselves, but also, in some cases, when on the phone attempting to arrange interviews. The language used in written emails and letters to these contacts was also noticeably softened. These and other minor adjustments made to my behaviour came out of both learned experience and anticipated feedback. For example, I can recall times when, in the middle of a phone conversation to a prospective interviewee, I deliberately, but not necessarily consciously, changed the accent and/or tone of my voice to mirror theirs. This was not a deliberate attempt to parody these individuals, but rather was an effort, as Burdsey (2003, p.27) commented, to “manage my appearance to meet the needs of the situation and avoid ‘sticking out’”. Indeed, it appeared that my requests for interviews were looked on more favourably after this slight change in behaviour, as I was more easily identifiable as comfortably “one of their own”. The success of this strategy led me, later on, to adjust my behaviour in anticipation of how people in this group might react, focusing on and adhering to aspects of behaviour that I came to realise they valued. Shaffir’s (1998, p.53) words were poignant, as she remarked: “The investigator must marshal an appropriate self presentation along with a convincing account to gain admission to a social circle or set of activities that may be sealed to outsiders”.

Over time, the norms of the British tennis sub-culture were internalised and became second nature to me. The cultural capital thus became part of my developing habitus. However, whilst the British tennis sub-culture could be described as mirroring middle or “upper-middle-class” norms and values generally, the status of being ostensibly middle-class and “white” and “British” myself certainly eased my movement among this group. Although I have little evidence beyond the anecdotal in support of this claim, it does seem ironic that while measures are being taken to help ensure working-class inclusion in tennis, I, as a white, middle-class young man, felt the need to modify and restrain my behaviour still further in order to gain access. This leads me to speculate that, had I been working-class in appearance and part of an ethnic minority, my access might have been even more restricted.

These anecdotes highlight that, while I was presented with opportunities to take a more detached position at times, in many ways and for many reasons, however, I was unwilling to do so; had I done so, I would have risked missing opportunities for an interview, or risked making my interview participants feel uncomfortable in my presence. In large part, I was conscious of my attempts to “fit in”, and it was felt that my active involvement was conducive to obtaining reality-congruent information and conducting successful research.

Reflecting on his anthropological analysis of football hooligans in Sheffield, Gary Armstrong (1993, p.17) stated:

The task of the researcher must always be to ‘fit in’ and act as naturally as possible... but when researching with groups of people, the primary aim is to be both known and popular. When these two elements are combined, people talk to you.

Definitely, efforts were made during the interview phase to become “known and popular”, and while many of my initial interviewees were those who had been present at the Tennis Show, later on they were selected based on recommendations from this first batch. While the primary and secondary goals of my interviews were to gain insight and to fit in, respectively, a tertiary objective was to “impress” those I interviewed so they would be willing to pass me on to their contacts for later interviews. The “snowballing” technique of interviewee selection, which Giulianotti (1995) recommended, was particularly successful, as I found it more challenging gaining access to individuals to whom I was unknown. I purposely selected my potential interview subjects, based on a “hunch” that they would be able to offer me useful information or a particularly interesting perspective. Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p.57) pointed out that the goal of this sampling technique is not

to build a random sample, but rather to select persons or settings that we think represent the range of experience on the phenomenon in which we are interested. Thus, it is our working knowledge of the contexts of the individuals and settings that lead us to select them for initial inclusion in our study.

In most cases, the “heads” of organisations were approached, as I felt they would be the most experienced and knowledgeable. Also, my aim to gather interview data from a cross-section of the British tennis industry helped me to recognise a number of we and I-

perspectives. So, as my understanding of these various perspectives grew, I argue that my active involvement in purposefully selecting interviewees allowed me to gain a better understanding of how the British tennis figuration was assembled and how power was contested within it.

In time, my conceptualisation of “they-perspectives” improved, as did my subject knowledge and general understanding of the British tennis figuration, which were outcomes of my personal development throughout the research process. Not only did my confidence in conducting interviews increase, but this also impacted on the calibre of people I approached for interviews. At first, I was happy to conduct interviews with whomever I could find, but later I approached some of the more high-calibre and pivotal figures in the industry, such as LTA executives, elite-level players and coaches, and other well-known and well-respected individuals. To arrange interviews with these people, I found myself “name-dropping”, which had the effects, both, of adding credibility to my research, and of massaging the respective egos of those individuals whom I was approaching, by associating them with others of high status. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggested that it was important to be entirely honest with interviewees, but I found this approach constraining. On the phone and in emails to people I was approaching for interviews, I found myself changing slightly the description of what my research was about in order to make it more appealing to them. For example, when trying to get an interview with someone from a club, I would play up the emphasis of social exclusion in tennis clubs in order to make it appear that their input, as someone who dealt with this issue, was pivotal to my research. When trying to get an interview with people at tennis academies or elite-level players, I described the aspect of talent development as crucial, as this was an area they would know lots about and have an interesting opinion on. These developments could be seen as a reflection of the growing awareness I had of the precariousness of research and the extent to which a degree of “involvement” was crucial to its success.

During the process of self-development, the depth and sensitivity of questions that I asked my interviewees increased and the information that I took from each interview became more focused, as did the general direction of my research. Pertinently, the focus began to shift most noticeably towards issues surrounding social class and age differences as ways of helping to explain, both, differences in the treatment of children,

and the types of exclusion found in tennis clubs. My appreciation for the complexity of social exclusion as a subject matter grew considerably, and I was able to ask my later interviewees about class and age differences and the impact they felt this had on participation. Interestingly, some of the numerous examples recounted to me of exclusion found in clubs contradicted the rather simple dichotomous conceptualisations of exclusion that were put forward in LTA discourse. Sally Parsonage, for example, provided one such stimulating anecdote:

The LTA has tried very very hard to do away with things like ‘all-whites’ rules, and ‘playing-in’... But I mean, it happened to me not so long ago with a club down in Sevenoaks. They said ‘you’ve got to play with the ladies captain’. I thought, ‘do you not want my membership?’ (personal communication, August 24, 2004).

The notion that a white, middle-aged, well-spoken and moreover competent tennis player should get treated with apparent coldness by members at a new club challenged these dichotomous conceptions of social exclusion and spoke volumes about the complexity of the issues surrounding social exclusion in British tennis. However, whilst I was not, at this stage, in a position to contest fully the myths surrounding age and class exclusion that were put forward in LTA and most media discourse, I nevertheless became sceptical of them. Seeking to expose the culture of a British tennis club underpinned my motivation to conduct ethnographic research within one. I will now reflect upon this period of my research, in view of the issues surrounding my relative levels of involvement and detachment.

The “Active” Ethnography Phase: Challenges and Opportunities

As with all qualitative research methods, major challenges are presented in the attempt to obtain knowledge that is honest and truthful, and portrays an adequate interpretation of social structures. Ethnography is particularly challenging because of the high levels of involvement that are inevitable in all of the methods that are employed (Davies, 1999). My involvement stretched far deeper, however, and even influenced the initial choice of site for research.

During the ethnography, I anticipated having to learn a whole host of new and different ways of behaving in order to “fit in” and conduct good research within the specific club. In essence, I had to obtain the necessary cultural capital. This was not a simple process, however, due to my research intentions and the attitudes and reactions of important club members to the precarious position I had within the club.

Including the gatekeeper to the club, Paul, there were approximately ten club members (i.e. two percent of the total club membership) who were aware that my attendance was for the purpose of conducting research. Aside from Paul, though, these members had little knowledge of exactly what I was investigating or analysing; many believed my research was to help evaluate the club, for the benefit of the club itself. Members were initially both curiously interested in me, and yet forthcoming with information. This also put me in an interesting position in relation to the established member group. As a new member at the club, my experiences were not and could not have been representative of all members. Generally, my perspective was of a new member, and insights were gained in terms of uncovering how a new member was treated by more established members and other new members. Nevertheless, I was still able to gain some insights into how established members regarded and conducted themselves through observations and inter-personal communications. I was often introduced to members of the established group through Paul, a highly regarded established member himself, and this allowed me to establish some form of rapport with these members. Therefore, while I could not “feel” what it was like to be an established member at the club, I was able to gain some insights that other new members, perhaps, would not have had access to. Macphail (2004, p.228) suggested the following:

Spending time with people builds up a rapport that allows the researcher to be party to conversations that they perhaps would not have shared had the researcher only been interested in a ‘snap shot’ approach. Regular in-depth contact also encourages an understanding of the language commonly used in a specific context and the sharing of similar experiences.

My “peculiar” position in the club made for an interesting first few weeks, as my status as a new member who was close with an established member was both conflicting and, ultimately, precarious. Certainly, early on, I was made to feel very welcome. The established members offered to buy me drinks, included me in conversations and treated

me, I felt at the time, as an equal. All the members were very friendly, polite and inquisitive. After being introduced to many of the established members through Paul I made a real effort to get to know them outside of my research intentions. In other words, I attempted to get to know them as people/individuals, rather than subjects for my research or sources of information. One would envisage this process became simpler as time progressed, but, in fact, the opposite became the case. I felt that after a month or so many of the established members had seemingly decided I wasn't "the right sort" of person for the club or at least for their particular social group, and so made this obvious. Increasingly, I was made to feel like an outsider, a second-class club member. Some of the established members became "standoffish"; they quite happily turned away from me at the bar, did not accept my offers to buy them a drink – because this is a symbol of solidarity and acceptance – did not include me in conversations or otherwise ignored me. Often, when I opened conversations with them, I would get short and curt responses. This was very peculiar to me, and I was unable to explain why I came to be treated with such contempt, especially after my face had been known after a while.

Had I not been conducting research at the club, the apparent callousness of these particular members would have undoubtedly earned an antagonistic response from me. Had I been a "typical" new member at the club, perhaps I would have come simply to regard these particular individuals as unfriendly, and kept away from them as such; or perhaps I would have engaged in open disputes with them when I felt they were treating me poorly. Also, equally as likely, I might have simply left the club feeling a sense of loss but with my head held high, never to return again. Because of the requirements of my research, however, these options were not available to me, and I was disinclined to accept that so many of the established club members disliked me because of who I was. Perhaps my stubbornness, coupled with my sociological understanding that patterned behaviour was often underpinned by social norms and values, led me to continue the search for more plausible explanations for why I and other new members were excluded and marginalised in these ways. It was clear that more sophisticated means and methods of exclusion were in place than initially thought. Nevertheless, it became a real challenge to balance my roles at the club and to balance, essentially, my appreciation of involvement and detachment. At times, established club members treated me so poorly and with such apparent malevolence that I retaliated and stood up for myself as any self-

respecting and confident young man would, but almost as quickly as I reached this level of anger and frustration, I realised that my wider research objectives were more important. Therefore, I often found myself showing considerable self-restraint when dealing with particularly nasty and aggressive established club members.

As a researcher, I was fascinated by the types of exclusion that I and fellow new members experienced on a day-to-day basis, but as a tennis club member, I was often angered and frustrated by this, and at times felt oppressed and inferior. It was impossible for me to remain unaffected during this process, not least because I had gained personal experience of exclusion that put into better context the examples that were described to me by my interviewees. Reading other ethnographic studies, difficulties in balancing roles between “researcher”, “participant” and emotionally-involved “human being” seemed commonplace.

Fountain (1993), for example, described the emergence of moral as well as research dilemmas when her best informants, who had become close friends during the research process, began to engage in illegal and immoral behaviours. Macphail (2004) also documented problems when attempting to balance roles between researcher and active participant in her ethnographic study of an athletics club. This became challenging at times, for example, when she observed another coach run potentially harmful training sessions or when she was asked to write a deceptively overly-positive magazine article on the club. Macphail also experienced a situation whereby she was forced to “step in” and break up a fight between two children. She later contemplated “how such an intervention in the training session could change [her] relationship with the coach and young athletes in any way that might constrain (or enhance) the research” (Macphail, 2004, p.239). While I never found myself in a position where I had to step-in to protect another club member, I did at times have to protect myself from verbal abuse and physical intimidation. The ways in which the researcher comes to deal with dilemmas such as these highlights their often somewhat precarious position in the research setting. The endeavour to balance one’s involvement is arguably most difficult when dealing with participants that are known personally to the researcher. Thus, while building personal friendships with participants might help to provide added insight, it might also make it difficult to achieve a level of emotional detachment necessary for later analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Thus, I came to be aware constantly that

striking a balance between involvement and detachment was crucial to the findings that I obtained and the ways they could be interpreted.

In these respects, I feel my reflexive approach to this research helped me to obtain a greater level of object-adequacy and reality-congruence in my findings. I attempted to be critical of the values that were imparted on all types of information that I obtained, as written text, verbal dialogue, observations and experiences, and I attempted also to balance the extent of my involvement and detachment by means of constantly assessing my findings and experiences with anecdotes from other people. An attempt was made to validate and obtain a clear picture of incidents between club members by way of gaining perspectives from different members or membership groups. For example, if a club member from one membership group told a story of a particular incident regarding an unfriendly interaction with a member from another group, I deliberately sought out other perspectives on that particular incident. Over time, this allowed me to interpret more effectively the validity of information provided to me from particular members, as well as understand particular behaviour in different contexts. All of these methods, I feel, helped in my endeavour to conduct effective research.

Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to reflect upon the ways in which I attempted to be reflexive and balance my involvement and detachment throughout the research process. This helped to bring to light the considerable complexity of this research, its structure and course of development, and to uncover important information about the social context in which the research was set.

Some of the complications that arose from the use of particular data collection methods were described. Firstly, I examined the respective documentation from the LTA and media sources that informed much of my initial understanding of social exclusion in British tennis and also fuelled my enthusiasm for the issue. The power struggle or rather the functional interdependence between the LTA and the British print media came to light through this examination. Some evidence was provided that indicated the LTA was well aware of their symbiotic but often seemingly antagonistic relationship with the media, and had over the course of recent years been forced to

contend with them on a number of different issues. The prevalence of social exclusion in tennis clubs was one such issue, the social and historical basis of which needed to be critically examined.

Secondly, the various challenges and opportunities that arose during the interview phase of this investigation were examined. Pertinently, the impact of my ostensible appearance and presumed social background was explored; that is, the impact of me being a white, middle-class, young man on my ability to arrange and successfully conduct interviews with British tennis stakeholders. The various ways and means by which I attempted to fit-in by making slight alterations in my appearance, accent and behaviour helped to characterise and gave a clear indication of the social structure of British tennis during the time of my research. These intricacies were subtle but nonetheless of crucial importance to the ways in which I understood my research environment and the people within it.

Thirdly, I examined the ways in which I balanced my involvement and detachment in the ethnographic phase of my research. This was much more difficult here, due to the larger number of different roles that I was forced to adopt. I had a very interesting but peculiar perspective at WRTC as a new member with a close contact or friend who was part of the established group. My ostensible ties with both groups made for an interesting first few weeks, when I was “sized-up” by members of the established group. I faced a number of challenges when I was forced to control and balance a number of competing emotions such as anger, frustration and fascination. The details provided here help to illustrate the somewhat hidden difficulties that I experienced trying to balance my roles as a social scientist, tennis enthusiast, adult club member and human being.

The detailed information provided in this chapter has helped to tease out the ways in which social class features as an important determinant of access in British tennis. The fact that I had to adapt my behaviour in order to conduct the research gives an indication of the deep-rooted and established social-class structures in the sport. The following chapter seeks to bring together all the pieces of information that have emerged in this investigation, and to make sense of social exclusion in British tennis in both a sociological and applied sense.

Chapter 14: Conclusions

The aim of this chapter is to draw together the numerous important sociological ideas and themes that were explored in this thesis, for the purpose of offering overall conclusions. I shall reflect upon the theoretical models of Elias that were utilised as frameworks for analysis in this investigation, namely *The Civilising Process*, *Game Models* theory and the framework offered in *The Established and the Outsiders*. This is in order to illuminate the ways in which these research findings have helped to develop our knowledge around the subject of social exclusion in British tennis. At the very end of this chapter, I will discuss some of the limitations of this thesis.

In the first chapter of this thesis, a critique was offered of current LTA policy in relation to the notion of “social exclusion”. Evidence was presented to suggest that much of British sports policy, and LTA policy specifically, was underpinned by assumptions that mirrored a structural-functionalist approach. In particular, LTA policy tended to view the concepts of “club culture” and “social exclusion” in process-reductive ways, and gave insufficient attention and consideration to their historically-rooted nature. While leading individuals at the LTA recognised the need for long-term planning and understood the inevitable slow progress of change, when it came to decision-making, they were restricted by the growing pressures of their jobs; in figurational terms, therefore, they were constrained by others through ties of interdependence. Many, if not most, of the LTA’s recent schemes have been designed and introduced for the purposes of either promoting the game to new and diverse sections of the British public or of developing already-existing talent up to the elite level. These schemes were criticised for being based on and supported by inadequate knowledge and understanding of the specific groups that were targeted as well as the particular problems they sought to overcome. This analysis has revealed that the roots of and solutions to many of these problems lay in an analysis of the sport’s history. This present sociological investigation is a point of departure in this respect.

In the second chapter of this thesis, a critique was provided of the current stock of historical knowledge of tennis. Written by “amateur” historians for the most part, these accounts of tennis, some of which are very informative and interesting indeed, are nevertheless unable to shed light on some of the central problems and issues faced in

British tennis today. All but Ian Cooper's (1995; 2004) two studies were written without reference to theoretical perspectives. None were underpinned by the desire to answer sociological questions. The objective of this present investigation, supported by an Eliasian theoretical framework, was to offer a more adequate and reality-congruent picture of British tennis, past and present. The focus was on gaining an understanding of social exclusion, analysing the history of tennis in order to find the roots of its exclusivity, exploring the sport's development in the light of wider social processes and growing ties of interdependence, and attempting to understand the prevailing and problematic phenomenon of social exclusion through an ethnographic study of a club culture. In addition, whilst it was not an explicit goal to test the explanatory purchase of some of Elias's theories and concepts, nevertheless, what has emerged out of this research is a good and thorough test. Let us now reflect upon the insights gained from this analysis, and the ways this investigation has tested the explanatory purchase of Eliasian theories and concepts.

Elias and the Civilising Process: Reflections on the History of Tennis

One of the main strengths of Elias's (1939/2000) work in *The Civilising Process* was the fact that he was able to build a bridge between what happened over centuries in wider Western European society at a macro level, and within the individual royal courts of Western Europe at a micro level. The conceptual framework that he employed, namely, the figurational approach, allowed him to achieve this, and attempt to overcome one of the thorniest dichotomies in sociology, the macro versus micro dichotomy. Explaining aspects of the historical development of tennis in terms of those concepts that Elias (1939/2000) introduced, it is felt strongly that this investigation was successful by, in part, bridging the macro and the micro divide, and adding to the growing base of support for Elias's theoretical framework in helping to explain social problems.

The popularity of lawn tennis at its conception in the 1870s was primarily due to the prospects it afforded members of the upper and upper-middle classes for status enhancement. Lawn tennis earned its tag of prestige because, firstly, it demanded considerable economic capital to play and, secondly, because the roots of the sport were to be found in the royal game of Real Tennis played centuries earlier. Playing the sport

or merely taking part in its social occasions became a means of conspicuous consumption for the aspirational classes. In these settings, either on country-house lawns or in private tennis clubs, young men and women were afforded opportunities to enhance their social status. This was achieved through associating with, and exhibiting a particular standard of restrained behaviour whilst in the presence of, members of a similar or higher class. The playing of lawn tennis offered many opportunities for exercising behavioural self-restraint and sportsmanship, the marks of higher status, so it was influential and significant as a tool in the wider class struggles during this time.

The onward development of lawn tennis from the late 19th century was influenced by, and sequentially came to influence, the power struggles between the upper and middle class, and between the various ranks of the middle class. Power struggles were manifested through tennis in several identifiable ways, namely: i) exclusive tennis club memberships; ii) expected behaviour whilst on court; and iii) the enforcement of the “amateur ethos”. The unintended outcomes as a result of these struggles came to influence effectively who was able to gain access to the sport, how the sport was played at both elite and recreational levels, and how its clubs and the LTA were organised.

Whilst much of the social character of lawn tennis had its roots in upper-class ideology, the spread of middle-class values in lawn tennis came most powerfully during the inter-war years, when the price of tennis dropped and clubs “opened their doors” to allow the middle classes access. Tournaments and competitions were organised within and between clubs, membership restrictions were softened and children were allowed limited access. These developments occurred concomitantly with a slight drop in the sport’s prestige, however, as many from the upper class moved on to more status-enhancing leisure activities. Those who stayed on in lawn tennis often took up prestigious positions on club committees, which had the unintended effects of, firstly, allowing the upper-class-derived codes of amateurism and voluntarism to remain entrenched in tennis club culture, and, secondly, to afford women greater influence on how tennis was to be organised. The appearance of absolute public deference to women and heavily-tempered behaviour were distinctive qualities expected of upper-class “gentlemen”. The developing social character of lawn tennis throughout the 20th century, therefore, came to be influenced by aspects of both upper and middle-class ideologies.

At the elite level, the embedded culture of amateurism was eroded gradually by the burgeoning ethos of professionalism. Developments at this level came to influence how the sport was organised across the world, as increased revenue from tournaments afforded the governing bodies and clubs that organised the events the opportunity to reimburse players' expenses. After World War II and increasingly into the 1960s, however, the extent to which players were abusing the system designed to maintain the sport's heritage of amateurism became well known. When tennis went "open" in 1968, allowing amateurs and professionals to play together in ITF-sanctioned tournaments, the floodgates opened for investment from the sale of television rights and corporate sponsorships. In Britain, Wimbledon began to make considerable profits from these new investments, which, because of their long-standing financial partnership with the LTA, had the consequence of affording the governing body an increasing amount of revenue to invest back into British tennis. Growing Wimbledon profits and an increasingly forward-thinking and proactive perspective thus afforded the LTA opportunities to put more focus on long-term developments. Since the 1960s, as Wimbledon profits increased considerably, the LTA's focus also shifted more towards the development of talent up to the elite level and the removal of playing barriers in British tennis clubs.

Amateur and voluntary-run tennis clubs, on the other hand, were not influenced and affected to the same extent by these same factors and processes. As clubs began to be taken over by members from the middle class, the competition for status and prestige did not vanish, but, instead, actually intensified and became more complex and multi-faceted. Wider economic, political and social processes facilitated a greater mixing of the classes in British society, and, as such, power chances between social-class groups became more even, allowing members of lower classes access to some tennis clubs from which they were previously excluded. In these clubs, the status-conscious and established higher-class members were forced to develop a more formal and rigid code of behavioural conduct, to which they adhered in order to help them remain socially distinct from the lower-class members. Hierarchy was enforced through behavioural conduct, with deference shown to social superiors and condescension towards social inferiors.

Because of their relative autonomy within British tennis and wider society, the structures of amateur and voluntary-run clubs have changed only marginally since the

mid-20th century. In many clubs, the inherently restrictive and exclusive social-hierarchical structure and the strict code of behavioural conduct have remained integral to their respective “culture”. As the LTA have come to demand increasingly the help of tennis clubs to put forward their talent development initiatives, this has led to the emergence of a growing power struggle between these two institutions.

The insights provided by Elias in this investigation have led to an examination of aspects of behaviour; firstly, the extent to which its control featured as a determinant or measure of status and class, and secondly, the ways in which increasing external constraints on behaviour gradually facilitated a shift towards internal constraints. This shift, whereby exhibiting self-restraint came to represent higher status and social superiority, occurred as an unintended consequence of changing group dynamics, or lengthening ties of interdependence between the various social class groups during this time. In many clubs where there occurred greater inclusion from previously excluded lower-class members, the need and desire to exhibit behavioural control became considerable. It was the intensification of status contests within clubs that led to the formalisation of codes of behavioural etiquette and the prevalence of social exclusivity, albeit through different methods.

It is partly from this analysis that we can see the usefulness of Elias’s (1939/2000) insights from *The Civilising Process*, and it is hoped that the stock of knowledge relating to the historical development of lawn tennis, since its conception and even before, and particularly the roots of its “exclusive character”, has been at least partially enhanced by this analysis. Only through utilising the theoretical framework and insights of Elias was illumination possible of some of the long-term wider social processes within which the development of lawn tennis took place. Thus, this analysis has shed light on aspects of lawn tennis “culture” that were previously concealed, combining historical data and a testable sociological theoretical framework for what is felt to be a comprehensive analysis. Moreover, whilst *The Civilising Process* was itself a historical investigation, it can be seen how theoretical aspects of it can be applied to a contemporary issue.

Elias and his Game Models: Reflections on the Expanding Figuration of British Tennis

Elias's (1978) theoretical framework of Game Models underpinned this historical analysis of lawn tennis and the wider social processes, lengthening ties of interdependence and dynamic power struggles between classes and institutions that together came to determine its path of development. Aspects of this theory can be found in Elias's work on the civilising process but these were not made explicit until the publication of *What is Sociology?* in 1970 (the English translation came in 1978). By conceptualising power struggles between individuals, institutions, countries or other types of groups as "games", Elias (1978) was able to shed light on the ways in which groups compete with one another. Of course, while many of the relationships between groups in lawn tennis were amicable and friendly, there was nevertheless a constant undercurrent of competition and rivalry between groups, some of whom sought to "make their mark" and influence the development of the sport, while others attempted merely to consolidate or reaffirm their relative positions and the privileges that it afforded them. In the earliest decades of lawn tennis, as this analysis has exposed, the most pivotal and important competition was, in essence, a social class one. The outcome of this struggle helped to characterise by whom, how and where the sport was played, as well as how the sport was organised in voluntary clubs and by the governing body and its connected associations. The organisation of tennis across all levels, generally, was still underpinned by aspects of social class differences, that is, the lingering ideals and ethos of amateurism, ambivalent attitudes towards competitiveness, antipathy towards commercialism and the slow and often reluctant acceptance of professionalism. However, as tennis at the elite level professionalised throughout the mid-20th century bringing the LTA with it, the greatest power struggle then developed between the governing body and its affiliated tennis clubs. Pressured to some extent by new commercial influences from television and corporate sponsors, the former came to focus increasingly on developing talent as its main objective. This included a concomitant struggle for greater access and opportunities for children in clubs, which they came to regard as central to their overall objectives.

The use of Game Models theory illuminated a number of themes and concepts that facilitated a much greater understanding of the developing figuration of British

tennis. To clarify, Elias (1978) suggested that it is not possible to explain or analyse comprehensively the actions, plans and aims of one group or individual if they are conceptualised as freely-chosen actions, plans or aims, considered by themselves and independent of other individuals or groups; only when one takes into account the compelling forces that groups and individuals exert on one another by reason of their interdependence can these be fully explained. With regard to developments in British tennis, through the use of documentary analysis, secondary sources and interview data, the figuration's inherent complexities were brought to light, giving due attention to the interdependencies that constrained groups in British tennis, in particular, tennis clubs and the LTA.

As described in *Chapter 7*, the figuration of British tennis expanded markedly from around the mid-20th century, mostly as a result of the global expansion of tennis and the processes of professionalisation and commercialisation that were set in motion from developments in the US. The LTA and the AELTC, the leading tennis "authorities" in Britain, were constrained in relation to having to keep pace with these developments abroad. The expansion of this figuration, however, came to affect the extent to which the LTA were able to exercise control over the groups with whom they were interdependent as well as over the course of how tennis developed in Britain. It is clear how and why this scenario emerged. Whilst expanding coffers gave the LTA greater opportunities to put their development plans into fruition, they came to be constrained increasingly by organisations and groups external to British tennis, such as national sports organisations and funding bodies, television networks, corporate sponsors, local authorities, the central government and the mass media. This came to influence their respective relationships with the thousands of clubs that were affiliated to them, many of which remained relatively autonomous voluntary-run organisations. Despite an increase in the LTA's financial resources, it seemed that the LTA and clubs gradually "grew apart", due in part to differing objectives centring on: i) how the LTA should invest their growing pot of money; ii) how players should be developed; iii) how clubs fit into the LTA's overall development plan, and iv) how clubs should organise their tennis. Thus, despite their relative strength, the LTA have struggled in their main objectives for cultural change in clubs, to make them more welcoming, nurturing, forward-thinking and performance-driven environments.

The growing ties of interdependence in the British tennis figuration had the consequence of limiting the extent to which the LTA could control the sport's development in a manner they intended. This was because the various interdependent groups came to develop a measure of reciprocal control over each other, which had the effect of lessening the power differentials between them. Testing Elias's theory, it appears that, as the figuration of British tennis became more complex due to the sport's globalisation, professionalisation and commercialisation, there were a number of unintended consequences that the LTA were ultimately forced to contend with as they sought to retain control of its development. The growing resistance to the LTA by the clubs and the burgeoning power struggle between these two tennis institutions was undoubtedly the most problematic of all unintended consequences for the governing body.

This investigation proved a useful testing ground for Elias's ideas but there is one area in particular where his Game Models framework should be critiqued and, if possible, developed further. The area in question concerns the notion that "players" of a particular game develop an "awareness" of its inherent complexities over time. Elias (1978, p.85) wrote that, within a game, "as the number of players grows, the individual player not only finds the game increasingly opaque and uncontrollable, but he also gradually becomes aware of his inability to understand and control it". The latter part of this quote might seem either obvious or innocuous, but upon reflection, Elias here makes an important but questionable claim. It poses a number of questions: If players in complex figurations tend to develop an awareness of their relatively weak and inadequate understanding, why, then, do conflicts so often emerge with regard to the right course of action? Also, why, then, once a course of action is chosen and, as is often the case, it either produces undesirable consequences or it fails entirely, do the decision-makers tend to show considerable confusion or annoyance? If decision-makers do recognise their relative inability to control social change, why are their expectations so high? This contradiction can be brought to light nicely through a brief look at the LTA and the extent of their "awareness" of the developing British tennis figuration.

I showed in *Chapter 1* how senior members at the LTA in recent years appeared to recognise the difficulty of planning, emphasising that "real" social change would only be achieved long-term. However, they showed an inadequate appreciation and

awareness of their “inability to understand and control it”. On the contrary, they gave the impression that they *could* change club culture and that they *could* begin to eliminate social exclusion with the initiatives that they implemented. Many, if not most, of the initiatives launched by the LTA in the 1980s and 90s failed to reach and remedy the heart of the problem, and actually led to a whole host of unintended consequences. These were shown across Section 3. Despite this, the LTA continued to believe, with their current level of understanding, that they could implement successful measures to change club culture. This inadequacy was based on their poor conceptualisation of the very groups and individuals they sought to change, that is, clubs, club members and club committees. As outlined in *Chapter 1*, the governing body believed in a relative consensus of opinion in British tennis. In other words, they underestimated the extent to which there was opposition and resistance, both to themselves as an organisation and to the full and wholehearted implementation of their policies and initiatives. Thus, it is possible to critique the suggestion of Elias outlined above. Evidence presented in this analysis suggests that, as the number of players grew within the “game” or figuration of British tennis over the decades, the extent to which the LTA found the game either “opaque” or “uncontrollable” did, in fact, increase, but this was not matched, as Elias suggested it would, with a concomitant increased awareness of their inability to understand or control the course of the game. Elias’s suggestion, surely, must only ring true if the player demonstrates a certain measure of detachment from the figuration or game they are within. Detachment, then, must be a requisite for a player to be able to gain awareness of their inability both to control and understand the game.

It was suggested in *Chapter 1* that the LTA have, to date, been unable to obtain the necessary measure of detachment that would enable them to recognise their inadequate level of understanding, and to be aware of their relative inability to control the course of social and cultural change in tennis. Having said this, recent evidence does suggest that the LTA have come to welcome the input of others, recognising their stakeholders, working in partnerships and accepting some of the divergent interests among groups involved. In addition, very recent evidence suggests that the LTA have come gradually to realise their relative inability to direct change in tennis and, in 2006, commissioned what became known as the *LTA Grassroots Tennis Review*; the results of this were eventually published in 2007. In this research document, it stated: “It was

essential to consult with as many people as possible involved currently in British tennis and compare ourselves with other British and overseas tennis bodies” (LTA, 2007a, p.1). Further recognition was given to several of the divergent interests among tennis stakeholders, as well as to a number of inconsistencies and contradictions in the way tennis development has been implemented to date. If the 2007 *Review* is anything to go by, it seems the LTA have finally begun to demonstrate an awareness of the complexity of the figuration in which they must deliver their objectives. Of course, they must develop further their understanding of it before they can obtain a measure of surety that the courses of action they take will have a greater chance of yielding intended results. Not only must the LTA strive to recognise which individuals and groups they are functionally interdependent with but also the ways in which these players can enable and constrain the implementation of their objectives. It has been suggested that the LTA have tended to overlook divergent interests among their stakeholders, particularly those stemming from their many and varied affiliated tennis clubs.

Elias and Established-Outsider Relations: Reflections on British Tennis Club Culture

Reflecting on the findings from West Regency Tennis Club, it was demonstrated how “club culture” at a micro level is inextricably connected on numerous levels to what happened and what is currently happening at a macro level in British tennis. From this analysis, one can see how the figuration of a tennis club and the figuration of British tennis are, essentially, two sides of the same coin.

It was apparent that what I experienced and was able to uncover at WRTC was not, in effect, an anomaly, but rather a club culture that was structured and conditioned to a certain extent by wider social processes. As tennis clubs have lost some of their relative autonomy since the mid-1990s, due in part to the LTA making the requirements for clubs to gain funding more stringent, the extent that clubs can maintain the same measure of social exclusivity has been tested. Analysis at WRTC revealed the considerable degree to which decisions made within the club were inextricably connected to the wider social processes affecting British tennis as a whole, as well as the decisions made at the LTA headquarters. In effect, wider social changes influenced the functional interdependence, firstly, between member groups within WRTC, competing

for control over the club and a share of its social benefits; secondly, between tennis clubs in the vicinity, competing for status and prestige as well as, to a certain extent, funding; and thirdly, between tennis clubs and the LTA, competing for the right to manage and invest in tennis as they so desire.

Elias's theory of Established-Outsider Relations came to provide, for the micro-analysis of a tennis club figuration, a considerable measure of enlightenment. Member relations were uncovered to illustrate balances of power between groups, but more importantly it focused attention on how long-term developments at a social level, what Elias (1939/2000) called the process of "sociogenesis", can influence developments at a personality level, what Elias (1939/2000) called the process of "psychogenesis".¹ Ethnographic analysis was conducted in a relatively prestigious and exclusive tennis club, which successfully brought to light these aspects of Elias's work in the civilising process, by focusing on the sociogenesis and psychogenesis of club members. One of the most important and recognisable ways this was achieved was through the suggestion that exhibiting behavioural self-restraint was a means by which the established, higher-status group could achieve social demarcation from outsiders of lower status. The established club members regarded themselves as having certain superior characteristics for a tennis club member, generally, which included being better behaved, more respectful of others, more "sporting" and superior tennis players. While evidence revealed that differences in these main measures between established and new member groups were exaggerated, based on an identity corresponding to only a minority of their best and worst members respectively, nevertheless, the strength of cohesion among the established group and their ability to control positions on the club committee allowed this ideology to persist and become dominant; it was internalised, even by some of the new members. In other words, the "they-image" to which the new members were labelled by the established members, became a "we-image" in accordance with which a number of the new members believed and behaved. Retaliation and resistance by new members, both, to their inferior image and social standing and to the poorer treatment and access to club resources they received, was limited due to their poor cohesion and by the fact that some new members would internalise and follow established group norms, which led them to expect deferential treatment from social inferiors, that is, newer members, rather than help them "settle in".

This aspect of Established-Outsider Relations, where new members could become accepted as part of the established group, was something not discussed by Elias and Scotson (1965/1994), however. It might have been due to the specific character of the figuration of Winston Parva that they studied; the fact that this process of social mobility for outsiders was simply not possible or evident. At WRTC, though, the slow but steady inculcation of new members into the establishment was what helped them survive as a group. The take-up of tennis by their children could not be guaranteed, so established members allowed some new members to work their way up through the rankings and gain acceptance among their exalted company. This was not a straightforward process, however, as some new members were handpicked because of their tennis ability or because, simply, they were well-liked or they “fitted in”; evidently, others found the long process rather more arduous and prostituting. Many new members merely left the club after one or two years of bad treatment. It was this high turnover of new members, traditionally, that had kept the authority and control with the established group, but wider developments meant that new members came to be more included in club matters. The inclusion of children, generally, had become intrinsic to obtaining LTA funding, much like removing unwelcoming clothing and membership restrictions, which, ultimately, allowed adult new members greater access as well. The need for funding was in order to build a new clubhouse – a project that was regarded with a sense of urgency and desperation because the old one was about to collapse – and it was this need which forced the club to adhere to LTA investment conditions. This led the established group to concede some authority to the outsider new members. In other words, there was a slight shift in the balance of power, and it was the recognition of their relative loss of power that led the established group to develop a more stringent code of behavioural etiquette, to which all established members were pressured into adhering. It also became the yardstick against which new members were measured in order to assess the extent to which they “belonged”. Ultimately, adherence to this strict code of behavioural etiquette helped established members demarcate themselves from new members. The “formalisation” of behaviour at WRTC, which began among the established group but then spread to all members, was an unintended consequence of a shift in functional interdependence between the established group and the outsider new members, caused by wider social developments.

In many ways, therefore, the rapid process of behavioural formalisation which developed over the last decade or so could be regarded, using language from Elias and Dunning (1986), as a “civilising spurt”. Although this investigation did not set out to find evidence for long-term changes along the lines of sociogenesis and psychogenesis of WRTC club members, it is altogether possible that what happened among the club’s established members over the course of recent decades, although on a much smaller scale, has parallels with the long-term process of change in the royal courts of the Middle Ages. The process of change at WRTC might have had similar unintended consequences in the same overall direction: i) the refinement of manners and social standards of the ruling group; ii) the increase on external social pressure for people to exercise greater self-control; iii) the shift from external to internal behavioural constraints as the predominant means of regulating group behaviour; iv) the increase in importance of self-conscience as a control device for behaviour; v) the internalisation by the established group of social standards and; vi) the operation of social standards beneath conscious control, for example, arousing feelings of guilt and shame when behavioural taboos were broken. Most certainly, these processes were unintended outcomes as a result of shifting balances of power and lengthening ties of interdependence. At WRTC, the need for increasing behavioural controls occurred because of wider social processes, the emergence of an Established-Outsider figuration that was unintended and not of the club members’ own conscious choosing.

This examination of member relations in a tennis club has added to a small but not insignificant collection of research using Established-Outsider Relations theory. Much like Dunning’s (1999) investigation of 1950s race relations in the USA and Van Stolk and Wouters’ (1987) study of relations between men and women and between homosexuals and heterosexuals in the Netherlands, this present analysis examined an outsider group going through a process of emancipation. This allowed the processual nature of power relations between established and outsider groups to be illuminated. While new members were undoubtedly exploited and marginalised at the club during the period of my research, wider developments in British tennis made their inclusion in this tennis club of considerable importance to some established members. Thus, new members, especially those who were children, were not wanted, but came gradually to be tolerated. Because the LTA coerced the club into removing its exclusive membership

restrictions, the established group were not able to exclude them outright, so found ways in which they could separate themselves from them. It is important to note that reaching this level of tolerance for new members should be recognised as an improvement in their relations with established members. This slow movement in the direction towards equality between member groups suggests evidence of what Elias (1939/2000) called “functional democratisation”. While it might be unwise to predict the course of how WRTC will develop in time, it is possible that, in the future, WRTC club members will come to accept gradually the inclusion of these new members, if not because they simply “get used to them”, but perhaps more because they come to recognise that the inclusion of new members will help their beloved club to survive. Thus, only upon reflection with a measure of detachment would these established members be in a position to accept the ways in which they and the new members were tied together in the same struggle; to survive, therefore, they must integrate, cooperate and work together to secure ends for everyone at the club. As they begin to rely on the inclusion of new members, so too do they recognise and value their input, as well as the extent to which their respective futures are joined by means of their present ties of interdependence. Perhaps it will take WRTC members recognising the precariousness of their position before they come to accept, essentially, “what has to be done”.

In this way, the utilisation of the Established-Outsider Relations framework proves useful, pointing us towards the consideration of ties of “functional interdependence” between groups and how these determine relative power chances. This concept focuses on the ability of groups to withhold or control something that another group either needs or wants. At WRTC, established members, among other power sources, could control and determine access to club resources, be it membership, inclusion of members in formal club decisions as well as informal social activities. As a result of wider developments in the figuration of British tennis, new members as a collective came to develop, possibly unknowingly to them, the ability to deny the club the chance to obtain external LTA funding that is vital for club redevelopment. The recognition of this unforeseen and ultimately precarious relationship allows established members the chance to see how both groups are integrated as part of a coalition in their power struggle with the LTA. In order to secure funding for the club, both groups must

work together, and the strength of this integration will come to determine, ultimately, their chances of survival.

While it was not its main objective, this analysis of Established-Outsider Relations in a tennis club has provided, what I feel, is a good understanding of the theory, in support of Elias and Scotson's (1965/1994) ideas. Further, it has examined a tennis club in a holistic sense, as a product of historical developments and within its wider figuration. It has provided evidence of how successfully the theory can be applied, underscoring its usefulness in these social settings. Elias (1978) wrote of the sociologist as a "destroyer of myths", but it is questionable whether sociologists can ever be sure of the extent to which they are successful in this endeavour. The myths that I attempted to destroy were to do with the ways social exclusion was conceptualised by the LTA, as static and ahistorical, underpinned by false dichotomies of age and class relations. While it remains to be seen the extent to which these myths are replaced with insights of a greater reality congruence, this investigation has, if nothing else, added to the stock of knowledge in the subject areas of both social exclusion and British tennis, and proposed a new means of orientation towards the particular problem of social exclusion in British tennis.

Towards a More Adequate Understanding of Social Exclusion in British Tennis

The ability of one group to label another as socially inferior, to deny them access to certain resources that they, themselves, enjoy, to treat them relatively poorly and, moreover, to make this label "stick", suggested Elias and Scotson (1965/1994), is a function of a particular and specific figuration created by two groups with one another. This is conditioned by the extent to which the balance of power is uneven; the extent that one group is able to monopolise and control particular power resources. This analysis has revealed that a type of figuration corresponding to this model of established-outsider relations has underpinned the social exclusion of particular groups throughout the history of British tennis.

It was one of the original questions in this investigation whether contemporary taken-for-granted conceptions of social exclusion in British tennis could explain the types of inequalities found in clubs. The critique in *Chapter 2* made a number of points:

i) social exclusion, as a concept in itself, has tended to be presented in a reified way, viewed in ways that are value-laden and regarded as wholly negative; ii) the processual nature of how certain groups came to be excluded as a consequence of historical developments and unintended outcomes of power struggles in tennis was ignored largely, and; iii) social exclusion was underpinned by “false dichotomies” of age and class differences. This analysis has sought to overcome these inadequacies through an Eliasian framework; this will now be illuminated, focusing briefly on the first and second of these points, then going into some depth on the third to consider how this research has overcome the inadequacies posed by dichotomous ways of thinking.

Firstly, the notion that social exclusion was a “thing” that had its own compelling life-force was critiqued. “Social exclusion” was described as the barrier that prevented certain groups of people from gaining access to tennis, rather than the actions of interdependent people. Therefore, despite being reified in public discourse, this developmental analysis showed how exclusion was an outcome of an uneven balance of power between interdependent groups. Further, analysing “social exclusion” with a measure of relative detachment helped to appreciate the phenomenon as neither positive nor negative. While accepting the extent to which the exercise of exclusion hindered the plans of some, I was able also to comprehend how it helped the plans of others. It is hoped that the findings here reflect my desire to conduct relatively “detached” research.

Secondly, through the historical analysis of tennis and the investigation into the growing figuration of British tennis from the mid-20th century, the development process of how groups in the figuration of a tennis club came to form relations with each other was brought to light. Initially, groups in tennis clubs came to distinguish themselves along clear and easily identifiable lines of social class, which could be determined through economic distinctions. As social class divisions in wider society blurred somewhat, and as tennis has come to open its doors to the lower-middle and working classes, economic distinctions have come to count for less in many clubs in ensuring high status for a particular member. From the LTA’s perspective, the use of Game Models theory helped to shed light on the difficulties they had to endure whilst trying to develop the sport in accordance with their own objectives. The governing body were criticised on account of their inadequate understanding of several features of tennis club membership, which included: what individuals valued in their tennis club memberships;

what the reasons were behind the considerable resistance shown by individual members and committees of tennis clubs towards implementing some of the LTA's talent development initiatives; why tennis clubs seemed resistant to change, generally; and, why certain groups have continued to be excluded or marginalised within tennis clubs despite the LTA's numerous attempts to remove barriers to participation. Underpinned by Elias's theoretical frameworks, an attempt has been made to address these inadequacies.

Thirdly, a question was posed in the introduction of whether variations in age and class could explain the power differentials between members in tennis clubs. With regard to the first of these two characteristics, anecdotal evidence from my interviewees suggested children tended to get poorer treatment in clubs, and findings from this present investigation support this assertion, in large part. The utilisation of Established-Outsider Relations theory, however, helped to overcome the dichotomous way of thinking, which would suggest that adult established members at WRTC excluded children and treated them poorly because of their age; the mere fact they were children. Elias and Scotson's (1965/1994) work helped direct attention towards the roots of an individual's or group's power, and helped to develop explanations of greater reality congruence. Evidence suggests that it was not due to mere age discrimination that many of the adults were motivated to treat most of the children poorly. This would imply that the adults desired and felt the need to treat *all* children poorly, when, in fact, they did not. Indeed, a handful of children of established members were treated much better, and not marginalised to the same degree. It is felt that using the terms "age relations" or "ageism" to describe features of power differentials at WRTC helps to single out what is peripheral and of less significance to these relations, that is, differences in age, and avoids what is of central importance, that is, what Elias and Scotson (1994, p.xxx) described as "differences in power ratio and the exclusion of a power-inferior group from positions with a higher power potential". The ways in which established members obtained positions of authority, and how they managed to maintain them and use greater power resources against other groups should be examined.

Utilising this theoretical framework for analysis, it was possible, therefore, to step beyond popular misconceptions of exclusion in tennis clubs based around simple differences in age, and ask important questions: How did it come to be that one got into

the habit of perceiving people of different ages as being part of a different group? In other words, why has age become a defining feature of group membership? As exposed in *Chapter 2*, the position of children in wider society today can be understood only through an examination of the development of “childhood” as a separate stage of life. This gives insight into why children are perceived as being part of a distinct group, with special rights and needs. With specific regard to the changing position of children throughout the historical development of tennis, there are a number of other questions that needed to be addressed: How did it come to be that one’s status in the tennis club came to be determined largely by their age? And, how did it come to be that differences in age became less important over time as a measure of status in tennis clubs, while longevity of membership became more important? An attempt has been made to answer these questions in this analysis, but let me clarify these points here.

As tennis clubs were some of the few places where young, single men and women could share company and search for suitable marriage partners, children served few functions for adults in these locations. It was only when the standard of play and competition grew in importance and when the nurturing of talent became an important goal for some clubs, did children gradually gain access. Tennis clubs, some more than others, came to find their position within communities increasingly precarious and competition grew with various external groups that threatened their survival, for example, governing bodies, property developers and local government agencies. In clubs where these types of difficulties were dealt with, the attributes of longevity of membership and tennis club experience came to be highly regarded among club members and, in terms of ties of functional interdependence, members who had these important attributes came to serve important functions for their respective clubs. Not only could their experience in club matters and associated expertise help to aid the club through difficult and challenging periods, but these members also became recognised symbols or symbolic measures of a club’s strength and fortitude. This was most certainly evident at WRTC, a club that was forced to overcome numerous challenges posed by property developers in the 1970s and 80s. Members who were influential in this crusade are today highly respected and honoured, as the highest status members of the club.

While one's age often determined the extent of a club member's longevity and experience, this was not always the case. New members at WRTC, for example, were of a variety of ages, while some established members were comparatively young. While age undoubtedly features still as an important measure of status, it has lessened over time. In its place became longevity of membership, because it was this characteristic that, largely due to unforeseen and unintended consequences, came to be of paramount importance to many clubs. This specific discovery, which was central to gaining an understanding of the established group's collective identity, could have been made only through a historical analysis that uncovered the intricate and detailed developments in the club members' ties of interdependence over time. Such an analysis could not have been achieved had the researcher subscribed to popular dichotomous modes of thinking.

The inadequacies of adopting a dichotomous mode of thinking to analyse the influence of social class on tennis participation was also revealed in this investigation. Much like the argument above, which suggested one of the main causes of social exclusion in British tennis was related to differences in the age of club members, the same can be said of arguments put forward related to variations in social class. By focusing solely on the characteristics of social class that differ between established and outsider members, one is apt either to take for granted or ignore altogether the ways in which the groups became increasingly interdependent with one another over time, as well as how the groups came to obtain and maintain certain power resources that they were able to monopolise in order to limit the power chances of other groups. Again, one is pushed to ask certain fundamental questions to uncover this information, such as: How did it come to be that one got into the habit of perceiving people of unequal economic status as being part of a different group? In other words, how did social class differences emerge and why did they become so central in dividing society?

The work of Karl Marx has shed light on the how one's respective relationship to the means of production, that is, one's position within the economic structures of society, became the main determinant of access to power resources in capitalist societies. However, this analysis has shown how power can be manifested in ways other than economic, and that, in some cases, these other power sources are substantially more influential than those derived from one's position economically. Having said that, evidence presented elsewhere suggested that economic differences, or those derived

from one's social class, continue to persist as determinants of access in tennis, limiting the possible opportunities for an individual through factors such as cost, early access to the sport, parental knowledge and support and entry into sports clubs. Bourdieu (1978) posited that social class differences can lead to a disparate uptake of the cultural capital necessary to achieve status within a tennis club. While the findings here would support this assertion to some extent, it is suggested that social class differences only prevent or limit opportunities for access to lawn tennis at a base level. This leads us to pose further questions: How did it come to be that one's status in the tennis club was determined largely by social-class-related differences, most notably, one's educational attainment and profession? And, why did one's social class become less important over time as a measure of status in tennis clubs, while other features less related to social class became more important, such as the longevity of membership, adherence to an established code of behavioural conduct and playing standard?

As brought to light earlier, the historical development of lawn tennis took place alongside several crucial class struggles and this determined, to a considerable extent, by whom the sport was played, where and in what ways. As educational attainment and profession were solid and reliable signifiers of social status and class in the late 19th century, they also came to determine access in tennis clubs. During this time, however, the new "middle class" emerged to challenge the authority of the incumbent ruling class. Those who became relatively prosperous were able to purchase symbols of wealth and status that were reserved previously for members of the upper class, and this included, among other things, a public-school education. Lines of demarcation related to one's profession also began to blur, and this meant that previously reliable membership restrictions in tennis clubs began to allow the middle-classes access. In order to distinguish members of various ranks within the hierarchy of respective tennis clubs, strict codes of behavioural etiquette emerged that came to enforce behavioural restraint on the members of highest status. This became an important symbol of prestige to distinguish themselves from other members of the same club, as well as between members of different clubs. The status competition of members within clubs was inextricably related to the competition for status between different clubs in a given vicinity. Competition was also played out in terms of playing standard, which also came to be a measure of prestige and social position. Due to these wider changes that affected

relations between clubs as well as relations between members of the same club, traditional distinctions and membership restrictions based on educational attainment and profession were discarded, to be replaced with other measures. The study of WRTC revealed these new measures and how and why they came to be enforced.

Findings at WRTC suggested that, whilst it is evident that members of a higher class are more likely to be involved in tennis and have membership in a club, their social class would neither entirely nor necessarily determine status once within the club. At WRTC, it was evident that ostensible social class differences featured less to determine relative status of club members. Clearly, all of the club members had sufficient economic capital, but once an individual affords access to tennis and obtains entry into the club, his/her status within it is structured largely by distinctions that are not entirely class-determined. It is without doubt that some aspects of cultural capital are class-derived, for example, the codes of behavioural conduct which were characterised by the British upper and middle classes of decades past. However, these codes of conduct do not seem to represent for the lower classes the barriers they once did. Differences in behavioural conduct between the social classes are not as marked or obvious as they once were, due in part to the increasing inter-mixing of the classes in wider society and the related movement towards functional democratisation. Ultimately, this has meant that specific codes of behavioural etiquette can be learnt by members of a lower class with relatively greater ease in contemporary social life than was previously the case. Nevertheless, length of membership or oldness of association was another main determinant of status, power and influence in WRTC, and this developed largely irrespective of social class. What has been referred to as the “class system”, therefore, which was critiqued earlier with regard to its common conceptualisation as static, process-reductive and economic determinist, can be shown to be less of an over-riding and influential determinant of access to lawn tennis than what was previously thought. Bringing to light the inadequacy of explaining social exclusion in British tennis in social-class terms has been one of the outcomes of this investigation, therefore, and it is doubtful whether this could have been achieved without the theoretical underpinning of the Established-Outsider Relations framework. From this study, it is clear to see that the means and ways by which club members act out socially exclusive practices changes

over time, and these are unintended outcomes of developments in the wider figuration of British tennis.

Limitations of the Thesis

There were a number of areas where I felt something more or better could have been done that would have enhanced the research or the thesis in general. These included but are not limited to the following: the desire to gather more material direct from tennis clubs for documentary analysis; the desire to conduct interviews with more people and obtain a greater cross-section of views and perspectives on issues in British tennis; the desire to conduct follow-up interviews with particular people whose positions or jobs changed during the time of my research; and, the desire to conduct ethnographic research in more than one club. I will now discuss each of these in turn.

Documentary analysis in the historical section of this investigation was limited in several ways due to problems of access and the location of appropriate sources. The sifting through of old documents direct from clubs is a time consuming task in itself, but actually locating this information in the first place presents a formidable challenge. At present, there is no central database of information about the history of voluntary-run tennis clubs. The vast majority of information is held within the clubs themselves, or in some cases, in the private homes of long-standing members. Gaining access to this information would have undoubtedly helped the thesis in a number of ways, presenting more and sometimes conflicting evidence of the various processes that were investigated. This, however, will have to be an objective of future historical research into tennis clubs and their complex social developments.

Formal interviews were conducted with thirty individuals within the British tennis industry, but it would have undoubtedly helped to have interviewed a number of others. Many of the people approached for interviews declined my offer, while others, particularly the more high-profile individuals, were inaccessible along the various different avenues through which I attempted contact. It would have been helpful to gain the perspective of individuals who work in the following areas: those who write about tennis and the LTA in the print media; those with knowledge and expertise in the area of marketing and television; previous LTA chief executives; representatives from some of

the other exclusive clubs such as Queens, Hurlingham and Roehampton; those involved in school's tennis; and, representatives from local or central government involved in the funding and provision of tennis.

There were also a handful of individuals with whom I would have liked to have conducted follow-up interviews. Since writing the thesis, these individuals have now left their respective positions and taken up either new posts in tennis or moved away from the sport entirely. Obtaining updated information on, for example, Sue Mappin, who moved on from her role at the *Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation* to head the umbrella tennis charity *The Tennis Foundation*, would have been worthwhile. In addition, I suspect that individuals who have since left tennis would have provided a more candid and open reflection on their previous roles and of British tennis more generally. Follow-up interviews with John Crowther and Rebecca Miskin, for example, both of whom left the LTA in 2006, might have provided extra insight into the struggles of their position and the particular frustrations they encountered during their tenure. A follow-up interview with John Barrett, who has now retired as a BBC commentator, might have also been enlightening, with his ability to reflect upon the problems in British tennis.

Ethnographic observations were conducted in one club over a ten-month period. While this amount of research was suitable for the purposes of this present investigation, it is undoubted that more could have been done. More clubs could have been investigated, and thus a greater cross-section of tennis clubs could have been researched. Given the massive investment of time that research into just one club took, however, it is felt that such an endeavour was outside the realms of possibility in this present research period. Nevertheless, future research could and perhaps should be conducted of a similarly ethnographic nature in numerous and various clubs, to uncover more information on the prevalence of social exclusion in clubs.

¹ The acknowledgement that “power” should be understood and conceptualised both socially, in the actions of particular individuals or groups, and psychologically, in the ways individuals or group members as a collective feel about themselves and the group to which they belong in relation to others, is one of the major cornerstones of Elias’s theorising. It underpinned his study of changing relations over centuries between members of Western European royal courts in *The Civilising Process*, but it is in his work of Established-Outsider Relations (Elias & Scotson, 1965) where this aspect is most clearly and comprehensively examined. In this way, the theory of Established-Outsider Relations can be seen in many ways to be an extension of the theory of *The Civilising Process*. Mennell (1992, p.115) noted that, in the final chapter of this seminal text, Elias made a number of assertions regarding “the relationship between

social inequalities, power chances, personality structure, and styles of life and cultural expression". These assertions can be regarded as enduring in the fate of social groups throughout the Middle Ages and into the 20th and 21st centuries, and are particularly valuable when examining tensions between social classes and social groups with identities that incorporate expectations based on behaviour and personality traits. Thus, the theory of Established-Outsider Relations can be seen to overcome another thorny dichotomy in the social sciences, that is, the dichotomy of human behaviour explained purely in either psychological or sociological terms. Elias brought to light how developments in both of these regards were interdependent and part of the same long-term process of change; thus, they could not and should not be separated.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Timetable of Procedures

Broadly speaking, the main methods of data collection can be split into the following four areas: i) documentary analysis of historical texts; ii) documentary analysis of contemporary LTA material; iii) semi-structured interviews; iv) ethnographic observations. While there was considerable overlap between the various stages of data collection, the broad time frame for each method is outlined below:

- 1) Documentary analysis of historical texts. This began from the commencement of my PhD studies in September 2003 and lasted for approximately 24 months, until this section of the thesis was felt to be sufficiently completed.
- 2) Documentary analysis of contemporary LTA material. This began from the commencement of my PhD studies in September 2003 and lasted right up until the end of the year 2007. The last major LTA publication that was analysed was the *LTA Grassroots Tennis Review* published in November 2007.
- 3) Semi-structured interviews. These took place in two phases and over a total period of 18 months. The first phase began in May 2004 and consisted of between twenty and twenty-five interviews that were all scheduled within six months from this date. The second phase of interviews were more sporadic and selective, and consisted of the final five or ten that took place from the end of 2004 until Nov 2005.
- 4) Ethnographic observations at West Regency Tennis Club took place between Mar 2005 and Jan 2006.

Appendix 2: List of Interviewees

Note: The information presented was only accurate at the time of the interview and may have since changed and now become out-of-date.

John Barrett – BBC tennis commentator and former British Davis Cup captain

Steve Bean – Businessman and Director of Teddy Tennis, a programme designed for children under 8 mixing music with skill development in tennis

Colin Beecher – Elite Tennis Coach, based at the National Tennis Centre at Queen's Club; the coach of Anne Keothavong and Miles Kasiri

Tim Blackman – Tennis Coach, 20 years of experience, mostly in Middlesex area. Coach at Uxbridge Tennis Club

Dan Bloxham – Head Coach at the AELTC, leads the WJTI and RTW programmes, designed to get children from local schools to play at Wimbledon

Alex Bogdanovic – Professional player, at time of interview was British number 3 male, with a world ranking just inside top 200

Mark Bullock – ITF Wheelchair Tennis Development Officer

Clive Carrigan – Director of the PTR in the UK, a large international coach development organisation offering professional coaching qualifications

Mark Cripps – Juniors Tennis Manager at David Lloyd, Raynes Park. He is responsible for building the junior section of the club to over 600 weekly visitors

John Crowther – Chief Executive of the LTA, between 1996 and 2005. Responsible for ushering in new programmes, the re-launch of Mini-Tennis, Club Vision and City Tennis Clubs programmes

Garry Engleman – Head coach of PTR UK Academy, based in David Lloyd Heston.

Patrice Hagelauer – Performance Director at LTA between 1999 and 2002, took charge of Club Vision programme working with tennis clubs to become more inclusive and performance oriented. Since leaving the LTA, has been working with the FFT.

Tony Hawks – Comedian and head of Tennis For Free charity, designed to work with local councils to free up existing tennis courts to broaden participation across the country

Anne Keothavong – Professional player. At time of interview she was British number 1 female, with a world ranking around 180

Brad Langevad – Elite level coach. He has worked with Greg Rusedski and currently with Pat Cash

Brian Linskey – Group Racquets Manager for David Lloyd Leisure

John Love – Middlesex LTA County Development Officer

Sue Mappin – Director of the CRTF charity, designed to open up avenues for children in tennis. Also, formerly with LTA in 1980s, and has since taken up the position of Director of the Tennis Foundation

Rebecca Miskin – LTA Operations Director between 2003 and 2006, responsible for tennis development from the grass roots to performance level across the UK

Peter Occleshaw – Director of Tretorn UK, tennis equipment manufacturers. Tretorn are sole manufacturers of all Mini-Tennis equipment for the LTA

Sally Parsonage – Professor of Sport Science at University of Greenwich. Heads a BSc course in sports science and tennis coaching, which is the only one in the country.

Andy Parsons – Chairman of Oxfordshire LTA

Mike Raphael – Elite level coach. At time of interview, was head coach at Marston Tennis Academy in Basingstoke and coach of Alex Bogdanovic

Paul Smith – ITF Head of Event Operations

James Sohl – On the Board of Directors at the Sutton Junior Tennis Centre, the only child-specialist tennis centre in Britain

Edwina Strachan – Assistant Brand Manager of Ariel UK at Procter & Gamble. Responsible for organising Ariel Tennis, the main sponsor and financial contributor for children's tennis in UK

Julian Tatum – Committee member of the AELTC

Andrew Thomas – LTA Commercial Manager, responsible for organising sponsorship and marketing directives

Nick Walden – Racquets Manager at David Lloyd, Raynes Park

William Winstone – Head coach at Bush Hill Park Tennis Club, Enfield.

Appendix 3: Examples of Interview Schedules

The following is a list of some general and specific topics that were discussed by many of my interviewees. Generally, interview schedules were structured according to the types of expertise or experiences that the interviewees were expected to have. For this reason, interviews did not follow a strict or structured pattern, nor were the same questions asked or topics discussed with each interviewee. Nevertheless, similar topics were discussed with each individual, such as:

- Your job/role in British tennis
- How you got into this role or into tennis generally
- Your thoughts and feelings about the current state of British tennis at present
- What aspects could be improved?
- Thoughts and feelings about how the following aspects of tennis infrastructure are organised/structured at present. What are the successes and failures, and what needs to be done in schools, public parks, academies and clubs?
- Tennis played in schools – standard, availability, access, etc.
- Tennis played in public parks – availability, cost, location, role of coaches here, etc.
- Tennis played in academies – availability, access, cost, parental expectations, role of coaches, coaching styles, etc.
- Tennis played in clubs – availability, access, cost, location, image, history, social character, facilities, attitudes of members/committees to change, fulfilling LTA requests, clothing restrictions, membership availability, etc.
- Problems associated with social class exclusion – cost, access, image, financial support, funding in clubs, schools, parks, parental/coaching support, school's tennis, school-club links, role models, attitudes of clubs, etc
- Problems associated with age/children's exclusion – cost, access, availability, image, coaching styles, parental support, school's tennis, school-club links, role models, attitudes of clubs, adults working on behalf of children, talent ID, pathways of talent development, etc.
- Facilities/courts – Cost, provision, standard, amount, availability, access, etc.
- Aspects of coaching – provision, standard, career opportunities, attitude, professionalism, coaching styles, etc.
- The role of the media/sponsorships – image of tennis, tennis coverage, sponsors, compatible and competing interests?
- The role of the LTA – working in partnerships/their relationships with local authorities, central government, clubs, academies, schools, media, sponsors, etc; funding projects and emphases, their successes/failures?
- The role of Wimbledon and the AEC – image of tennis, WJTI and RTW schemes
- Cultural aspects of tennis related to: competitiveness/hunger of players in Britain; spoiling young players; lack of suitable role models
- Comparisons with other countries in all/any of these areas

Appendix 4: Details of the Fieldwork and Note-Taking Process

Over the ten month period of ethnographic research at WRTC, well over a hundred visits were made to the club on various days and nights. Sessions at the club lasted anywhere from one hour to all day and evening, depending upon how much time I could afford to spend at the club. Sat in my car away from the club, at the end of each session, notes were written on any new pieces of information that were uncovered. During the first few months, this process of note-taking took well over an hour, because almost all aspects of “club-life” were unique and intriguing. Towards the last few months, however, only particular incidents or new pieces of information were recorded. Information was obtained from observations, conversations with members and personal experiences in the club. Generally, notes on the following areas were written:

- My general impressions of the club, its surroundings, facilities, courts, etc.
- Impressions of the club from club members – any differences? Rivalry between clubs, pride in the local area, information in the clubhouse and on the website about the club written by members
- General impressions of the club members, their dress, appearance, behaviour
- Etiquette at the club, on court, whilst playing, in the bar, clubhouse and changing rooms, on the grass areas, inside the indoor dome
- The identification of distinct member groups/cliques
- Relations/behaviour between members/member groups – committee members, regular members, new members, coaches etc.
- How members treated each other at the club – new members, committee members, regular members, adults, children, coaches, guests, players from other clubs, etc.
- Relations between members and the coaches
- Experiences related to the people I met, the conversations they had with me and with each other, the ways in which they described certain aspects of the club, attitudes towards other club members or member groups, attitudes towards changes at the club, problems at the club, its history, its future, etc.
- Observations of coaching sessions run by the club coaches; and conversations with the children’s parents during these sessions, their feelings, attitudes towards the club, its members
- Observations during specific events: social events, race/quiz nights, leaving parties, final’s day, Wednesday club nights, inter-club team competitions, club tournaments for adults and juniors, club BBQ’s, etc.
- Developments over the course of my involvement at the club – changes in terms of how I was treated by others, changing attitudes of club and committee members, seasonal changes at the club and problems associated with changing court availability between summer and winter, etc.

Appendix 5: Sample Fieldwork Notes

The following is an example of some fieldwork notes written in my fieldwork diary on visits to the club for approximately one month from the end of March until the end of April 2004. At points where I quote names from the club or its members, asterisks are used to conceal identities.

Mar 31, 2004

It seems as if juniors are only supported because without doing so, the club would not be able to get LTA funding. Otherwise, the members would prefer the way the club used to be. So, there is an intimation that junior development is merely a short term goal in order to achieve funding. According to ****, they would become “expendable”. “Financially, juniors are not helpful. Not only do they pay less, they also take up courts”. It seems that if you piss of the adults, who are essentially funding the club, they would go elsewhere.

April 3, 2004

According to one kid who I met today, “kids always get kicked off court”, and the adults are not polite about it. They just say “get off”. “We used to play football on the grass but then someone said, it’s not a football club so it’s not allowed. They put up a sign saying ‘no ball games allowed’ on the grass because of chemicals on the grass, but its rubbish because there aren’t any chemicals. They just put the sign up to stop us playing”.

I found out that members would write letters to the club committee to complain about the kids. But it’s not the majority of members who don’t like it. There is just a core group who have been there many years who have always played at a certain time on a certain court for all these years and so are reluctant to accept the changes. It is for kid’s development that these changes have taken place, so it is not just the kids but also the coaches who receive abuse. They are ignored, or people are just really rude to them.

There was supposed to be a junior tournament for the kids but that got cancelled, because something like: “they initially said that kids could sign up on the day of the tournament but then they took away that option at the last minute, even though loads of kids turned up to play”. Many of the kids are members without their parents being members. I don’t know if this is true or how many exactly what proportion – find this out! Also if kids are playing with adults/parents they are not allowed to be kicked off unnecessarily, otherwise they are.

April 4, 2004

The club president said to me tonight – “Why do the LTA think tennis clubs will be able to produce performance players? Why do they put so much of their money into clubs? I mean, we’ll take it, because we have to. We need it. But we’re not a club to produce performance players. We’re here to have a good laugh”.

Another member was telling me about the club and its competitions and tournaments: “Tennis here is competitive. 300 out of 500 members step on court wanting to win. It is

a prestige thing. We are really competitive against other clubs, and we have rival clubs like ****. We see ourselves as the most prestigious club in the area, and we are also the biggest. Anyone who thinks tennis here is just for fun is wrong. We are aggressive and you need to be if you're going to win. Tim Henman might be a nice guy or whatever but he is aggressive and tough".

April 6, 2004

5 juniors were invited to trials for 5, 6 and 7th team tonight, but none of them turned up. Trials were quite difficult and I found out that I will make the 7th team. Bargain! I have been asked to play our second match again a small club called ****. We'll see how that goes in a few weeks time.

April 11, 2004

Sunday – A Junior tournament was taking place on the indoor courts. I was told the club has a junior representative but no body seems to know who it is. I suspect it's rubbish. There were no people from the club watching or engaged in conversation about who was winning, especially their own kids.

An issue arose when members have an indoor court booked but it was taken up by the juniors for the tournament. One lady was particularly annoyed at having to play outdoors. The tournament was largely ignored by all club members.

One member was saying/repeating how if the club wants LTA funding (i.e. for the new clubhouse) they need to have kids tennis programmes and play in junior tournaments/matches with other clubs. It seems there was no real expressed desire to have or want kids at the club, apart from the financial benefits. This member also talked about how some members couldn't see the bigger picture. They were selfish and only wanted things for themselves (i.e. the right court at the right time) and couldn't see the importance of having junior programmes at the club. I asked him if he watched the matches for the junior tournament and he said he hadn't, then laughed it off saying that he didn't find out there was something going on until after everyone left.

April 12, 2004

**** vs. **** - matches like this take place maybe every month.

April 14, 2004

I found out tonight that a few members got married after meeting at the club – maybe 3 or 4 couples.

The practice wall is used by the kids and never by the adults. Kind won't get asked to play during social evenings.

Many of the members live locally.

April 15, 2004

Some members were wishing it was back to the all-whites outfits at the club. "I'm a traditionalist. I like the all-whites rule, but I mean, if it brings kids to the club and gets them involves then that's a good thing. Maybe I'm just old" (raises his glass to his friend in agreement).

When asked how, generally, kids were treated at the club, two members said they were treated well. At a time "there could be about 10 kids at the club". But there could be

about 100 or more adults - 10%. Even on paper, there are 20% of members that are kids. Some of the adults don't like the kids, and there is a real element of this when they want kids off court.

Kids also have coaching available to them.

April 18, 2004

Tonight I met **** – the part-time bar man, 19 years old. 2.5 nights per week. He likes working at **** because “you can have a laugh”. The members are fun, friendly and he makes good money. Sometimes he stays after the bar closes and continues drinking with some of the members who live nearby.

Money – it is clear that members at the club earn a decent amount. No one complains about the £30 for the summer ball (a fairly large amount of money, for a night out and plus drinks, transport and hiring a tux, etc.). And in conversations about what line of work people are in, things like company trips, expense accounts, first-class travel, all expenses-paid trips etc. Clearly they are in the “professional” category. This is also evidenced by the types of cars in the car park (the odd Jag, BMW and Porsche etc.).

April 21, 2004

I feel as though I am still fitting in slowly into the club but there are certainly some members who I feel uncomfortable around. It seems some of the more established members do not talk much to me, unless they have had a few beers or they feel obliged to for whatever reason. Generally, I get the feeling that some members do not like me or they do not want to get to know me or give me a chance. They tend to loosen up and begin to include me in conversations after a few beers. I do not find it easy here to make conversations with members and find myself making a huge effort sometimes to actually try and fit in. I suggest that many members' clubs are similar in this respect with new members. Having said this, I feel much more comfortable around some of the younger members (even those that have been there a long time – since they were juniors themselves). One could suggest that I do not feel as comfortable with the older members because of our age difference – like it is natural, but I do not feel this when I'm on a one-to-one basis with members here. Separated from the group (usually conversations near to the bar) I can have nice comfortable conversations with most members, but it seems that when they are together, maybe in a group of 4 or 5, it is much more difficult to make conversation. And this is not through want of trying. On many instances, I would start talking, perhaps about something topical or on the television and a typical response might be the briefest of acknowledgements or sometimes completely ignoring me. Again, it would depend on the individual. On most occasions though, I am the one to initiate a conversation with someone (maybe 70%). Members could quite happily let me sit/stand next to them at the bar in complete silence, without saying a word to me.

April 25, 2004

Today was a Sunday and there seemed to be some sort of tennis programme going on in the covered courts. About 10-15 kids came out, some with parents or someone adult. It might have been a match, a coaching session or tournament. No idea! The kids did not enter the clubhouse unless they needed to use the toilets and what's more, the parents (obviously not members themselves) didn't either. This could suggest that differences in terms of opportunities/exclusion between groups were not simply around age, but around

who fits in and who clearly did not. If power and access to power is expressed in terms of access to opportunities to engage in socially enjoyable and meaningful relations with other people, clearly this is determined by, not necessarily whether you are an adult or child, but whether you 'fit in'. And this stretches further than age/class differences at ****. There are some adults who do not fit in and not openly accepted. **** the junior coach, for example, and clearly the parents of these children – I must speak to them! So what is it that established members have that outsiders don't? The adherence to a certain code (behaviour, language, rituals, clothing, open channels of communications, gossip, mutual acceptance and established ways and mutual abhorrence of all else)??

None of the parents came in for a drink, to use the other facilities or socially engage with club members. They came and went, just as though the club was a leisure centre or somewhere impersonal. Some might call this cliquey.

April 26, 2004

Any chance I can get hold of the old coach who recently left???

Appendix 6: Recommendations for the LTA

The principle objectives of this investigation were to expand the stock of knowledge on the subject areas of social exclusion and British tennis, to propose a new means of orientation to the problems associated with social exclusion in British tennis and to underscore the usefulness of adopting Eliasian sociology to contemporary social issues. While this study was a sociological analysis, it is unavoidable that its findings have ideological and political, or policy, implications. The process of recommending policy, however, is constrained by two important factors, firstly, the need for short, medium and long-term solutions to social problems; and, secondly, the need to acknowledge and build upon existing policy as opposed to “starting from scratch”. Let us now consider these factors.

Firstly, LTA policy has often been characterised by short-term solutions and knee-jerk reactions to immediate problems. The LTA, to a certain extent, have to answer to critics in the media and general public, who seek instant justification for policies in the light of the considerable amounts of funding obtained. Because of these constraints, solutions need to be couched in the short-term, in order to satisfy all of the LTA’s associated groups. Further, not only are short-term policy objectives generally felt to be more practical and achievable for authorities, but long-term objectives can often be dismissed as utopian. However, evidence from the two most recent policy statements, the 2006 *Blueprint for British Tennis* and the 2007 *LTA Grassroots Tennis Review*, suggests that the LTA have come to acknowledge more fully the need for long-term solutions in order to make lasting and fundamental changes to ensure the future of the sport. This is because they have come to appreciate, quite correctly, that problems of social exclusion are historically and culturally rooted. Therefore, only modifications to the underlying social structures of exclusive tennis clubs will lead to changes in the relations between club members. From this perspective, therefore, it becomes clear just how immensely difficult it is to make policy recommendations couched both in the short and long-term.

Secondly, recommendations for policy must not only take into account existing policy but they must also begin from the starting point of what is already available. While it would be ideal to begin from the point of “no policy” and build upwards, this is

impractical and impossible when policies are already in place. British tennis, over the last twenty or thirty years, has been decorated with policies designed to attract new people to the game, remove existing barriers to participation and curb the exclusive practices of tennis clubs. Any new recommendations made must be made off the back of this; “throwing the baby out with the bath water” is not a viable option for the LTA, which makes the recommendation of policy a tricky endeavour.

Of the two most recent policies in British tennis, the 2006 *Blueprint* and the 2007 *Review*, the former was written under the directorship of Roger Draper, while research from the latter was compiled by Sue Mappin, who recently took up the executive directorship of the Tennis Foundation.¹ Both of these policies demonstrated a more progressive and forward-thinking stance by the LTA to some of the issues raised in this study. Greater acknowledgement was given to stakeholders in British tennis, and consultations were done in the 2007 *Review* which signalled the LTA have come to understand some of the divergent interests of interdependent groups in British tennis. However, it is felt that this present study can add to what the LTA are currently doing in a number of ways. Some of these recommendations are outlined below. First, though, it is important to consider the ways in which this investigation differs from those already in existence, and how this has led to the introduction of what are felt to be new recommendations for change in British tennis.

The most important and recognisable difference is the background and expertise of the researcher. Unlike research compiled by individuals at the LTA, my background is not in tennis, nor have I got any particular axe to grind, other than a sociologically-informed research one. Thus, my starting point is very different to Sue Mappin’s, for example; she played tennis professionally up to a very high standard and has worked for many years in different sectors of the British tennis industry. Because of this, we do not share the same preconceptions of what tennis “is”, “has been” or “should be”. Inevitably, active and prolonged involvement in the sport over a number of decades will lead to the internalisation of ideas and beliefs as part of a particular ideology. These ideas and beliefs become taken-for-granted over time, and can lead one to ignore pieces of information that a relative outsider will not only recognise, but also critically question. It is important to clarify that I am not criticising the work of either Mappin or Draper, because gaining experience in the sport is an immeasurably valuable asset when

attempting to make policy recommendations. I am merely suggesting that my relatively detached starting point, buttressed with my “sociological” expertise, will lead me to ask different questions and consider, differently, the pieces of information available at a given time.

Another important way this present study differs from what has come before it is in its methodology. As far as I am aware Sue Mappin conducted interviews with almost 200 consultant individuals and organisations, which was far more comprehensive than what I undertook. However, my methodology included other modes of gathering data. An extensive historical examination was conducted underpinned by sociological theory, which was the first explicitly sociological analysis of tennis ever achieved. An extensive analysis of documents since the 1980s was undertaken, which was useful in charting long or medium-term changes and developments at the LTA. It might be easier for a relatively detached individual to recognise the gradual and subtle developments over time that documentary analysis of a particular organisation can reveal. Both Mappin and Draper helped develop some of the important policies in British tennis over the last two decades, but it is unclear, and I would not like to speculate, whether they were aware entirely of how their work influenced and was influenced by wider social processes in British tennis. In addition to documentary analysis and interviews, an ethnographic analysis of a tennis club culture was conducted, the innumerable benefits of which have already been brought to light. An attempt is made, therefore, to offer some general policy recommendations aimed at the LTA. These recommendations are not definitive but rather represent a developmental model; a work-in-progress for a new point of departure towards the alleviation of some of the problems associated with social exclusion in British tennis clubs.

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I offered criticism of contemporary sports policy, pointing to the inadequacies of adopting an approach underpinned by structural-functionalist assumptions. It is here where I bring to light the ways in which I feel an Eliasian framework should replace such ways of thinking. Some groups in British tennis might act in ways that go against the general consensus of how the sport should be organised or developed further in order to remedy some of its inherent problems. It is felt that through adopting the theoretical framework of Game Models, one can come to recognise and appreciate the network of relationships and ties of

interdependence formed by the various groups in British tennis, which have both enabled and constrained the LTA in their objectives for “cultural change” in their affiliated tennis clubs.

When deciding on policy recommendations, it is important to recognise, essentially, what is possible and what is problematic. It is important to consider from where and from which groups can cooperation be sought and expected, and to what degree. In addition, it is important to recognise what is not possible, and from where and which groups cooperation cannot be relied upon. While the LTA might reasonably expect a number of their stakeholders to take a particular action, it is important for them to consider from which groups action might not be taken, and, then, how this problem can be circumvented? In order to obtain such an orientation, let us review some of the pivotal groups and stakeholders that are likely to affect the LTA in its attempt to implement successful policy in voluntary-run tennis clubs, namely, the county LTAs, the club coaches, central and local government and leading tennis clubs.

It is from the county LTAs where policies reach the “ground”. There are 38 English County Associations and Tennis Wales and Tennis Scotland. These associations have numerous responsibilities within clubs, including: i) helping clubs to organise and manage tournaments and competitions; ii) helping clubs with fundraising, either through formal channels like LTA or Sport England funding or through more informal partnerships with local councils, schools and businesses; iii) helping clubs implement LTA initiatives; and, iv) helping clubs to find a licensed coach. In these regards, county LTAs have a role to play in the implementation of the LTAs talent development initiatives as well as competitive opportunities within and between clubs, although the latter is more a duty for the club coaches.

In the 2006 *Blueprint for British Tennis*, it was written: “There are about 6000 active coaches in Britain and they are probably the single most important group of people when it comes to attracting, developing and retaining players in the sport” (LTA, 2006b, p.8). Certainly, the 3500 coaches who are currently working in clubs are pivotal within the club figuration. Not only are they the only people within a club who are accountable in part to the LTA, but they also have the challenging responsibility to put into practice LTA policy. In part because it is financially beneficial for them, many club coaches also take it upon themselves to attract new members to the club and attempt to

integrate them with established club members. Because of this, coaches can occupy positions of centrality and authority in the club; however the LTA (2006b) reported that less than 30% sit on club committees.

Central and local government are also pivotal in the implementation of LTA policy. In the last few years, funding has been received for the PESSCL (Physical Education School Sport Club Links) and TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) programmes and some club projects have been funded through the CCDP (Community Club Development Programme) scheme (LTA, 2004c). In addition, central government policies have already helped to make clubs less autonomous and more accountable, for example in the areas of child protection, alcohol licensing and the smoking ban. However, they have had less influence in areas related to social inclusion, as the “private” aspect of voluntary-run clubs has been retained. Local authorities have supported the ongoing ITI programme with investment. In addition, they are either directly or indirectly responsible for the maintenance of public park and school tennis courts, but the LTA and its associated charities have continued to invest in these areas despite them not being within their direct remit. Local authorities are also responsible for allowing planning permission for the development of tennis facilities, such as indoor courts and floodlighting, which many have regarded as complicated and problematic.

The All England Club over the last few years has become the model of good practice for the leading prestigious clubs across the country. The implementation of the Wimbledon Junior Tennis Initiative, which incorporates the Road to Wimbledon programme, has offered hundreds of thousands of local children their first opportunities to play the game. However, the expected spread of these junior development schemes to other prestigious clubs has been disappointing. In this regard, it is felt that more could be done to encourage other leading clubs to implement similar programmes. The importance of such clubs should be recognised, not only as trend-setters of policy but also of the social standards to which other clubs aspire.

In order to be successful, schemes designed to develop talent and help clubs to become more inclusive, competitive and performance-driven environments should take into consideration the following requirements: i) the need to understand the opportunities available for clubs to raise sufficient funds; ii) the need for a critical appraisal of the “pyramid structure” of talent development; iii) the need to reconsider the

funding procedures for clubs; and, iv) the need to improve the centrality of competition in club life. These considerations form the basis of the following policy recommendations.

Considerations for the Implementation of Policy

Firstly, the extent to which working in partnerships is crucial to the survival of tennis providers is now well recognised by the LTA. However, while the LTA have taken the lead working in partnerships with a whole host of new and diverse partners, greater encouragement and guidance needs to be given to clubs as well as county LTAs to do the same. Partnerships offer great opportunities for raising funds, and these relationships need to be more fully exploited.

The school-club links programme, for example, which began in 2000, affords excellent opportunities for coaches to ply their trade and attract new club members, but there is undoubtedly a feeling of reluctance by some clubs to embrace such a programme, for threat of limiting court time and playing opportunities for full members. Thus, perhaps more information could be given to the club about the potential benefits of this arrangement for all club members; for instance, clubs could offer subsidised facility provision or membership subscriptions. Information, encouragement and guidance to form partnerships with local authorities and commercial sponsors, in order to alleviate some of the financial pressures associated with club redevelopment, could be improved.

Secondly, it is important to question the traditional pyramid approach which suggests that “more players” will lead to “better players” simply and inevitably. Kirk and Gorely (2000, p.122) argued that the traditional pyramid structure of talent development was too simplistic, rested on false premises and actually implied the systematic exclusion of young players as one progressed up performance levels, suggesting: “There is no guarantee that a broad base of participation... will necessarily produce a higher standard of achievement. We may instead have greater strength in depth, rather than a higher level of performance”.² Nevertheless, these assumptions have remained deeply entrenched in dominant sports development ideologies and have continued to undermine talent development efforts across many British sports until the

present day. David Felgate, in 2004, for example, returned to this age-old assumption while comparing the development of British players to those of other countries:

Where we differ is that we don't have the numbers to ensure that a healthy handful of our juniors will make the break-through, and that's what we are really focusing on at the LTA. It's about putting numbers in the draw, because the law of averages tells you that the more players are involved the better the chance one of them will progress (cited in Hayes, 2004, July 4).

Undoubtedly and inarguably, achieving greater numbers of recreational players is a positive development but it is wrong to assume that this will inevitably lead to higher standards and greater numbers of elite-level players. Weaknesses of this "numbers" approach lie in its ahistorical and static conception. The suggestion, therefore, is to focus on the specific "pathways" of development, instead of the simple quest to achieve greater numbers; this is something that Sport England has come to appreciate recently (Sport England, 2002).

Thirdly, it is important to provide county LTAs with more relevant information from which they can make better judgments on the suitability of clubs for investment. The extent to which the LTA's Club Vision programme actually targets effectively the heart of inequality in clubs has been questioned previously. It has also been suggested that the LTA's methods of detecting exclusion are fundamentally flawed, using quantitative measures as a suggestion of a club's suitability for developing talent and, thus, its suitability for financial assistance from the LTA. It is proposed that these methods be improved, supplemented with information about the club of a more qualitative nature.

It is proposed that county LTAs construct a team of individuals with the remit to critically investigate the clubs in need of financial assistance. The necessary quantitative measures could be obtained, and then the team could spend time investigating the club and its members through more qualitative means. Short informal interviews could be conducted with new members, the parents of children at the club, the club coaches, as well as with members of the committee and more established club members. Questionnaires could be sent to ask new members of their experiences at the club. Additionally, similar in some ways to a "mystery shopper" approach used to gauge customer service in business, a more thorough investigation could be done in clubs

requiring a particularly large investment, which would involve what Sands (2002) called “ethnography for hire”. This is whereby an individual is given access to the respective club for a short period, perhaps four weeks, and in this time attempts to gauge the extent to which the club provides the kind of welcoming, nurturing, competitive and performance-oriented environment that the LTA require in order to put into fruition their development initiatives. Observations and informal interviews would be done, together with active participation in as many aspects of club life as possible. This method of analysis will allow the county LTA to “get a feel” for the club, which will be useful not only in helping to judge the respective club’s suitability for funding, but also help them obtain other information that might be useful in the future when implementing policy.

Whilst this proposal would make considerable demands on both time and access, it is felt that, considering the vast amounts of money requested by respective clubs for investment in new facilities, to ask for their cooperation in a more detailed examination of their suitability of funding and further development seems reasonable. In addition, with the relatively small number of investment projects put forward each year, for each individual county LTA, it seems a workable proposal.³

Fourthly, in their 2005 annual report, the LTA wrote: “We believe that by encouraging and delivering competition, standards of play will rise. This is a fundamental contribution to our vision of ‘more players, better players’” (LTA, 2005, p.43). Up until this point, serious competition, however, has been regarded as something separate from what would normally take place in most voluntary-run tennis clubs. In the 2007 *Review*, the provision of better competitive opportunities was one of the eight major recommendations detailed, where it was noted: “the vast majority of people who play tennis are not competing on a regular basis, if at all” (LTA, 2007a, p.9). As the LTA recognised in their 2006 *Blueprint*, however, opportunities for competition are poor, particularly for children, and many coaches do not value competition. Further, while it will be difficult to remove the hierarchical structure of voluntary-run clubs, instead, it is suggested that the link between playing standard and social status could be strengthened. It is felt that more could be done to raise the status of competition and competitive achievement in the club. In this scenario, children with promising talent would be encouraged and nurtured, instead of marginalised or ignored. As such, there is a need to improve the centrality of competition in club life.

Inter-club leagues across Britain have become well established, for example, through the KIA National Club League which began in 1993. While the competition is open to all LTA affiliated clubs in the UK for men and women's teams, however, only approximately 800 club teams regularly take part in the six-month event (LTA, 2004, March 23). Further, due to some of the structural and "social" aspects of inter-club matches,⁴ it is doubtful whether they actually foster a serious competitive spirit for most members of most clubs. To make competition more central in club life, and to help *all* members see its benefits, incentives could be offered to the most successful clubs, including cash injections to improve aspects of their clubhouse, courts or other facilities.⁵ Sue Mappin, inadvertently, spoke of the potential of this approach as follows:

A club can be for everyone, not just junior development... That club has to function socially as well. That club has to be a unit where all those families want to be part of. And then they will want to improve that club; they will care about it. If you have got good coaches who have then got good development, tournament level as well, in those clubs, and say you've got ten clubs in the area, they will want to play against these other clubs; huge inter-club competitions, all played locally. And then your base begins to build, and that to me is the most important thing (personal communication, August 24, 2006).

It is suggested that improving the rewards, incentives and recognition for successful teams in inter-club competitions will help shift the respective balances of power within clubs in a direction that is more favourable to the LTA's overall objectives. Of course, increasing the amount of competition and level of competitiveness in clubs should be only one among a number of criteria for funding.

In the light of these considerations, generally, it is felt that this shift or, rather, the equalisation in the balance of power, between groups of club members as well as between the club members and club coaches, is fundamental to the success of the LTA's objective for changing the "culture" in clubs. If this is achieved, it is suggested that clubs in Britain could more closely resemble those in France, as described by Patrice Hagelauer, whereby promising children come to achieve a higher status in clubs, with their talent development needs better looked after; further, all club members value the development of their respective juniors. Moreover, the relationship between the club members and coach would shift, as in the pursuit of competitive success the coach would

become more important in the development of players in inter-club competitions. Club coaches would thus be rewarded for their hard work, dedication and skill not just in the development of individual players but also for the success of the club's teams in competitions more generally. The suggestion that coaches should take more responsibility for the competitive development of club players was also suggested in the 2006 *Blueprint*. The LTA wrote: for coaches, there is a "lack of a financial incentive to watch and support their players during competitions. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of coaches do not prioritise an understanding of the competitive framework" (LTA, 2006b, p.8). This would suggest that, in order for coaches to take this responsibility seriously, perhaps rewards should be offered to coaches of successful club teams. This would help the coach to set performance targets for the players he or she helps to develop. It is suggested that the support of players through inter-club competitions would be an excellent starting point, a point of departure for club coaches to begin to invest more heavily in the results and performance of their pupils.

These brief recommendations are by no means indicative, but rather a point of departure towards a model for change in British tennis. Generally, the successful implementation of any scheme designed to change what is rooted as part of a particular "culture", requires a sound base of knowledge of the subject matter, its development over history and an understanding of the goals and motivations of the various groups and stakeholders that are implicated within the complicated process of implementation.

¹ The Tennis Foundation is the umbrella charity organisation for all of the major tennis charities in existence, including Tennis For Free, the Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation, the British Schools Tennis Association and the Dan Maskell Tennis Trust. According to its website, the Tennis Foundation "is responsible for the management of a sustainable inclusive tennis delivery for all age groups across all Local Authority tennis facilities, including parks, leisure centres and indoor facilities located on Local Authority land. The Foundation's responsibility also extends to the whole of the education sector, and to disability development and performance" (<http://www.btf.org.uk/about.html>).

² The example of British rowing, a sport with a minority participation but with considerable success at the elite level, has been offered as a comparison to suggest that success at the elite level is not always predicated by masses of players at the recreational level (Hoey, 2002, January 28; Houlihan & White, 2002).

³ From its launch in 2000 until 2004, for instance, the LTA's Club Vision programme injected £14.7 million into 107 facility development projects. Divided between the 38 counties over 4 years, this equated to an average of less than one planning application per county association per year. At the time of publication of the 2005 annual report, the LTA remarked that there were over 100 project proposals and funding applications being processed (LTA, 2005). However, many of these were for relatively minor facility projects such as installing floodlights.

⁴ Personal experiences have led me to believe that the main function of inter-club matches for its participants is social, in that they provide a good way for members of one club to enjoy the company of members from another club. Inter-club matches often take place during an evening mid-week, thus they

are invariably poorly supported either by non-playing members of the travelling team or the home team. Further, matches in many leagues, such as the Middlesex county league, are played only in a doubles format, thereby limiting the types of players wanting to compete. Doubles in a club environment is regarded as a less competitive type of game compared to singles, while the pursuit of success tends to be taken less seriously. This is probably because playing doubles offers the possibility for players to defer the responsibility of defeat or, indeed, success to one's partner. After the matches have finished, all players retire to the clubhouse to enjoy an elaborate banquet put out by the home club, as well as drinks from the bar. This aspect of the affair tends to last as long as the playing of tennis itself, which has led me to conclude that it is of comparable importance to the actual competition on court.

⁵ Additionally, the LTA would have to organise inter-club competitions fairly and sensibly, making stipulations on the use of "ringers" and, perhaps, ensuring equality of chances by dividing clubs into different size divisions, like in boxing. That way, clubs with 60 members and 3 courts would not be competing against a club with 600 members and 20 courts.

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