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The challenges faced by the only black team playing 6-down  
Touch Rugby at In2Touch.

“I just saw all these white people and just thought WAH... what is  
going to happen to us!”

By

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the  
Degree of Master of Philosophy in Diversity Studies

Department of Sociology  
University of Cape Town 2008

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date: 20 May 2009

Signed by candidate

2. Khaya were also systematically mistrusted by the white teams they played against. The manner in which this mistrust was expressed was overwhelmingly aggressive. The team did not seem to notice anything particularly wrong with these mistrust incidents which led me to conclude that the covert racism at Brookside had become a tragically ordinary part of their experience.

These findings seriously question the idea that sport promotes egalitarianism. The data reveals that the legacy of apartheid still means that access to sports such as 6-down touch rugby are available only to areas with particular facilities and to those that can afford it. It is not available for all. Sport itself is not magic-wand through which people naturally find it possible to put behind them societal differences. Differences from greater society are mirrored in sport and this was evident from my data. Covert racism acts subtly in 6-down touch and the fact that it is a sport does nothing I saw to make this less of a challenge for Khaya.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*“From the usually staid tree-lined, predominantly white suburbs, to dusty black township streets, black and white South Africans seemed to have discovered a sense of common unity as the victory was toasted across the land. For a country with a long and painful history of division and conflict, and in the sporting arena rugby in particular being perceived as the game of the Afrikaner oppressors, such celebrations were thrillingly extraordinary.” -*

Grundlingh A, “From Redemption to Recidivism? Rugby and Change in South Africa During the 1995 Rugby World Cup and its Aftermath” 2006:83

The national rugby team that won the 1995 World Cup, it has been said, did more for reconciliation than any other single event in South African history. Sport generally is seen by many as holding the potential for real nation building and reconciliation, not only for the spectators but also for the competitors. People promoting sport hold these assertions because sport is meant to be a great equaliser: or, on the field of play a person’s race or social standing plays no part. Sports are thought of as governed by sets of rules and officiated by impartial adjudicators. It is believed a person’s skill in that particular sport will set them apart from others, nothing else. Sport is seen as a space with the potential for different people to meet and share differences and similarities, a space where issues such as race can be diminished through the equality a sporting space provides

There are those however who do not view modern sport in the same way. Sport can be and more often is a place where differences in broader society are mirrored and sometimes further entrenched. Modern sport, through its similarities to the social structure that created it, capitalism, creates division because it mimics capitalist notions of success, or: winning. “Capitalist sport takes positive human qualities like playfulness and recreation, but virtually extinguishes them” (Budd, 2001:16).

I believe that sport does hold the possibility for individual progress and upward class mobility but that in the majority of cases it does nothing but ensure or entrench differences. With this in mind I decided to focus on the relationship between race and sport for this project.

## **Subject**

This research report examines the challenges faced by the only black<sup>1</sup> team competing in “In2Touch” 6-down Touch Rugby; a demographically and historically white sport and questions the idea that sport promotes egalitarianism.

The research was conducted at ‘Brookside’, Villager Rugby Ground, Claremont, Cape Town.

## **Background to Investigation**

The game of 6-down touch rugby is a “minimal contact sport that is played worldwide by men, women and children of all ages. The sport emphasizes running, agility and ball handling skills such as passing and catching” (touchrugby.co.za). It is played between two teams who at different times during the game are on attack and defence. The point of the game is to score more tries than the other team in the two twenty minute halves. As the name implies there is no tackling but a touch on the attacking player by a defending player stops that particular phase of play. The team on attack is allowed to utilise 6 phases of play in order to try and score. A legal touch ends a phase of play and is on any part of the body, clothing or ball. A defending player must claim a touch by raising a hand and shouting “Touch”. The referee is the sole judge of the touch and has the discretion to overrule a claim.

Barring any mistakes the attackers have six opportunities to take the ball up to the try line and try to score. After 6 touches or phases the defending team then receive the ball and the process is repeated.

Formal 6-down touch rugby was developed in South Africa by “The Sportsman Group” a set of businesses “involved in all spheres of corporate sports provision, event management, general promotions and field marketing” (touchrugby.co.za). “In2Touch” is one such company and has been organizing and hosting 6-down touch rugby tournaments in South Africa for the last 11 years. The game has historical ties with the game of Rugby League

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<sup>1</sup> In this report I employ the terms ‘black’ ‘coloured’ ‘Indian’ and ‘white’ as they are generally used in contemporary South African society and by my interviewees, but without supporting the notion of any biological imperative and believing that the “concept of ‘race’ ...should be viewed as a social construction, an ideological process” (Foster 1991:203).



Football, being a no-contact form of this game. It started out as a way to practice this form of rugby but is now considered a sport in isolation. There are national leagues, provincial teams and international tournaments.

Four tournaments are hosted at Brookside each year, corresponding to each season, one each for summer, autumn, winter and spring. They offer the opportunity for teams to enter the men's league, women's league as well as mixed gender league. Each league is divided into different divisions according to the skill level of the teams. The number of teams and divisions within each league fluctuate depending on levels of interest each season. The tournaments follow a pattern where each team in a particular division plays each other team in the division before the top four play a semi-final and final to decide the eventual winner of each division. There are grading games before each season in order to pair similarly skilled teams together in the differing divisions.

The games are played every Wednesday night during the season, with In2Touch renting the Brookside fields from Villager Rugby club. An observer of a Wednesday night at Brookside won't see integrated black, coloured and white teams playing against integrated black, coloured and white teams. However you would see one black team playing white teams playing against coloured teams. Besides a few glimpses of racial integration, teams remain largely racially homogenous. Out of up to fifty teams; generally there have been three coloured and one black team competing against other white teams. The one black team, "Khaya"<sup>2</sup>, arrive by taxi, gather in the same area, to the sides of the field week after week, play their matches and go home. I very seldom see them socializing with players from other teams before or after the game, I never see them in the bar before or after the game. The only time that I had ever engaged with these players was when I played against them.

I had played 6-down for a number of seasons with various teams as a means to keep fit, play a low contact sport and socialize with friends. It wasn't until I played for a team loosely drawn from the University Cape Town students during the winter league of 2007 that I played alongside a man called 'Mandla'; a member of Khaya.

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<sup>2</sup> All names, team and individual, have been changed.

'Mandla' played a number of matches with us and when we got to talking he spoke about some of the difficulties he and his team faced by choosing to participate in 6-down touch. Some of the obstacles were financial; they all lived in Khayelitsha and were not rich, they struggled to find money and sponsorship/charity for their fees as well as for equipment and transport. As well as facing these challenges they faced opposition teams who were largely white and who didn't seemingly include them in any of the social aspects of participating in 6-Down touch. Watching many of the games taking place on the different fields, I began to notice a trend that some teams and some people were seemingly instantly trusted while others were not. This manifested in arguing with the opposing players or the referee over the claims made by the other team and by other players.

I began to observe that the coloured and black teams, Khaya in particular appeared to receive more accusations of cheating than did the white teams. The integrity (honesty?) of black or coloured defenders was questioned more frequently and more aggressively by white opponents than were white defenders by white opponents.

These observations might seem surprising as sport and participation in sport is often seen as a potential solution for racial differences. Sport is promoted by businesses, civil society and government as being a vehicle through which people can meet and play and overcome their differences. It is widely considered that on the sports field people are equal and that this equality allows for interaction and learning to take place. It is said that sport is what binds people together, "a highly cohesive structure which banishes social barriers and differences and is based on the equality of all..." (Haute Comite' des Sports, 1965 in Brohm, 1976:58).

My cursory observations seemingly challenged these common promises of sport having the potential in South African Society to overcome difference. I therefore made it my task to identify what challenges Khaya face as a team of black players from Khayelitsha competing in what is an expensive, demographically and historically white sport.

### **Aims of Research**

The specific aims of this research are to:

- a) Examine the challenges facing the Khaya team.
- b) Question of the idea that Sport promotes Egalitarianism.

## **Scope and Limitations**

The investigation was restricted to the “In2Touch” 6-down Touch Rugby League operating at the ‘Brookside’ fields in Claremont, Cape Town. The investigation was restricted to the team calling themselves ‘Khaya’. Financial and time restrictions did not allow me to investigate a completely thorough range of “In2Touch” leagues throughout South Africa. The project is about the social reality of one team and their encounter with a demographically and historically white sport. What I do plan to use their example for is to question the idea that sport promotes egalitarianism

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL GROUNDING in RACE and SPORT

A theoretical grounding in the area of race and sport will allow me to gain a deeper level of conceptual clarity required to do a satisfactory study. Second and more importantly it will allow me to operationalise these key concepts in order to take the research process further.

This chapter is split into 3 parts; the first explores the historical context of race and racism and how this has manifested itself within contemporary society. Part 2 explores popular notions of sport as well as critiques thereof. The final section deals with research into the area of race and sport and how they are connected.

#### PART 1

##### Race and Racism

*“For no matter what ‘learned’ scientists may say, race is, politically speaking, not the beginning of humanity, but its end, not the origin of peoples, but their decay, not the natural birth of man but his unnatural death.”*

- Hannah Arendt, in du Toit, 2003:87

This study has as a focus the only black team playing a sport that is demographically and historically white. Race therefore is central to the better understanding of the challenges they face. Racism can be used to determine social reality through the exercise of ideological power (Frankenberg, 1993). To better understand the basis of this ideological power I need to first define and contextualize race and racism to make better sense of the historical legacy these concepts carry.

Africa has been and continues to be seen as the opposite to everything good Europe is meant to represent. It goes without saying that this vision of Africa was created by Europeans. It was created through the representations and images of Africa Europeans imposed upon it. Famous European writers such as Joseph Conrad in his book “Heart of Darkness” (1902) created Africa as the antithesis of ‘civilisation’. As part of the western canon it was extremely

influential and Chinua Achebe (1989) critiqued the ways in which Europe and especially Conrad had constructed Africa as the 'other'. "For reasons which can certainly use close psychological inquiry the West seems to suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilisation and have a need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa. If Europe advancing in civilisation, could cast a backward glance periodically at Africa trapped in primordial barbarity it could say with faith and feeling: There go I but for the grace of God. Africa is to Europe as the picture is to Dorian Gray – a carrier on whom the master unloads his physical and moral deformities so that he may go ahead, erect and immaculate" (Achebe, 1989:17). Chinua Achebe asserts that this is how Europeans saw and continue to see Africa and its inhabitants, as the direct opposite to all that Europe is and does. It speaks to an ideology, a discourse in which Africa as a setting and backdrop eliminates the African as a human factor. "Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril" (Achebe, 1989:12). Achebe writes passionately against the writings of Conrad as a means to express his disgust for the ideology Europe holds of his beloved continent.

The ideology of superiority that Achebe describes is as prevalent and entrenched today as it was when Conrad wrote his book; it has merely shifted and become maybe more difficult to see. Overt racism has in many cases been subsumed by covert racism.

An ideology of superiority is that which leads one person to discriminate against another, one group to discriminate against another, one group to 'feel' superior - to 'know' - it is superior to another. It can permeate society and is sustained by society's very fibre; through language, education, religion and media, through history, culture, political systems and economic exploitation. The development of an ideology of superiority depends on the unbroken power of one group over others for a long period of time in conjunction with systematic economic exploitation by one group over the others. It enters the culture of both groups and is to some degree internalised by both groups to such an extent that both groups start believing in their relative positions to each other; it affects and shapes our society and is self-reinforcing. When the supposed superiority is based along racial lines racism is the manifestation.

In a South African context with its history of colonialism, slavery and apartheid, racism is and has been a manifestation due to an ideology of white superiority. The racist form that this

ideology takes is not however uniquely white in its perpetuation. Black, coloured and Indian to some extent have internalised the ideology of white superiority.

Taking this understanding then of racism and the implications for 6-down touch rugby, studying the social reality of a black team playing a white sport will surely show that race does in fact heavily influence the social reality of the team. The question therefore is to verify this and answer the question in what ways race affects their playing of 6-down touch rugby.

However I first need to state the historical significance of racism and how it continues to operate today.

Where did this ideology of superiority originate and how were races constructed? How does race and racism continue to be constructed and given meaning today?

Racial identities have been 'common sense' in South African society for hundreds of years and it is proving hard to rearticulate the meanings given to and classifications surrounding the term, 'race'. These notions remain even though they have been scientifically rejected by the likes of Tobias (1985, in Foster 1991) who noted that there was no evidence to support the view that races are pure and distinct entities, that all members of a race look and think alike, or that some races are better than others. Erlich (1977:38 in Foster 1991:58) also concluded that, "Biologically there are no races of Homo Sapiens". Omi and Winant (2000) echo these ideas by saying that there is no biological basis for distinguishing between human groups and that these racial lines are "at best imprecise and at worst completely arbitrary" (Omi & Winant, 2000:183).

Melissa Steyn (2001) noted that Apartheid South Africa was the society most overtly organised by race and South African society still uses the concepts and meanings of race as being distinct groups. Since democracy and the outlawing of this form of discrimination there have been shifts in the economic differentiation dissected by the racial categories of the past. According to Erasmus (2004) race is still shaping the economic landscape and the lived experience for the majority of poor and working class black people in this country in South Africa. This echoes Balibar (1991) who wrote that the mere fact of outlawing these systems does not necessarily mean the elimination of the racism, that the history still lives with us.

So if race is not in law and is not scientifically corroborated does it make it any less real? Not really, the social constructionist argument regarding the 'reality' of race have become very popular. Berger and Luckman's (1966) book "The Social Construction of Reality" popularised the term 'social construct' and race and racism are both social constructs; that which is not real is made 'real' to serve particular purposes. In the present day context we could say that even though race does not exist in science it still exists in the lived reality of South Africans.

It is vital to deepen my understanding of these concepts so that I better understand how and why they were constructed. This will possibly help in understanding why the ideology of white superiority still exists and is such a problem.

### **The Construction of Race**

*"Africa grew dark as Victorian explorers, missionaries and scientists flooded it with light, because the light was refracted through an imperialist ideology that urged the abolition of 'savage customs' in the name of civilisation."*

- Brantlinger 1998:173 "The Genealogy of the myth of the 'Dark Continent'"

Africa has been positioned as the 'other', as less than fully civilised since the first European travellers began exploring this continent and writing about what they saw and what they felt when they visited it. Colonialism was based on the 'superiority' of the colonisers which was physically marked by their paler skin colour and socially by their 'civilized' customs. Conversely the 'inferiority' of the colonised, marked by darker skin colour and less 'civilized' customs (Steyn, 2001).

J M Coetzee (1988:2) ponders why the Cape never had the myth attached that it could be an Eden; "...why did the garden myth, the myth of return to Eden and innocence, fail to take root in the garden colony of the Cape?" Coetzee answers that Africa could never, would never be the earthly paradise, as this had already been 'discovered' in the New World, the Americas. The Cape was not the New World but 'of the old'. The peoples of this land were never afforded any interest by the early visitors but rather disgust or at most, merely vague curiosity. The Cape promised the traveller not an image of possible being but rather that which to avoid. It was as Achebe (1989) wrote, the foil to everything European, everything civilized.

Coetzee (1988:14) writes that these early travellers perceived the native peoples of the Cape through a “grid”, a list of concepts such as weapons, dress, language, economy, government, physical appearance. These give formation to the ‘data’ observed and actually create an image and discourse for the Europeans so as to better understand the people they were observing. The problem with this is that these concepts are European constructs as to what ‘makes up’ a person/people, nation, culture, civilisation.

It would be too much, writes Coetzee (1988:15) to expect these early observers to “put aside their inherited Eurocentric conceptual schemes in favour of a scheme based on native conceptual categories”. It is because if this that images are created, interpreted and then spread in a manner which never does any sort of justice to the people being dominated, exploited, defamed, looked down on, being made the ‘other’.

As credibility for the ‘truth’ of science, rationality and logic grew in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, so too the thinking that there had to be a scientific basis for what had become ‘obvious’ differences between the peoples of Africa and Europe. It was during the 1850s that scientific racism was first advanced (Banton, 1988). Science set out to measure and fix the difference permanently and it was the famous zoologist Linnaeus, who developed racial classifications for peoples from the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa, with detailed descriptions of physical features as well as the corresponding predictable behaviour; “Homo Sapiens Afer: black, sluggish, loose-limbed; hair dull black, kinky, flat nose, big lips; women immodest concerning bosom, long nipples; cunning, lax, careless; smears self with fat, is ruled by authority” (Linnaeus in Foster 1991:59). This scientific explanation for the ‘other’ was welcomed and accepted as fact by the dispersing, colonising Europeans.

These ‘facts’ became law and almost naturally an understanding began to show in the social fabric, make up of society, adding further ‘proof’ (as if any were needed) that white Europeans were superior to black Africans. Africa becomes merely the setting for the European story, eliminating the African as a human factor, Africa as a “metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity” (Achebe, 1989:12).

The reasons why Europeans were so determined to construct this ideology of superiority was that it allowed exploitation and subordination of these peoples without any questions being asked of the morality. South Africa’s history shows too that the ideology of superiority further allowed the exploitation of the growing coloured and Indian communities.



Colonialisation was a pursuit by European countries for capital, and racism was an intricate part in that pursuit. Once the European powers were in place in African countries, the maintenance of that level of capitalism required racism to continue to be a part of the running of the state. Racism was an absolute necessity for capitalism to occur; capitalism required the racial order present for its development and reproduction and it is logical therefore that the need to maintain this relationship would also be expressed through various racially discriminatory measures (Wolpe 1980). In South Africa these racist understandings and 'facts' became an ideology of superiority and when entrenched in law it constructed a society to favour white over black.

It is clear therefore that the ideology of white superiority was a construction made by white people, for their benefit.

### **Whiteness**

*"White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks."*

- McIntosh, P. 1998:148 "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"

Racism is not always what puts others at a disadvantage but can be what makes white people gain an advantage. They could be the same thing really but white people play a crucial role; they gain from acting in a racist manner, otherwise why do it? Out of hate? Racism has little to do with hate and a lot to do with power and the control and use of that power (McIntosh 1998).

By seeing whiteness and studying whiteness academics claim that we can better identify the process by which difference is constituted and therefore see how power is accrued and abused. Although a fairly new area of study there is a large body of literature to draw from (Wise 2008, Shaw 2007, Garner 2007, Goldstein 2006, Steyn 2001, Aitken 2007, Hage 2000, Bay 2000, Cowlshaw 2004, McIntosh 1998, Epstein 1998 and Frankenberg 1993). To study whiteness is to study directly how race affects white people rather than the predominant form of research into the area of race which looks at how race affects black people. Instead of studying blackness, they study whiteness.

Steve Garner (2007) in his book "Whiteness: An Introduction" gives an extremely thorough overview of the issue and is very useful when trying to understand this concept. Garner argues that whiteness is at once so normalized as to be invisible, and simultaneously so marked by the exercise of power that it is extremely visible when looking for it. He writes that whiteness is highly visible because as whites express racialised anxieties about others, they are also constructing idealized identities for themselves, leading Garner to note that whiteness "can see itself only if reflected in another" (2007: 43). It is through the denigration of black people that whiteness and all the cultural, economic and social benefits that come with it are constructed and maintained. Whiteness acts as an asset, protecting from all kinds of hostility, distress and violence; it protects whites from the violence of everyday life. Whites need blacks to be inferior to them so that they can be superior, and they ensure that this occurs.

In the South African context Melissa Steyn (2001) argues that the need for the superiority of whiteness in relation to the inferiority of blackness hints at its delicate nature. This precariousness is due to the normative notion that whiteness espouses, that whiteness is the only version of reality, the "master narrative", the framework from within which all other versions of reality, narratives, are interpreted. The effects of colonization were to make being black or blackness as abnormal from whiteness, with whiteness naturally being dominant and correct. When the dominated are constructed in this manner "the dominating position is unmarked, allowing freedom and greater possibilities, and simultaneously setting itself up as normal, positioned beyond any obligation to explain itself" (Steyn, 2001:21). By ensuring therefore that whiteness was not seen as being a reality its power was allowed to reproduce unchecked and the dominance of whiteness has been ensured. This echoes McIntosh who wrote that "White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (1998:148). The insecure character of dominant positions requires that it remains invisible for it to remain dominant. Those focusing their studying on whiteness hope that by starting to see whiteness, its precariousness might be challenged; its power might be questioned.

In her book "Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used to Be" Steyn (2001) identifies five narratives of whiteness engaged by white South Africans. All these narratives are endorsed historically through colonialism and apartheid but define varying relative positions to them. "Still colonial after all these years" is a narrative which basically assumes an unchanged power

relationship between blacks and whites; whites superior, blacks inferior. “This shouldn’t happen to a white” constructs whites as victims in a situation which is a reversal of the ways things ‘should be’, i.e. whites superior and blacks inferior. The narrators of “Don’t think white it’s alright” acknowledge a change in the power relationship between black and whites, however, and are “trying to find practical, even creative, ways to remain white in the new South Africa” (2001:58). Then there are those who did not “internalize the enculturation of racialised South African society” (2001:58). Theirs is a tale of attempted evasion from the gradual acceptance that they were living in Africa and is captured in “A whiter shade of white”. Lastly there are those “who are moving away from their whiteness” (2001:58) in different ways – they tell the story of “Under African skies” or “White, but not quite”.

The significance of these narratives is that they complicate the notion of a homogenous whiteness and illustrate Erasmus’ (2004) point that race can be “inhabited” in different ways.

It is clear then that whiteness acts to assert itself and those who are white. To do this whiteness acts not only to exclude blackness (or colouredness or Indianess) from white spaces but actively makes ways in which black people negotiate white spaces difficult (Garner 2007). Racism in South Africa, a manifestation of an ideology of white superiority, is therefore a tool of whiteness, reinforcing racist assumptions that point to the dominance, the superiority of whiteness.

It could be argued that in instances where blackness is the dominant reality the contra-position might be true and that in such situations racism, as a manifestation of an ideology of black superiority, could be a tool of blackness. This is a completely plausible scenario. However through recent history there has not been a period where black has dominated over white to such an extent that an ideology of black superiority has been created or persisted. It is because of this that I make the claim that in the South African context for the time being racism is a tool of whiteness.

My research will be conducted in a distinctly sporting environment; and if the theorists are correct then the question is more than just whether or not sports spaces escape the effects of whiteness but in what ways does whiteness shape sporting spaces?

Fusco (2005) in her article “Cultural landscapes of purification: Sports spaces and discourses of whiteness” tried to answer the question; what importance does whiteness play in shaping

the built environments of sport? Fusco asserts that the locker room (the space she studied) privilege the white people using them. She believes that discourses of whiteness are brought to bear on the subjects who administer, use and maintain everyday sport and recreation spaces, such as locker rooms. In conclusion, Fusco (2005) states that her article furthers the notions about how whiteness strongly influences sports spaces. Although I am not looking at the locker rooms or the physical structure of Brookside, it is valuable to note that sports spaces are, according to Fusco seemingly not outside the clutches of whiteness.

My research focuses on the lived reality of a black team playing 6-down touch rugby and so might seem like I am looking at blackness rather than whiteness. However it will be important to understand firstly if the effects of whiteness exist at Brookside and then how whiteness might work as a barrier to black participants fully enjoying their time on the sports fields. Whiteness cannot be deemed by demographics only although a space that is made up largely by white people is often an indicator of the potential for whiteness to be operating. It is also crucial to see whether the space is seen as being a white space. For black participants coming into a space that they interpret as being 'white' this can make it unwelcoming and they might not fully enjoy the full use of Brookside. It will hopefully be helpful in explaining why racism might exist in 6-down touch rugby.

### **Institutional Racism**

*"Like a mist or vapour, institutional racism cannot be seen and often goes undetected"*

- Better, S. 2002:48 "Institutional Racism: A Primer on Theory and Strategies for Social Change"

It has become popular to conceive racism through images such as white policemen torturing black youth, or through organisations and people such as the far right-wing group, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and their leader, Eugene Terre'Blanche. It is easy to visualise racism through stories of brutality emerging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and so therefore understand racism through what Hesse (2004) refers to as the Jewish Holocaust perspective, rather than being a part of the structure of society.

However Hannah Arendt claims that racism is at its most devastating, not in the excessive pathologised violent acts such as racialised police attacks, but in the racism that can so easily become one of the "tragically 'ordinary' tendencies" of a country such as South Africa, where our day to day actions are controlled by the structure of the society and our behaviour and

prejudices are entrenched in the 'common sense' of the peoples within the society (in Balibar 1991:51). One of the most studied forms of this type of racism is known as "Institutional Racism" and is that which, covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions - reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn. Whereas individual racism might be the expression of personal prejudice, institutional racism is the expression of a whole organisation's racist practice and culture (Holdaway and O'Neill 2007).

The term, institutional racism, received widespread publicity after the release of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry in the United Kingdom. Stephen Lawrence was a black British teenager from South-East London who was stabbed to death while waiting for a bus on the evening of 22 April 1993. After the initial investigation, five suspects were arrested but never convicted. In 1999, an inquiry headed by Sir William MacPherson examined the original Metropolitan police investigation and famously concluded that the force was "institutionally racist" (Macpherson 1999).

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry defined institutional racism as: "The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people" (Macpherson 1999:28). This definition represented a radical challenge to liberal perspectives which tended to associate 'racism' with relatively obvious, overt acts of discrimination. This definition included unwitting (and even well-intentioned) behaviour and argued that racism should be identified by its effects – not the intentions of individual actors, groups and/or policy-makers.

According to Millar and Garran (2007) in the United States institutional racism forms a web of oppression which obstructs economic, social and political mobility for black people while whites are "issued passports of privilege" (2007:33). Writing from an American perspective their piece "The Web of Institutional Racism" focuses on the institutional manifestations of racism and the many ways it inhibits opportunity for people of colour. They claim that this 'web of racism' is often invisible to many white people, creating the illusion that Americans live in a fair and just society. It exists in the socio-political realm but also imprinting itself on

individual bodies and psyches. This means that the problem is more than just an individual one and Erasmus (2004) writing in the South African context asserts that there are not the proverbial “few bad apples” who continue to use race as a means with which to prejudge other people but that race and the meanings attached to it, permeate the culture and structure of our society.

When it comes to the reality of racism the question that therefore needs answering is focussed on the contestation of institutional racism as first being an ideological phenomenon which gives rise to unfair, discriminatory structures. Or second, the idea that institutional racism is a structural phenomenon which gives rise to ideologies of domination. Omi and Winant (2000) argue that they are not distinct or separate; that ideological beliefs have structural consequences whilst social structures at the same time give rise to beliefs. They mutually shape racism in society and it is in understanding that racial hegemony is ‘messy’ and a product of an extensive historical process that ultimately means many different forms of racism.

Omi and Winant (2000) urge the reader therefore to see race “as an element of social-structure rather than an irregularity within it” and as “a dimension of human-representation rather than an illusion” (Omi & Winant, 2000:184). This is why the meanings are so fluid and mobile, precisely due to the fact that the definitions and understandings bend, shape and move, as social forces will them. As Foster (1991:77) concluded “it is not going to be easy to wish it (racism) away. It will return in new guises, renewed rhetoric and altered masks.”

It is therefore the linking between these two observable manifestations of racism that is crucial to understand, just how do they become connected? Without understanding that link, we will never escape the presence of the past.

The link between the institutional and the ideological, or rather the structure (the way in which societal organisation is racially stratified) and representation (how we understand what these racial differences mean to us) is an important one. ‘Racial Projects’ are said to connect what race means with ways in which community frameworks and everyday experiences are racially organised (Omi & Winant, 2000). Race is understood to mean many different things and so racial projects can be expected to take many different forms.

These projects are not just building blocks of racial formation but of hegemony too and when these projects are racist in their characterization, racism becomes what Hannah Arendt refers to as one of the “tragically ‘ordinary’ tendencies” of our society (Arendt, in Balibar 1991:51).

Not all projects are racist though and Omi and Winant maintain that they are only racist if they create or reproduce “structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race” (Omi & Winant, 2000:206). So a project can be racially aware and not be deemed racist. The most obvious and clear example of this would be the Affirmative Action programmes implemented in order to try and eradicate discriminatory employment policies; framed by the constitution as ‘positive discrimination’. Affirmative Action’s aim is to transform South African business organisations and Public Service from discriminatory structures to ones that reflect the demographic constitution and values of South African society (Franchi, 2002). Although these programs are racially aware they actively seek to breakdown “structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race” and in so doing should therefore in my estimation not be considered racist.

In sport there are countless examples of racial projects that too could be racially aware but not racist. Sporting quotas are where various representative teams are instructed by the sports ministry or specific sports governing bodies to include in their teams various numbers of black or coloured players. In much the same way as Affirmative Action attempts to breakdown structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race, quotas in sport are an attempt to do the same. It is based on the assumption that race still plays a significant enough part in how teams are selected or not selected and without direct intervention racist practices in selection would continue. This is why in my opinion quotas in sport can be seen as being a racial project but are not racist.

A racial project can be defined as racist therefore if it creates or reproduces a racially unequal social structure, based on essentialised racial categories. Or if it essentialises or naturalises racial identities or significations, based on unequal social structure; or both.

In other words a racialised structure creates essentialised meaning; or essentialised meaning creates a racialised structure...or both. It is the tragic ordinariness of racism in everyday life and the structural nature of it that I suspect Khaya faces at Brookside. This could manifest in ways which are not instantly obvious to them; it just is how they experience the sport. One such way is in the area of trust.

## Trust and Race

*“We trust someone if we expect him not to be opportunistic even if he has both the opportunity and the incentive to do so”*

- Nooteboom and Six, 2003:4 “The Trust Process in Organisations”.

A way in which covert racism as a form of whiteness can occur is the way in which white people treat black people but never openly use race or racialised language to further entrench their dominant position. Forms of trust are one of these ways.

Trust or mistrust exists when one cannot make an assessment of probabilities, when – in a situation of uncertainty – one decides to ‘believe in’ someone or something. Trust is a four-place predicate: someone (trustor) trusts something or someone (trustee) with respect to something (competence, intentions), depending on the conditions. The key question is therefore regarding the conditions. What conditions might make someone trust another more or less? In the case of 6-down touch rugby, could race be one of those conditions that make people seem more or less trustworthy?

Trust is seen to include both emotional and cognitive dimensions and to function as a deep assumption underwriting social order. There are academics that conceptualise trust as a psychological event within an individual rather than as a systemic social reality, however increasingly research points to systemic social factors being the key conditions influencing levels of trust (Burns, 2006).

The issue of trust and race has been explored mainly in terms of economics and how trust may or may not affect how one person does business with another. Studies in this area have almost exclusively been based on a specific game that requires trust for participants to ‘succeed’ in a constructed economic setting. This has come on the back of growing evidence suggesting that survey questions are unable to adequately capture trust levels (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1999; Glaeser et al., 2000; Burns, 2006).

In South Africa trust and race has not been widely studied or recorded. One of the first studies of this kind in South Africa, Ashraf *et al* (2003) found that black participants were the least trusting. More recently, Burns (2006) found that there was a systematic pattern of distrust toward black participants.



It seems clear from the literature that individuals differ in their trust levels due to differing assumptions regarding the trustworthiness of others (Glaeser *et al*, 2000). These differences in trust are exacerbated in largely segregated societies and mounting experimental evidence suggests group association based on attributes such as race (Glaeser *et al*, 2000; Eckel and Wilson, 2003 and Burns, 2006) ethnicity (Fershtman and Gneezy, 2001; Brouckaert and Dhaene, 2003), or gender (Scharleman *et al*, 2001; Chaudhuri *et al*, 2002; Croson and Buchan, 1999) do affect behaviour in the trust game.

Most recently in South Africa research into race as a condition for trust was carried out by Justine Burns. Published in 2006 her work “Racial stereotypes, stigma and trust in post-apartheid South Africa” researched 337 students ranging in age from 14 to 19 from six different High Schools in the greater Cape Town area. These students form part of the first generation of South Africans who have not only been in racially open schools but have also spent much of their lives living in the ‘new’ South Africa, where attempts to redress the effects of racial segregation under apartheid have been made.

Burns used the same trust game spoken of earlier. In the trust game, the proposer is given an amount of money and asked what portion (if any) of this they would like to pass on to a partner (the trustee), who is separated from them, usually in a separate room. The offer by the proposer is tripled before passing it on to the trustee, who must then decide how much, if anything, to send back to the proposer. The amount sent by the proposer is an indication of trust, while the amount returned by the trustee/responder is an indication of reciprocity or trustworthiness. While the ‘best case’ scenario outcome for this game is that the proposer should send the entire amount to the trustee, the ‘worst case’ scenario is that no transfer of resources will occur at all (Burns 2006).

From the results Burns concluded that there is a systematic pattern of distrust towards black partners, even by (what she says is a somewhat unexpected result) black proposers, largely attributable to mistaken behavioural stereotypes. She doesn’t ascribe it directly to racism but it is my assertion that this is what is occurring. As I have said before the ideology of superiority is that which leads one group to discriminate against another, to ‘know’ it is superior to another. In the South African context racism is present due to an ideology of white or European superiority. Importantly it is expected to enter the culture of both groups and is to some extent internalised by both groups; it affects and shapes our society and is self-

reinforcing. According to this understanding of racism it would therefore be expected that black proposers would hold similar views to those of white proposers; against black partners.

It is clear therefore that issues of race can and are influential when it comes to levels of trust. I would then expect to see this in 6-down touch rugby and to what extent?

Informal racial segregation is another way in which whiteness could manifest in a setting such as Brookside.

### **Informal Racial Segregation**

The contact hypothesis postulates that the longer peoples of different social groups are brought together in settings precisely such as sports events, positive change (defined here as prejudice reduction) is likely; and has been mooted as having the potential to reduce racial intolerance (Vogt 1997; Schneider, 1976; Amir, 1998; Foster, 1984; Ray, 1983 and Beard, 1992). In forced settings such as organised team sports the contact hypothesis has shown to hold true to its promise but informal racial segregation can ensure that contact time is limited only to the field of play. It may be that people actively do not seek contact outside of the games and therefore have little chance to build relationships and connections. The playing of 6-down touch rugby forces players of different races into a potential contact situation but the game itself is a small part of the overall experience. The contact hypothesis will be discussed in some detail later in the project however if informal racial segregation outside of the actual games exists, what could this tell me about participants?

Notwithstanding its formal abolition in many societies, Dixon and Durrheim (2003) argue that segregation remains pervasive as an informal device for ordering and defining social relations. They say that social psychologists' tendency to investigate contact under 'optimal' conditions may obscure this fact. The authors argue that research must move to consider contact in everyday situations. Situations where contact is not forced and people have the freedom of movement can show more about intentions and willingness for contact and possible learning to take place. This is therefore a significant shift away from research focusing on set and controlled conditions involving contact. My research in 6-down touch rugby therefore could not only look at what happened on the field of play but had to extend to before and after the games as well. What happens to players outside the 'optimal' conditions on the field of play?

Sociological surveys undertaken in the USA have repeatedly demonstrated that levels of informal racial segregation remain high (Peterson and Krivo 1999; Darden and Kamel 2000; Farley, Fielding and Krysan 1997; Goldberg 1998; Massey and Denton 1993; Taylor and Moghaddam 1994).

Although it is possible to isolate cases of 'stable racial integration' (Ellen, 1998), by and large black and white Americans continue to live in different areas, attend different schools, and circulate in different social networks (Darden and Kamel, 2000; Farley, Fielding, and Krysan, 1997; Goldberg, 1998; Massey and Denton, 1993). And even in contexts where integration seems well established, contact frequently turns out to be more illusory than actual (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). There are debates about why this is so however there is little disputing that segregation continues both as a system of values and as a social reality.

This trend is also true in the United Kingdom; the Ouseley Report (2001) confirmed this notion by examining the effects of racial segregation on schoolchildren in Bradford, UK. The report concluded that white, Asian and black learners are growing up with few experiences of children of other races and therefore stereotypes of the other ascribed races were highly prevalent (in Hatton, 2003).

This has also been an area of study in South Africa (Bauman, Z 1993; Durrheim and Dixon 2003; Christopher, A. 2001). With similar findings to those of the American and UK researchers; levels of informal racial segregation have remained high since the end of apartheid.

Studies done on racial segregation have noted that the economic differences between black and white South Africa leaves a legacy of spatial segregation in terms of housing and the choices that offers in terms of schooling for example (Foster, 2004). However racial segregation seems to continue even when there are no physical barriers between black and white and the lack of contact seems to be ensured by white South Africans.

Durrheim and Dixon (2003) researched informal racial segregation on a South African beach. The beach under study was previously exclusively white however is now open to all races. The study aimed to better understand the observed racial segregation on the beach during the holiday period. The beach was used mainly by white and indian holiday makers; however on certain days the beach was also used by large numbers of black holiday makers. The setting

meant that those who chose to go to the beach came from many different places but at the beach there was an opportunity for contact to occur.

What happened in response to this perceived 'invasion' was what the authors termed a 'white flight'. The white people specifically and seemingly intentionally, left the beach because of the increased number of black people. The researchers made various systematic observations of the racial configuration on the beach and then went to the beach-goers for explanations of them. Prevailing covert racist attitudes and perceptions were exposed mainly from the white beach-goers. Black people were perceived as welcome at the beach provided they did not "drink and behave noisily" (2003:17-18) or "come into my private space" (2003:16). The authors report that the reasons given for the exposed racial segregation are restructured racist tropes that serve a political function – to justify the racist attitudes of the whites. The analysis indicated that processes of segregation operated in various ways to limit the opportunities for racial contact. White people ensured that they had little contact with black people. The views of the black beach goers were not discussed and their assessments of the situation are left un-analyzed.

So in a setting such as 6-down touch rugby where my purpose was to look at the challenges faced by a team of black participants, perceptions of the white players may not be all that useful other than further describing possible racisms. What is interesting and important is that economic legacies of apartheid were less relevant in a setting such as 6-down touch rugby. All teams have equal rights and access to all amenities at 'Brookside'. Would that mean that no segregation will take place off the field of play or will my findings echo those made by Durrheim and Dixon' (2003)?

Bauman Z (1993) in "Social Spaces: Cognitive, aesthetic, moral" uses the term 'Stranger' to refer to the 'other'. The Stranger is that person or persons the insider groups try to manage in 'their' space and who cast the Stranger to the background of 'their' world. The Stranger will forever be in 'their' world and this permanent, specific move of 'them' to the background is to actively reduce the need for serious contact or involvement. In the study done by Durrheim and Dixon (2003) the black beach goers would be the Strangers who are actively kept away.

Perhaps then this could inform me as to how a team of black 6-down touch rugby players would interpret their involvement in the sport. Do they see themselves as insiders or outsiders; are they Strangers at 6-down touch rugby?

## PART 2

### SPORT

*"It can ease the pain, frustration and anger of everyday life."*

- Neil Manthorp 12 May 2008 "Why we have sport"

*"I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield. Even if they didn't know from concrete examples (the 1936 Olympics, for instance) that international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred, one could deduce it from general principles... At the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare."*

-George Orwell, "The Sporting Spirit" 1945

*"We believe the greatness of sport lies in its unique ability to empower anyone in the world to cross any barrier, whether personal, political or philosophical."*

- Laureus World Sports Academy Declaration of Sporting Beliefs 2008

As the above quotes show, sport<sup>3</sup> is a contested space with various stakeholders holding very different views on it. It is crucial when studying a sporting space to gain clarity regarding these different views so to better understand what it is that the team Khaya was taking part in.

Sport and leisure activities are an important part of South African society. The people of South Africa watch and play sport and devote a lot of time to these practises that have seemingly little to do with how they are actually allowed to live their lives. If the team you play for on Saturday wins, how does that change the fact that you are without running water? If the team you support loses on Friday, how does that change the fact that you cannot find work or that your school doesn't have enough teachers, that you are abused by your boss (Booth, 1998)?

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<sup>3</sup> By 'sport' I mean modern, institutionalised, formal, rule-governed, objective ways of playing (Booth, 1998).

And yet even with all the social problems our country faces South Africans play in large numbers and support in even greater numbers with a passion that was described by Booth (1998) as both an infatuation and an obsession. As South African anti-apartheid activist Dennis Brutus has noted “disasters elsewhere and international affairs are mere trifles compared to a rugby victory- and even anticipation of a victory” (Brutus in Booth, 1998: xvii).

It might seem, therefore that sport, as a form of recreation must improve the quality of our lives, otherwise why would we do it? Recreational sport programs and organised games like 6-down touch rugby have become increasingly popular and there is pressure from international groups, such as the World Health Organization, to advocate for the health of both males and females. Physical exercise and recreational sport activities can be used both as rehabilitation and prevention. Katzmaryk, Gledhill and Shephard (2000) estimated that over 10% of deaths in Canada could be attributed to the negative effects of inadequate physical activity. Death rates in sedentary individuals are approximately twice as high as for physically active persons (Blair, 1993). Many researchers believe that participation in recreation and sport also engenders benefits for individuals and communities (Alexandris & Grouios, 2002; Roberts, 1993; Henderson, et al., 1989).

However organised sport in modern society is different to 'play' and there are researchers that claim that sport is divisive and harmful to those that compete, not physically but socially (Orwell, 1945; Brohm 1976; Hasbrook 1987; Booth 1998; Washington and Karen 2001 and Budd 2001). The main reason for this is the capitalist manner in which modern sport is organized. Modern sport mimics the hierarchical nature of the capitalist system with the same ideologies, discourses and lies.

Does sport promote egalitarianism as some say it does or is it merely a tool of the capitalist system from which it comes and will never allow for anything approaching equality? Each of these two understandings of modern sport needs greater clarity so that research into 6-down touch rugby can more accurately answer these questions. Firstly I will look at the 'egalitarian' promises of modern sport and then how those that critique this notion see sport as actually operating.

## **The Egalitarian Promise of Sport**

*“We believe the greatness of sport lies in its unique ability to empower anyone in the world to cross any barrier, whether personal, political or philosophical.*

*We believe that the best in sport represents the very best in humanity: it's time to stand up for fair play, honest effort, and the joy of taking part.*

*We believe that sport is great in itself, but that it can help make our world a better place too: we will use sport to help tackle pressing social challenges.*

*We believe that those who excel in sport have a responsibility to uphold and promote those values, both on and off the field.”*

Laureus World Sports Academy Declaration of Sporting Beliefs 2008

The Laureus Sports Academy aims to recognise and celebrate outstanding sporting achievement through the Laureus World Sports Awards, the only globally recognised sports awards, as well as promote participation in sport by all people regardless of gender, ethnic background, financial means or physical or mental disability and promote sport as a means for intra and inter-national interaction and understanding. It is clear therefore that the ‘Academy’ sees sport as having value outside of the health benefits. In fact these benefits are what they value the most, a desire for everyone to benefit from their version of sport. They claim sport has value in bringing communities closer through promoting certain sporting ethics; it can empower people to overcome obstacles in their personal and social lives. It is claimed that sport develops the ‘best’ in people; fair-play, focus, honesty, team work, perseverance, determination and sacrifice. The virtues of the sports person are the same as the ideal “There is nothing magic about the virtues of the winner. They are the same as those found in every kind of exemplary life: concentration, method, organisation, persistence and will-power, independent of the slightest pleasure” (Morand in Brohm, 1976:58).

This notion is echoed through what is called the ‘spirit’ of the Olympic games, the world’s longest running and largest sporting contest. The Olympic games has as its mission; to build a peaceful and better world which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play, things best learned through sport. This ‘Olympic Spirit’ strives to inspire and motivate the youth of the world to be the best they can be through sport. The Olympic flag is a symbolic reminder that through sport all men are equal, the torch relay an

expression of peace between nations and men. This idea that sport can be a tool in promoting egalitarianism is not only reserved for global sports events but exists in South Africa as well.

During apartheid Australian cricketers rebelled against South African sporting isolation and organised a tour to this country. Booth (1998) writes that the discourse of the organisers of the tour promoted all the seemingly 'obvious' virtues that came with sport; sport brings people together, sport unites and sport is outside even politics. The rebel cricket tour, seen by many anti-apartheid activists as being supportive of the regime was sold as being the opposite, sport bringing people together.

The Springbok victory at the 1995 Rugby World Cup is sighted by many as an example of how a divided nation can come together in support of a winning sports side "From the usually staid tree-lined, predominantly white suburbs, to dusty black township streets, black and white South Africans seemed to have discovered a sense of common unity as the victory was toasted across the land. For a country with a long and painful history of division and conflict, and in the sporting arena rugby in particular being perceived as the game of the Afrikaner oppressors, such celebrations were thrillingly extraordinary" (Grundlingh 2006:83). Even though rugby in South Africa has struggled from one disaster to another, the more recent World Cup victory in France 2007 again provided an 'opportunity' for nation building.

Thabo Mbeki, the then president of South Africa, was hoisted on high by the triumphant Springbok team as they celebrated their success in the 2007 Rugby World Cup. It was a staged show, meant to demonstrate, illustrate the Rainbow nation, meant to show integration, unity and peace. Sport; bringing all the people of South Africa together (in victory) a nation at play.

Corporate companies in South Africa are also pushing this idea sport promotes egalitarianism. Supersport, the country's largest sports TV channel launched their 'Let's Play' campaign in the hope of promoting sporting activity in schools. The need for South African children to participate in sport again goes beyond the health benefits, as the 'Let's Play' website claims that "Team work is something that is best learned in a sporting environment where rules exist and participants bring different strengths to the team. Children grow and develop at different rates, which can result in considerable differences in sporting ability between children of the same age. Thus, team sports offer advantages: slower developers derive satisfaction from their team's successes while faster developers realise that



they need their other team members to be able to successfully compete as a team”  
([www.supersport.co.za](http://www.supersport.co.za)).

This fervent promotion of sport is further sanctioned by our government with Minister of Sport, M. Stofile, in his 2007 budget speech saying that "Sport is a very important part of society. It is also a very important barometer of how a particular society is organised. For that reason, our country too has a responsibility to use sport to assist the country and our people to move in a particular direction; the direction of a de-racialised South Africa which is also sensitive to gender and disability issues." Again there is this notion that sport can be a tool to bring people together, to overcome obstacles to enable people involved in sport rise above personal circumstances.

The pervasiveness of this idea of egalitarianism because of sport is discussed in various academic works, including Brohm (1976), Duda (1989), Henderson *et al*, (1989), Tatz (1995), Long, Carrington, and Spracklen, (1997), Jones (1998), Booth (1998), Godwell, (2000), Hartmann (2003), Henry (2000), Keim (2003), Bale and Cronin (2003), Vidacs (2003), Desai and Vahed (2004), Sheard (2004) Hallinan and Judd (2007), Alexandris and Grouios (2002), Roberts (1993), Henderson *et al* (1989) and Pelak (2005).

In Australia, sport has been identified as a place in which Indigenous Australians can be on equal terms with European Australians and is characterized as an avenue for social mobility, financial gain and a ladder to social improvement (Godwell, 2000; Tatz, 1995; Hallinan and Judd 2007).

In the United States of America sport has for a long time been seen as being an excellent tool in reorganising and reconstructing the way race is understood, potentially positively (Hartmann 2003 and Primm *et al* 2007).

This notion of sport preaches that it is not only good for the human body but more so that it is good for that human and the society in which they live. It has been said that there is no aspect of human behaviour which holds a greater potential for self-fulfilment than participation in sport and recreation (Henderson, et al, 1989). Jones (1995:3) claims "Recreation can also become a site of empowerment," he claims it can bring diverse social groups together and improve the social cohesion and inclusion of minority groups in other settings. Jones further asserts that "Recreation has a critical role to play in the integration of the youth into a society.

Participation in all forms of recreation can cultivate sustainable involvement in arts and culture, thereby developing creativity, self-expression and can be used to acquire specific skills which can create jobs and generate an income” (1995:7).

What exactly is behind this idea of egalitarianism through sport? What is purported to be its fundamental lesson?

That on the sports field everyone is equal and through that equality; barriers can be broken down and understanding can take place.

Sport is therefore meant to be a contest between bodies, that’s all. Class, race, religion, nation, language; are all forgotten on the equality of the sports field. “Sport is what binds a group together – a highly cohesive structure which banishes social barriers and differences and is based on the equality of all... Sport satisfies the need for social participation and brings into being a parallel hierarchy, alongside the hierarchy which most people have imposed on them in everyday life. This parallel hierarchy takes no account of people’s everyday status and gives them opportunities for achievement which they are denied by modern society” (Haute Comite’ des Sports, 1965 in Brohm, 1976:58).

Why would equality on the sports field equate to greater equality outside of it? A strong explanation is that because it satisfies the most difficult condition of the contact hypothesis: equal status (Vogt, W. 1997; Schneider, 1976; Amir, 1998; Foster, 1984; Ray, 1983 and Beard, 1992). The perceived equality of the sports field in conjunction with the fulfilment of other conditions required for successful contact to occur means that participation in multi racial sport holds potential to overcome racial boundaries.

### **The Contact Hypothesis**

Extensive studies on the effects of inter-group contact have been carried out by researchers testing what is termed contact theory or contact hypothesis; contact enables people to discover commonalities and exchange rewards. The mere exposure to new and different things for extended periods of time leads them to be liked or welcomed (Myers 1999). Inter-group contact occurs when peoples of different groups work and play in the same environment, the interaction directly increases the need and therefore the ability to tolerate (Vogt 1997).

Yet there is also evidence that inter-group contact may have no positive effect on prejudice, or may even exacerbate tensions (Amir, 1998). Studies have shown that the more one comes in contact with the 'other', the more prejudiced one becomes (Amir, 1998: Schneider, 1976 Foster, 1984 and Chu, 1982) and "the assumption that contact always lessens conflicts and stresses between ethnic groups seems naive" (Amir, 1998:178). Research has further revealed that exposure to negative stimuli increases the negative feelings by the subject to the stimuli. It was postulated therefore that contact with people or groups of people one dislikes might very well result in increased dislike (Schneider, 1976). In addition "unfavourable conditions" may increase prejudice and inter-group hostility (Foster, 1984:2). Even if there is shown to have been positive change between groups due to a successful contact situation, Foster (1984) argues that it is probable that this will not be generalised beyond the immediate group or situation.

What has been concluded therefore is not that the contact hypothesis has no grounding but rather that the conditions and variables through which contact occurs, shapes to a large degree the direction and intensity of the change experienced by the participants.

According to the proponents of this theory, to ensure that contact is beneficial for all participants and that positive attitudes between groups is fostered there are a number of conditions under which it is claimed contact theory will have a positive outcome, (Vogt, 1997; Myers 1999; Amir, 1998 and Foster, 1984).

Firstly, the contact must first be brisk and firm, facilitated by a respected authority figure. If the contact occurs slowly apprehension might grow between the learners as well as indicating or alluding to a lack of resolve by those said authorities. A referee, as in 6-down touch rugby would seemingly be an appropriate authority figure who is given certain powers by the teams in the league. These referees ensure that the games follow a strict timetable so that contact would be brisk and firm.

Secondly these contact situations should be enforced with sets of rules or guidelines so that participants are aware of what is acceptable and what is not; it goes without saying that these should be enforced. It could be argued that 6-down touch fulfils this requirement where there are a set of rules that govern behaviour on the field and how the matches take place. The parties involved before the games by virtue of the fact that they participate agree upon these rules.

Thirdly, it is seen as being important that the contact be made over a substantive period of time so that participants must be involved and cannot merely let the contact situation occur around them fleetingly. Again the nature of the seasonal competition in 6-down touch means that teams will be in contact with other teams for a number of weeks in each competition.

Fourthly, research has found that prejudices are more likely to be shifted or change as a result of contact that offers an opportunity to be involved with and participate in activities with members of the other group. Mere "sight-seeing" contacts have shown to have little effect (Amir, 1998). This could be a difficult condition to meet if the teams are racially homogenous.

Fifthly, it is important that the interaction between the individuals be somehow meaningful; contact should never be superficial when the aim is for meaningful change. This could mean that common goals are set, that is realistic goals, meaningful possible outcomes for all concerned or that the process of the contact situation has specific meaning for those taking part. This links to the above condition, for if teams are racially homogenous then through the act of playing the sport they have to have oppositional goals, to beat each other. They cannot share the same goal or it would render the point of the sport meaningless.

Lastly, and possibly most importantly, it is seen to be crucial that that the different groups are treated and operate at an equal status. Equal-status contact is interaction between people who may perceive each other as different but in the specific situation they meet on a comparable basis. Contact with 'lower' status individuals can lead to a worsening view of that particular group. Contact with 'higher' status people tends to improve one's view of their group. However such contacts may also produce feelings of inferiority and diminished regard for one's own group, especially in the case of low status minority groups meeting higher status members of the dominant group (Amir, 1998). Even if there is shown to have been positive change between groups due to a successful contact situation, Foster argues that it is possible that this will not be generalised beyond the immediate group or situation (Foster, 1984). By choosing to research race in sport in 6-down touch rugby I am looking at one of South Africa's clearest indicators of social status, race. The mere awareness of race as a factor in 6-down touch rugby might render the possibility of equality impossible.

Through much of the research done, what has been concluded is not that the contact hypothesis has no grounding but rather that the conditions and variables through which

contact occurs, shapes to a large degree the direction and intensity of the change experienced by the participants.

It is the presumed equality of the sports field that gives the contact hypothesis much of its promise. However there is strong criticism as to the equality of the sports field being equal at all.

### **Capitalist Sport – A Critique of the idea of Egalitarianism through Sport**

*“It doesn't matter what they dress like, how many tattoos they've got, who they're married to, it is none of my business. What matters is winning matches.”*

- Roy Keane, 2008. Professional English Football Coach

There are serious criticisms of Sports supposed promise of egalitarianism. A common narrative of class and sport regards how a player has ‘escaped’ poverty or ‘risen above’ his surroundings, how sport offers that escape for the poor.

However it is only the very few, very lucky that actually achieve fame and fortune through sporting pursuits. This is due to the fact that although sport is said to be about equality; access to the sports field and the choices of sport are entrenched in class positions and the very nature of modern capitalist sporting competition backs up and legitimises existing class imbalances ensuring that proper access is restricted.

To play 6-down touch rugby requires money; the organisation that hosts the games is a business; the touch rugby competition is a business; it makes a profit from both the league fees and sponsorship they receive. The game itself is centred on the winning and losing of matches. Through the league games a hierarchy is developed to differentiate the ‘best’ teams from the ‘worst’ teams. Modern sport such as 6-down touch rugby developed out of a capitalist system and so I would expect them to share the ideology capitalism espouses. If this is the case it would certainly have implications for how egalitarian a space a sport such as 6-down touch rugby can possibly be.

It is crucial therefore that I am clear what exactly capitalist sport is said to be and what this means for the sport and participants involved.

Brohm (1976) in his seminal, influential work "Sport- A Prison of Measured Time" takes a long, hard, clear, critical look at capitalist sport. Brohm asserts that the institutional, rule-governed, highly organised structure of modern sport has been shaped by capitalist interest groups in such a way as to represent a constraint rather than a freedom. It is far from being a freedom and he writes that it "removes all bodily freedom, all creative spontaneity, every aesthetic dimension and every playful impulse" (Brohm 1976:175). He maintained that apart from labour, the way in which people relate to their bodies is through sport and that when sport is formed out of a capitalist system it will further serve that system and its needs, rather than challenge it in any real way. This mirroring of the capitalist system in sport is observable in all ways, writes Brohm: "all the values of the capitalist jungle are played out in sport: virility, sexual athleticism, physical dominance, the superman, muscle worship, fascistic male chauvinism, racism, sexism etc" (Brohm, 1976:15). All furthering the alienating effect of capitalism. In fact he goes further than saying it is a mirror but rather that its ultimate function is to protect the class rule of the bourgeoisie and is an "apparatus of civil hegemony" (Brohm, 1976:55) not only stabilising the system but also justifying it by presenting itself as being equal and positivist.

The popularity of capitalist sport further ensnares the viewer into its ideology and becomes like a religion. Through doing this it is another opiate of the masses; it camouflages the class struggle, "By providing real opportunities for a lucky few alongside a theatre of dreams, spectacular distractions and a safe arena for the displaced expression of social antagonisms for the many, sport does have the effect of an opiate" ( Budd 2001:15). Sport can be said to be the ultimate expression of capitalist ideologies, naturalizing competition, nationalism, individualism and elitism (Budd 2001).

Hasbrook's (1987) extensive study of sports choices revealed that economic opportunity plays the largest role in determining the degree of sport participation; rather than social-psychological reasons. Two theoretical constructs of social class were used to determine how well they explained the social class-sport participation link. The first was 'life chances' and the second was 'life-styles'. The first, 'life chances' or economic opportunity, and consisted of the availability and use of sport equipment, facilities or club memberships, and instruction. The second was 'life-styles' or social psychological opportunity, consisted of selected parental achievement and gender role expectations that encourage, fail to encourage, or discourage sport participation (Hasbrook, 1987).

This then seriously questions the validity of the argument of the equality of the sports field. Is it only equality for those that happen to make it to the sports field? The study showed that the choices made about participation were class based rather than any other single factor. It is not a simple case of the provision of facilities, after which equality is a natural phenomenon unique to sport.

Apart from this notion of equality, what makes modern sport unique in history is that it is primarily and exclusively concerned about winning; those that jump the furthest, run the fastest and punch the hardest. This hierarchy is therefore no class solution. It is what it is, a hierarchy excluding the vast majority and therefore can never be seen as the utopic solution for the 'poor' it sometimes is purported to be; hierarchy supports hierarchy.

The hierarchy it supports is the unjust capitalist hierarchy. The relationship between working-class sport and capitalism is illustrated by the factory origins of many sporting teams. The factory began to shape the working-class leisure time and was reinforced by middle-class prejudices regarding the working-class's mob mentality and need for control and civilized exercise and healthy competition (Budd, 2001). Sport became ever increasingly controlled with greater emphasis being placed on the rules and structures of the 'game'. This form of social control over the working-class participants by the middle-class organizers of these competitions greatly assisted productivity in the factories through the workers increased labour potential through the sport related exercise but also through what the sport taught them, obedience. These forms of sport also began ensuring the specific tasks of the factory were mirrored on the sports field. Participants were taught to do one aspect of the game and learn to do it well. Instead of merely running, suddenly there was ever increasing compartmentalization of the sport with sprinters emerging along with middle distance and long distance. There were no longer football players but defenders, midfield players, wings, centre's, strikers. Each participant had a specific job to improve upon, to perfect, so that the whole would benefit "Capitalist sport takes positive human qualities like playfulness and recreation, but virtually extinguishes them" (Budd, 2001:16).

Sport and society are clearly connected; capitalist normality produces sport along with its lessons, alienation, exploitation, rivalry and disappointment. "Sport is neither an expression of some natural competitive spirit imputed to all of humanity by bourgeois ideology nor a

simple and unqualified extension of play: sport is too heavily laden with competition, routine, success and failure to be equated with the playful pursuit of pleasure” (Budd, 2001:16).

The athlete learning the ways of the exploiter, to look for opposition weakness, to increase productivity, to win at all costs. Sport seemingly has become the very things and ways it is meant to be a distraction from. However Gruneau warns that this connection between sport and the social order is not the primary characteristic of sport but one component within it.

Gruneau (1983) critiques Brohm (1976) and other leftist critics of capitalist sport, whom he claims do not see the potential for sport to be in opposition to the social order rather than reproductive of it. That participants in sport can change the rules and mould the manner in which their sport is played, that importantly this is exactly the kind of creativity and expression which sport promises. However Budd warns that if society truly wants to play it cannot in a capitalist system: “Reform of capitalist sport is possible but the playful pursuit of pleasure can only be fully achieved under socialism” (Budd, 2001:1). The ‘play’ he envisions under a socialist system has very little to do with the win at all costs, obsessive types of sport we are familiar with: “Play enables a re-connection with, and integration of, our selves without fear of social disapproval, a rediscovery of childhood intoxication with the joys of contact with the elements of the body, of improvising its shape, running till we drop, jumping for joy” (Budd, 2001:16).

Will there be a day in the future where when told that people once tried to go faster, jump higher and further, throw further, or knock other people unconscious, people will simply ask ‘why?’

So if we accept this notion that modern sport should more accurately be described as capitalist sport and that it has as its essence competition and winning, it would be perfectly acceptable to presume that participants in sport seek ways in which to ensure victory. This they do by not only improving their tactics and strength and speed. They could and do invoke existing unequal power relations in broader society to better ensure that at the end of the day they are still winning. Race has seemingly provided this opportunity historically and currently. White participants have historically attempted to keep their sports white. When this has failed and black people have begun playing sports alongside white people there are recorded attempts to exclude black people, when black people have forced their way into sport, they are kept out of decision making positions, when they have excelled, they then



serve to confirm 'scientific' notions of race. Black sportsmen and women have been used and abused in sports but are never fully in control. Their race is as a barrier, and white power is left little challenged.

In a sports space such as 6-down touch rugby I would therefore expect to see the experience of the one black team as being shaped by racism for the purpose of the white teams winning and keeping the sport as white as possible.

It is therefore important to look at ways in which race has been used to shape the experiences of black sportsmen and women.

## **PART 3**

### **SPORT and RACE**

Sport has a long history of racism shaping the experience of black participants and still today there is research arguing that sport is a space where black participants are used and commodified to the extent that they are at best merely perfunctory or tokenistic, at worst exploited or abused (King, Leonard and Kusz 2007).

Before examine research in this field it is important for me to look at the significance of race and sport historically so as to contextualise my research focus.

Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the British settlers brought their games and sports to the new colonised lands at the tip of Africa. Black South Africans were not totally excluded from the practice of these sports and games but by the turn of the century it was common to have national associations for black players, separate to those of white players for colonial sports. Sports clubs were being opened in the 1920's for black urban populations and criticism came swiftly from both the ANC as well as the communist party who both argued that sport was being used to dampen black political aspirations (Keim, 2003).

Although segregation became normalised by the 1930s it was in 1948 that it became law which resulted in further "oppression, interference and forced relocation" of black sportsmen and women and the clubs they were trying to play for and with (Keim, 2003:27). So while white clubs, schools and municipalities received generous funding, facilities and access; little or no provisions were made for black South Africans. In 1956, the Minister of Internal affairs, issued a proclamation intended to thwart any attempt by black sporting bodies to be internationally recognised, further entrenching their exclusion.

In 1971 the new Minister of Sport, Piet Koornhof, introduced the concept of multi-nationalism, which divided the nation's sports people into apartheid's four groups. These groups would be allowed to play one another, and preserve their 'national' identity, under a national 'umbrella' body. It was argued that this would provide opportunity while avoiding friction. Visits by single nation teams would be regarded as 'international' but not 'open': whether or not they were multiracial, visitors would have to play ethnically defined local teams at strictly segregated venues (Merrett, 2004). Through late 70's and 80's there was

increasing international resistance to South African teams competing when laws preventing black participation were entrenched. Rugby being the last sport to become internationally isolated (Keim, 2003). The lifting of the sporting boycott in the 1990's led to enthusiastic response from the international sporting community, despite the composition of the teams being largely white (Merrett, 2004). Even football, traditionally the sport of black South Africa had a white coach, white captain and a number of white players.

Since 1994 and democracy, sporting bodies have been specifically directed by Government to allow all race groups the opportunity to play the sport of their choice. Sporting bodies have publically embraced the rainbow nation rhetoric and participation by all groups in all sports is allowed and encouraged. In the White Paper of the Department Sport and Recreation of South Africa they clearly state their aims to improve the quality of life of all South Africans by promoting participation in sport and recreation in the country. The Department's objectives are to:

- Increase the levels of participation in sport and recreation activities.
- Raise sports profile in the face of conflicting priorities.
- Maximise the probability of success in major events.
- Place sport in the forefront of efforts to reduce the levels of crime.

Among the Department's priorities are:

- To ensure that all sport and recreation bodies meet their affirmative action objectives.
- To develop a code of ethics on recreation in South Africa. ([www.srsa.gov.za](http://www.srsa.gov.za))

The structural results of this history means that formerly white areas have structural access to sporting activities whilst formerly black areas do not, making access difficult and sometimes impossible. Lack of access to participate in sport today for many black South Africans is therefore largely a legacy of apartheid laws where the state provided little more than a “crippling lack of equipment and shortage of facilities” (Archer 1987:235).

As I have mentioned before it has become popular to conceive racism through images such as white policemen torturing black youth, or through organisations and people such as the far right-wing group, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and their leader, Eugene

Terre'Blanche. It has become easy to visualise racism through stories of brutality emerging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and so therefore understand racism through what Hesse (2004) refers to as the Jewish Holocaust perspective, rather than being a part of the structure of society. It is through this overt conceptualisation of racism that public attention on race and racism in sport in South Africa has too often become focused.

A recent sad example of this has been the alleged racial abuse of Ziningi Shibambo by three Afrikaans-speaking men at the Springbok rugby game held at Johannesburg on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August. Shibambo was allegedly called a "kaffir"<sup>4</sup> by the men during halftime of the game. They accused her of taking over what was the only exclusively white sport in South Africa and were alleged to have pushed and threatened her physically (Mkhondo, 2008).

This is not an isolated incident and sport in South Africa, rugby in particular, have had numerous examples of this sort of overt racism. In 2007 Paul Treu the coach of the Springbok Sevens team, a coloured man, endured racial abuse from white spectators (Sapa, 2007). White Springbok lock Geo Cronje was kicked out of the Springbok camp after he refused to share a room or bathroom with a coloured team-mate, Quinton Davids (Mkhondo, 2008). Racial insults were hurled at South Africa's national cricket players in the field during a cricket match; Ashwell Prince, Garnett Kruger, Shaun Pollock, Justin Kemp and Makhaya Ntini, among others, had the insults "kaffir" or "kaffir-boetie" shouted at them by spectators (Doman and Ndenze, 2005). Various violent clashes between rugby clubs have been blamed on and have revealed brutal vicious racial tensions and undertones (MacLennan, 2006). Former Springbok wing Chester Williams asserts that his team-mate, James Small, called him "kaffir" on the playing field, while former coach Andre' Markgraaf was tape recorded referring to "kaffir's" while he was coach of the national team (Mkhondo, 2008). Racism in European football also has a long, violent and infamous history (Back, Crabbe, and Solomes, 1998).

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<sup>4</sup> The term 'kaffir' is understood in this study as a term utilized exclusively as a racial slur. The original meaning of the word was 'heathen', unbeliever or infidel. Today it is considered by many as a form of racial hate speech. It is deeply offensive to those who endure its continued use.

As disturbing as these incidents are and as important it is for them to be studied and hopefully eradicated, it is possibly more important to look at the more subtle, covert ways in which race, racism and sport are connected. Although racism can be covert in its manifestations it can still be devastating for those affected precisely because it becomes one of the “tragically ‘ordinary’ tendencies” of a country such as South Africa (Arendt in Balibar 1991:51).

6-down touch rugby might also provide evidence of this type of overt racism but it is the way in which race and racism work covertly to exclude and shape the experience of a sporting space that is of particular interest mainly because these can go unseen by both black and white.

Washington and Karen (2001:191) write that as in larger society, patterns of covert racism in sport are “rampant” and research into this field has dealt primarily with black individuals negotiating racism in sport rather than what I am looking at which is a black collective encountering a white space. While there has been research that shows positive racial identity shifts or opportunities for upward mobility exist because of sport’s promise of egalitarianism, (Hartmann, 2003 Godwell, 2000; Tatz, 1995 Gardiner, 2003; Lenskyj, 1999) overwhelming evidence points to race being used primarily as a way in which white competitors, spectators and participants can ensure the maintenance of their superiority, on the field and off of it (Silk 2008, Buffington and Fraley 2008, Hokowhitu and Scherer 2008, Spracklen 2008, McNeill 2008, King, Leonard and Kusz 2007, Primm, DuBois and Regoli 2007, Hallinan and Judd 2007, King, Leonard and Kusz 2007, Douglas 2005, Gardener 2003, Garland and Rowe 1999, Collins 1998, Majors 1998, Long *et al* 1997 and Hoberman 1997).

In the South African context with our history it is somewhat surprising not to see as extensive research into this area as one might expect. This is not to say however that it has not been academically addressed (Desai and Ramjettan 2008, Murray 2005, Padayachee, Desai and Vahed 2004, Keim, 2003, Booth 1998 and Archer, 1987).

Trends of the research into the area of race and sport express themselves in two significant ways. Firstly, studies often focus on elite sport and secondly individuals within those elite sports. Within these trends, research has been focussed on the following;

- prevention of full participation,

- stacking of individuals in ‘white’ teams,
- the ‘dominance’ of blacks in some sports and the ways this has furthered false ideas of black physicality.

There is a gap in dealing with black collective experience in ordinary sport practices.

One of the most studied aspects of sport and race has been the phenomenon of “stacking”. The concept of ‘stacking’ is best understood as discrimination in allocating players positions in sports teams. Collins (1998) contrasted the involvement of black professional players and coaches in Rugby League with their slow and late emergence in soccer and Rugby Union. He commented on what he referred to as the ‘stacking’ of black players in non-decision making positions, shared with the other team games as well as the lack of black supporters. He attributed this to “an ideology ostensibly based on meritocracy” but within a wider setting, “shaped by business exigency and the underlying racist assumptions of British society.” Later he concluded, “Rugby League is . . . a deeply contradictory phenomenon. A long history of achievement by black players and coaches coexists with deep-rooted racial stereotyping and estrangement from local communities” (Collins, 1998: 166).

The argument that black participants are ‘stacked’ and therefore excluded from participating fully is seemingly the most widely analysed phenomenon researched in this area of study highlighted in many other academic research including Eitzen and Yetman (1982), Berghorn *et al.* (1988), Eitzen and Furst (1989), Weddurnburn (1989), Maguire (1991), Long and Spracklen (1996), Malcolm (1997), Margolis and Piliavin, (1999) and Chappell and Karageorghis (2000). It is clear that although there are seeming gains made by black players in white sport, their involvement is marginal at best, exclusionary at worst. This ‘stacking’ is mainly the result of racial stereotyping by teachers and coaches who perceive that black athletes have certain attributes which are suited to those positions. These attributes are usually the physical attributes of speed and strength. Positions in which decision-making is important are occupied by white players.

Even when black athletes make serious inroads into sport, research have shown that this has merely added to already existing racist notions of black peoples abilities. Examples of black athletes dominating certain sports have not been seen as challenging the superiority of whiteness but rather it is claimed to add to racist notions of inherent racial differences

(Buffington and Fraley 2008, Spracklen 2008, Douglas 2005, Majors 1998 and Hoberman 1997).

Not only do Black participants face these issues of stacking and exclusion but in many cases open racial abuse is encountered in this contested terrain. Gardener (2003) writes about the abuse experienced by Australian Aboriginals who participated in traditionally white sports. Douglas, D 2005 in his article “Venus, Serena, and the Women’s Tennis Association: When and Where ‘Race’ Enters” looks at white crowds reactions to the successes of the Venus sisters in major tennis tournaments. He concludes that tennis is a historically white space and spectators reacted to black sports people dominating ‘their’ space the reaction toward the Williams sisters reveals the profound discomfort whites experience when blacks enter a predominantly white space. Long *et al* (1997) also discuss the sorts of abuse faced by blacks in sport varying from open abuse to subtle exclusionary practices.

In South Africa the debate regarding black participation in ‘white’ sports has also tended to become focussed on individuals in elite sports. Murray (2005) in “A New History of South African Cricket” writes that sports histories have been racialised with black participation being excluded or forgotten, but it is a history of elite individualised sports participants nonetheless. Desai and Ramjettan do broaden this scope in “Sport for All? Exploring the Boundaries of Sport and Citizenship in ‘Liberated’ South Africa” and other articles where they critically analyse the transformation process in sports in South Africa. They write that for meaningful transformation to take place issues of class cannot be excluded by an obsession with race, “the majority of black people in South Africa must be in a position to properly prepare, train and compete for positions” (2008:311). They write that the ANC’s obsession with neo-liberal policies and the slow (non-existent) pace of redistribution will mean that national sports teams will forever remain an option for only the elite. They continue to say that if these elite grow to include significant proportions of black people, we might then see transformation with regard to numbers in national teams, only to the exclusion of class being an issue when it comes to mass sports participation. In other words, in South African sports class privilege has replaced race privilege.

It is clear then that as in larger society, patterns of covert racism in sport are “rampant” and I would expect forms of racism to be acting against Khaya as a group (Washington and Karen 2001:191). The forms that I will look for will not however be individualised but rather how

they as a group are excluded. It is clear from research conducted that sporting spaces are not outside of the debates and concerns and conflicts in broader society, sport is not an egalitarian island some make it out to be. If we put faith in sport to be any kind of unifier and ignore class issues we do it at our peril.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The stated aims of the research are to examine the challenges facing the Khaya team and to question the idea that sport promotes egalitarianism. In order for me to accomplish this, having operationalised certain concepts and research in this field, the approach I felt would best accomplish my aims was a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. It involves systematic observation and recording of possible informal racial segregation; the systematic recording of incidents of mistrust in the act of play; quantifying the racial profile of those playing the sport; conducting in-depth interviews with Khaya; facilitating a group interview to add to what emerged from the individual interviews; recording any conversations and observations I was privy to that related to my field of study.

I purposefully did not conduct interviews with white participants so as to keep the focus on Khaya and the challenges they face. This follows the appeal of Thomas Holt that researchers put “black people back at the centre of their history” as part of the process of “creating a complete history of the black experience.” That end can only be reached through “a sustained effort to account for and place that experience in the larger context of external forces” (Holt 1986:5-6 in Sammons 1995:204).

This section will discuss the rationale behind the chosen site and sample as well as the different methodologies used.

#### Site

During 2006 and the first half of 2007; plans that I had made with regard different research projects and sites fell through. I made a critical decision to choose a site which I felt presented me with minimal obstacles.

I started playing Touch Rugby in 1998 at which time it was played at the Claremont Cricket Club fields. I became a more regular player since 2002 and have since played at the ‘Brookside’ fields. The fact that I was already playing at this site, had access to the fields, knew players and officials made it a site for which I felt there were fewer potential obstacles

than elsewhere. This bore out in reality and I experienced very little resistance to the research conducted.

The site for the research was 'Brookside'; rugby fields for the Villager Rugby Football Club (VRFC). Although the grounds primary use is for the Villager Rugby Football Teams, it is rented to In2Touch every Wednesday night for the In2Touch 6-down touch rugby league. VRFC was founded in 1876 and have been using the historic Brookside since the 1930's. The club and fields are amongst South Africa's oldest and most prestigious. The site is shared by large office block complexes. Facilities include a gym, squash courts, change rooms, four rugby fields (with lighting) and a bar ([www.villagerfc.co.za](http://www.villagerfc.co.za)). Claremont is a reasonably up market area in Cape Town's Southern Suburbs which during apartheid was exclusively for white South Africans.

In2Touch divide the fields into the appropriate sizes for the 6-down games, provide trained referees to officiate and record results. At the end of each season they officiate semi-final and final rounds for the leading teams in each category as well as award prizes. The fields, games as well as the bar facilities are open to public support and patronage.

### **Access**

I had a number of informal conversations with the various managers of the In2Touch League regarding my idea of conducting research at their site. They agreed to the proposed research in principle; this was formalized through an 'Informed Consent' document that the league management e-mailed to all the organizers of the various teams in the league (Appendix I). In this I stated what my plans were in terms of my research as well as what I required of them, which was a) permission to observe them before, during and after their games and b) make notes of what I observed. I promised that all names would change and that the notes I made would only be seen by me. I highlighted the fact that the finished research project would be put into the UCT library and could be accessed there by interested parties. The information on what I would be observing was limited to stating the following; "I will be observing social interactions before, during and after the games." I did not want participants to change their behavior if I was watching their game specifically if I had told them that race was at the core of my research. No complaints or objections were received.

## **Sample**

### *Khaya*

I did not obtain a thorough profile of the team members of Khaya. This was an oversight on my behalf and a weakness in the methodology. However I am satisfied that I gained enough information to paint a decent enough picture of the team being studied.

The team called 'Khaya' is a team of young black South Africans all of whom live in Khayelitsha, Cape Town's largest "township", situated on the outskirts of the city. The team itself consists of 9 core members but the numbers would swell and decrease for no obvious reasons. The ages ranged from 17 through to the oldest who is 21 years old. I did not get a specific breakdown of what the various members of the team were doing outside of Touch rugby. Six of the nine were still in various schools in Khayelitsha, of the three who had left school one was studying Sports Management at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology while the other two had various casual work.

The group consisted of five men and four women and in spite of this gender mix were entered into the "Men's Fourth Division"

When I first decided to try and observe this team in the league I approached their captain and organiser, Mandla, to tell him what I wanted to do and gain permission. He agreed to the research and introduced me to the team to whom I explained what I wanted to do and asked for their permission. I also encouraged them to ask me any questions and if they had any issues they wanted to raise. Informed consent was formally gained through a document with information on my research and what I wanted of them (Appendix II).

I had planned to interview as many of those that played for Khaya as possible but the random nature with which some played or didn't play meant that I eventually made a decision to only actively pursue those 9 core members of the team.

The 9 core members constituted the sample interviewed, both individually and in the group interview. All members self described themselves as being 'black'. I felt that they could collectively, accurately represent the views of the Khaya team.

### *Student Team*

The team referred to here as “Students” is a team comprising mostly of young white University students. Trials for the team were held at the university they all attended and were open to any students. I joined the team after they had formed so was not privy to the trial process. Most of the team seemed to know each other. They all lived within walking distance from the fields or were short drive away. There were 11 core members of the team that played regularly together.

This team was entered into the “Men’s Third Division”.

It was never my plan to interview the players in the student team. I didn’t need to play for them to observe them but felt that it wouldn’t do the project any harm and the act of playing each week acted as an added motivation to be on site.

If I could go through the research process again I might very well not compete with the team but merely observe. While I could accurately record what I needed to in terms of systematic data collection, the ability to be privy to conversations on the side of the field was restricted.

Consent was gained through informed conversation where I outlined for them what sorts of things I wanted to do. I told them that I wasn’t watching them but rather how other teams reacted to us and how they would treat us before during and after the games.

### *Remaining Teams*

There were approximately fifty teams entered into various divisions in the Men’s League. They were made up from a variety of sources. Some were businesses whose employees were playing in what amounted to a team building exercise. Some were merely groups of friends who were self organised, others were representing schools or colleges.

There were a few teams made up of only coloured players and a few other teams who had black or coloured players in them (as a numerical minority). Although I concentrated the research on Khaya it could have been extremely advantageous to also conduct similar systematic observations and interviews with these other teams as was done with Khaya. This could have enriched ascertains of how whiteness was or wasn’t operating to groups other than Khaya to groups other than this one black team. If there were similar trends operating to act

against coloured teams participation, this would strengthen the argument regarding how whiteness was operating at Brookside. This is a weakness in the methodology.

### **Preliminary Observations**

My observations of the Khaya team began in the winter season of 2007 and I have watched the vast majority of their games through the following three seasons. During the first season I would just 'hang out' and watch the ways in which they were being treated and trusted, and the ways they behaved; loosely compared those to the way my team of white players were being treated and how they behaved. I observed the manner in which the teams arrived and where they sat, how they socialised, with whom and where. I listened to the ways in which they spoke to each other, other teams and the referees and organisers. I took notes in a note book as and when incidents occurred that I thought had any sort of relevance to issues of race in sport. It was not terribly formalised or structured in any way. What I wanted and needed to do was figure out what kinds of things were happening and how exactly I could go about recording them systematically. I had to make sure that I could accurately identify actions and behaviours that would indicate to me challenges they face that were racial in their nature. These also had to be of the sort that I could consistently differentiate from other types of incidents and issues. These preliminary observations informed me that the way in which white teams trusted Khaya were seemingly different to the way white teams trusted my team. This manifested in whether or not attacking teams believed Khaya defenders who claimed to have made a contentious touch. These contentious touches are known by players in the league as being 'ghost' or 'phantom' touches. Where a defender claims that a touch has been made but the attacker did not feel it physically. The attacker either has to accept that the defender has made a legitimate touch and that he just did not feel it or he thinks that no touch was made at all and that the defender is deliberately cheating. I also noticed that some weeks Khaya wouldn't arrive for games and that transport to and from games was difficult. The Khaya team also seemed to sit apart from all the other teams and wouldn't socialise outside of their team mates. From these preliminary observations it seemed like informal racial segregation was occurring as well as mistrust on the field of play.

### **Systematic Observations**

The preliminary observations allowed me to decide what areas needed systematic attention, focus and recording. Firstly and most crucially was to record the numbers and types of

mistrust incidents in each game for both Khaya and UCT. Secondly was to record the movements of the team looking for informal racial segregation. This was done by recording where they sat before and after a game as well as whether or not they utilised the bar facilities.

### *Mistrust Incidents in the act of "Touch"*

It is clear that one of the most vital components of the game revolves around the making and claiming of the touch. The nature of the game means that the Referee often cannot see whether or not a 'touch' has legitimately been made, they therefore have to accept that when a defender claims the touch (unless the ref can see otherwise clearly) that he is in fact telling the truth, and accordingly award the touch. The fast paced nature of the game also means that some touches even when legitimate might not actually be felt by the attacking players.

In Touch Rugby ghost or phantom touches can have a crucial and negative effect on the play of the attacking side and on the game as a whole. It can therefore become a contentious issue if the attacking side thinks the defending side is lying about whether or not they are legally making their touches. Key to this study is firstly whether or not the attacking player thinks a phantom touch has been made and secondly how they react to the decision that a phantom touch has actually been made. The game is fast and it is accepted that sometimes a legitimate touch cannot be felt ([www.touchrugby.co.za](http://www.touchrugby.co.za)). When this takes place the defender has to make an almost instant decision as whether or not the defender is trustworthy. If the attacker does not trust the call of 'touch' from the defender my observations showed that the reactions fall into two broad categories.

The attacker either adopts a 'just checking' position or a 'you cheated' position. The more games I observed during this initial stage the more clear it became that reactions to a phantom touch would always fall into one of these two groups. Each group showing a different level of trust for the defender.

The 'just checking' group is distinctive by the generally calm way the attacker questions the call of 'touch'. The player in question would turn and ask the referee or defender whether or not the touch had actually taken place. The questioning is either light hearted, or short and serious. The key is that response is accepted, the attacker continues with play and by this shows that they accept that the touch took place in reality that they just did not feel it.

The 'you cheated' position is distinctive by two things, firstly the question regarding the validity of the touch is never asked, the assumption is made that the defender has cheated and questioning it would be futile. Secondly it is more aggressive in its style. The trustworthiness of the defender is minimal.

I noticed a difference within the 'just checking' group and one that I decided to incorporate into my observations systematically. The difference was to whom the checking was directed, either the referee or the defender in question. The distinction was important to make as I thought it could further highlight levels of mistrust. If the attacker questions the defender, there is a level of trust being displayed; the attacker allows the defender the opportunity to give their version of what the attacker thought was a phantom touch.

However if the questioning is directed toward the referee, the attacker is showing less trust in the defender, that the attacker seeks a neutral third party for verification of what is thought to be a phantom touch shows that little trust is shown toward the defender in question.

So with these three categories in mind I began recording mistrust incidents for both the Student team and Khaya. Over two seasons I managed to record accurate information from 10 different games for each team. There were occasions where Khaya did not arrive for their game or occasions when the game I was playing in occurred during the same timeslot as Khaya game so I did not manage to watch all their games

In my notebook I would record the event as I saw it describing what was said, to whom and into which category it fell. I then recorded these electronically each week. At the end of each week's recordings I would tabulate that week's number of mistrust incidents as well as into which category they fell (Appendix III).

In addition to notes taken regarding mistrust incidents, I would also note incidents and moments as and when issues arose that I felt were important. At the end of the second season I logged the results.

The rationale behind choosing these aspects of mistrust to systematically observe was due to the fact that it exposes quite directly how Khaya is trusted or mistrusted by the team they play against. It further exposes the levels of mistrust ranging from low to high in the three categories. It is also part of the game that directly affects how the game 'flows' and so impacts I believe on the ability of the teams competing to enjoy the sport.

If I had spoken to white players about how they trusted or did not trust the black team I could not be guaranteed of competent honest answers especially with something as contentious as racism. But it is the actions on the field of play where racism can be seen and recorded. Their actions speak louder than words especially since sport is made out to be a space where tolerance and understanding can and is developed.

### *Informal Racial Segregation*

This involved the systematic noting of the location the team met and socialised as well as their movement through the evening including the use of the Bar on the premises. Again this speaks to how institutional racism manifests. White participants could easily claim in an interview situation that they have no difficulty or problem with sharing the space with Khaya or that they are indeed friendly with them socially. This then would tell me little of the social reality for Khaya and their movements before and after the game. I needed to see how free they were, where they sat and with whom.

### **General Observations**

When watching the games that Khaya would play I would often be privy to conversations on the side of the field about Khaya which were useful in looking at how people saw them, what they thought of them and how the space was made open to them. This was not a key part of the research but if something happened that was of importance I would make a record of it.

### **In-depth Interviews**

My observations over the preceding months had informed me of some issues I thought they might raise. I did not want these preconceptions to influence their answers but rather allow them to express as freely as possible what they saw as obstacles or challenges or issues. As I have stated elsewhere I wanted the team to put themselves at the centre of their experience rather than just me telling them what their experience was and asking for comment.

The interview therefore was loosely structured around three main sections. The first section was designed in such a manner as to allow the respondent the space to discuss the perceived obstacles they face when trying to play their chosen sport and was asked without specific direction. Of course having observed some specific things I wanted them to reflect on these and so the following section was designed in such a way as to go through those things that I



had observed and had thought might be obstacles for them and ask them to comment on those different areas. The issues that I wanted comment on were; issues around informal segregation, issues of race and perceptions of treatment from other players and teams, questions around mistrust in the game as well as issues of payment, both for the league fees as well as transport to and from the grounds. The final section allowed them to think about what things they could change about the sport and how they could go about doing this. All questions were open ended and gave me space to probe where I felt necessary, and allow for other themes and issues to emerge.

The interviews were conducted in private, were kept confidential and the respondents consisted of the entire team. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the respondent in order to facilitate accurate transcription of the data. The respondents were given a consent form which included pertinent information as to what I was planning to study as well as how this involved them as individuals and as a team. Before the actual interview took place I read a preamble wherein their rights were made clear to them and their permission again requested. The interviews were semi-structured in depth interviews and followed a predetermined set of questions and probes (Appendix IV).

### **Group Interview**

I decided that a focus group with the team would benefit the investigation as focus groups allow a space in which people can get together and make meaning among themselves, rather than individually. Issues, thoughts and opinions often arise that would not necessarily come to light in one-on-one interviews. The organisation of the focus group was not easy and after a number of attempts six team members met and I decided to go ahead with the focus group rather than try and wait for better numbers. Issues under discussion were around the money they received and how they felt about it as well as issues of mistrust on the field of play.

### **Questionnaire**

Although I believe that there is no biological basis for distinguishing between human groups and that these racial lines are “at best imprecise and at worst completely arbitrary” (Omi & Winant, 2000:183). I do believe in the notion that they are never the less a constructed reality in South Africa and in as much as they are a constructed reality they are useful to use in research and analysis. This is especially true in South Africa where the constructed reality of

race has meant that the centre of power resided and continues to reside within white South Africa. A team of black participants entering a setting where they are the racial minority illuminates this constructed reality and this whiteness can act as an obstacle to Khaya from freely enjoying their participation.

It is, however, difficult for me to presume to know who is who when it comes to the issue of racial classification and so I made it a task to numerically quantify this apparent racial distortion by allowing the different teams to self-describe themselves racially.

This was done through an e-mail that was sent on my behalf to all the organisers of the various teams. In it I asked:

1. During Apartheid would you have been classified, 'white/coloured/black'?
2. How many players in your team?
3. Of those participants during Apartheid how many would have been classified: 'white/coloured/black'?

Only 11 teams responded to my request including Khaya, however I am satisfied that the trend they show draws an accurate picture of what I observed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ETHICS APPRAISAL**

#### **Beneficiaries of the Research**

I stand to benefit from this research. Not only by completing a Masters degree but also having furthered my practical experience in the field of social research. The research is not meant to be of any direct benefit to anyone in particular outside of myself. The league organisers could stand to benefit through better understanding the difficulties a team in their league face every time they play. This motivation is not the purpose of this study. The team being studied might gain through describing their own experience to themselves as being different to other teams if in fact they do not know this already. This might allow, if they choose, to fight to overcome some of the obstacles they face with a clearer understanding of their lived reality. This again is not the purpose of the research.

#### **Informed Consent**

As indicated earlier, permission for me to do this research was first granted by the management of in2touch and then by the teams in question. I approached Mandla, the captain and organiser of the team I was researching and spoke to him about what I wanted to do and why I wanted to do it. He then introduced me to the team and I told them the same thing. I told them why I was interested in talking to them and asked for their permission to watch them play and to set up interviews with them at some stage. I offered the chance for questions and the team were happy for me to follow them as the season progressed. This permission was later formalised through informed consent forms which included information on my research and formalised their permission for me to continue.

The team I played for was consulted as well. I spoke to the captain first and then also the team. I didn't tell them in too much detail that race and class were at the core of my study but rather that I was looking at the manner in which teams interacted on the field and off it. Again there were no questions but full support.

The rest of the teams participating in the league were sent e-mails by the organisers outlining briefly what I was doing and whether or not there were any complaints or issues with this. No complaints were received.

### **Limitations Imposed on Research**

The only recurring problem encountered was the inability or avoidance of management to e-mail the captains participating in the league with a consent form and short questionnaire. I requested the e-mail addresses of the captains of the various teams so that I could be in control of the process. Management said that they didn't want to give out the addresses of the captains but that they would e-mail the questionnaire for me. It took a long while for this to be done. Beyond this I was put under no restrictions regarding publishing information I gain from the study.

### **Dishonesty in Fieldwork**

The fact that a 'controversial' topic is being dealt with here, race; mean that what I tell people had to be abridged. The team that is the focus of the project has been told more clearly what exactly I wanted to look at. The research was about them and required them to think about their experiences in the league.

The team I play for was not informed as to the exact nature of the project. This was done for two reasons. Firstly what I was observing with regard to my team was the way in which other teams play with us, against us and socialised with us. I was observing how other teams treat us as a team of white players. This meant that there was no need to go into any detail that might affect the way they interacted with the teams they faced. Secondly it is my experience that white South Africans have an unreasonable fear of ever being branded as racist. I did not want the way in which I was allowed to interact with them and other teams to be changed with knowledge regarding the details of my project. I told them that I was observing interactions between teams and there was enough truth to that for me.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

I told Khaya I would change their names in the written report. Seeing as there is only one team of black players in the league it would be a false promise to offer full anonymity. If

someone had to read the finished project and know about the league it would be clear to them about whom the research was done. Anonymity therefore cannot be offered.

### **Power Relations in the Research Process**

Being a contextually wealthy educated white man there are undoubtedly existing power issues; between me and the team and individuals I am observing and interviewing. The biggest problem I can think of is that I would have imposed this project onto them rather than that decision being one that is totally fair for them to make. This was not thought through extensively. Other issues might have been promises that would be impossible to keep. I did not go into this research making any sorts of claims that I knew I could not fulfil.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FACED by KHAYA**

The challenges that face this team from Khayelitsha are numerous and varied. Some relate to their geographical position, some to the legacy of apartheid, others relate specifically to their race while others have little or no connection. Importantly some challenges are obvious and clear to the team whereas others are not totally apparent to them. The distinction is an important one because while I was looking for overt racism I was specifically looking for covert racism as well, which can act against people with their acknowledgement or not.

The key challenges that surfaced through the observations and interviews fell into the following two major categories:

1. Financial Challenges
  - Transport Difficulties
  - Fees, Charity and Notions of Escape
2. The role of race in the experience of Khaya
  - Brookside perceived as a 'white' space
  - Informal Racial Segregation
  - Mistrust in the Act of Playing the Game

Each section will be dealt with separately with an overview of the data gathered from the various research methodologies. Conclusions will be drawn later on in the piece.

## **PART 1**

### **Financial Challenges**

As I have said earlier to play this sport costs money, some teams pay themselves, some get corporate sponsors. In the Student team I played in each member paid their own way. In other teams I have competed for we managed to obtain sponsorship from a range of corporate organisations. The deals were similar in that the company would pay the fees and we would be registered under their name and wear their branding on the field. This was common amongst other teams as well.

The R2590.00 it costs to play per season is not what I consider to be cheap and Khaya finds that not only paying for the fees difficult but all the other costs associated with playing are difficult obstacles for them as well. From my observations I knew that the team used minibus taxis' to travel from Khayelitsha and back each week. I knew that sometimes this was hard as taxi drivers would want to charge them extra or not arrive to take them to the games. I made an assumption that money was an issue for them as Khayelitsha is not one of Cape Towns' wealthier suburbs. Apartheid has ensured that Khayelitsha was and remains gripped by poverty and working class problems.

These were things that I could not quantify just by looking and observing and so a major part of the interview was taken up talking about these issues. This was by design but also because the players talked mostly about money as a major challenge for them when trying to play this sport.

What was startlingly clear from the interviews was that according to them, the lack of money and the associated problems this caused them was the most critical challenge they faced.

The team was originally constituted by a man they refer to as 'John'. Through the interviews I was able to piece together how they had come to play touch rugby and how the fees and transport costs get paid for. None of the team had heard of touch rugby before John went to Khayelitsha to recruit players. How he actually recruited them is not exactly known.

He invited each player to form a team and try this new sport, the team which he initially coached. Apart from this he made promises to cover their fees and transport costs. His payment for transport has according to the team become erratic and although the league fees

have continued to be taken care of, transport and the associated costs have become the single most crucial difficulty according to the team.

### **Transport Difficulties**

Early in the interviews I asked them to identify for me what things make it difficult for them to play. This was an open question allowing them the freedom to talk about whatever they felt were the major issues. Each player in turn said that the difficulties they face in terms of the transport were what made it most difficult for them to play. Each inferred through the discussion that this was to do with financing the transport rather than any other specific aspect of transport but Jonas was the only one to make this link explicit.

“Are there any things that make it difficult for you to play?” - Interviewer

“Money and transport... is one.” - Jonas

“Money and transport?” - Interviewer

“Ya, they are one.” - Jonas

Although not as clear as Jonas, the rest of the team found the financial difficulties they faced and the resultant transport challenges to be the clearest and most pressing challenge they faced .

“It’s the transport mostly. Coming from Khayelitsha to here, most of the time John will be here or we have to get the money on our own then John might pay us later. The drivers, they love the money those people, yoh! We used to throw over 200 now they say No come with 300, 400, 500. You see so we can’t get that much money. That’s what makes it bad.” – Siya

“The other things is sometimes we came here like today we don’t have the money, and I’m the one who has to pay for it.” - Mandla

“What do you have to pay for?” - Interviewer

“Transport. I have to pay for the transport and then and like ok I’m gonna pay for the transport but John is going to reimburse me. But last season I had to



pay like one thousand for the transport. And he didn't give me money back." – Mandla

"Like, money wise it's very difficult for transport coming from Khayelitsha its very hard and like we finish late and like it's like quarter past nine we have a game and like transport is very difficult to get transport at that time." - Noma-Afrika

"Ummm.... yoh! We always struggle with the transport in our place in Khayelitsha. Sometimes we don't get transport and we have to organise it ourselves. Then we have to, it's hard to then try and get back there." – Olwethu

"Like sometimes we come here and there is no transport to take us home so Mandla is the one that has to find something. We don't have like a mature person like a oldest person because John doesn't even come that often he just gives us money." – Thandi

"I would say transport yes. Because many people stop playing touch because of transport like every Wednesday we have to stand there to look at the transport like ask the taxis one of the taxis like please take us there we can give him money. Every Wednesday it's like a different transport, a hassle, yes." - Bongani

"How do you pay for it?" - Interviewer

"Sometimes its hard yes, Mandla does help us, John give us money, sometimes he gives money sometimes he phone Mandla no I'll be there and he won't be there, no he won't." – Bongani

The fact that this was an issue meant not only that they just found it difficult to organise money week after week and that they found this challenging but it took a very serious toll in terms of forcing the team to miss matches. As I have said previously there were at least four occasions during the two seasons I observed Khaya that they did not arrive to games because of transport issues. When questioned about this the response was that the transport was late or that they did not have enough money to pay what the taxi driver was asking. Khaya travel a long way to play a sport they all love. The fact that they found money to prevent them doing

this sometimes surely hurt. I asked them if they miss games regularly because of transport issues and how this made them feel. The answers ranged from being sad to being angry but clearly it was very important to the team that they are allowed to make every game.

“Yes sometimes, we offer them this price and then they want more. Yes. But if it doesn’t come we always make a plan.” - Siya

“How does it make you feel when you don’t manage to find a transport?” –  
Interviewer

“I feel dirty, I feel bad. Because I love this sport, really. Sometimes if we don’t come here than we drop points in the league, we get low in the league.” – Siya

“Like, I feel like when I don’t come to play I always get angry because maybe I organise a taxi to come maybe at 4 o’clock, maybe the taxi driver comes only at 5 o’clock then it still an hour to get here.” - Mandla

“So how do you feel?” - Interviewer

“Angry, to the drivers.” – Mandla

“Yes sometimes we struggle to get like we struggle to get transport from there like people don’t wanna take us. It happens often, too many times. It freaks us out and brings us down because like we are expected to be on this field at this time and we are running late because of transport wise and the people also here are getting like impatient because they pay the money and they are expecting all the teams to be there on the field at the right time and if like you can’t then you must make arrangements to phone them before the time.” - Noma-Afrika

“There have been times when you haven’t arrived to play and when I asked Mandla he said that there were problems with the taxis. Does this happen often?” - Interviewer

“Yes.” Olwethu

“Lots of times?” - Interviewer

“Ya” - Olwethu

“How does it make you feel?” - Interviewer

“Yoh! It makes me really sad.” - Olwethu

“Why?” - Interviewer

“Because we want to play, like we are ready those times so we are ready to play. Sometimes it happens like when we are playing semi-finals and finals.” –  
Olwethu

Without putting leading questions to the team but merely opening up a space for them to talk about the difficulties they face in this sport, each and every member without fail raised transport and the associated costs as being the most direct and serious challenge they face.

### **Fees, Charity and Notions of Escape**

The fact that the team has yet to pay for the league fees themselves seemed to me to be the most likely reason why this did not come up as a major challenge they face. I decided to put to them a scenario where John stopped paying their fees. I wanted to know what they thought would happen to them and their team playing this sport. The trend from the answers given was that Khaya felt that they would more than likely not be able to play although there was a sense amongst two members of Khaya that they would try and make a plan. However what was clear is just how reliant this team is on the charity of John.

“What happens if John stopped paying for your team?” - Interviewer

“I think we would stop.” – Grace

“Yoh! We would have to... Yoh! Some of us would even have to quit because it's hard already. So we would have to quit. ...But we love touch we wouldn't just quit, we would try our best, we would struggle that much but ya...” -

Thandi

“Realistically do you think you would be able to...” - Interviewer

“I don’t think so, because we live far, if you could see where we live you would be surprised. It’s like to Stellenbosch.” – Thandi

“We would have to stop. Because we not going to get that money.” - Olwethu

“I can think what’s going to happen. We won’t be playing touch anymore.” - Mandla

“Without him helping you, you can’t play?” - Interviewer

“Ya because I am the only one who’s organising the things in this team I’m like if there is something that’s gonna happen we don’t have money in our bank its Khaya money or like ok we don’t have money on our own. Ok like we can try like a tournament in Khayelitsha and all these things but we just don’t have the money.” - Mandla

“Yoh! No I don’t think we will be able to carry on playing because we don’t have the money to pay the fees, we have to buy kits. We are coming from disadvantaged areas we don’t have money.” - Thabo

“We won’t go there (Brookside) again I think.” - Jonas

“Without his help you can’t go?” - Interviewer

“Yes that’s right. Its money, you talk about money, he pays the money for us you know.” - Jonas

“Yoh! ...We won’t play anymore. Yes we won’t. Because we have tried fundraising and that didn’t come through.” - Bongani

“So without John you can’t play?” - Interviewer

“Yes.” - Bongani

“How does that make you feel?” - Interviewer

“It makes me sad because sometimes here in the community there’s the wrong things happening here. It keeps us away from the wrong things.” - Bongani

Bongani raised the idea that Touch rugby was an escape for these youngsters, from the boredom of their communities, lack of sporting opportunities, equipment and the potential of becoming involved in criminal activities. Sport, touch rugby specifically, offered them a glimpse of another world, another possibility, an escape from something they feel needs escaping from.

“To me at first it was all about fun, at first and then when I when I played as time goes by I recognised that maybe it is some career to me, I can use this sport as a career to me.” – Siya

“For me it was a challenge to come here, a step for me to go up to know about touch and all. To get more experienced. I enjoy sport and like I want to get somewhere with sport in the future.” - Noma-Afrika

“It keeps you doing things and keeps you from doing something’s wrongs. Like smoking.” - Thabo

“It keeps you out of trouble?”- Interviewer

“Ya.” - Thabo

“Did someone tell you that?” - Interviewer

“I see it for myself.” - Thabo

“There is no tackling in touch and you get to meet new people there.” - Olwethu

“Don’t you meet new people playing netball?” - Interviewer

“Ya we do meet people there but we meet more people here in touch.” – Olwethu

During the group interview this was again raised with similar responses. They all agreed that it was fun playing at Brookside

“We do play soccer, but not many teams in Khayelitsha. Not a nice field at Khayelitsha, no grass.” - Group

“Play at villagers because of the nice grass?” - Interviewer

“No other things too, keep us off the street, away from crimes.” - Group

The issue of escape was not pursued as well as I wanted through the recorded interviews and so informally later as they were meeting before their game I began asking them what their plans were for their futures. Thandi said that because of her experiences playing touch she was now studying Sport Management at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Siya responded that he wanted to play 6-down touch rugby for a living. I asked him if he thought this was possible, to which he replied:

“I think so...” – Siya.

A few other members of the team claimed that they wished to study Sport Management like Thandi at CPUT; what was clear though is that all the members of the team wanted to do something involved with sport.

Issues of race did surface and interestingly, Jonas, who raised issues of race far more clearly than many of the others as being a difficulty, when it came to questions of why he plays this sport, raised race as being a reason why he plays this sport. White people; the same people who scared him when he started playing and who he felt he needed some sort of protection from, he offered their presence as a reason why he continued to play touch rugby.

“There are white people playing it... with the black teams. They are nice, they are nice like ya.” – Jonas

He wasn't the only person to assert this as a reason for playing the sport. Thandi as well as some in the group interview raised this as well.

“Socialising with white people. It's an experience.” - Group

“Umm, actually there are few black girls in this sport, few black people as well. So I thought maybe I should do something a bit odd.” - Thandi

“A bit different?” - Interviewer

“Yes.” - Thandi

Khaya play this sport because it offers them the chance to escape and do something different to their everyday lived experience.

## **PART 2**

### **The Role of Race in the experience of Khaya**

#### *Brookside Perceived as a 'White' Space*

It was easy for me to notice the Khaya team when I first went to watch touch rugby at Brookside. They were the only team completely made up of black players. The sport was overwhelmingly white, the men's leagues, the women's leagues and the mixed leagues, white, white, white. Through all the different divisions the pattern repeated itself.

Although I believe that there is no biological basis for distinguishing between human groups and that these racial lines are "at best imprecise and at worst completely arbitrary" (Omi & Winant, 2000:183). I do believe in the notion that they are never the less a constructed reality in South Africa and in as much as they are a constructed reality they are useful to use in research and analyse. In addition to this according to literature there is a history of white South Africans carefully constructing or maintaining white spaces for their benefit. What makes a particular space 'white' has to do partly with demographics. Therefore it is important to racially profile the participants as well as document perceptions of what this might mean for Khaya. However it is difficult for me to presume to know who is who when it comes to the issue of racial classification and so I made it a task to numerically quantify this apparent racial distortion by allowing the different teams to self-describe themselves racially.

This was done through an e-mail that was sent on my behalf to all the organisers of the various teams. In it I asked:

1. During Apartheid would you have been classified, 'white/coloured/black'?
2. How many players in your team?
3. Of those participants during Apartheid how many would have been classified: 'white/coloured/black'?

Only 11 teams responded to my request including Khaya, however I am satisfied that the trend they show draws an accurate picture of what I observed: the overwhelming 'whiteness' of the touch rugby leagues. In fact it would be safe to say that had more teams responded the statistics would have shown the racial dominance of the white participants to be even more



overwhelming. Table 1, below, breaks down the organisers' response to the questions put to them regarding racial classification.

**Table1: Racial classification of the touch rugby team organisers and participants**

Team name	Race of organiser	Number in Team	White participants	Coloured participants	Black participants
Winners	White	10	9	0	1
Big Legs	White	11	11	0	0
Joe Cools	Coloured	12	0	12	0
Windyz men	Coloured	9	8	1	0
Lego	White	11	11	0	0
No Help	White	13	11	1	1
Potency	White	14	14	0	0
Windyz mixed	Coloured	12	11	1	0
Strong Arms	White	12	10	2	0
Khaya	Black	9	0	0	9
Student Team	White	12	11	1	0

If we depict this information graphically, as can be seen in Fig 3, out of the 11 teams that responded 5 teams were racially homogenous; 3 white, 1 coloured and 1 black. Of the remaining 6 teams the 'Benchwarmers', who were 84% white, displayed the greatest degree of racial representivity.

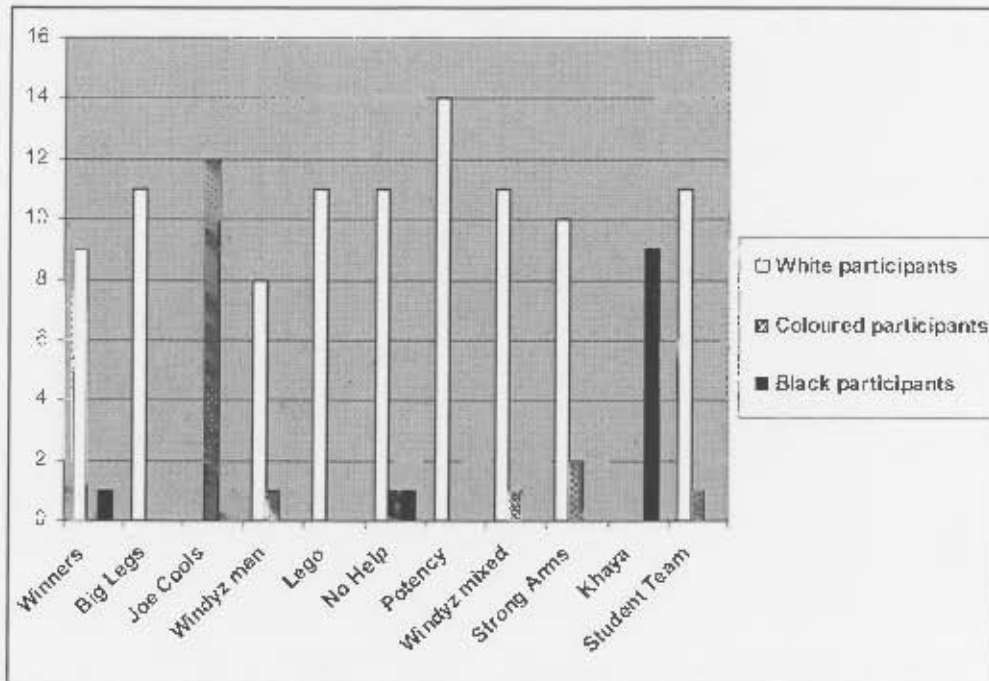


Fig 1: Graph showing numerical break down of teams in terms of race

In the following pie-chart, from the sample afforded me it is clear that the league is vastly skewed toward the white participants. From the responses received, 77% of participants in the league are white. However, as I have noted elsewhere, the percentage of white participants is actually much higher.

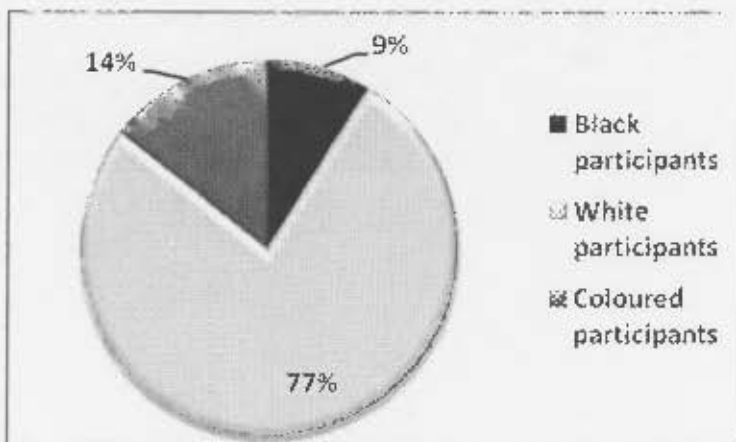


Fig 2: Illustration showing percentage of different race groups playing touch rugby

The sample received contained the only observed homogenous black team and one of the three observed coloured teams meaning their percentages in the whole were inflated. When it became clear to me that I would only have accurate information of 11 teams I did a personal count of teams playing on one evening and made decisions about the racial breakdown of the participants in that team. Depending on my assertion regarding a racial majority, I prescribed a racial classification to the team. Depicted in Fig 3, I counted 50 teams with 1 black team

and 3 coloured teams so in reality the percentage of those playing touch rugby who are white would be more in the region of 92% in reality.

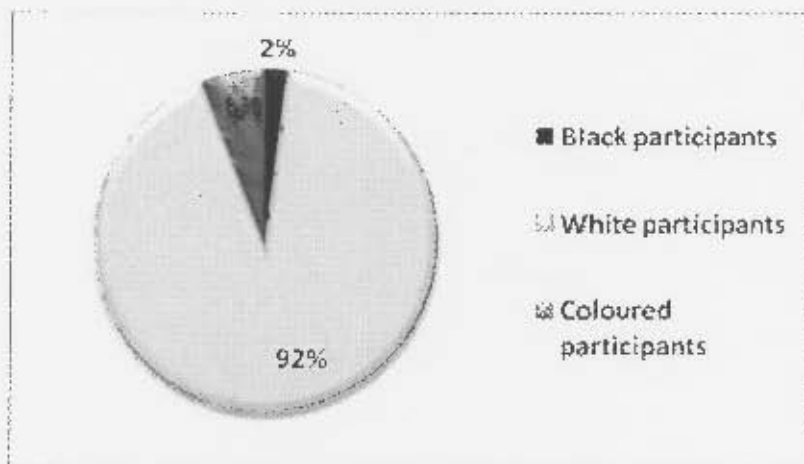


Fig3: Illustration showing perceived racial breakdown of participants

What was more crucial than establishing the fact that the majority of teams and participants were white was what this meant for Khaya? Whiteness cannot be established through demographic information alone. It was very clear to the team that Brookside and this sport was white and that they were black. Without any hinting or leading; the team consistently raised this as an issue for them when they started playing at Brookside.

During the interview I asked them to tell me about how they felt coming to Brookside when they started playing touch rugby. Every member of the team as well as during the group interview responded by highlighting as an issue the fact that they were the only black team among many other white teams.

The answers also indicated that not only were they the only black people playing this sport at Brookside but importantly that this would mean something; that the whiteness of Brookside would result in something negative happening against them in some way. Their fear was one of overt racism being a distinct and real possibility:

“I just saw all these white people and just thought WAIL... what is going to happen to us! I thought that maybe they would be racist or something. They could have called us names while we were playing or doing something’s nasty to us.” – Siya

“Like I was so scared because like to sit here and I don’t see anyone here that is my skin colour or speak Xhosa here. It made me scared because maybe they

gonna think we gonna steal their things you see? Because the first time we came here they like grabbed their things and like put their things right next to them. I was like ‘NO! We didn’t come here to steal we just want to watch touch and we want to play.’” – Mandla

“The first time here, I was shocked, there were like white people only here there was no black people it was only us. It was like wow! Ya.” – Olwethu

“Ha ha What I was scared of is that they would call us names” – Bongani

“Yoh! I was thinking it would be a bit unfair just because we are the only blacks and it goes like that.” – Thabo

“I was sooo afraid. There are white people all over we are black, like seven blacks and huge white people there. So I was so afraid. I think like, like there would be racism or you know like black people you know that kind of stuff. The black people were and they torture us you know.” - Jonas

“I was scared to touch them because we felt like it’s not our colour and all that. We were scared that they would say something wrong to us.” - Grace

On the whole the team felt that their initial fears regarding racial abuse or victimisation were unfounded and that they were allowed to participate freely.

“Yes I am not nervous now, most of the guys here we know” – Siya

“No, actually we get along ok. Yes. We know each other now” – Thandi

“I feel that we are one, we are one because they don’t have that “you are blacks and white” We are friends.” - Thabo

This was not shared by all in the team. Although Mandla did not mention it during the recorded interviews, during an informal conversation he angrily expressed to me the feeling that his team were not being made welcome at Brookside.

“Blacks, here... I get the feeling that we’re not wanted. We can play touch, we can play this game...” - Mandla

Mandla is saying that the teams' ability to play the sport should be the only reason why they should or should not be accepted, sadly though he asserts it is their blackness that results in them not being "wanted".

During the recorded interviews only Thandi expressed a specific occasion when overt racism affected her involvement in this sport.

"They even call us name's sometimes! There was this other grandfather playing here. He suddenly called one of us "kaffir" but we didn't like it. It wasn't something we even put into our system." - Thandi

"How did you react to that?" - Interviewer

"It was a bit shocking because I thought people were like over that, I didn't think that they had that in their system. Even myself I was surprised that someone was still calling people like me a kaffir. It was a bit shocking; I didn't understand why he called them a kaffir." - Thandi

"Did you do anything about it?" – Interviewer

"I didn't think of anything at that time so I thought 'whatever'. Just leave it like that." - Thandi

Thandi's story was not related to me by any of the others. From the data gathered it is clear then that the players are aware of the fact that they are the only black team playing this sport. Not only is this clear to them but it has real meaning for them. The whiteness of Brookside is a real phenomenon and one which they feared will impact on how welcome they are in that space.

Although no one else in the team related stories describing as overt racism as Thandi's; as an observer of the team I was made aware of other incidents and comments made by participants and players which were recorded in my notebook and provided an insight into how Khaya were seen by other competitors. During a particular game a Khaya member had just scored and an opposition player who was watching from the sideline was shouting "He's Habana! He's Habana". This was referring to Bryan Habana the star black winger in the Springbok

team. There was little else besides shared skin colour between the Khaya player and the Springbok winger. The connection was made directly through race, not speed or style or size.

Before another game Khaya was standing near some tog-bags next to the side of the field. One of the white players from the opposing team came over to me and asked “Hey, please watch our bags.” Then looking at Khaya; “there have been some thefts lately”. Not knowing this person I wondered how he knew I was to be trusted. It seemed as if my whiteness had marked me as being trustworthy whereas Khaya’s blackness marked them as being untrustworthy.

A third example of how Khaya is seen as a black team by their white opponents was again before a game. Before the game started Khaya were warming up, amongst their team was a new player wearing a ‘Western Province Touch’ top, a friend of Mandla who played with him in the WP Junior team. He was ‘helping out’ and was not a permanent member of the team. An opposition player began commenting to his team mates about Khaya now that they had a WP player playing for them “Well they’re not a development team anymore!” he said to a team mate. This for me was again a show of Khaya being seen as a black team, the concept of developmental teams consisting of black players is common in the South African sporting lexicon. Generally it refers to teams that are not particularly good but who are given opportunities to play as a form of racial redress. It is not used as a positive label.

### **Informal Racial Segregation**

One of the first things that I noticed when I started observing the movements and playing of the Khaya team was that they seemed to meet in the same place week after week, socialise in the same place week after week. While the rest of the participants seemingly used all that Brookside had to offer. Other players and teams would use the change room facilities, the bar; some would watch TV and others would meet outside. There was seemingly constant movement by most teams in the league and freedom in their movement that I didn’t observe in Khaya. I didn’t see them in the bar, watching TV, having a drink, they wouldn’t run on the field throwing a ball around, having fun; they met in the same spot and stayed there.



The photo left (Google Earth) is of Brookside in Claremont. Khaya would meet every week in the area marked with an "X". This is a space that is far

from the bar, far from the change rooms, far from the stands where other players and teams meet and socialise. From there they would make their way to the appropriate field, play their game and return to the same spot where they would wait for the transport home. On rare occasions individuals from Khaya would play for other teams or some might be found in the bar.

I began to record their movements systematically. Over the two seasons that I observed them they were absolutely consistent with my initial observations and met every week in the same spot. Only once did I personally see any of the Khaya players sitting in the bar. They were watching football on one of the TV's before their game. They were not in the bar for long and soon moved to the usual spot in preparation for the game.

The segregation was clear and consistent. The body language of the Khaya team did not seem to me to be despondent. It didn't seem like they had been forced by anyone to sit there. They talked amongst themselves and anyone else who happened to join them in a manner that suggested they felt happy to be there.

I could not help but wonder why they did not utilise the other facilities of Brookside. Was it because they did not feel comfortable outside of their area? Were they made to feel that way? Was it a sense of ownership of space that allowed the white teams to run and play on the fields lacking amongst Khaya?

Racial segregation is a crucial issue in any social activity but especially in sport which professes to hold the ability to bring people together. I needed to find out firstly why they sat where they sat, whether or not they saw this as a problem and lastly why they so infrequently were in the bar. The project is about the challenges they face and so it was key to allow them

the space to articulate whether or not it was in fact an issue for them. This by no way means that it was or wasn't actually a challenge for them, but rather their perception of my observations.

The fact that they met in the same spot each week did not once come up as a major issue when I invited them to talk about things that make it hard or difficult to playing this sport.

I therefore presented to them later in the interview, my observation of the fact that they met in the same place week after week and did not stray.

No one hinted at anything obviously racial as possible reasons for not moving from their spot. When pressed for reasons why they sit there the answers were generally about physical comforts; warmth, shelter and the view.

“We like that spot, we like to leave our things there and like when it’s raining we’re under cover.” – Mandla

“... and the view is nice you can see all the different games from there.” -  
Noma-Afrika

“I really don’t know we just chill there in the same spot. It’s warm there.” -  
Olwethu

Having already discussed the apprehensions they felt about being the only blacks at the fields and how uncomfortable this made them feel I was expecting more of the same racialised language regarding the reasons why they sit in the same spot each week. Reasons can however sometimes be unclear to even the people involved.

When pressed some of the team made out that they hadn’t really thought about it, but when they did think about it, the reasons raised for the observed segregation was that they just felt comfortable there. Answers were given that showed that even though there weren’t clear reasons why they sat there they did because they were comfortable - by saying that implying they are not comfortable elsewhere.

“Ha ha, I don’t know, I really don’t know. If we just meet there we just meet there. We are used to that spot” – Siya

“Ya, I don’t really know, we just like it there, it is like nice and ya” – Thabo



“When we started playing here we just saw that spot and decided to come and sit here.” - Grace

I asked Grace if they have tried to sit anywhere else to which she replied:

“No. We’re not used to that.” – Grace

If there had been nothing else to do at Brookside on Wednesdays except watch other teams play while you wait for your own game or a lift home I might not have been more interested in their movements, or lack of movements, but I was. There is a bar on the premises which was open to the players and the public. It was very popular with players and spectators alike, with people using it socially before and after games to meet and talk and socialise. It had televisions showing sports games, it was warm and was sheltered and was safe. During my preliminary observations and then later during my close observations I recorded seeing members of Khaya in the bar only once. Again I asked them to tell me why. Four of the nine were not 18 yet and so claimed that as the clearest reason why I had not seen them in the bar. Even though they were allowed into the bar these four said that they were not comfortable because they were not 18 and the bar was a place for older people.

“A pub to us is like actually for older people not just for 18, for older people like our fathers” – Thandi

Two members said that they did not drink alcohol and so there was no need to go to the bar although the bar does sell other drinks that were not alcoholic as well as snacks and you don’t have to drink to enjoy the other services the bar offers including chairs, tables and TVs. Other members of the team said that it was purely down to not having enough money, again even though you did not have to purchase anything to sit there.

“Cos I don’t afford the bar...” – Mandla.

Bongani responded to my questions explicitly telling me that he does not feel comfortable in the bar that he is made to feel uncomfortable in the bar. He talks about “us” being stared at which could easily refer to black people or his team, the only black team in the league.

“Do you feel comfortable in the bar?” - Interviewer

“No I don’t.” - Bongani

“What makes you feel that way?” - Interviewer

“Like, the people looking at us always...” - Bongani

Only one of the players, Jonas, talked specifically about race being a reason why he did not feel comfortable going in to the bar.

“Like I’m a black guy sitting there with all the white people uh-uh come on...”

- Jonas

“Is it the same way you felt when you first came to villagers?” - Interviewer

“Yes.” - Jonas

“You are comfortable on the fields. Why is it different in the bar?” -

Interviewer

“There are a lot of people and like white people and uh-uh...” - Jonas

“Do you think your team mates feel the same way?” – Interviewer

“Oh yes. The others don’t go there as they are afraid, same as me.” – Jonas

Jonas’s assertion that his teammates felt the same way didn’t bear out in the individual interviews however it did in the group interview. During the group interview this issue of the bar was raised again and to my surprise the group interviewed, who didn’t include Jonas, agreed with the notion originally held by him in his individual interview.

“I feel uncomfortable there.”

“We are the only blacks there and it is just a feeling...”

“I try and avoid places where I am the only black person there.”

It is clear then that the team has found certain areas within Brookside that they feel comfortable in and at. It is also clear that they do not feel totally comfortable elsewhere.

### **Mistrust in the Act of Playing the game**

Race has been shown to be a condition that can affect the manner in which people trust other people. Specifically black people are not trusted by white people. During my initial observations it seemed to me that Khaya were not trusted by the teams they played against. As described earlier I then sought to systematically record incidents of mistrust for Khaya as well as my team as way of comparison. After systematically observing 10 games through the two seasons I logged the results.

The table below represents the numerical results of my observations and it is clear that Khaya as a team received far more accusations of cheating than did UCT, almost 6 times more frequently.

**Table2: Categorisation of mistrust incidents into the different categories**

	“Just Checking” - Defender	“Just Checking” - Referee	“You Cheated”	Total
Khaya	5	11	25	41
Student Team	7	0	0	7

The pie chart on the following page represents this distortion as it shows the percentage of the total number of mistrust incidents I recorded attributed to Khaya versus the Student Team. This means that Khaya receive on average 4.1 moments per game when they are visibly mistrusted by the opposing players. Compare this to the Student Team who on average would receive less than one incident of mistrust a game and Khaya it could be safe to say that Khaya as a team is not trusted by the teams they play against.

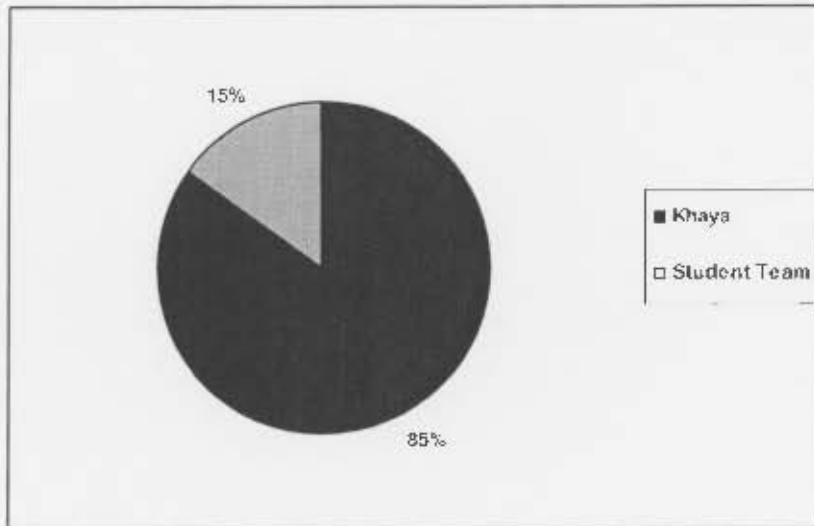


Fig 4: Percentage comparison of total Mistrust incidents between Student Team and Khaya

If we break the data down into their different categories, represented below in Fig 5, it can be seen that not only do Khaya receive almost six times more mistrust incidents, but that there is a trend that these show higher levels of mistrust than those received by UCT. Within the "just checking" category, players are more likely to question the referee than the Khaya player while against the Student Team they never questioned the referee but only the opposing player. Not only this, but Khaya suffered more aggressive accusations of cheating than the two 'just checking' categories combined with 25 falling into the 'you cheated' category and a combined total of 16 mistrust incidents falling into the 'just checking' category.

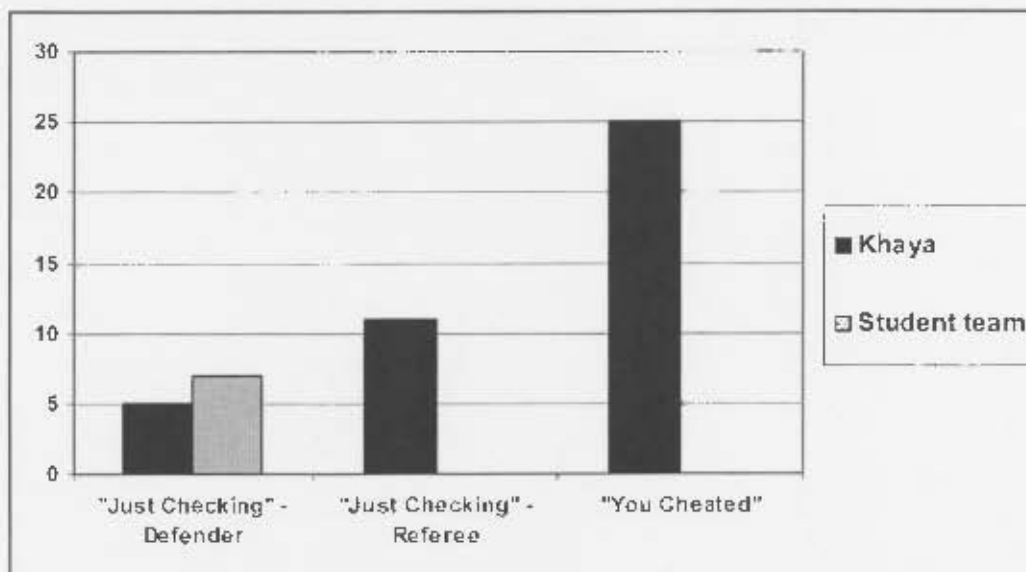


Fig 5: Categorisation of Mistrust incidents for both Student Team and Khaya

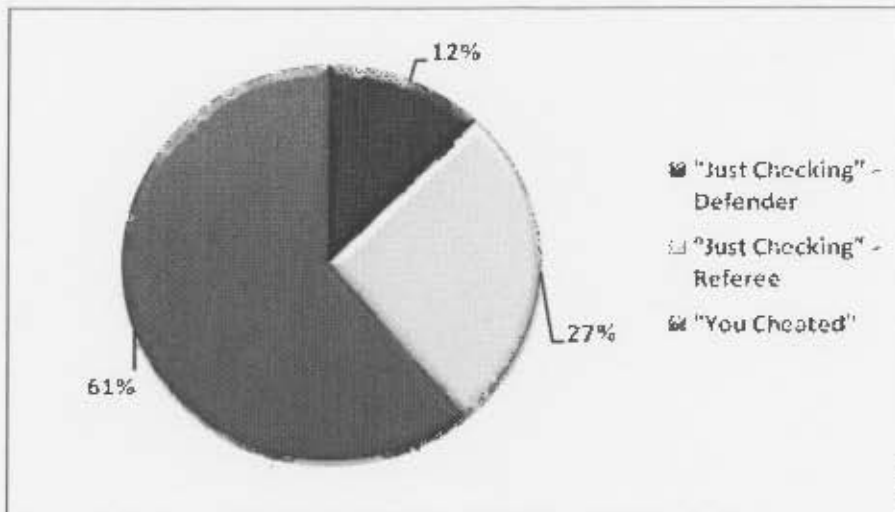


Fig 6: Percentage breakdown of Mistrust incidents for Khaya

When we look at the mistrust incidents against Khaya alone the difference between the three groupings becomes clearer. The Khaya team is not trusted as much as Student Team and this displayed most often through aggressive accusations of cheating.

As I have noted before I decided not to confront the team during the interviews regarding what I had observed. I wanted to see if they brought this issue up as something they saw as a problem for themselves. If during the interview it became clear that they did not talk about phantom touches or accusations of cheating being a problem then I would raise this issue for discussion. However I was careful not to do this in a manner which would expose something that is happening to them that they might not realise.

What I did was pose a question to them, the answering of which would force them to think about issues of trust in touch rugby and so through that I would hopefully gain a better understanding of what sort of problem this might be to them. The question centred on another sport, 'Ultimate Frisbee', in which there are no referees. Players sort differences out between themselves and trust plays a part in this too, in keeping with the spirit of the game. What I asked them was "Ultimate Frisbee is a growing sport in South Africa. No tackling is involved as this is a non-contact sport – any contact is a foul. With no referees in the game at all the two players in question have to come to an understanding and agreement before play is continued – Do you think not having referees would work in 6-Down Touch?" The responses from the team was overwhelmingly negative, there was little thought before answering, it was clear to them that this was completely impossible for touch rugby.

“Absolutely not!” – Siya.

“Hell there will be disaster. There will be a lot of fighting, they would fight over like forward pass or ghost touches.” - Noma-Afrika.

Noma-Afrika raised ghost or phantom touches as an area that is clearly a part of the game that requires referees in order to maintain peace between sides. No one else in the group raised this directly as an issue and so I not only asked them to explain why they thought referees were essential but also raised the issue of ghost touches and asked them for their thoughts on this matter. They answered that conflict would arise if there were no referees and that this could be violent conflict.

“We need those guys on the field because there are some fights while the ref is on the field. They fight, about like let’s say it’s a penalty, like overstepping, and the ref don’t see it, someone like can go to the ref and shout or hit.” – Siya.

“Cos I saw... many of the players that are playing touch rugby they are not fair they are unfair. So if there is no ref they would be even more unfair.” - Thabo.  
“Because some of the players are rough and rude and Yoh, and sometimes we don’t agree.” – Grace.

Jonas was the only one who, as he did before, raised the idea that race would be an issue of conflict made worse by not having a referee.

“The ref is the one who looks at the game you know from... If there was no ref I think it will be like the white people messing aside (inaudible) the black people, uh uh...” – Jonas.

“There would be conflict?” – Interviewer.

“Ya.” – Jonas.

Apart from four players, the rest of the team did not raise host or phantom touches as being a real issue or merely brushed it aside when I raised it as being just part of the game.

“Ahh... It’s part of the game.” – Thabo.

Those that did talk about it in any depth had varied views, some seeing them as a point of real conflict and others seeing it as an irritation that occurred, but no more.

“So about the ghost touch, does that happen often?” – Interviewer.

“Yes that can cause the fight, many times. Yes, it happens to us.” – Siya.

“And it is really irritating because you run and you know that you didn’t feel that touch but sometimes it’s not a ghost because like our shirts are big and sometimes you can’t feel it sometimes. That is when the skelm goes you didn’t touch me! And all of that.” - Noma-Afrika.

During my interview with Thandi the ordinariness of phantom touches was made very clear to me. After telling me a story about a physical fight caused by accusations of phantom touches, she went on to say that phantom touches weren’t a problem and that they happen all the time.

“Actually it (a fight) was about a touch made. The player said it was not actually a fight that was a bit racism or whatever. It was just a we were playing touch and then she claimed a touch but the other player suddenly hit “Moomi” in the face and then “Mandla” just hit the other player back and then we all... ya...” – Thandi.

“So it all started because????” – Interviewer.

“Because we claimed a touch. And he was so out of control, he didn’t want to hear what anyone had to say. – Thandi.

“Does that happen often? People getting angry when you claim a touch and they think it wasn’t?” – Interviewer.

“Ya, that is a regular thing here. It is something that we don’t even mind anymore. They doing it on a daily basis now.” – Thandi.

So while phantom touches have the potential to cause serious conflict and according to some of them phantom touches happen regularly there is a strong sense that phantom touches are a part of the experience of touch rugby and that this is not something that they see as being particularly challenging or in need of change. That of course doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist and doesn’t act against them.



## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION

In terms of the findings of the research the following conclusions can be made.

#### **Financial Challenges Threaten Khaya's Participation at Brookside**

Khaya face particular financial challenges that threaten their participation in this sport. They rely on sometimes unpredictable charity without which there is a realistic fear that they will not be able to play the sport they love. 6-down touch rugby is not offered where they live and so they have to travel long distances to get to Brookside. The structural results of South Africa's history means that formerly white areas have access to sporting facilities and activities whilst formerly black areas do not, making access difficult and sometimes impossible. Lack of full and easy access to participate in sport today for many black South Africans is therefore largely a legacy of apartheid laws where the state provided little more than a "crippling lack of equipment and shortage of facilities" (Archer 1987:235). None of this is their fault or of their choosing but in the South African context being born black means certain realities; one of which is a lack of access to decent sporting facilities such as those at Brookside. The challenges they face make them feel "dirty" or "sad" or "angry", words the team used in expressing how they felt about their situation. Surely participation in sport should not lead to these sorts of feelings? Sport as a business requires that fees are paid and In2Touch is a business. This means that the struggles faced by Khaya are in part a result of the sport being profit driven. "Capitalist sport takes positive human qualities like playfulness and recreation, but virtually extinguishes them" (Budd, 2001:16).

Even though they face these challenges they continue to play because it offers them the possibility of upward social mobility through potential association with white people and what that represents. A common narrative of class and sport regards how a player has 'escaped' poverty or 'risen above' his surroundings, how sport offers that escape for the poor. However it is only the very few, very lucky that actually achieve fame and fortune through sporting pursuits. This is due to the fact that although sport is said to be about equality; access to the sports field and the choices of sport are entrenched in class positions and the very nature of modern capitalist sporting competition backs up and legitimises existing class imbalances ensuring that proper access is restricted. This is clear to me not only because

some members clearly intimated that this was the reason but more subtly it was what this place offered them. What they escape to not only offers them structural opportunities they might be denied where they live but what they are escaping to is the possibility of some sort of class and/or race escape.

### **Possibilities of Class and/or Race Escape Influence Khaya's participation**

The space is white in their eyes and by playing there I feel they see a chance for them to benefit from that whiteness. From this they hold the hope of the benefits white South Africans take for granted; safety, employment and access to decent facilities.

This whiteness that they look to as some sort of route of escape unfortunately acts against their full participation once they make it to the fields. Having overcome to some extent financial challenges, when they arrive at the field they are faced with another set of challenges that have nothing to do with where they live but is I believe, due to the whiteness of Brookside and the blackness of Khaya.

### **The Whiteness of Brookside Acts against Khaya fully participating at Brookside**

Brookside is perceived as a white space by Khaya and my observations back this up. The whiteness of Brookside manifested in two recorded ways; both of which actively make ways in which Khaya negotiate Brookside difficult.

Firstly; there is the existence of informal racial segregation at Brookside. Khaya do not see anything particularly wrong with the segregation but what was expressed was some discomfort using other facilities at Brookside; and secondly Khaya as a team are not trusted by their white opponents.

The racially skewed demographic reality of the participants and teams at Brookside as well as the historical legacy of the grounds made the space a white space for the members of Khaya. This was a stark reality for Khaya and they expressed real fear of overt racism acting against them by just competing in a 'white' place like Brookside. This whiteness of Brookside was evident to Khaya even if it may not be evident immediately to others involved, as Garner (2007) wrote whiteness is at once so normalized as to be invisible, and simultaneously so marked by the exercise of power that it is extremely visible. Khaya saw the whiteness of Brookside and feared what this would mean for them. Whiteness, as has been shown, acts not

only to exclude blackness from white spaces but actively make ways in which black people negotiate white spaces difficult, even sports spaces like Brookside (Garner 2007 and Fusco 2005). The comments and conversations I was privy to while watching their games from other teams and players bear this out. Khaya's competitors also saw them as black. Not only do the other white teams mark them as black but that their blackness meant something, generally negative.

What the clarity of their own blackness and the whiteness of Brookside means is that successful contact becomes very difficult because of the historical unequal power relations between black and white in South Africa. It is crucial that in a contact situation different groups are treated and operate at an equal status. Contact with 'higher' status people tends to improve one's view of their group. However such contacts may also produce feelings of inferiority and diminished regard for one's own group, especially in the case of low status minority groups meeting higher status members of the dominant group (Amir, 1998).

Whiteness constructs blackness as inferior. It was not clear to me whether this was in actual fact a feeling amongst Khaya however because the conditions for contact are not met it would not necessarily be surprising to see little interaction between Khaya and other teams at Brookside.

Khaya's fear of overt racism acting against them only materialised in a few solitary cases and in the current South African context this is to be expected. As has been pointed out before racism is at its most devastating, not in excessive pathologised racially violent acts but in racism that can so easily become one of the "tragically 'ordinary' tendencies" of a country such as South Africa, where day to day actions are controlled by the structure of the society and our behaviour and prejudices are entrenched in the 'common sense' of the peoples within the society (in Balibar 1991:51). The overt racism experienced at Brookside can never be excused and is a sad reality for Khaya.

### **Informal Racial Segregation Excludes Khaya and to some extent keeps Brookside 'white'.**

Even though the contact hypothesis has been mooted as having the potential to reduce racial intolerance, there has to first be contact, situations where contact is not forced and people have the freedom of movement can show more about intentions and willingness for contact and possible learning to take place than when contact is forced (Dixon & Durrheim 2003).

Informal racial segregation off the field of play can therefore ensure that contact time is restricted. The playing of 6-down touch rugby forces players of different races into a contact situation but the game itself is a small part of the overall experience. It is clear from the data that informal racial segregation occurs at Brookside making contact brief. Khaya do not meet sit or socialise anywhere else but in what I consider to be a fairly remote part of the fields. It is away from the bar and stands where other teams and players freely mix and use.

I believe that the whiteness of Brookside has as a manifestation this segregation; it is not formal but none the less defines who is allowed where (Dixon & Durrheim 2003). The invisibility of whiteness and the informality of this ordering explain why race was not an instant reason for why there was segregation however what is patently clear is that they have made a particular space their own and they do not feel comfortable anywhere else. If the space they had chosen had even come close to the comforts of the bar or the social opportunities some of the other stands allowed I would find this conclusion difficult to make but their spot has none of these.

### **Khaya are Systematically not Trusted by their White Opponents and could be due to their Blackness**

The methodology chosen to look at whether or not Khaya are trusted was flawed in a number of ways. Firstly there was no way I could accurately check whether or not physical touches had taken place, secondly the fact that the Student Team had far less accusations of cheating levelled against them could well be due to the Student team being particularly trusted by opponents. However from the literature it is clear that individuals differ in their trust levels due to differing assumptions regarding the trustworthiness of others (Glaeser *et al*, 2000). These differences in trust are exacerbated based on attributes exactly such as race (Glaeser *et al*, 2000; Eckeland Wilson, 2003 and Burns, 2006). Although I was not watching out for it I never thought that Khaya were cheating; or calling Ghost touches as much as their opposing teams made out. It seemed to me that the touches called by Khaya were as close as other games I have observed and participated in. There was no talk within the team or in the interviews which made me think that they would be cheating in this way. What was however strongly evident was a desire by Khaya to be accepted and for the opportunity to play the sport they loved playing. It would seem to me absurd that a team who already felt like they were the outsiders to then worsen that situation by cheating. In addition to this was the fact

that little of the teams' conversation was focussed on winning games or that winning was fundamental to their enjoying the sport. If this was the case one could argue that they might resort to cheating as a way to improve their chances of victory. Winning was not the major reason for playing at Brookside and so I don't think that they would actively cheat to the extent that opposition players accused them of. Further to this was the style of accusations. The fact that so few of the accusations were directed at the Khaya player but rather at the referee indicates for me that there was largely the assumption that the Khaya team were not to be trusted instantly. Even more worrying was that the vast majority of the mistrust incidents were overly aggressive direct accusations of cheating where the Khaya players were not given the time to protest their innocence.

The findings of my study I feel therefore echo those made by Burns (2006) who concluded that there is a systematic pattern of distrust towards black people. The whiteness of Brookside and one of its manifestations, mistrust in the act of play toward Khaya has become so normalised to be hidden to the very people against whom it is acting. The overt and aggressive nature of it became tragically ordinary.

**The idea that Sport can promote Egalitarianism is seriously questioned through describing the challenges faced by Khaya.**

The notion that sport is a space where peoples differences can be overlooked or ignored or even worked through and changed have been questioned by this research through describing the challenges faced by Khaya.

Firstly the facts that access to both the fields and to the league is costly prevent many from participating. Only those who access money from whatever source can participate. As the evidence showed; Khaya struggled with this, without the charity they received there was little hope of continuing to play. How can sport be seen as a space where egalitarianism is promoted if it is only open to those that can afford to get to play? It is not.

Secondly arriving at the fields the team is encountering a space they felt was white and was made aware of their blackness. This then defeats one of the single most important conditions required for successful contact to occur, the need for equal status. The fact that Brookside is a sporting space clearly does not ensure that racial awareness such as that displayed by Khaya disappears. As I have said before given the legacy of racial discrimination in this country

Khaya's awareness of racial differences also acknowledges issues of power and therefore in the absence of any direct efforts to correct this at Brookside, theoretically the contact would be flawed.

Thirdly during time away from forced contact situations as in the act of playing the games where choice allows people to make contact or not, informal racial segregation occurs at Brookside. This means that opportunities for contact are limited and contact only occurs when it is forced upon the participants. As before, the promise of the sporting space is one in which opponents can learn and interact with each other. This is seriously in question if the one black team at Brookside feels uncomfortable anywhere else but in their one spot.

Lastly on the actual field of play where essentially everyone should be equal as the game itself is governed by rules outside the norms of greater society; again we see that this teams race affects how they are allowed to enjoy sport. They are not trusted in the same manner as the white team I researched. I concluded that this was because of their blackness. This then again questions the idea that sport promotes egalitarianism. The fact that they play sport cannot be denied, the notion that this is some sort of utopic answer to societal differences has to seriously be questioned.

What it is clear sport does do is offer "real opportunities for a lucky few alongside a theatre of dreams, spectacular distractions and a safe arena for the displaced expression of social antagonisms for the many, sport does have the effect of an opiate" (Budd 2001:15). Khaya all dream that sport and contact with white people at Brookside offers them the chance of escape. Escape from crime, social problems or escape to a possible career or job opportunities. It can do all these but only at the individual level.

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All observations took place at the fields at Brookside, days where specific matches played by Khaya were observed took place on the following dates:

26 September, 2007

03 October 2007

10 October 2007

17 October 2007

24 October 2007

31 October 2007

14 October 2007

28 October 2007

12 March 2008

17 March 2008

### Individual Interviews

Noma-Afrika (pseudonym), Brookside, Claremont, March 2008

Olwethu (pseudonym), Brookside, Claremont, March 2008

Thandi (pseudonym), Brookside, Claremont, March 2008

Grace (pseudonym), Brookside, Claremont, March 2008

Siya (pseudonym), Brookside, Claremont, March 2008

Mandla (pseudonym), Mandla's House, Khayelitsha, March 2008

Bongani (pseudonym), Mandla's House, Khayelitsha, March 2008

Thabo (pseudonym), Mandla's House, Khayelitsha, March 2008

Jonas (pseudonym), Mandla's House, Khayelitsha, March 2008

### **Group Interview**

Mandla , Grace, Thabo, Bongani (pseudonyms); Mandla's House, Khayelitsha, April 2008

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# Appendix I

Dear Team Organisers

My name is Philip Broster and I am doing my Masters Research project, through UCT, on '6-Down Touch Rugby' at Villagers.

I have permission from Kurt and Graeme from In2Touch to do this research.

I am asking for your agreement in two areas:

- Firstly, I need data regarding the demographics etc of those involved in this league. Will you please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire and email the responses to me.
- Secondly I want to observe games and take notes. No one besides me will have direct access to the notes I take.

All names will change when it comes to writing up the project. The finished document will be read by several people at the university and will be put in the library where it can be read too.

Please consult your team about these requests and let me know if I have your permission to continue.

If possible please consult your team before answering these questions

- What is your team name?
- During Apartheid would you have been classified, 'white/coloured/black'?
- How many players in your team?
- Of those participants during Apartheid how many would have been classified:  
'Black'?
- 'Coloured'?
- 'White'?

Thanks for your time

Philip Broster

# Appendix II

## Informed Consent

### *About my research*

The research that I am doing at in2touch is focussed on your team, Mallinicks. As you are probably aware, you are the only black team playing this sport in this league. You also don't live in the surrounding areas and have to travel far every time you want to play. I am interested in what difficulties you face as a black team playing a sport that is dominated by white teams. Furthermore what financial difficulties you face like paying for the chance to play, transport, equipment etc. I also want to know what difficulties you have overcome, what you ignore or what you feel you can never overcome but have to endure.

I am doing this in order to get my degree from the University of Cape Town. The finished document will be read by several people at the university and will be put in the library at UCT.

### *How this involves you*

In order for me to do all this I will need to watch you as a team when you're playing, as well as before and after the games. I will be watching how other teams treat you, how they relate to you and how they interact with you as well as how they treat each other, relate to each other and interact with each other.

Can I please:

- Interview you
- Record what you say

Each interview should not take longer than 45 minutes and will be done at Villagers Rugby Ground. All your names will change when it comes to writing up the project.

Consent Form:

I agree to the requests as outlined above.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix III

Notes taken from observations made during games.

### 03/10 Khaya vs. X

#### Incidents

1. K defender claims a touch X looks at ref, shouting, "C'mon, no touch!" Not just checking, assumption of cheating taking place. X continues shaking his head after game carries on.
2. K defender calls touch but is ignored by ref. Ref decides not trust claim of K defender.
3. K call touch, X player plays on as if touch was not made. Called back to where touch was made. Does what I can only describe as long glare at K defender. Carries on without further verbal challenges. Not sure if it was a 'Just Checking' incident or 'You're cheating', would have to count it as you're cheating. It was a belligerent acceptance; it was accepted only in so far as the ref forced it upon the game.
4. K claims touch, ref awards it. X player clearly doesn't think there was a touch decides to just check with the ref. "Did she?" he asked the ref, when the ref answered in the affirmative the X player nodded and said "Okay." in acceptance.
5. X team closing in on the K try line when a touch is claimed by K defender and awarded. This is reacted to angrily by the LF attacker who attempts to carry on the movement by shouting "No touch! No touch!" Eventually he returns to begrudgingly accept the call.
6. X defender claims a touch, which is awarded. K attacker remonstrates clearly asserting that the touch was illegitimate. The ref reacts by sending the K player off the field. Why was there this double standard? Was something said that I couldn't hear. I maybe should have explored this further but didn't.

Total mistrust incidents 4. 'Just Checking' – Ref: 1; Defender: 0; 'You Cheated': 3

### 03/09 Student Team vs. Y

This game had no mistrust issues but rather claims of rough play. "Excessive contact" is not allowed and punishable through the award of a penalty. I don't consider these to be incidents of mistrust.

Total mistrust incidents 0. 'Just Checking' – Ref: 0; Defender: 0; 'You Cheated': 0

# Appendix IV

## Individual interviews.

**Section A** allows for themes to be raised without prompting. From this it is possible to conclude what issues are important for the team instead of imposing what I observe onto them and allow me to map stated views of problems against observations of problems

1. What did you know about this game before you started playing it? What had you heard?
2. Why is it that you play this sport?
3. Where did you learn?
4. Tell me how you felt when you started playing it at Villages?

(Looking for levels of comfort, were they made to feel welcome, unwelcome, what might some of the challenges have been when they started. See what could correspond to observed issues/themes)

5. Do you feel any different now?

(Looking for continuities, changes.)

6. Can you tell me a story of a time you feel you were treated badly by other players, teams at touch?

(Again seeing what is raised and what is not raised. Themes raised through this question will be asked for expansion, "Were there any other times when things like this happened? Do other people in your team feel similarly? What have you heard?")

7. What other things, if any, make it difficult for you to play?

**Section B** is where I start focusing on the issues I have observed. This will be done either through linking what was raised in Section A or introducing them to things that I have been thinking about with regard their team.

1. Who pays the fees for your team?
2. How is this organised?

- a. (Look for how the money is interpreted. Is it charity? Is it sponsorship? If they specifically talk about this money being charity then go onto the next question)
3. There are some teams in this league who are sponsored by companies to play. They wear T-shirts with the company's logo on and the company says that they will pay the league fees for the team. Is this different to what happens to your team? Is it the same? Explain?
4. What would happen if the charity stopped?
5. Do you think that if teams cannot afford to pay the fees that the league should still allow them to play?
  - a. (If they see the money as being about sponsorship rather than charity then ask this next question)
6. What would happen if you could no longer find sponsorship?
7. Do you think that if teams cannot afford to pay the fees that the league should still allow them to play?
8. How does your team travel every week to and from Touch?
9. How is this paid for?
10. There have been times when you haven't arrived to play your match. When I asked Mandla about it he said that the taxi driver didn't pick you up. Does this happen often? How does it make you feel?
11. Do you think you travel far to get to the fields?
12. Do you feel comfortable in the bar?
13. I have noticed that you tend to always meet in the same spot. Why is it that you are always sitting there and not playing on the field or sitting next to the field like some other teams do?
14. "Ultimate Frisbee is a growing sport in South Africa, No tackling is involved as this is a non-contact sport – any contact may constitute a foul. With **no referees** in the game at all the two players in question have to come to an understanding and agreement before play is continued" – Do you think not having referees would work in 6-Down Touch? Reasons?

By taking incidents raised through the above questions, importantly if there is an area that they have talked about passionately, it is the task of the final section, **Section C** to talk about how they approached the problems.

1. When you raised issue X before, how did you react to it?
2. Which of the difficulties that you raised before would you most like to change?

3. How do you think you could go about changing them?
4. Why are the other ones not as important?