This thesis examines the perceived benefits of sport for ethnic minority young people in the context of social exclusion. The broad constructs of social exclusion, are examined whilst drawing together evidence of how individuals experience exclusion in contemporary Britain. Throughout reference is made specifically to a broad spectrum of ethnic minorities and the experiences they endure due to the distinctive combination of socio-economic factors and race. The claim that sport has the potential to address social exclusion through empowering individuals and creating community cohesion is examined. The link between education and exclusion is regarded as one of the key determinants with the potential to either positively or adversely affect the likelihood of ethnic minorities becoming excluded (Parekh, 2000). Therefore understanding the relationship between education and exclusion is key in examining the claim that sport can be used to address social exclusion in a group who are more likely to be excluded from both sport and education in the first place. In order to achieve the research aim a mixed method approach was utilised. By combining a flavour of grounded theory modelling, plus adopting a critical realist stance, provided an opportunity for the subject matter to be recorded and analysed in order to gain an understanding of social life and interaction. The research was carried out within the Arches School Sports Partnership in north Sheffield. By contextualising the programme, it was possible to investigate the young peoples responses and understandings of the sport within these parameters, identify and interview key stakeholders, sports deliverers and community practitioners. Additionally the views of the young people from a range of ethnic minorities were sought through a questionnaire and more detailed interviews. The results of the study illustrated the diverse range of views expressed by individuals. The ethnic minority young people revealed a greater degree of diversity in relation to hyphenated identities, which was closely linked to role or place of religion in their lives, particularly for the Muslims. All of the young people, regardless of their ethnicity, perceived exclusion as part of their lives in one form or another, which was expressed in diverse first-hand experiences, stemming from anti-social behaviour. Their perceptions of the use of sport to tackle wider social issues was the most negative response of all those interviewed. Whilst they believed there is a correlation between sport and social exclusion, and, along with other structured activities, could potentially positively affect their lives, in that if they had more to do in their spare time they would be less susceptible to being involved in anti-social behaviour and thereby being excluded from society. The adults demonstrated a range in levels of knowledge and understanding of exclusion and how it may affect young people. However, whilst the deliverers were very positive about sport’s potential use, citing a strong positive correlation between involvement in sport and improved behaviour management they believed multi-agency working and a variety of different agendas, were a potential conflict to successful outcomes from all young people. In comparison community practitioners were very knowledgeable about exclusion issues and generally positive of sport’s potential use, though were keen to promote a multi-agency approach in order to achieve success, and expressed scepticism about sport being used as a purely diversionary tactic. In addition to diversity within each group, there were also differences between the perceptions of understandings of young people and adults, demonstrating the degree of diversity in the research findings.
Editor's comments - [ The above is the abstract from an original PhD thesis; the final publication in the study for the author in pursuit of a doctorate; such works result in the author being awarded a PhD and the title of Dr. by an appropriately accedit University. PhD's are the culmination of a number of years work by the author supervised by two (normally PhD or MPhil qualified) academics and, with the addition of a further appropriately qualified academic (not normally from the same University) as part of a viva-voce examination team. Successful research work at PhD level is designed to add to the body of knowledge in the study area at some level.

A PhD thesis often forms the foundation for journal articles for the author and leads to further enquiry in the form of what is called post-doctoral research. These works are characterised by
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comprehensive literature reviews, sometimes traditional yet multiple (and often mixed) methods, interesting if not ground breaking discussions and always directional signs toward further research; they provide for undergraduates not only a model for the possibilities for further study but a gift in terms of references in any given subject areas. ]


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