A Brief Analysis of British Football Culture from the Perspective of British Football

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Abstract: **British football is not only a sport, but also shows some cultural phenomenon behind it. The present paper first discusses and affirms the relationship between British football and British social culture, and then analyzes the characteristics manifested in British football including the significant gentility culture in British football culture, nation state consciousness, island mentality, class consciousness, cultural weakness and the revolutionary spirit with the aim to show the readers with the peculiar British football culture in British football; At the same time, relevant enlightenment aroused by analysis is provided to seek better development of British football in the context of globalization.**

Keywords: **British football; Football culture; Social culture.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Britain (England) is the cradle of modern football. Football is the most popular sport in Europe represented by England. Football originates as a sport in which ancient warriors cut off the heads of their enemies and kicks them back and forth after victory in battle under the influence of the power culture of the ruling class. British football is not only a sport, but also shows some cultural phenomenon behind it.

The external characteristics shown by British football serving as clues and the breakthrough point, this paper first discusses and affirms the relationship between British football and British social culture. And then based on such external features shown by British football as the movement styles of British football, football and national consciousness, the relationship between British football and the island culture, football sports audience's social class distribution, football violence, and development property of British football, the author analyzes the characteristics manifested in British football including the significant gentility culture in British football culture, nation state consciousness, island mentality, class consciousness, cultural weakness and the revolutionary spirit with the aim to show the readers with the peculiar British football culture in British football; At the same time, relevant enlightenment aroused by analysis is provided to seek better development of British football in the context of globalization.

2. FOOTBALL, CULTURE AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIP

2.1 Deep Meaning of Football

What does football mean on earth? People have been studying it and talking about it all the time. Football is more than just a black and white ball. It has a lot of connotations. The essence of football is a kind of culture and spirit. Football is an embodiment of national cultural spirit and an external manifestation of national temperament (Li and Shen 59). The origin of today's British football with color of black and white, is a manifestation of Anglo-Saxon people's strong desire of expansionism and conquest.

2.2 Definition of Culture

Culture is a complex system that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, morals, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by human beings as members of society (Tan 37). Once a culture is formed, it has vitality and influence, and can be inherited and radiated around. People in this culture are often influenced by it without being aware of it. Culture is an atmosphere that subtly influences people and things in the cultural atmosphere. Culture is a kind of spirit and temperament, and people and things in the cultural field show this spirit and temperament.

2.3 Interrelationship Between Football and Culture

As David Beckham, England's ambassador for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bids, said in an interview with the media on December 3, 2009, "football is embedded in our culture, in our DNA. Football has been with us ever since we were born." From David Beckham's words, we can feel the close relationship between football and British culture. This modern game originates in Britain, grows up in Britain, and spread all over the world, becoming the world's largest sport. Sports culture is a kind of subculture, which is closely related to social culture (McPherson and Brooke 219). The origin and development of British football is rooted in the extensive British social background and permeates and reflects the characteristics of British football culture.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE TRAITS SHOWN BY BRITISH FOOTBALL

3.1 Gentility Culture

Anyone who has watched British football will have a cognition, that is, the British have shown a remarkable national character in football (Taylor 271). British football is typically full of aggressivity, whose expression consciousness is reflected not only in the individual players, but also in the whole team's typical attack play. Every player on the football field is a qualified "gentleman": they run actively, fight fiercely fierce, do Chong hanging, and compete with the opponents by frontal "confrontation", in the whole process of which is agile and quick. Therefore, the scene of the British football match is very tense, intense and wonderful. The British used the game to "beat anyone in the world" until 1953, when the Hungarians broke their record of being unbeaten on home field. Considering all off the above, the author thinks that gentility is one of the characteristics of British football. Gentility is the external manifestation of British national culture, which is formed by the integration of certain values of various strata of British society based on noble spirit in the process of keeping up with the upper class (Brown, Crabbe, and Mellor 160-61). The image of a gentleman is rooted in medieval chivalry. Aristocracy is the social class that British people dream of (Li and Yuan 174). In England, everyone hopes to be favored and appreciated by the aristocracy. Therefore, from British football, we can strongly feel British people have a strong sense of self-expression.

3.2 National identity

As for the cradle of modern football, the author thinks this is a question worth considering. Football originates in England and has an England-style, but actually it is not accurate to say the football has a British style. The England-style cannot be replaced by British style. People from wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland believe that if the England-style is equal to the British-style, it will erase their identity. The key features of Scotland's national identity are closely linked to football and, to some extent, form a structural dependence on England (Jiang 227). Playing against England on the football field is one way they define their Scottish identity, and the Scots continue to support every British opponent, even Germany, as a reflection of their identity building in football. The same is true in other fields; Wales, by the same token, identifies itself as a second-class sport. Thus, the author argues, the peoples that make up the British Isles have never really blended. Despite the political union, the British, Scottish, welsh and Irish have still stuck to their true national and cultural identities (Zhu and Wang 5).

3.3 Conservatism

England is the home of football. On the world football stage, British football has a glorious history and its dominant position is unshakeable. However, with the development of the world football game, the British football which emphasize the heavy attack and light defense is now at the end of the road, and the British football's status in the world football record is declining day by day. The style of British football became its weaknesses, and the distinctive tradition of the Chong hanging is gradually smashed by the opponents' clever tactics of short game (Cui and Tian 62). In the domestic

British Super League, many teams still play the traditional British method of the Chong hanging, which is so inefficient that it usually elicits only laughs and whistles from spectators in Italy and Spain. And the new trend in world football stages is hard to accept here in Britain. According to the above analysis, combined with the geographical location of Britain -- island countries, which are geographically isolated from the outside mainland, the author believes that in the British football culture, the island mentality of holdup and conservatism of refusing to accept new things are the "stumbling blocks" hindering the development of British football.

3.4 The Social Classes

Most of Britain's 92 professional football clubs nowadays are located in and around the new industrial cities of the industrial revolution, and almost every industrial powerhouse of the time has one or more famous clubs (Chen 580). With the decay of industrial enterprises, the end of the 20th century has produced a large number of a new generation of white-collar workers. As the offspring of the traditional working class, they inherit from their parents, the love of football. And the education they receive and their reception of new technologies make them more culturally close to the middle class, thus the new generation of white-collar is become the main force of British football fans. The football audience nowadays is a mix of manual workers, executives, cleaners and advertising executives, compared with the almost uniform working-class audience of the past (Ma 34). It can be seen that British society is one of the societies with the strongest class consciousness. From the football audience, the reader can clearly understand the class shape distribution of British society.

3.5 Hooliganism and Violence

When it comes to British football, the description of football hooligans is common. In addition, British fans are notorious not only for disrupting the domestic league, but also for the violence that has kept them out of Europe. Too rigorous and practical in work, too gentlemanly in life, this kind of lifestyle leads to too many normative constraints in British people's life and work. In particular, the constraints of people's moral ethics contradict with the energetic and active personality of the British people, resulting in the dual personality of the British people. On the other hand, the British people has a need to let off their excessive energy. Dual personality causes the British to have a depressed state of mind, letting people generally have a desire to vent (Moorhouse 258). Football, as a traditional British sport, has naturally become an important place for British people to vent their emotions. Especially when their self-esteem is severely bruised, their anger will result in a vengeful mentality, which will be externalized into violent conflicts. The British don't speak logic because they act, just as the British fan riot did. Therefore, it is not difficult to find out that the weakness of British culture is the main factor that causes the radicalization of fans.

3.6 Revolutionary Spirits

About British football, what also should not be ignored is the football reform carried out after the domestic football status gradually lagged behind in the later time. It is true that the British emphasize tradition, but they do not deny changes. With its football status suffering from being pushed aside and ensuingly being banned, its domestic football teams boldly reform the traditional soccer team, get rid of the doctrine of soccer, and absorb the essence of football in Italy, France, Spain and other countries. And while keeping the tradition of Chong hanging at the same time, they manage to play tactical football, contributes to a combination of British style and tactical football, to make the team can attack the good defense (Wang 28). Even in Britain, the diet of athletes is imitating others for the progress of football, which shows their revolutionary spirit.

4. TRAITS OF BRITISH FOOTBALL CULTURE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

4.1 Traits of British Football Culture

After analyzing the external characteristics of British football, the author tries to describe the basic characteristics of British football culture as follows: gentlemanly manner, unique national identity, conservatism, class nature, cultural weakness and property of reform and development. The British social classes' worship to the upper class etiquette makes the British football have the strong gentility demeanor brand; The loose political characteristics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland make British football a way of national identity (M. Bradley 252). The life style of the islanders makes British football with conservative tendency and hinders the development of British football to some

extent; Since the beginning of modern football in Britain in the middle of the 19th century, football has become a leisure activity of the British working class and a means of social control. However, with the change of the social class structure in Britain, Britain has gradually developed into a social form dominated by the middle class. Dual personality causes the British to have a depressed state of mind, generally having a desire to vent. To apply this desire to football is to reflect the weakness of British culture. People often look at the conservative side of the British people, but often ignore their revolutionary side. British people with their own "John bull" spirit, will be sure to make the reform of football in Britain finally be effective. The time "John bull" beat everything on the world football stage will surely come again, so the revolutionary spirit is the hope of British football.

4.2 Enlightenment

The basic characteristics of British football culture have provided some perspectives for the study of British football culture and brought some enlightenment for the development of British football. Against the background of the surging tide of globalization, with the development of British society, economy and culture, British football in the new era needs to keep pace with the Times. British football needs to continue to maintain the image of the gentleman who dares to fight and perform, and at the same time, British should frankly abandon the conceit and arrogant conceit, constantly show a positive and open mind, actively participate in international football exchanges, and seek to achieve a more important position in the international football world (McPherson and Brooke 218).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Football is a special cultural phenomenon in Britain, from which we can see many characteristics of British football culture. The style of British football reflects the core of the gentility culture -- fair competition and chivalry. The national consciousness and identity of the four nations in Britain are deeply immersed in football culture. Like other sports, the love of football reflects class differences in Britain, though more middle-class people are joining the working-class crowd. Through football, we can better understand British football culture; The understanding of British football culture will help us further understand British football, appreciate British football and seek the development of British football with the times.

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