1. **Intro – Slide 1**

This presentation explores a particular moment in the complex and multi-faceted relationship that exits between football and fashion. In 1996 the Liverpool team presented themselves wearing cream Armani suits as part of the media build up to that year’s FA Cup final. The representation of the team and the subsequent treatment received by those from within and outside the game make visible certain cultural and sociological ideologies. Such ideologies which concern ideas around class, masculinity, and (in this case) the male body, are powerful and have far reaching effects that remain relevant today.

Of particular use here is the work of Henri Lefebvre and his ideas around moments of ‘contestation’ (Lefebvre, 1969). Also of interest is the discussion of the role that the body and clothing play in marking out or positioning ideas around class, as Skeggs states; ‘representations have to work on the body for them to be read as authentically belonging’ (Skeggs, 2004:111). When working class men, of which footballers are convenient symbol, engage with consumption and grooming in such a visible way the subsequent reactions highlight not least, middle class insecurities around subjective value and distance from working class experience.

1. **Football’s relationship to fashion is complex and multifaceted – Players – Slide 2**

Just to explore very briefly this complex relationship that exists between fashion and football. I’m going to just touch upon a couple of examples, some quite recognisable, some perhaps not.

**George Best**, obviously. His life has been very well documented, moved from Ireland to Manchester as a teenager, a naturally gifted, maverick game changer. An early example of the mutability of cultural practices, he moved from sports star to mainstream celebrity and fashion entrepreneur. Although noted for a ‘mod look’ this had more in common with general youth trends of the 1960’s rather than his own aesthetic approach to fashion. Consistently documented and referenced as being ‘attractive’ or a good looking man. Used for various advertising campaigns during the years before his addiction to alcohol became too visible.

**Alan Hudson**, this is an image of him showing off some of his collection of kipper ties in the 1970’s. Hudson was from London and played for Chelsea in the late 60’s/early 70’s, at a time when the Kings Road held much sway as a centre for fashion. He, along with teammates Peter Osgood and Ian Hutchinson were known at the time for fast flowing exciting football and the same approach to fashion and self-styling. The interesting image here is the atmospheric shot which is by Terry Richardson – that Hudson was considered a suitable subject for Richardson is itself telling. Things haven’t ended well for Hudson for a number of reasons but interestingly he is quoted, when at his lowest point as saying the he ‘doesn’t even have a change of clothes’ (<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/alan-hudson-hits-rock-bottom-1981623>)

**David Beckam**, who I’m guessing we all know, another footballer who transcends sport to become a celebrity within mainstream media cultures. This is a later shot, post PS or post Posh Spice, we have an earlier one to look at in another slide that is pre PS.

**Aaron Ramsey** – current player, model and gay icon.

**Gordon Smith** – A Scottish legend, and documented (Hewitt) as the first metrosexual, due to his relationship with clothing and grooming. Smith was most prolific in the 40’s and 50’s and is part of the ‘Famous 5’, the most celebrated forward line in Hibs history. A BBC documentary claims he appeared as an extra in ‘To Catch a Thief’ with Cary Grant. Lover of fast cars, holidays in the south of France and Fashion.

**Jim Baxter** – another Scot who played in both Scotland and England in the 1960’s. Known as ‘Slim Jim’ until drink again wreaked havoc. Baxter attracted attention by his stylish play, controlling the game with calm creativity and refusing to conform to styles of play prevalent in both the English and Scottish leagues at the time. His relationship to fashion and clothing adopted a similar approach. A sometime Mod icon.

**Booby Moore –** England legend, and other name that people might be familiar with. Moore represents the more fastidious side of modernist culture, a formal approach with tailor made suits and separates, handmade shirts and cashmere knitwear. Lots written anecdotally regarding Moore’s approach to fashion and dress. For example, that his mum ironed his shoelaces for him or that his was the only player to exit the bath already dry.

**Jimmy Hill** – now this you might think is an odd addition. Hill is here because he was instrumental in lobbying for the abolition of the maximum wage for footballers in 1962. This marked the point where footballers might now compare/compete with entertainers with regards to their consumption practices. Those practices subsequently became much more visible. The engagement with fashion had been present, as evidenced by men like Gordon Smith, but the means to consume had perhaps not.

1. **Managers – Slide 3**

I’m not going to go into as much detail with the following two slides due to time constraints but here we have a selection of images of football managers from the 1970’s through to present day. The interesting thing to note here is that managers themselves are not excluded from being used to sell products and clothing, Mourinho here is advertising for Braun for example – such is the pervasive nature of contemporary celebrity culture.

They also present a site where the discussion of national or international stereotypical formations of masculinity, male dress and the fashioned body are played out. Compare Pep and Big Sam for example.

You also see struggles over class formations played out on the bodies and dress of these men. Big Ron and his consumption practices or Big Sam and his choice of shirt collars are examples of this.

1. **Fans – Side 4**

Again, time constraints mean we can only briefly mention terrace fashion here**.** What I find interesting is that those who engage with football whether players, managers or fans, are often viewed and analysed as sealed unit – football fans and their fashion. Discussions around masculinity, male fashion or styling, consumption and the male body are equally relevant within the football context as without. In reality these discussions bleed from one subject into another. Identity formation cannot be compartmentalised in this way, we all agree it is a much more fluid process. So why are most commentators still surprised when the connections across and between football and fashion are made explicit? Why are examples of that connection seen as exceptions rather than the rule? I think the development of the ‘Spice Boy’s and how they were/are represented helps to answer this question.

1. **1996 – Context and subsequent representation – Slide 5**

So, 1996 was an interesting year in the UK. Culturally, we were at the height of a resurgent global interest in British popular culture. ‘Britpop’, often has often been viewed as a marketing tool, was a movement that emphasised Britishness and found expression across music, art, fashion and film. A celebration of ‘Cool Britannia’ and an evocation of the 1960’s as a decade of cultural importance for the UK, Britpop dominated the early to mid-90’s. The introduction of the Spice girls in 96 is often seen as the beginning of the end for Britpop as they heralded a new wave of more manufactured, less authentic commercialised pop music and cultural products. This shift was also expressed politically in the introduction of ‘New Labour’ and Tony Blair’s development of Gidden’s ‘Third Way’.

So, football - to briefly to explain to those who may not know, apologies to those who do. The FA Cup is an annual football competition in England with a long history. The final is scheduled for the end of the domestic season and had developed over time into a widely shared cultural event. Media coverage is extensive in the run up and for the game itself. The platform for this coverage was across dominate and mainstream media sites, although this has been modified somewhat over the past decade.

Liverpool and Manchester are both cities with strong footballing heritage and the teams that made it through to the final in 1996, Liverpool and Manchester Utd have a particularly well documented rivalry. They may be just 30 miles between them but culturally the cities exist much further apart – local and regional identity plays into cultural formations here in very specific ways. At this point the team from Manchester had bragging rights with the team from Liverpool enduring a barren spell in terms of club success.

Traditionally as part of the pre match build up, the players, managers and staff of both teams would ‘walk out’ onto the pitch and present themselves before the game. Liverpool’s goalkeeper at this time was David James who also modelled for Armani. According to one version of events, James instigated the proposal that Armani dress the team that year. The team walked out wearing cream linen suits with pale blue shirts, red/white stripe ties and blue floral button holes. The shoes were not uniform. The Manchester Utd team wore dark suits with high necked waistcoats and red button holes.

The development of the premier league had seen player’s wages and exposure rise in this period and the Liverpool team seemed to encapsulate problem areas of the game identified as a result of this. David James was not the only photogenic member of the squad, other team-mates had been signed up to endorse various products. The choice of suit appeared to be attention grabbing, highlighting the lavish lifestyles of players who weren’t actually producing the results on the pitch that their fans expected or required – style over content.

The commentary then and now is illuminating, descriptions of vulgarity, laziness, a lack of discipline (over bodies), betraying the class heritage of the game, dishonest (McManamen picking up 2mill for nothing), excess behaviours – shagging, drinking, consumption. The judgement made is very familiar when examining class relations in the UK. Interesting, the vocabulary and criticism are the same. I wonder if those criticisms have more to do with middle class anxieties around distance and difference that with a supposed pathology of weakness seemingly exemplified here.

1. **Class – Slide 6**

Contemporary class analysis identifies a level of uncertainty, ambiguity and ambivalence that exists within formations of a classed self. The historic categorisations of upper, middle, lower class are no longer fit for purpose and analysists such as Mike Savage have identified a new picture of class within contemporary Britain. This new vision expresses clearly defined groupings at the very top and very bottom of the social scale and a very murky middle section that cannot easily be classified. This is a result of the overlapping and inter-connected interplay of economic, cultural and social capital that each of us embody. Due to this uncertainty, class boundaries are now seen to be permeable and are therefore less clearly defined, more fuzzy or frothy.

When boundaries are challenged in this way, anxiety is produced in those who seek to maintain distance. Reading of surface makes visible classed based investment of reader

Boundaries are fuzzy – judgement on knowledge and expertise

Fashion common area for drawing boundaries

Rise of new series of cultural activities (barristers row – arsenal)

Still social faux pas of not knowing yur place

Disgust

New snobbery based on judgement

Taste a way of judging worth

– identity potent and symbolic force

1. **Masculinity**

Appropriation by mc of wc masc

Mc – neew forms of body culture

Cosmopolitanism

The right kind of consumption

cuckold

Unhinged, clamity, crocked, out of his depth, cuckold, simple, unattractive

1. **Male bodies**

Wc bodies read as repositories of negative value

Symbolic value of bodies

Placing of certain bodies

Judgements of bodily practice

Excessive attention to appearance = low moral value – labour of the self made visible

Over furtile, vulgar, tasteless, out of control

Cultural into economic capital – traditional distinctions based on classed bodies

1. **Contestation**

Lefebvre discusses the idea of an uneven development across social experiences precipitated by the existing class structures and capitalist hierarchies. Such uneven development creates ‘differences’ manifested within the formation of identities. These differences in turn create what he terms – lags, distortions, or disassociations.

Such ‘lags’ or ‘gaps’ between groups and individuals create specific environments. Within these conceptual spaces, moments of contestation occur where resistance to the superstructures that govern and control everyday existence take place. Such lags or gaps and the resulting differences or contestations they produce are often unacknowledged or misrepresented. As a result the reality of everyday life contrasts with that officially sanctioned or proposed as culture and/or knowledge.

A reductive understanding of this different and uniquely specific environment that creates uniquely specific identities serves to simplify but also to fix in place. For Lefebvre, a ‘Void’ is created as a result of the ‘lags’ he discusses. When lags that are latent become visible within these voids, contestation takes place as a reaction. The void is created by ideological and political power and is filled with contestations.Contestation is born from negation – it has a negative origin – it begins with a lack. This idea of a lack can be applied in many ways here – a lack of class ‘taste’ for example**.**

As a result of the lags discussed representations begin to articulate internal colonization’s. The ordinary is colonised and reduced to the sum of its parts. This colonisation and the conflicts inherent within or the contestations which happen as a result, are veiled by ideological mediations such as the media and entertainment. Within this colonial void the reality of everyday life contrasts with that officially sanctioned or proposed as culture and/or knowledge.

Resistance often occurs through the ‘language’ of dress or dress as a form of ‘speech’. Lefebvre writes that syntax, grammar and vocab are political acts, therefore the syntax, grammar and vocab of the language of clothing is also political. ‘Free speech’ is thought to be a primary freedom – the ‘free speech’ of dress the **‘explosion of unfettered speech’ (Page)** has been re-appropriated via modes of representation. ‘**Dialectical logic invests relations between form and content with concepts and language. Empty logic becomes the centre of demarcated forms that constitute a structure with a specific content’ (page).** The relationship between form and content has been nullified. Essentially, the diversity that exists within the ordinary is absent from representations of the ordinary. Such diversity which can be and more often than not is, incredible subtle, is created within the void of social existence and articulates an individuals contestation or resistance to that void and the lags that are inherent within in.

Difference = inequality

What is available for appropriation and by who?

Marking boundaries and ‘fixing’

Liking something without entitlement = ridicule

Lack of fit between capital – economic v cultural produces gaps

Mass produced (object as well as people) distained