RELIGIOUS APPROPRIATION IN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL: INCORPORATION OF JEWISH IDENTITY AND DISCOURSE BY AJAX AMSTERDAM AND TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

by

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George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
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Religious Appropriation in European Football: Incorporation of Jewish Identity and Discourse by Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at George Mason University, and the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Malta

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Fall Semester 2015
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
University of Malta
Valletta, Malta
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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my grandparents who sat in in Loge, Section 32, row 7, seats 18 and 19 for more than 20 years at the Murph. Look what you got me into…
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the years, many people have kept their faith in me either by mistake or by a level of knowledge that I have not yet achieved. I appreciate every single one of you. None of my past successes have been, nor will my future accomplishments be, possible without those that have stood by me. Special acknowledgement is necessary for the first teacher that ever challenged me to never settle and to be better. Without one year in Joyce Abrams’ fourth grade class, I would never have been the athlete or become the scholar that I am today. Thank you Mrs. Abrams. I would like to thank Dr. Patricia Maulden for her patience and genuine investment in my project as well as Dr. Stephen Calleya and the wonderful staff at MEDAC. While in Malta, if not for the daily support from Thanos Gatsias, our entire cohort may have been doomed. Everything worked as well as it could have due to the tireless work of this man. Finally, my deepest thanks go my mother, father, and sister for their love and for allowing me to use their space in order to complete this project on time.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Amsterdamsche Football Club Ajax .................................................. AFC Ajax
European Union .................................................................................. EU
Football Association ........................................................................ FA
Fédération Internationale de Football Association ............................... FIFA
Professional Footballers’ Association .................................................. PFA
Union of European Football Association .......................................... UEFA
United Kingdom ............................................................................... UK
United Nations ................................................................................. UN
ABSTRACT

RELIGIOUS APPROPRIATION IN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL: INCORPORATION OF JEWISH IDENTITY AND DISCOURSE BY AJAX AMSTERDAM AND TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

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George Mason University, 2015
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The thesis explores the discourse created by the supporters of two of Europe’s more popular football clubs in order to determine how and why they have socially constructed identities that involve Jewish songs, images and symbols. Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur of London, England are considered “Jewish” clubs based on their self-identification as “Super Jews” and “Yids” respectively. These identities are sometimes misinterpreted by outside groups which have led to anti-Semitic abuse over the years. By analyzing what the parties are saying about themselves, discourse analysis allowed for this research to understand the context and history that led to the creation of these identities and how they have been misinterpreted by opposing football supporters and other members of society. A comparison of how each club uses songs, symbols, and publications to maintain and create their discourse is followed by a synthesis of similarities and differences. Reviewing theories of appropriation and agency, this
research concludes that the two supporters groups have legitimately constructed new forms of Jewishness that borrow songs and symbols from previous types of Jewishness by injecting new meaning into them. The world of sports offers unique challenges and specific opportunities for social scientific research. Understanding how identities are created, maintained, and interpreted by multiple parties inside a football grounds could provide useful insight into how identity-based abuse occurs all over the world.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Football is known as the beautiful game; beautiful not only in the aesthetic sense but also in a philosophic way that can sometimes temporarily stand in for our own lives. At times, the run of play in a match can seem unorganized and chaotic. The ball bounces seemingly wherever it pleases between the influences of the wind, pitch conditions, individual decision making, and team chemistry. All too often, these same feelings of disorder and disarray appear in our daily lives. But when a player passes the ball without looking, or when a piece of skill is so sublime that it takes the breath from the entire crowd, chaos and disorder are defeated and the intentions of every action are made clear. In what seems like such a simple game, tactics, preparation, skill, luck, equipment, weather conditions, the influence of the crowd, and history all play a part in what can make this game, and life, so incredibly beautiful.

Our own lives can often be caught in cycles similar to those of a football match. Of course, the intentions of both sides are to score goals and win the match. In our own lives, whether we are trying to get a new job, finish school, or raise our children, we know the objective but sometimes lack the precise knowledge of how we are going to make it happen. In football, when an attacker is met with an obstacle in his or her path, there is no shame in passing the ball backwards in order to regroup and start again. Sometimes the other side might even score first and put our chances of success in
jeopardy. But we remember our objective and we count on our teammates, co-workers, classmates, family etcetera, to be there for us when we need them. Life just like football can be as simple or complex as one understands it to be.

World football is known to have an ugly side as well. It is not uncommon for the supporters of a sports franchise to be harassed by the supporters of another club. This can occur in the form of songs, derogatory statements, or visual stimuli. More often than not, this harassment does not come from a place of genuine hatred for the opposing supporters or the city their club is based in, but rather the fact that they are wearing a different uniform.\footnote{John Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” in \textit{Emancipation through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe}, ed. Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 237.} Racism, hooliganism, and anti-Semitism have all rocked the foundations of the sport in the 20th century. But unlike any other part of life, football not only promotes but schedules regular confrontations between rival groups of identity, culture, and political issues at a confined, physical location. This research will focus on two case studies involving the supporters of two of Europe’s more popular football clubs, Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur, in order to discover how anti-Semitism has helped to create what might be a new form of “Jewishness” for the supporters of these two clubs and how this has created a dialogue over original ownership of symbols and songs.

In order to explore how this identity may be problematic, I need to situate the phenomenon within a broader context of conflict-based identity politics in sports. In this case, the data for this study comes from the discourse from the supporters of Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur. These fans have had to deal with harassment, and sometimes physical abuse, based on their performed Jewishness and representation as
‘Jewish’ clubs by opposition supporters. This paper intends to address the appropriation of Jewish symbols, songs, and actions toward creating what appears to be a Jewish identity by these two fan bases as well as bringing into the analysis, examples of other clubs in European football where clubs are seen to represent ideas such as politics, religion, or social movements.

That said this study will be framed by exploring the historical definitions of identity, appropriation, what it means to be Jewish, and just how identities can be socially constructed. After developing a context in which Jewishness represented in football can be examined, the decisions to appropriate symbols, images, and songs will be examined. The supporters of both clubs invoked a new type of identity. Given past experiences associated with pieces of this identity, it is considered controversial and the way it is used by the fans may be problematic in a number of ways.

In order to properly analyze this phenomenon, this research will identify what this identity really is, how it came to be, and how it has proved to be problematic in the past as well as moving forward. In order to explore how this identity has developed over time, we need to take a look at both the fans’ discourse and how this discourse has been received by other actors. Data for this will come from three categories of fan discourse; songs and chants, images, publications. It is also important to note that these discourses do not only reflect the identity of Ajax and Spurs but also create a discourse from opposing supporters who interpret Ajax and Spurs’ Jewishness differently. Speech acts by out-groups, such as media reports, articles published by supporters of rival clubs, can indicate how the development of socially created identities integrates into the greater
function of society as a whole. The nature of how these discourses exist together is important in understanding and handling identity-based conflict in all areas of life, not only in sports. In the final analysis of Ajax and Tottenham’s Jewishness through discursive evidence, a section comparing how two similar but unique cases of Jewishness will be presented. This section will help to identify how the incorporation of this identity by the fans of two very popular European football clubs has given birth to different, contested notions of ‘Jewishness’ and how a new form of Jewishness has been created, not only in sports or in football, but in Amsterdam and in London respectively.

Ajax and Spurs were the recipients of anti-Semitic abuse after World War II for a number of reasons. In response to this abuse, the supporters of the two clubs at the center of this research decided that the best way to deflect the hurtful, anti-Semitic abuse was to construct a new type of Jewishness. This socially constructed identity was adopted by the supporters many decades ago and is still evident today. The appropriation of previously held symbols of Judaism and Israeli culture are considered by some to label Ajax and Spurs as “Jewish clubs.” This research outlines ways in which the Jewishness discourse represented at the Amsterdam Arena and at White Hart Lane reflect clubs that are sympathetic to Jews more so than Jewish in the sense of ownership, operation, or location. As these clubs are not representative of Jewish religious faith or the state of Israel, their Jewishness calls for another type of definition, one in which was socially created in a similar fashion to that of religiously Jewish symbols and that the whole of the state of Israel have. This is not to say that these fans have redefined what it means to be Jewish in terms of religion or politics. This type of appropriated identity is performed in a
way that celebrates the defiance against those who seek to abuse Ajax and Tottenham supporters on a level that extends far beyond the norms of what should be allowed in sports.

**Significance of the Study**

The aim of this work is to challenge conventional wisdom, encourage deeper understanding, and to avoid judging books by their covers. The significance of a deeper understanding of parties and issues means that rash decisions are substituted for intelligent, well-developed actions based on historically balanced and contextual sound information. This project is set within the context of sport which is an important and often overlooked area of society in terms of its capacity for community building and conflict resolution.

The case studies in this research focus on two large groups who have constructed unique identities that aim to celebrate their past while passing down part of themselves to future generations. These identities are full of appropriated symbols and speech which are not intended to be used as fuel for hate and abuse. As the two clubs have been the victim of abuse around the substance of these identities, the supporters of these clubs argue that their constructed identities serve to protect them from abuse. Research involving social identities and appropriation of symbols and songs in the sports world has two major benefits for conflict resolvers: there is a relatively low risk of direct violence between parties and confrontations between parties occur regularly with sufficient time to plan.

So why is it that sport is often seen as a trivial aspect of life by academics? “The elitist view, that sport is of the body and not the mind, and therefore not intellectual or
refined enough to merit such attention, still holds in some quarters… Perhaps they forget how pervasive sport has become in Western Societies – sports coverage in North American newspapers surpasses that of the economy, politics or any other single topic – or that sport occupies a major portion of our television programming, or that many Americans are now more devoted to their sports than their religion.”

Whether or not sport should be considered as the “moral equivalent of war”, is a topic for another paper, but this research takes the stance that sport plays an ever increasing role in politics, economics, television programming, and human development. Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, wondered “if only world politics could be as well organized as the World Cup Games.” It may come as a shock to some but considering how football (soccer, calcio) is the most popular sport in the world, there are more national members of FIFA at 207 than the 191 members of the UN. Soccer is simply the tip of the global sporting iceberg. The Olympics are now the biggest peacetime event in modern history.

Football in The Netherlands and England has a long, distinguished history at the top of the sport. Die-hard fans sometimes liken their support for their team to that of divine status. This is no surprise when one considers the parallels. Both Ajax and Tottenham have supporters all over the world. Their support meets regularly, wearing the colors or symbols of their faith, to observe something that aims to bring people together across national, ethnic or racial lines. The Olympics are too a global glorification of the

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3 Suter, “Sport in Society.”
4 Suter, “Sport in Society.”
diversity and energy of humankind. Finally, sports has made tremendous strides recently in becoming a vehicle for bringing people together rather than dividing them with a determined effort to end racism. Sport is now seen as a way of uniting people rather than dividing them.

To resolve conflict means that there was an accurate understanding of what the positions and interests of the parties involved were as well as a fair and balanced agreed resolution. To get to this outcome, any means that helps to produce change toward peace should be utilized. This project aims to use the cases of Ajax and Tottenham to better understand identity construction; the process of cultural appropriation; how meaning is constructed, deconstructed, reconstructed, and contested over time; as well as the role of supporters’ agency in creating a new form of Jewishness.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

One could be forgiven for assuming that all that has been written in the past about forms of Jewishness materialized from the Holocaust and the events of the 1930’s and 1940’s in Europe. This study does not diminish the role that the Holocaust plays in the formation of a strong Jewish identity in one form or another but seeks to explain another aspect of Jewishness. Amsterdam and London were irrevocably changed by the events of WWII and it has been well documented in movies, books, plays, and all other types of media. Something that is missing from the academic literature, however, is the role that football played prior to, during, and after the war. This research is designed to show that there is a connection between two constructed identities in the footballing world to the themes of Jewishness outside of the footballing world.

In order to properly analyze the topic of Jewishness and how it has been manifested by Ajax and Spurs, certain terms or ideas, as they appear in academic literature, need to be reviewed. This literature is further broken into four sections. These sections will outline the ideas of social constructivism, appropriation, identity, and agency, as well as defining what it means to be Jewish. Among these terms, appropriation deals with the nature of making something one’s own. It is in this transfer of ownership of an object that can create conflict. The social constructivism section deals with the perceptions that individuals or groups have of the world and how those individuals or
groups creating meaning for those perceptions. The penultimate section breaks down the concepts of identity and agency as they apply to how free individuals are in creating a defined place for themselves in the world. It is important to understand how certain identities can be formed around ideas of inclusion as well as in order to exclude. The final section carries historically held definitions of what it means to be Jewish. One of the arguments of this research is that not only are the definitions of Jewishness are being reconsidered in the contemporary, but have also changed over many centuries.

**Social Constructivism**

As humans, we create meaning from what we observe and interact with. What we “know” influences our decisions and behaviors. But what do we know and how do we know if what we see is true? In the jargon of the social sciences, this is referred to as the theory of epistemology. At the heart of this paper are two cases of football fans who have created meaning in a very unique manner by taking symbols and objects that do not traditionally belong together and combining them together in a way that few people yet understand. These fans are constructing truth for themselves as a group. According to Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, knowledge is the property of a group and without the collective belief that knowledge ceases to exist at all.\(^5\)

American sociologist, William Isaac Thomas, pioneered what has become known as the *Thomas Theorem* that helps us understand how everyday aspects of our society are socially constructed. “If men define situations as real, they are real in their

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This theory has profound relevance for the cases of Ajax and Tottenham supporters. This theorem, however, does not go as far as to excuse the behavior, rather it only helps to understand how events are likely to have occurred. For example, if you believe that it is going to rain this afternoon, you must deal with the consequences of covering furniture in the backyard or wearing rain appropriate clothing. Whether or not it will rain remains to be seen. Supporters of Ajax know that the identity that they have socially created and jointly believe to be true carries with it an inherent risk of being abused anti-Semitically.

In this context, it is most important to recognize the social aspect of knowledge legitimacy. Knowledge is thus not what individuals believe, it is what groups believe. This is meant to acknowledge that although individuals are capable of knowledge production, that knowledge is ultimately given meaning by their social context. Beginning at birth, humans are cultured into society through the knowledge bestowed upon them by their primary caregivers. As that child grows, they begin to associate with an ever-expanding pool of overlapping social groups, all of which hold a different worldview than the last. Eventually, a person’s experiences and education allow for membership into professional groups that will guide their career decisions and worldviews. In other words, the behavior depends not on the objective reality of a situation but on our subjective interpretation of reality.

For this paper, it is important that we interpret the world through a post-positivist lens. Whereas positivists believe that in order to have knowledge of something, it needs

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to be observable and measurable (anything beyond that is impossible), post-positivists hold to the position that those observations are inherently biased by the observer through the biases and by their unique cultural upbringing, worldview, experiences, etc.\footnote{“Positivism & Post-Positivism,” Research Methods Knowledge Base, accessed July 20, 2015, http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/positvsm.php.} Post-positivists reject the idea that any individual can see the world perfectly as it really is.\footnote{“Positivism & Post-Positivism.”} Social constructivism therefore, is a theory that helps to explain how phenomena exists only because members of society agree that it exists; because we agree to behave as though it does exist while nothing outside social behavior suggest that certain things are real. Some dismiss things that are socially created as not true or real while Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann argue that just because something is socially constructed, that does not mean that it is less real or less important to how people live their daily lives. Let me unpack this further.

For something to be socially constructed, all it takes is for people to believe that something is real. Take food and the idea of ‘disgusting’ for example. To those who grew up in the United States, eating snails is considered disgusting. Snails are animals and not meant to be eaten. However in France, snails are considered food, a delicacy at that. Americans are just as sure that snails are not food and French people are sure that escargot is food. Although it is possible for the human body to digest and extract nutrition from snails, many Americans would construct the reality that snails are not food, much the same as cows are not seen as food in India but are a very common menu item in the States. This example shows that if we apply social constructivism to issues of inequality...
and injustice that are based on constructed ideas of reality, we should also be able to identify how to resolve those issues by redefining our knowledge.

To some, socially constructed things carry with them a sense of illegitimacy, a sense that those things are false or untrue as if it were fiction and should be ignored. But sociologists like Berger and Luckmann find that socially constructed items can be as powerful, if not more powerful, than scientifically defined realities; such as inorganic materials like metals and plastics, can never be considered food since our bodies cannot physically digest and process them as food. Humans create these realities for a number a reasons, one being that we seek order and structure in our lives. Abraham Maslow hypothesized that humans act the way that they do in order to fulfill certain basic human needs, the security of what is known being one of those needs. “Other broader aspects of the attempt to seek safety and stability in the world are seen in the very common preference for familiar rather than unfamiliar things, or for the known rather than the unknown. The tendency to have some religion or world-philosophy that organizes the universe and the men in it into some sort of satisfactorily coherent, meaningful whole is also in part motivated by safety-seeking.”

A good example of this is the difference between sex and gender. Whereas the former is determined by scientific knowledge, the latter is constructed by humans and creates much more of a difference between who is a boy and who a girl is than sex does. Many of the things that make someone either a boy or a girl are socially created. For instance, makeup is something that is often associated with girls. So much so that girls often feel more themselves and confident while wearing makeup. Men, on the other hand,
are not encouraged to wear makeup and even the slightest use of it could lead to social sanctions from others. Yet there is no scientific reason why girls should have to wear makeup and boys should not. Scientifically, men on average have larger muscles than women and have more upper body strength. Socially, it is desirable to exaggerate these characteristics by encouraging men to lift weights while encouraging women to do more cardio work which maintains a smaller, leaner body. Sexually, two men cannot conceive a child together although that does not preclude them from raising a child together.

According to Berger and Luckmann, we experience society as objective reality but transmit it subjectively. Sometimes, we experience scientific push back when our observed reality contrasts with scientific reality, like when drinking spoiled milk. Social sanctions occur more often when social boundaries are breached. Dressing in a manner that conflicts sex and gender or enjoying a particular musical artist that does not fit the social norm. We have to understand social reality to feel that this is the way it is. This means that moving between cultures who share different constructions of reality can be difficult. For a religious Jew, they may never get over the fact that the Star of David is known as the Star of Ajax while being a symbol of loyalty to a football club, no matter how long he has lived in Amsterdam. For those Ajax supporters living in Amsterdam, this is simply a known reality.

Social construction can be applied to all manner of human phenomena. Social construction means that it is society, not biology, or some other non-social factor that groups and that creates and maintains that stuff we study. Constructions persist because every day, people believe in and reinforce it. By identifying the part of society that are
not working and examining them through the lens of social constructivism, we should be able to determine whether or not we need to change our thinking about what is real in society or accept that this is the way it is going to be. When there is nothing outside of social behavior that explains why something is real, identifying society as the problem also means identifying it as the solution.

**Appropriation**

It was John Locke who originated the theory of appropriation in his writings about natural law. Locke determined that natural objects could be in fact owned by a man by inserting some of himself into that object. “…yet every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may fay, are properly his.”\(^9\) Meaning, if a man’s ‘self’ belongs to him because his self is part of him, making an object his own means making it part of himself. This law of nature primarily applies to what could be owned or acquired from property considered communal.

In the fifth chapter of the *Second Treatise of Government*, Locke considers the examples of picking up acorns, hunting deer, and taking water from a communal fountain.\(^10\) Therefore man needed no consent from others in order to appropriate things. Speaking of acorns, the man who picks them up has “certainly appropriated them to

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himself” a furthering this argument by emphatically stating that “no body can deny that the nourishment is his.”

Appropriation of the natural world gives us a starting point on which to build on. True as this theory may be for objects in the natural world, it hardly helps us when we judge the ability and impact of unnatural, infinitely renewable objects such as symbols and speech. This is something that would have been of little concern to Locke when writing the Treatises of Government in the seventeenth century. Locke would have likely argued that the fans of Ajax and Tottenham have clearly appropriated Jewish symbols and speech by inserting parts of themselves into these objects. However, he would need to further his definition of appropriation to include what would happen to non-physical, non-consumable items. It could be argued that the Lockean proviso, included in the second Treatise of Government, pertaining to the ownership of private property, could be exercised to include appropriated objects such as the Star of David and the song Hava Nagila, maintaining that those objects were “...at least where there is enough and as good, left in common for others.” Therefore, the use of these symbols and songs by football fans does not preclude others from doing the same. It is as if these supporters had never taken these objects to begin with since there are still enough of which for others to make use of.

When something is appropriated, it is taken from one place and sent to another. More so than that, ownership is transferred from one party to the other. This can be done with or without the express permission of the party who is having their item appropriated.

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11 Locke, Second Treatise, chap. 4.
12 Locke, Second Treatise, chap. 4.
Usually, this term is understood to contain a negative connotation that implies a sort of theft or that the party losing the item is the victim of a binary relationship. But as this term stands here, many questions arise as to how it can be applied critically to scholarly work in Conflict Resolution. According to Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2004), the verb “appropriate” is defined in two ways that could prove relevant for scholars: “to take exclusive possession of” and “to take or make use of without authority or right.”

If looked at as a whole, Ajax and Tottenham supporters are guilty of appropriating Jewish songs and symbols for their own usage. For example, Ajax’s most boisterous and notorious supporters club, known as the F-Side Skinheads, often sports a blue Star of David against a red, white, and black background on much of their official merchandise. But, perhaps guilty is the wrong word to use. Was the Star of David, sometimes now called the Ajax Star, stolen from Judaism the religion or from Israel the state? Does either party have the legitimate right to disallow the reproduction and use of the symbol by other parties? What happens if Jews do not want this symbol to be used by Ajax? The very nature of the ‘appropriation’ needs to be sorted before these questions can begin to be answered.

If we consider appropriation that connects two parties in a relationship, Baris Büyükokutan deems appropriation as a reciprocal exchange of scarce symbolic and material resources between two heterogeneous parties. But this relationship depends on

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the outcomes for the two parties. If the owners of the item do not depend on Ajax for something, the claim for appropriation may be denied. In the case the Star of David, Ajax fans simply took control of the symbol for their own use without asking the perceived owner’s’ permission. It is, however, important that we acknowledge the relational qualities of appropriation rather than an ‘us and them’ situation. For this paper, in particular, Büyükokutan points to a very useful construction of appropriation. “Rather than the theft of a preexisting entity by a preexisting group, appropriation may be seen as the ongoing constitution of cultural goods as desirable objects and the actions of groups prepared to struggle for their ownership.”

Critical to this definition is the need to direct more attention to the specific actors and context of this process.

However, just as in all relationships, resources are not necessarily distributed equally. I did not anticipate to find that appropriators in this study are overly concerned with the daily struggles over identity and prosperity between all of those who produce Jewishness through their identity, whether that be for political or religious reasons. I did however, expect to find that football fans’ use of Jewish songs, chants, and symbols, although quite possibly motivated by a shared historical story, had very little to do with religion or statehood but more to do with the interests and identities of being a supporter of a specific football club.

Social acceptance of semiotics is crucial. It is of the most important themes of this entire project. If the Jewishness performed by the supporters of Ajax and Spurs is not

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accepted by opposing fans and the public at large, it is hard for their views to be considered correct. In his work, *The Theory of Semiotics*, Umberto Eco points out that “even prophets have to be socially accepted in order to be right; if not they are wrong.” Eco’s work is useful to the study of Jewishness in football in the way that it examines semiotic codes in order to explain how they work. In the same sense that paintings or sculptures can be considered artworks that mean something different to two different individuals, so too can textual or performed art. Communication of all forms is littered with codes in which the sender of the message uses to formulate the message. In order for that message to be understood by the receiver, they must also be in possession of the same code. Eco theorizes that humans are evolving in a system of systems of signs in which “the sign is used to transmit information; to say or to indicate a thing that someone knows and wants others to know as well.”

This theory can be applied to the way in which Ajax and Spurs’ supporters communicate their Jewishness to other groups. In the traditional model of communication which flows as such, source → sender → channel → message → receiver, both the Superjoden and their rival support need to signify the messages the same way or else risk a lack of mutual understanding of the meanings of messages. Although the messages can continue to flow from one party to the other, signs and meanings that are coded wrong can lead to misunderstanding and improper behavior (such and abuse and vitriol). Eco also introduces the concept of rhetorical code-switching which explains how the

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meanings of symbols and words can transform over time.\textsuperscript{18} It is in this fashion that a term such as “queer” has been adopted by a certain community in order to transform it’s once derogatory meaning into a self-identifying badge of inclusivity. In a sense, the meaning of this term has been reappropriated to fit the needs of the people that it represents. In order for the new meaning of this term to become true, however, it needs to become socially accepted by even those who do not define themselves by this term. While the new definition of what it means to be “queer” is true to those who have reappropriated its meaning to define themselves, communicating that to other groups may not be easy if they code that term differently. This is a good example of what is going on between the supporters of Ajax and Tottenham, and outside groups. Until these terms are socially accepted, the messages sent between supporters groups will continue to be misinterpreted.

From a social science perspective, the definitions of appropriation change when culture is introduced. Cultural appropriation carries with it even more a sense of the commodification of marginalized and/or colonized cultures. Cultural appropriation is unavoidable when cultures come into contact. It is helpful to conceptualize this idea as involving in the assimilation and exploitation of marginalized and colonized cultures and in the survival of subordinated cultures and their resistance to dominant cultures. In his book, \textit{Cultural Appropriation and the Arts}, James O. Young argues that, over time, this new representation of a culture may be seen as authentic to those participating in it and even by the general public; meaning that the use of the Star of David and songs like \textit{Hava}

\textsuperscript{18} Eco, \textit{A Theory of Semiotics}. 19
*Nagila* but Ajax and Tottenham fans could be seen as uniquely theirs with an entirely new defined utility.

Yet the party seen as the ‘original owners’ may have a grievance over this. In their eyes, a piece over their culture, of themselves, was stolen and is now being used, in a manner other than is was unintended for. Throughout history, the process of returning items to their original owners that I have in mind was referred to as 'repatriation', 'restitution' or 'return.' However, in a landmark case in 1992, the Australian High Court conferred in favor of the indigenous Meriam People represented by Eddie Mabo, ‘native title’ to the lands once belonging to the Meriam prior to Australia becoming colonized.¹⁹ This ruling then suggests that “the Mabo decision in itself provides the 'possibility of legal protection of (other forms of) traditional Aboriginal interests' including cultural property such as art.”²⁰ Given this development, pieces of art could be seen as ‘nature or incidents’ of natural law and being held to the same legal standards as land. If this is the case, it is important to recognize that the changing nature between those doing the appropriating and those of being appropriated from. Previously, if items were returned, there was a lack of agency (more on this later) on the side of the ‘original owners.’ It was almost as if the appropriating party was doing the original owners a favor by returning those items. 'Repatriation', 'restitution' and 'return’ all speak to this relationship. The term

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reappropriation acknowledges the previous transactions and relationships between the parties of the past in a way that the term appropriation does not.\textsuperscript{21}

For this paper, the entire process of appropriation will be considered; starting with John Locke defining what is and isn’t allowed to be appropriated to describing the actually means of appropriating to how the relationship between those appropriating and those being appropriated from manifests. This research will attempt to address, through the voices of their supporters, whether or not ‘Jewishness’ is something that Ajax and Tottenham have appropriated and if so, how it manifests through their identity with the club. The voices of the Jewish community that stands at odds with the two fan bases will be considered as to reveal the relationship over overlapping symbols, but only for this reason. Although attention will be given to this relationship, the primary emphasis will rest with the discourse emanating from the supporters of Ajax and Tottenham.

\textbf{Identity, Agency, and Football}

Why would identity as a term need defining? Everyone knows what identity is. It is a term that is so often thrown around by both large companies to profile their ‘corporate identity’ as much as it is by individuals. People use identity to describe themselves as well as others. This term is so flexible that it can be used to describe, label, and categorize people but can also be used to explain people’s actions or behaviors. It is good to have an identity; those without an identity can be considered lost or unsure of themselves. Since the late 1990’s, ‘identity talk’ has burgeoned within conflict studies to

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help human behavior related, but not limited to, globalization, culture, ethnicity, and politics.\textsuperscript{22}

‘What’ or ‘who’ somebody is, is generally considered their identity. Groups can also have an identity that describes their motives or what brought them together in the first place. On the surface, identity is so broad that anyone can have one but this raises many questions. Can people hold multiple identities? Can identities be gained and lost again? Are we able to identify ourselves? How do situational circumstances, roles, norms, gender, and time play a role in self-realization of identity? Erik H. Erikson studied the role that identity plays in the ‘social reality’ by bridging the gap between identity on the individual level and on the societal level; residing both in the core of the individual and the core of the group, he coined the term “common culture.”\textsuperscript{23}

Individuals, as well as groups, can have many different identities, but it is difficult, if not impossible, for them all to be expressed at a given moment. Salience is a term used to describe which identity is most important or obvious in a given situation. When a football fan is attending a match, his or her identity as a football supporter is more salient than being identified by their profession for example.

It is not hard to see the salience of social identity at football matches. Supporters wear the club’s colors, parade their symbols and songs in a confined and obvious manner. Sport, for the fans, is a regular and recurring clashing of social identities. Not only are these clashes scheduled but they are also encouraged. Dr. Jimmy Sanderson of Clemson University posits that as fans’ identities develop, more and more of their self-esteem and

\textsuperscript{23} Demmers, \textit{Theories of Violent Conflict}, 19.
positive projection of their self is directly tied to the performances of the athletes or teams that they identify with. This can be shown by fans who use terminology such as “we” and “my” when describing sports performances. “In some cases, identification becomes so intense that some fans are willing to engage in hostile and criminal acts toward opposing teams and players to provide their team with a competitive advantage.”

Salience implies that individuals can have multiple identities and also that they are fluid, meaning that one identity can take prominence over another at a given time. To answer the question of how individuals and groups determine what their given identity is, either at the creation of an identity or the day to day salience, we need to unpack what it means to have agency.

The conversation about whether or not an individual can act independently of structural limits is of much importance to researchers in the field of conflict studies. The capacity that one has to determine their actions or affiliations is broadly known as a person’s agency. But the answer to this question is a familiar one in the conflict studies; it depends. French academic Pierre Bourdieu studied the relationships between structure and agency, determining that individuals exist in a ‘field’ which they are socialized where after acclimating and learning what is acceptable, are able to develop themselves as agents, eventually forming their ‘habitus’.

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25 Sanderson, “Despising the Villain.”
26 Sanderson, Despising the Villain.”
“Every confrontation between agents in fact brings together, in an interaction defined by the objective structure of the relation between the groups they belong to (e.g. a boss giving orders to a subordinate), systems of dispositions such as a linguistic competence and a cultural competence and, through these habitus, all the objective structures of which they are the product, structures which are active only when embodied in a competence acquired in the course of a particular history.”

Bourdieu understands that we as individuals, act in a way that on the surface appears to be free choice based on rational cognitive processes but really these processes are shaped and confined by our experiences, cultural norms, morals, group affiliations, and many other factors. A student who wants to go study in his school’s library is free to do so but if the library is closed, this student is not free and constrained by the university’s hours of operation. Understanding that actions undertaken by an independent agent can be met with social sanctions, political or moral ramifications, helps to shape a person’s behavior and limits their real world agency although it may not be perceived by the agent in that way.

Sometimes, we can even limit ourselves in terms of agency. By becoming a fan of a blue football team, wearing red to the pub to watch a match with your fellow supporters becomes socially unacceptable. By doing so, you would place yourself at the mercy of the other supporters who may choose to sanction you by choosing anything ranging from embarrassment to being ostracized from the group. Even as a member of a group, all of the things that help to shape an individual’s habitus, have a role in shaping what occurs as

a member of a group. In other words, one’s prior experiences do not fluctuate in salience; you can only learn from what you have done in the past and then build upon that history.

**Who is Jewish and How is Ethnicity Understood?**

As was discussed above, socially created identities and realities can be extremely powerful in shaping the way the world operates. Often, we consider categories of identification and attach scientific meaning to social phenomena (gender misunderstood as sex). Some other categories are much harder to distinguish from. ‘Race’ and ‘ethnicity,’ for example, are terms that are often used interchangeably whereas race is meant to be a biological indicator and ethnicity refers to a culturally constructed identifier.30 Let us think about what the idea of being Jewish means for a second. When someone claims this identity, it is difficult to know exactly if they are referring to political, racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, or any other type of Jewishness.

However, there is evidence that race is itself a social category more than a biological difference. The peer-reviewed Gendered Innovations project at Stanford University asserts that “Race is a powerful social category…” and that “most geneticists agree that racial taxonomies at the DNA level are invalid; genetic differences within any designated racial group are often greater than differences between racial groups.”31 Cornell and Hartmann corroborate this expressing that “races… are not established by

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31 Gendered Innovations, “Race and Ethnicity.”
some set of natural forces but are products of human perception and classification. They are social constructs.”\textsuperscript{32}

Then too is ethnicity not a social construct? This term typically identifies those members of a collective that use markers such as ancestry, language, or culture, religion, beliefs, and customs as well as memories of migration or colonization to create homogeneity.\textsuperscript{33} What begins to show through the use of race and ethnicity is the emphasis that race puts on the physical characteristics of groups whereas ethnicity usually regards itself with behavioral characteristics. Furthermore, these two categories continue to produce an in-group/ out-group mentality where racial qualities are belittled for the others while ethnic and cultural characteristics are promoted from within the group.\textsuperscript{34}

Understanding ethnicity as a social construction allows us to accept that people seek out groups that share their beliefs and develop kinship over periods of time and through shared symbols and experiences. Sport gives people a very easy construction of in-groups and out-groups. Boundaries are clear and the clubs reproduce their history, narratives, culture, symbols, and goals very regularly. Spurs supporters were treated to a reminder of past glories with the kits that they wore for the 2014-15 season. The kits feature a design that represents the history of arguably their greatest manager, Bill Nicholson, on the tenth anniversary of his passing. The kit features 11 lines that represent

\textsuperscript{33} Cornell and Hartmann, \textit{Ethnicity and Race}.
\textsuperscript{34} Cornell and Hartmann, \textit{Ethnicity and Race}. 
the 11 trophies that Nicholson won, including a league title in 1961. What makes this kit really stand out from an ethnic identity standpoint is Nicholson’s rallying quote on the reverse side. “It is better to fail aiming high than to succeed aiming low. And we of Spurs have set our sights very high, so high in fact that even failure will have in it an echo of glory.”

Being Jewish, one is a member of a certain ethnicity that creates in-group solidarity by transmitting the glories and traumas, through storytelling of the past, present, and future. This is carried out in a manner not dissimilar than the way in which Tottenham supporters have done with their 2014-15 kits. Traditional Jewish songs, symbols, festivities, and customs are shared with younger generations through transgenerational transmission.

Ethnic identity draws from many sources. Donald Horowitz explained that it can come from choice but also from circumstances. In his 1998 piece titled, *Structure and Strategy in Ethnic Conflict*, Horowitz refers to the Firth experiment of 1957 in which on small homogeneous islands, groups were formed not on the basis of race, religion, or culture, but because of similar cleavages that develop among people living under identical conditions. Although it might not be obvious, it is possible to make the argument that the supporters of sports teams such as Ajax and Tottenham have been able to socially create unique ethnicities through their similarities in fandom and discourse.

Combinations of factors such as common descent (locality), a socially relevant

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cultural or physical characteristics (Jewishness practiced), and a set of attitude and behaviors (support for their local football club) all contribute to this ethnic formation. Common descent, according to Rishikeshav Regmi, does not necessarily refer to racial or gendered origins but more important is the self-description of groups distinguishing themselves (we) from others (they).\textsuperscript{38}

It is not enough to only categorize Ajax and Spurs supporters as different ethnic groups, football’s structure makes that characteristic easily apparent, and we need to hypothesize about how these groups interact with their opposing supporters in the league and within the greater society in which they exist. Horowitz argues that in order to study ethnic conflict, first we must understand the severity of division, the hierarchical nature of the groups, and the centralization of groups.\textsuperscript{39} These categories allow for explanations of why groups act as advanced or backward groups. Backward groups and minority groups, for example, seek to advance their status in order to avoid marginalization and ultimately extinction. They can often cope with their backwardness by blaming the actions of other groups that led to their marginalization. This theory posits that comparisons of ethnic groups revolve around their relative group worth and relative group legitimacy and the desire for instrumental (averting the threat of group extinction) or symbolic power (power as a confirmation of status).\textsuperscript{40} Jewishness practiced by football supporters reflects the Horowitz model that backwards groups (responding to anti-


\textsuperscript{40} Horowitz “Ethnic Groups.”
Semitic abuse but forming a Jewishness discourse) seek to preserve their identity from extinction by abusive behavior from opposing supporters and by movements created by activists to ban certain affirmations of Jewishness. The structure of football leagues provides a unique vehicle for realizing instrumental or symbolic power. Since the objective of sporting teams is to win matches, power is inevitably realized by clubs who have success on the pitch. Ajax supporters have celebrated more league championships in the Netherlands than any other club and although Tottenham Hotspur has not been as successful in the league, they routinely finish as one of the better clubs in their country. This is one way in which these supporters have been able to avoid domination from outside groups but their identities as backward ethnic groups remain unsettled.

None of the above goes far enough to actually help to determine who does and does not get to be Jewish; nor does it separate the qualities of Jewishness and those who determine Jewishness. For answers, we turn to Ernest Raiklin who helps us understand how groups form the basis of ‘personal belonging’; for groups themselves cannot exist without a carrier and a member.41 There are those who determine group memberships such as the out-group, the in-group, and the person himself.42 This paper will present the evidence as the two supporters groups in Europe discursively exist on the spectrum of Jewishness. Before that, let us discuss how others have defined Jewishness in the past.

Raiklin uses a passage from Simon Herman (1977) to describe the ambiguity of defining who a Jew is. Herman writes that

“(a)ccording to the halacha a person is a Jew if he was born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism in accordance with the prescribed procedures. A mere declaration of faith or of the feeling of belonging does not make a person a Jew. Nor does a person cease to be a Jew because of either lack of faith or of a sense of belonging (Herman, 1977, p.76).”

This passage declares two major things. First is that Jewishness is defined by Jewishness. It indicates that when a child is born to a mother who is Jewish, that child, without free choice, inherits her Jewishness. Secondly, it shows the mother’s past is determining the present Jewishness of the child. It is difficult to draw any further conclusions from this by virtue of it vagueness of actually defining what Jewishness is. It also does not specify if the mother herself became a Jew based on her mother’s faith, or if she converted at a later age. Over time, accelerated by the splintering of Christianity and Islam from Judaism, Jewishness morphed into a more ethnic/racial means of characterization. This categorization of being Jewish by blood is something inconsistent with the original religious application.

The consequences of realizing Jewishness by blood was that no matter what a child born to a Jewish mother did, renounced their faith or any other method, they would always, in the eyes of their in-group and their out-groups, be biologically Jewish. This was of course fully realized during the Holocaust. Is there a tangible difference between these types of categorization? Raiklin believes so; in that “…if logically pursued, in the final analysis, they leave no doubt that ultimately it is the accidence of birth (ethnicity, race, blood, biology) that takes

precedence over the religious faith and according to which the in-group implicitly determines one's Jewishness.”

The concepts that one can either be Jewish for life or that one can convert or renounce their Jewishness, remain hotly debated today. Not only by those identifying as Jewish versus gentiles, but also between the branches of Orthodox and Reform Judaism. What scholars are looking for is something that links all of these forms of Jewishness together so that a clearer picture of who is ‘in the group’ emerges. Perhaps this is the wrong way to consider Jewishness. Instead of multiple branches of one form of Jew, groups have created distinctly independent.

In ancient times, as well as today, the boundary between being a Jew or not is fluid. “The uncertainty of Jewishness in antiquity curiously prefigures the uncertainty of Jewishness in modern times.” Jewishness has henceforth been even more socially constructed in the 20th century as Zionists defined Judaism as a nationality; a nationality that has only existed for 67 years whereas Judaism has existed for nearly 4,000. Whereas Bundists Jews defined Jewishness as ‘peoplehood,’ the early Zionists regularly welcomed as members even Jews who had converted to Christianity.”

Today, we mostly consider Jewishness to be related to religion, to statehood, or as a people. Each of these definitions though can be refuted in ways that show that they are

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47 Hershel Shanks, “What’s a Jew?”
48 Hershel Shanks, “What’s a Jew?”
all socially created without being substantiated by science. Leonard Fein argues that Jewishness is something that can be lost by virtue of “(A) Jewishness never asserted becomes a Jewishness de facto denied.” 49 Hershel Shanks reveals that it wasn’t until around 200 C.E. that matrilineal descent began, and “no reason or explanation is given for the matrilineal principle or for the change from the practice of the previous 1,500 years.” 50 And the Jewish state of Israel has only existed for a very brief amount of time compared to the existence of the religion. There does seem to be as many interpretations of Jewishness as one desires to find. So why couldn’t a form of Jewishness exist that celebrates the brotherhood of Jewish people, the collective spirit to combat anti-Semitism, and the performance of traditional song and dance through the use of symbols that represent Jewishness? Many Ajax and Tottenham fans believe that this is precisely what they have and will continue to do.

Overall, the supporters of Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur find themselves in a unique situation in which their identities as football supporters has been constructed over time to protect against varying types of ethnic abuse and to reflect support for a local minority group. These identities have survived for decades and multiple changes in salience and meaning. By appropriating symbols and songs from other groups, these fans have produced meaning that demonstrates a new type of Jewishness that they as independent agents have socially constructed. The battle in the future is continuing to keep this identity relevant and socially accepted amongst the rest.

49 Hershel Shanks, “What’s a Jew?”
50 Hershel Shanks, “What’s a Jew?”
of the footballing community as well as the greater European society in which these supporters operate.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND DESIGN

Topic and Questions

In designing this project, it is of most importance that the language, text, and communications of those that are actually producing Jewishness within the supporters groups of Ajax and Tottenham, are examined closely for their discursive manifestations. It is of less importance to this research what other individuals and groups say that these fans are doing by appropriating and projecting Jewishness, although their reactions to this discourse are relevant. Discourse analysis has a very important role in helping us to understand the specificity in which actors create their identities and ideologies. Unlike many other forms of social practice, discourse is more explicit and allows members of groups express or formulate abstract ideological beliefs or any other opinion related to such ideologies or identities.\(^\text{51}\) Since discourse is how individuals and groups attempt to give meaning to reality, this approach seems most appropriate in order to determine why the supporters of two football clubs have continued to identify themselves, by using Jewish words and appropriating Jewish symbols, as a group that does not conform to the traditional definitions of being Jewish. By giving meaning to reality, these groups of football supporters are constructing knowledge through series of conversations and actions. This implies that what they are producing with their speech, symbols, 

publications, and actions can be seen as a source of evidence about other aspects of their lives. Therefore, by researching the speech, symbols, and publications of the supporters of Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur, a clearer picture of how the discourse surrounding Jewishness in represented in football will become visible.

This case study approach is particularly focused on how such inflammatory symbols and speech acts surrounding Jews and the Holocaust have made their way into the identity of two European football clubs. By analyzing multiple contemporary cases, this research allows for the question of “how” to be answered more broadly by two independent situations but that can be interrelated. Analyzing the discourse surrounding these two cases will also begin to show how these identities create conflict with those who do not interpret the discourse with the same codes that Ajax and Spurs’ fans use to produce them. There are other themes that are to be addressed as well. Careful consideration of the following questions will be addressed: How did Jewishness become an option for group identification? Who gets to (re)produce Jewishness? What criteria are individuals judged in order to join the group? How does this affect those that identify by alternate Jewish forms? By appropriating Jewish culture (the singing of Hava Nagila, Yiddish slang words, and the Star of David), have these things become part of the club’s culture or do they remain borrowed?

Case Comparison Overview

Conducting research into the discursive themes of supporters’ behaviors and actions toward Jewishness has been carried out by anonymous observation of open source data on the internet. By doing so, the research was able to move forward very quickly and
without interfering with the discourse created by those supporters. As this research intended to analyze the discourse emanating from the supporters of two different European football clubs’ supporters, a chapter focusing on each fan base will occur prior to a synthesis chapter of common themes and unique differences. Discourse can be created in many places. From supporters’ blogs to symbols and songs sung at matches; as long as the data was openly available for the study via non-subscription based services on the internet, it could be considered for analysis. Eventually, discursive themes were to be analyzed from three categories: songs and chants, photographs, and other media (video documentary and supporters’ blog). The discourse around Tottenham Hotspur occurs much differently than that of Ajax. This is why both cases will be independently studied prior to a comparative synthesis. Club leadership at Tottenham has always been far less likely to show support for connections between the Jewish community and their club’s supporters.

Two separate case studies have been chosen to reveal that the practice of Jewishness within the context of football has not been a one-off, unique phenomenon. Each case depicts instances of Jewishness, identity, and appropriation of words and images in their own unique way. These cases are also different in many ways by means of geography, history, and language but together help to paint a picture of the social construction of identity. By comparing how the supporters of these two clubs have appropriated nationalistic as well as religious symbols, turned them into self-identifying badges of honor in order to show in-group solidarity, a whole host of future applications of identity studies may be possible.
This comparative case study is particularly useful for understanding and explaining how context has influenced the formation of unique identities in Amsterdam and London that have both manifested from initial anti-Semitic triggers. The success of this research will be in its construction of a clear foundation of how socially constructed identities exist in Amsterdam and London today. To intervene in a conflict means to understand the context in which it began and to accurately map the interrelationship between the parties, dynamics, and issues involved. If, in the future, an intervention is needed into the Jewishness represented in world football, this research will provide a useful starting point for additional scholarship. Conflict resolvers will be better prepared for tailoring an intervention to the unique history and context of either club in order to achieve their intended outcomes.

**Data Set**

What makes the North London club’s Jewishness different than that in Amsterdam is the specific appropriation of a particular word more so than the blanket identity as Super Jews. ‘Yid’ as well as its variant ‘yiddo,’ (or politically correct version the Y-word) have come to describe Spurs supporters as well as sometimes the players on the field. Given this fact, the themes surrounding the material chosen for analysis for this chapter all contain references to either ‘Yids’ or to the murdering of religiously Jewish people connected with the Holocaust. Four songs or chants were chosen to compliment two images. The last piece chosen for the Tottenham chapter takes an in-

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depth look at an article published to a supporter’s blog titled The Spartacus Question. This unique blog is run by a group of contributors that all support this particular club. This blog, named Cartilage Free Captain, belongs to a network of other sports blogs, SB Nation, for clubs and teams from all different sports from all over the planet. The article in question explores the meaning behind Spurs gentile supporters standing up and identifying as ‘Yids’ in a way that is unique to their club.

For the case study on Ajax Amsterdam, five songs or chants, four photographs, and one documentary were chosen for analysis. Of these songs, four include a variant of the word ‘Jew’ while the final song is the national anthem of the state of Israel sung by the supporters of Ajax Amsterdam while playing an away match against Haifa on October 21, 1999 at the Kiryat Eliezer Stadium in Haifa, Israel. It is important that while discussing themes of Jewishness, identity and appropriation, all songs, images, and media include both themes of Jewishness and a sense of ownership over the discursive material. Sorting through hundreds of photographs, it was a challenge to settle on just a few. Two photos were ultimately chosen from Ajax’s trip to Israel in 1999 while the other two contain themes of what makes the theme of Jewishness permanent to these supporters. One photo shows a fan with numerous Ajax tattoos covering his arm while also inked is the image of the Star of David (sometimes colloquially known as the Ajax Star). The last image is of an artifact from the F-Side supporters group that is now on display at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam.

53 “Match Report,” UEFA.com, accessed July 25, 2015,
At this point, after the facts of each club have been presented, a synthesis section will sift through all the information to discover significant patterns between Ajax and Tottenham in order to come to conclusions. The purpose of the synthesis is to combine what has been shown by a number of different sources and to present the data in a coherent overview of the subject. In this case, this means to illustrate what has been discovered about Jewishness related to the supporters of two European football clubs and how those themes tie back into the theories and concepts described in the literature review. In other words, to fill in the gaps of what is really going on through the social scientific lenses of appropriation and identity. More importantly, this section will communicate to the reader why it is that this is important and why they should care. It will strive to report findings that are otherwise missing in the social scientific literature.

**Data Analysis Framework**

As previously discussed, researchers believe that individuals and groups do maintain a certain degree of agency in constructing their identity, truth, and reality, but another factor can play an important role. We, as groups and as individuals, exist in the world in which discourse helps determine which identity, truth, or reality that we subscribe to. Discursive themes serve as the raw materials from which individuals draw in creating their identities. Philips and Hardy attempt to define discourse in one sentence by stating “Without discourse, there is no social reality, and without understanding discourse, we cannot understand our reality, our experiences, or ourselves.”

Michel Foucault, credited as the father of discourse, takes a critical approach to what we know as knowledge and how it is formed. He defines a discourse formation as the systematic grouping of objects, stories, tradition, and concepts, that when grouped together, create order, correlations, and commonality.\(^{55}\) “Take the notion of tradition: it is intended to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successive and identical (or at least similar); it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same.”\(^{56}\) Foucault’s research was not particularly interested in the product of discursive thought but rather a process in which knowledge was built upon discourse rather than originality. As a result, our thoughts and actions are based on a set of constructed frameworks that control the flow of knowledge therefore after. This can be dangerous as not all discourses have proved to be true or acceptable. There was a point where the institutions of slavery and segregation were framed as and were socially acceptable by some churches and governments.

Discourse analysis is, however, an approach to research as much as it is a methodology. Discourse Analysis stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. All social practice are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested. Discourse theorists like Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips argue that communication is what shapes the world.\(^{57}\) When individuals (and groups as we will later

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\(^{55}\) Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 35.

\(^{56}\) Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, 21.

see) communicate, they draw from widely accepted foundations of knowledge to make statements about the world. These statements can either reinforce or challenge those bases of knowledge. Jorge Ruiz Ruiz suggests that humans are inherently social beings in which communication is successful only through intersubjectivity.\textsuperscript{58} The implicit nature of intersubjective communication can thus be explained through analysis of discourses.

If we consider that we live in a socially created universe, discourse analysis then operates on the basis of two basic assumptions. First, that the knowledge of social intersubjectivity provides us with indirect knowledge about social order because intersubjectivity is a product of it and because the social order is formed and functions through this social intersubjectivity; secondly, discourse analysis allows us to understand social intersubjectivity because discourses contain it and because social intersubjectivity is produced through discursive practices.

With this research, I will be looking at two distinct forms of communication, verbal, including transcribed texts of songs, and visual, images of symbols and gestures. Verbal communication offers certain advantages that visual communication does not. Articles produced by supporters groups as well as lyrics to songs are easier to interpret than images of symbols which call for detailed descriptions. These materials can be categorized further as spontaneous discourse, referring to discourse produced by parties in their everyday lives, and induced discourses, discourse produced within the framework of research. This methodology will also help to investigate the process in which these fan

bases naturalize their feelings a ‘Jewishness,’ making their Jewish identities self-evident as representative of an entire group.

For this study, it makes sense to use the theories of Foucault as well as Philips and Hardy. We need to understand the realities of these two groups by sifting through what they say about themselves and how they are represented to the rest of the (footballing) world. The appropriation of Jewish symbols and speech should not be dismissed as simply a constructed framework but as a deeply rooted tradition of identity. By studying these identities through the aforementioned theoretical lenses, this research will help to answer how Jewishness became an option for these fans; or if this identity is helping fans to realize instrumental power, symbolic power, or both; and possibly even if the identities of these clubs’ supporters can be considered as Jewish.
CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY ONE

Imagine that you're attending a match for your favorite sports teams. Today they are playing a club that you have never seen before. Upon entering the stadium, you head straight for the concession stands. This is what you’ve always done when watching your team. You’re not exactly hungry for a hot dog or nachos nor are you particularly parched that you need a cold beer to wash it down. But you do it, every time because it’s what you’ve always done. It has become ritualistic in nature.

While waiting in line for your concessions, you hear a faint chant that starts growing louder and louder in volume and magnitude. Quickly, everybody around you is chanting “Jews, Jews!” Thousands of voices all crying out for what, a religion? Culture? These songs and chants aren’t coming from the supporters of a club from Israel but from a club based many thousands of miles away. Now, besides the cacophony of sounds emanating from the thousands of fans surrounding the concession stands, your visual senses are stimulated by the waving of the Israeli flag and liberal use of the Star of David. What are these people doing at a football match? What does Israel have to do with two clubs from so far away? Are these all Diasporas? This is the strangest thing you’ve ever seen in sports.

The friend you are standing next to in line says that she has heard about this before and begins to offer up a short explanation. “This is what they have always done.
This club has been perceived as a Jewish club for decades and this is their response to being abused by other clubs. Very few of them are in fact Jewish, but this is their response. It is more of a ritual now than being used to combat anti-Semitism.”

Being ritualistic is something you can understand. Performing a series of prescribed actions is something that often happens in sports and in everyday life. You collect your food, make your way to your seats, and begin watching the match, but the onslaught of Jewishness from the visiting fans has only just begun. Along with chanting “Jews, Jews” in an apparent attempt to rally their fellow supporters together, the Israeli folk song, *Hava Nagila*, vociferously emerges from the lips of the entire group of away fans. By now, your attention has completely diverted from the match and you are trying to wrap your head around what is going on with these fans. How can they identify with something that they are not? You can be Jewish by nationality or by religion but definitely not as a football supporter, right? There are so many questions that you want to ask about what is going on. Luckily for you, this was all a crazy daydream where this type of phenomenon can only exist. However, this is not the case. This set of non-fictitious circumstances does exist and it occurs in the Netherlands with a football club from Amsterdam; Ajax Amsterdam.

**Amsterdamsche Football Club Ajax**

Amsterdamsche Football Club Ajax is one of world football’s most storied clubs. Ajax maintains a history that extends over 115 years that includes nearly every championship a club can win. In addition to winning silverware, ‘*de Godenzonen*’ (the
sons of the gods)\textsuperscript{59} are known for their famous youth development system that has produced some of the all-time greats including Johan Cruyff, Dennis Bergkamp, and Patrick Kluivert, as well as their philosophy of ‘\textit{totaalvoetbal}’ (total football) that changed the way the world played the game.\textsuperscript{60}

In 1894, Johan Dade, Carel Reeser, and Floris Stempel began a football club in Amsterdam named "Footh-Ball Club Ajax" but the club found success to be elusive.\textsuperscript{61} Sensing that something needed to change, these three men met on March 18, 1900, at the Café Oost-Indië in Kalverstraat, Amsterdam, and the club as we know it today was born.\textsuperscript{62} Rebranded as ‘Ajax Amsterdam,’ named after the mythological Greek figure, Ajax has gone on to win:

- 2 Intercontinental Cups
- 3 European Cups/UEFA Champions Leagues
- 1 UEFA Cup
- 1 European Cup Winners' Cup
- 3 European Super Cups
- 1 Intertoto Cup
- 33 Dutch Championships
- 18 Dutch Cups

\textsuperscript{59} The club’s name as well as the image on the club’s crest refers to the Greek God Ajax. Ajax was one of the greatest of the Greek heroes who fought in the Trojan War. According to Homer’s \textit{Iliad}, only Achilles was a greater warrior than Ajax. Of great size and stature, Ajax supposedly looked like a tower when he went into battle holding his shield. He was courageous and good-hearted but spoke very slowly and preferred to let others talk while he fought.


\textsuperscript{62} “Classic Football Clubs.”
8 Dutch Super Cups

It was not until the 1930’s that Ajax really began to assert itself on the domestic stage. Within this decade, Ajax won five of their 33 Dutch Championships. It was in this golden era that saw the construction of a new stadium called "De Meer" on the Middenweg in Watergraafsmeer to accommodate the growing fan base who would flock to watch their sporting heroes. The opening of this stadium in 1934, in this location, would forever shape the identity of the club’s supporters. For it was in this particular area that much of the Jewish population of Amsterdam lived.

Although very few Jews have played for Ajax throughout its history, the Jewish connection has remained strong for a number of reasons. First, Amsterdam came to be known as ‘Mokum Alef” (Yiddish for town or place) by its Jewish inhabitants. The city was home to 60,000 Jews, 10% of the population, in 1940 when the German occupation began, including Annelies Marie "Anne" Frank. Secondly, since home matches were contested at the Stadion De Meer, just outside of Amsterdam’s Jewish quarter, supporters of the visiting clubs would pass Ajax supporters by tram, car, or bike and perceive that all who were attending the matches were Jewish. Thus, a reasonable explanation why Ajax had found a Jewish image.

Today, Amsterdam is home to far fewer Jews than in the 1930’s and 40’s. About three-quarters of Amsterdam’s 60,000 Jews were murdered in the gas chambers; in all of

63 “Ajax: The Early Years and the Birth of Total Football.”
64 “Classic Football Clubs.”
Europe only Poland lost a larger proportion of its Jews. This period of Jewish life, not only in the Netherlands but all over Europe, has been well documented and preserved. Today, the atrocities of the Holocaust are kept alive in our collective memories in books, movies, and memorials. While it is important that the history of this time period be remembered, there are many other aspects of Jewish daily life in Amsterdam (as well as in London) that deserve attention. The role of Germany and the Nazi party can never be understated, but something that is rarely discussed is the role football, particularly Ajax, played in keeping the Jewish identity alive in a time of so much death.

**Songs and Chants**

As it was previously discussed, the study of discourse allows for us to understand our social reality. Discursive themes serve as the raw materials from which individuals draw in creating their identities. In each of the following case studies, introductory themes of Jewishness, symbolic representation, and in-group/ out-group formation will be supplemented by emergent themes from the analysis of language and visuals. The lyrics of each song and the visual representation of the clash of Jewishness and football all reinforce the previously held discourse as well as create how we will continue to talk about this discourse in the future.

The songs and chants that Ajax supporters sing at matches both reinforces their identity while also inducing a reaction the fantasies of their opponents. Speaking of the Star of David as a symbol for his club, one Ajax supporter remarks: “We like to provoke

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67 Simon Kuper, Ajax, the Dutch, the War: The Strange Tale of Soccer During Europe’s Darkest Hour (New York: Nation Books, 2012), 3.
a little bit with this symbol. But this goes beyond symbols and gestures. One of the
most powerful manifestations of this identity construction comes in the form of songs and
chants.

Themes of provocation and protection of one’s identity have been evident
throughout this project but usually in an ‘either/or’ context. What Ajax supporters have
done with their most simple and common chant, combines both of these themes.

Joden, Joden, Joden…

Translated into English:

Jews, Jews, Jews…

A single word repeated until either your lungs get tired or the action on the pitch
takes your attention away. For this is a song that most directly affirms Jewishness with
the club. Simple enough that anybody can join in while also full of historical context and
proclamations of in-group and out-group identity formation. Ajax supporters have not
always embraced such a clear self-identification with the Jewish community. For those
fans old enough to realize what this chant means, they agree to perform a type of
Jewishness that has roots in pre-World War II Amsterdam and extends through to today.

Although the Holocaust and the events of the 1930’s and 40’s in Amsterdam are
not directly the focus of this study, they bear mentioning. In this time, Amsterdam had
many more Jewish inhabitants than today but their local football club was not as keen to
officially identify with any sort of Jewishness as being identified as Jewish carried certain
consequences. The club often denies any Jewish connection prior to World War II. Ajax

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historian Evert Vermeer told *Het Parool* newspaper in 1999, “The supporters of Ajax’s opponents used to arrive at Weesperpoort Station, where there were a lot of Jewish street vendors. So they would say, ‘We’re going to the Jews.’ But the club itself didn’t have a Jewish culture at all before World War II.” What this shows is that the discourse between Jewishness and Ajax has in one form or another, existed prior to World War II. It is important to preserve this period of time in the collective memory of what led to the current discourse of Ajax fans. This was a period in which Eddie Hamel, an American Jew who is considered Ajax’s first Jewish player, roamed the outside-right position. The Jewish Quarter of Amsterdam was an impoverished place where very few children had the resources to even begin to dream of playing organized football. All Dutch football was amateur until 1954, but Ajax had already established themselves as one of Holland’s premier clubs. Even if young Jewish kids in Amsterdam could not afford to play the game that they loved, many of them became supporters of the local club anyway.

This chant is deeply rooted in the supporters in the Mokum and it would be extremely difficult to take away the context of what created the chant to be what it is today. However, what about those who are either not old enough to know better or see the chant as solely meaning ‘Go Ajax’? This creates a problem for those who want to disassociate Ajax from being a Jewish club. Children who grow up in households that support Ajax would likely be exposed to the words and songs that their parents and family chant before knowing exactly what they mean. To these young kids, they are

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69 Kuper, *Ajax, the Dutch, the War*, 18.
70 Kuper, *Ajax, the Dutch, the War*, 47.
71 Kuper, *Ajax, the Dutch, the War*, 18.
growing up in an environment where their fellow supporters are Ajax *Joden*, thus redefining and reinforcing this particular brand of Jewishness in the Netherlands.

This next chant is perhaps one of the most potent examples of the supporters affirming their identity as ‘Superjoden’ (Superjews). The song is performed in a call and response style between two sections of the stadium. One section asks the question and the other one replies.

Waar komen Joden toch vandaan?
-Israël hier ver vandaan.
Wonen daar ook Superjoden?
-Ja daar wonen Superjoden.
Vinden Joden voetbal fijn?
-Als ze maar voor Ajax zijn.
Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Amsterdam

Translated into English:

Where do Jews come from?
-Israel, far from here.
Do Superjews live there?
-Yes, Superjews live there.
Do Jews love football?
-As long as they support Ajax
Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Amsterdam

At first reading, this song does not seem like it would belong in a professional football stadium. It more resembles an inaccurate generalization of religious and national politics. It is inaccurate because not all Jewish people come from Israel, and because Israel as a state has existed for a shorter period than that of the Ajax football club.

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72 Translations were performed by a Belgian national whose mother tongue is Dutch. It is important to acknowledge that literal translations often remove the underlying social feeling of the song. This will best be addressed later in the analysis.
This song is interesting in a number of ways. First, it asks where Jews come from, assuming that they all come from the same place. That question is answered by acknowledging that they come from Israel, a land that was created for people of the Jewish faith during the 20th century and a land of great distance from Amsterdam. Jewishness is thus represented here by political and religious identification. The song’s second call and response proclaim that there are ‘Superjews’ without explicitly stating where they are or what they have to do with Ajax. The final line ties this Jewishness in with Ajax by suggesting that the only way in which a Jewish person can love football is if he or she is supporting Ajax. Now this is obviously false as many Jews support many other clubs around the world (Tottenham being one of them).

What makes this song so salient to this research is that it is so participatory. Whereas some chants are as simple as chanting a single word over and over, this type of performance becomes even more amplified by one section’s silence while the other is forcefully singing. Of course, with all songs and chants, the louder one is sung, and the more people that participate in the performance, the more energy flows around the grounds. Being so powerful, this song has become an intrinsic part of Ajax fixtures. Jewishness performed in a way that everyone now knows “waar komen Joden toch vandaan (where do Jews come from?).

The following chant is also very simple. It is sung by Ajax supporters when the team is playing very well and they are almost assured of victory. It is a chant the encourages fans to jump and when thousands of supporters are jumping and singing at once, this verbal show of support for the team turns into a boisterous, visual feast.
Wie niet springt is geen Jood!

Translated into English:

Anyone who doesn't jump isn't a Jew!

This chant not only fortifies the previous song, it now calls on the supporters to identify themselves as (super) Jews. Now, we know where the Jews come from and where they currently are; in the stadium supporting Ajax. This is the first example in which the supporters identify themselves as Superjews. This is not to say that you cannot support the club if you are not jumping but there is a sense of security in which a fan who would like to declare himself as an Ajax Jew, is protected by his fellow brethren.

It could also be that those Ajax supporters who identify as Superjews are creating a venue in which other fans who are on the fence about whether or not they should participate in this form of Jewishness for whatever reason, feel compelled to participate just because the rest of the group is doing so. Irving Janis calls this “groupthink;” an influential theory of group decision making. The premise of this theory is that maintaining group cohesiveness and solidarity is more important than considering the facts in a realistic manner. Janis warns of the dangers of groupthink in individual decision-making where individuals are not encouraged to be independent evaluators. This is ever so apparent when analyzing this particular Ajax chant. Fans have to weigh the options of participating or not. By participating, supporters are contributing to a stronger, more cohesive group. By abstaining from jumping, fans are risking social sanctions. Of

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course, there are consequences in chanting “Joden” and representing oneself as a Jood in a public arena. Most importantly of which is that other groups may not understand this discourse in the same way that Ajax supporters do. Without that base understanding of how to essentially translate their discourse, supporters of other clubs come to their own discursive conclusions and act upon those definitions moving forward. Sometimes, this creates animosity or abuse.

Songs and chants can be a manifestation of this animosity and abuse. An extremely vile example of this is a chant featured against Ajax by other clubs’ supporters who understand Ajax’s Jewishness to reflect the events of the Holocaust.

Hamas, Hamas Juden ins gas!

Translated into English:

Hamas, Hamas Jews to the gas!

Similarly aimed at provocation, opposition supporters have either clearly misunderstood the discursive themes of Ajax fans or simply do not care how those fans identify themselves. In a sense, proclaiming one’s devotion to a particular club by song is really no different than any other means that sports offers. Football, in particular, makes it very easy for these identities which are easily defined by colors, uniforms, personnel, names etc. to clash on a regular basis. For instance, it is already known that the next time that Ajax will clash with their bitter rivals, Feyenoord, which in the past have employed the above chant, occurs on November 11, 2015.74 This appears in stark contrast to the

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time period referred to in the chat in which Jewish individuals had no prior knowledge of when their identity would so direly clash with their opponents.

This particular chant evokes horrific memories of life ending situations. It seems confusing whether or not those who sing this chant are referring to those from Israel, religious Jews, or Superjoden. Surely the Godenzonen’s opposition’s support is not threatening the lives of their fellow football fans, they are simply trying to use a historical event to bolster their own identity as the self-perceived, superior club. By doing so, this shows that through their discourse, in this case, vocalized, their views are not in concert with that coming from the Ajax support. Feyenoord fans have a reputation of chanting anti-Semitic offences to many other clubs but if this abuse is directed at Ajax fans as a means of degrading their construction of Jewishness, we cannot accurately consider this abuse anti-Semitic.\(^{75}\) It would be misleading since the Jewishness practice by Ajax fans does not come from a Semitic background.

Understanding that there are political and religiously Jewish roots in the lyrics and identities of this club’s support is undeniable. We also can tell just from these few examples of lyrical support that these fans are performing Jewishness in a manner that has never been seen before. As for the previous song in which the lyrics call for harm to come to the home support, although it is misplaced within the discourse of the Superjews, as well as in poor taste, the same argument can be made that these fans are performing their own version of their identity that does not necessarily mean that they want anyone

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to die, they would just prefer to sing and dance while the team that they support is victorious.

The final song of this analysis brings together multiple types of Jewishness into a singular forum. On 21 October 1999, Ajax supporters made the trek to a land ‘far from here’ to take on Hapoel Haifa Football Club in Israel. Touted as “The Jewish derby, the Jews playing the Jews” by the Israeli media, Ajax supporters sang the Israeli national anthem along with their hosts prior to the match.

As long as the Jewish spirit is yearning deep in the heart,
With eyes turned toward the East, looking toward Zion,
Then our hope - the two-thousand-year-old hope - will not be lost:
To be a free people in our land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

There are not many other types of songs that can rival the salience of identity formation and maintenance than a nation’s anthem. Two rivalry clubs, using the same symbols without offending each other.

When reflecting upon his trip to Israel, first generation F-Side fan club supporter, Ronald Pielor, puts into words “When visiting another club, we don’t usually get many cheers. They just hate our guts and it shows. Going to Israel was really special because we expected to be welcomed with open arms there. If only because we were carrying the symbols of Israel.” It would seem to be that there was a mutual respect for both sets of fans, whether or not each was accurately interpreting the other’s discourse. This shows

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77 Superjews, directed by Nirit Peled (Netherlands: Viewpoint Productions, 2013), DVD.
79 Superjews, Nirit Peled.
how fluid or adaptable the discourse coming from the Ajax fans actually is. Jewishness practiced in Amsterdam was very different than that practiced in Jerusalem. In this case, there was a pivot away from being Superjoden to more of a political support for the state of Israel. Of course, it makes very little sense to offend your host when traveling abroad, but Ajax fans went further than to be gracious guests. These supporters showed support for their fellow Israeli football fans and subsequently practiced their Jewishness in a way that fit the circumstances.

Images

In this section, multiple images connecting Ajax to previously held definitions of Jewishness will be presented. These images will show how Ajax supporters express and reinforce their identity through the use of visual stimulation. Most importantly, this section will connect the theme of appropriation into how the Superjoden represent themselves today.

Visual images and linguistic discourse are much more similar than we believe it to be at times; after all, images are simply another way to transmit discourse just as, if not sometimes more, effectively as linguistically. Songs, like those in the previous section, serve to paint pictures in our minds rather than on a physical canvas. If a picture is worth a thousand words, each of the previous songs and chants only represent a small fraction of the image of the Superjoden. The power of discourse when it comes to visual stimulation is that images help naturalize processes in order to make them appear self-evident. In other words, it not only helps to explain what is going on but also gives the discourse a sense of legitimacy through visual evidence.
One of the more remarkable elements of Ajax’s Jewishness is that it has withstanded repeated calls for termination of this identity for many, many years. In 2000, former Ajax Chairman, Uri Coronel, who is religiously Jewish, addressed a group of supporters at their home, the “Den.”

“I addressed the supporters, a couple hundred it must have been. I tried to explain that I’m aware they have nothing against the Jews and that Jews have nothing to do with it, but they should realize that it’s hurtful to some people who can’t even sleep at night. And it’s not really worth it to stir up these emotions. And that they should stop doing this… but it didn’t change a thing. Because the Ajax supporters have adopted Jews as a proud nickname. “We don’t care what others think, just leave us alone. We like to have a Star of David tattooed on our forearm.” Not because they’re Jewish, nor do they think about people who were forced to wear it during the war and who are horrified by it. They just cannot relate to that.”

Not only have members of Amsterdam’s Jewish community expressed their desire to disassociate any Jewish reference with the club, but here is a former chairman, himself a follower of Judaism, asking the supporters to watch what they are saying. If Uri Coronel couldn’t influence members of the Ajax support to change, can anyone?

Coronel mentions tattoos in the above quote. Tattoos are permanent. They are images used by some to express their individuality or to show their devotion to a group. Coronel knows that he is asking the supporters, some whose identity as an Ajax Jew is very deeply rooted, to refrain from identifying as who they have come to be and knows that his talk will have little to no effect.

This first image is of an Ajax tattoo with five major elements. From left to right, it starts with the Star of David in blue, three golden stars on top, the image of the club’s

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80 SuperJews, Nirit Peled.
logo - the Greek god Ajax, the crest of the club’s colors (red and white), and concluding with a shield with three white X’s upon a red and black background. Each of these elements holds a deep meaning for what it means to be an Ajax supporter.

The element that stands out the most here is the Star of David. Not only because it is tattooed in a shade of light blue while the rest of the tattoo is red and black, but because it is not part of any ‘official’ club logo. Given the way in which the elements flow around the central image of Ajax himself, this implies the Star of David (called the Ajax Star by some) is just as important as any other element of the tattoo. This is also a very large tattoo which sheds light on how deeply held this identity is for this individual. The tattoo takes up the entire width of the subjects back as well as a considerable amount of the vertical space.

Remembering that the Lockean Proviso -an object can be appropriated as long as it is left ‘enough and as good as’ for others- allows for the appropriation of objects, including symbols such as the Star of David, this tattoo becomes more of a singular piece of art than a collection of elements. This Ajax supporter specifically has injected part of himself into the Star of David as well as injected the Star of David onto himself. Since humans are the rightful owners of themselves, having part of yourself contained within a symbol grants them the authority to appropriate it as his own.

While the blue star symbolizes the Jewishness of the club, the gold stars on top represent the three European Championships that Ajax has won in a row from 1971-
Ajax won a fourth championship in 1995 to become the 6th most successful European club of all time, however their three consecutive titles in the 1970’s were only the second time in which that feat had ever occurred (previously by Real Madrid) and has only since been matched one time (by Bayern München). The small red and white shield next to Ajax is red and white which symbolize the colors of the club while the shield on the far right is painted with the flag of the city of Amsterdam.

This tattoo is an all-encompassing representation of what the supporters of Ajax present to the world. It speaks to their Jewishness, connection between the club and the city, and to their glorious, championship past. In this context, the fan is not saying that he is Jewish is a political or religious sense, he is showing how permanently his identity is tied to being a supporter of AFC Ajax, part of the Superjoden.

Ajax Image two: Israeli Flag

Is easy to understand how something like the Star of David could be legitimately appropriated by another group to symbolize part of their identity. This “star” symbol is called a hexagram; a star-shaped figure formed by six straight lines, that has a long history of meanings before it became widely used as a symbol to represent Judaism in the 17th century. Nowadays the hexagon is known as the Star of David to many people but to some, it is known as the Ajax Star. This same star is also present on the flag of the State of Israel which was created and adopted shortly after the formation of the modern

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82 "Champions League - Champions,” Worldfootball.net.

state of Israel in 1948. This flag is very often seen being waived by Ajax supporters at home matches in Amsterdam. Not only does it show up at matches, but it can also appear on Ajax memorabilia in place of the Ajax Star. Inside the stadium, individuals waive the Israeli state flag to show their support for Ajax. What stands out about this symbol that makes it distinct from the Star of David is that it clearly represents another defined population of people. The question now becomes, are the rules of appropriation the same for this state’s flag and for the Star of David?

According to Locke, this would be no difference. Although this flag, or symbol, was previously ‘owned’ by the people of Israel, Ajax supporters are causing the symbol no harm and leaving the flag in a condition where there is “enough and as good” left for others. For decades, the role that the Israeli flag plays within the constructed Superjoden identity at Ajax was common knowledge for those who followed European club football but not to the rest of the world. Then, on 11 March 2003, Ajax supporters unveiled an enormous Israeli flag prior to their Champions League match against Valencia CF of Spain. Former Ajax amateur player and Israeli citizen, Menashe Aharon, recalls seeing the flag that night. “All of a sudden I saw the Israeli flag, 20 to 30 meters long, 15 to 20 meters wide…”

The term appropriation can carry with itself a negative connotation. Often when we think of something that is culturally appropriated, we think of tasteless Halloween costumes or racially insensitive commercial advertisements. But appropriating something

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84 "The Star of David," Jewish Virtual Library.
86 Buchheister, “Jewish Identities Questioned.”
87 Superjews, Nirit Peled.
does not always come at the expense of another individual or group. Inherent in our understanding of appropriation needs to be the conceptualization that the new symbol itself recontextualizes whatever it borrows to become what it is now. In many cases, like the case with Ajax and the Israeli flag, the original symbol remains accessible to those who were using it previously.

Ajax Images three and four: “Rob van der Zande” and “Hat”

The final two images are being presented together. Together, they shed light on the origins of the appropriation of Jewishness into the Ajax supporter’s culture. The first image shows Rob van Der Zande, the original member of the fanatical F-Side supporters group and who is credited with first combining the Star of David with Ajax. He is holding the publication that he founded, the De Ajax Ster, while wearing a hip pack emblazoned with the Ajax Amsterdam logo. The second image depicts a hat on display at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam. The most striking feature of the hat is perhaps that it is covered in numerous Stars of David. Within a few of these stars is the name of the most radical supporters group connected to Ajax, F-Side.

F-Side formed in 1976 with members such as van der Zande and Ronald Pielor. This supporters group is very vocal and has engaged in confrontations with other supporters groups over the years. It was F-Side that first began to incorporate Jewish symbols into their identity. According to Pielor, the Ajax Star “has always provoked reactions from rival supporters, which in turn provoked a reaction from Ajax fans. It took

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88 Superjews, Nirit Peled.
89 Superjews, Nirit Peled.
on a life of its own, to the point where the star symbol was blamed for stirring up trouble with the rival supporters.”\textsuperscript{90}

The image of van der Zande is interests the research because it depicts that the symbol formally known as the Star of David has been fully appropriated into the supporters culture of Ajax. Not only is it being used by supporters as a symbol that reflects their identity inside the stadium, but it now also represents a publication which has the potential to reach far more people. Discourse is spread through many different media, van der Zande helped create and reinforce Jewishness through group membership, appropriation of symbols, and by publicizing F-Side’s Jewishness, making it available outside of the stadium.

This supporters group was very effective in incorporating Jewish symbols into their, and the club’s identity. Amsterdam is now known as “...the city of the Jews and the cyclists” as Prague Journalist Egon Erwin Kisch writes, and there is no doubt that F-Side played a large role in propagating this identity.\textsuperscript{91} One of the easiest ways to do this was to create merchandise. Not only does the group make money, but now anyone who buys their shirts, magazines, hats, or stickers is furthering the Jewish discourse surrounding Ajax. Taking, for example, this image of a cone-shaped F-Side hat, one can see the obvious overlap between Ajax and Jewishness. The more that this hat is seen around the stadium and Amsterdam, as well as other types of merchandise, the more deeply ingrained the Jewishness discourse becomes.

\textsuperscript{90} Superjews, Nirit Peled.
\textsuperscript{91} Kuper, Ajax, the Dutch, the War, 18.
Super Jews

_Super Jews_ by Nirit Peled is a complete documentary available describing the connection between Jewish culture and AFC Ajax. Peled is an Israeli-born, Amsterdam resident who describes her struggle with her own Jewish identity and how moving to the Netherlands as a young woman challenged how she thought about what it means to be Jewish to those who act out their Jewishness inside a football stadium and by those who hide their Jewishness. In her film, she interviews Ajax supporters, former club representatives, a member of the Jewish Amsterdam community, and families of multi-generation Ajax supporters. Among the stories described in the film are of the 1999 match in Israel, the dilemma a Jewish cafe owner who prays that Ajax matches pass without incident, and of an eleven-year-old boy named Jody.

Jody’s story is particularly moving. His father, an avid Ajax supporter, passed away from cystic fibrosis when he was 45-years-old after the doctors told him that he would not live past 20-years-old. His mother and father attended every Ajax match that they could and they passed their love of football and their Ajax Jewishness down to their child. Jody grew up in an environment where his father, Joark, practiced a type of Jewishness that Jody then picked up before he had any knowledge of any alternative types of Jewishness’. How was this boy to know what type of identity he was constructing? Years later, Joark has passed but Jody still remembers him on match days by wearing a necklace with an Ajax Star charm engraved with ‘F-Side’ into it. Along with the star, there is also a small football charm that holds some of his father’s ashes inside. Powerful yet raw. This story shows how this constructed identity lives on inside of
Ajax supporters. Not always quite as literal as in the case of Jody and his father, this example shows us how much of themselves these fans have inserted into the Jewish songs and symbols that identify Superjoden from other types of Jews.

Later in the film, Nirit returns to the dilemma of what it really means to be Jewish in Amsterdam. She speaks of Ajax supporters by summarizing:

“They feel Jewish, but they are not. I am Jewish, but I wonder what it means. In Israel the Jewish and Israeli identities mix. We combine Israeli symbols with Jewish symbols and since I couldn’t separate them, I separated myself from them. Now, I find myself in a so-called Jewish city with a supposedly Jewish football club and a bunch of non-Jewish supporters who feel Jewish.”

What Nirit Peled is realizing at this moment is that Ajax supporters, by combining Jewish symbols with football are behaving in a way that is very similar to that of Israelis and Judaism. By denying Ajax supporters the right to define themselves as Superjoden is the same as denying the same mechanisms that Israelis and members of religiously Jewish communities have done in the past. The sense that these supporters need to continuously fight for and prove to everyone else why they have constructed an identity called Superjoden is hypocritical. Humans inject meaning into symbols. To some, the bald eagle stands for freedom whereas others may view the bird as a symbol of colonialism.

Peled further understands this hypocrisy when she reflects on her role in preserving Jewishness in her family by passing it onto her children. As she narrates the film, she states that she does not believe in god but does believe in miracles. When her family comes together on Jewish holidays, she loves to participate in Jewish traditions of

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92 *Superjews*, Nirit Peled.
cooking and singing. Her quandary occurs as she realizes that she is teaching her children the Jewish songs and practices of the past without fully believing in their message herself. She asks herself whether she is preserving or pretending Jewish identity.

These symbols and songs that Ajax supporters are empty unless meaning is given to them. Fans inject their personal stories and unite around them; thus becoming a group. When they go to a football match, they come from all over the country to experience something together. It is a community which gives us a sense of belonging.

“When the crowd gets together it gets loud. It’s a party. Like (Israeli) Independence Day. We chose a flag and an anthem to unite all the different Jews that came from all over the world. To give them an identity, something to fight for. Everybody needs a team, this (Israeli national holding the Israeli flag) is my team. I am Israeli, I am Jewish, I am also an Amsterdamer now.”

The film concludes with a scene from a match in the Amsterdam Arena. Peled is present in the crowd which excited, jumping, waving Ajax flags, and singing Wie niet springt is geen Jood! Armed with everything Peled has learned for herself and presented through the film, she asks a simple question: Do I jump?

93 Superjews, Nirit Peled.
CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY TWO

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club

Tottenham Hotspur, Spurs for short, are the other side of the Jewish football coin in Europe. Similar in their self-identification using Jewish symbols, Spurs embrace the Star of David and Israeli flags. The history of this Jewishness developed in a similar fashion as that in Amsterdam. Spurs have long held a Jewish fan base that grew before and after WWII. Since the club plays their home matches in North London, home to the majority of London’s Jewish population and the ultra-Orthodox community of Stamford Hill, opposing supporters would walk to the stadium through this Jewish area and begin to hurl anti-Semitic language at the Spurs support as though they were all Jewish themselves.94 At least, this is how the story goes.

One of the major difference between Ajax and Spurs is in the language used to identify themselves. While Ajax supporters are known as Superjoden, Spurs fans refer to themselves (and sometimes the players on the pitch) as Yids. The Y-word, ‘Yid’ or ‘Yiddo’, is seen by some as an incredibly degrading, racist word. Originally derived from Yiddish, an Eastern-European Jewish dialect, the word yid is still used among Yiddish

94 Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” 244.
speakers as a word for ‘bloke’ or ‘buddy.’ 95 The word can mean different things to different Jews, often depending on their age and where they are from. It can be seen as a derogatory name for Yiddish people in the same way that the word ‘Jew’ began as a slang or offensive word for Jewish people. “Back in the 1930’s and 40’s, Jewish people all over Europe were being rounded up and killed. People called them, Yids.” 96

In the same way that believers of Judaism adopted the term ‘Jew’ as their own, not allowing for it to connote racism any longer, Spurs fans have attempted the same with ‘Yid.’ Sometimes proclaiming their fan base as the “Yid Army”, Spurs supporters have taken what was once an insult and created a badge of honor. But in order to combat the abuse from opposing fans, Spurs’ supporters began to adopt the Y-word and refer to themselves by it.

The club was originally founded by boys from Hotspur Cricket Club and from the local Grammar School as Hotspur FC in 1882 and moved to their current location in 1899 to a grounds that eventually became known as White Hart Lane. 97 Although Spurs have not amassed as many honors as Ajax, they have been pioneers of the English league becoming the inaugural UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) Cup winners as well as the first English club to complete The Double in the 20th century. 98 The following is a list of Tottenham’s major honors:

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98 “Year by Year,” Tottenham Hotspur.
- 2 UEFA Cups
- 7 FA Community Shield
- 2 Football League Champions
- 2 Football League Division Two Champions
- 8 Football Association Cup
- 1 European Cup-Winners Cup
- 4 Football League Cup Winners

Setting Spurs apart from a club like Ajax is the league and the country that they play in. The Premier League in England is the most popular and most viewed league in the world and boasts the highest revenue and sponsorship deals. Whereas the league Ajax plays in, Eredivisie, is set to make €72 in revenue from television rights in 2016, the English Premier League recently sold their U.K. television rights for the period between 2016 and 2019 for €7.22 billion. This means that with the revenue sharing model of the Premier league, each of their 20 clubs will profit more television money each season than the entire Eredivisie league.

The Premier league is now able to attract the best footballers from all over the world to play in England for reasons no simpler than because the players are able to make much more money, on average, than in any other league. This money allows from

102 Manfred, “New TV Deal.”
Premier League clubs to field much better, quality squads than in any other league. Being able to show a high quality product to more people than ever before means that more eyes are on all aspects of the English game, bringing attention to parts of the game that the league would rather hide.

The first manifestations of “Yiddo culture” occurred in the 1970’s when not only did Tottenham supporters adopt the term as a self-designation but also the response to it by opposing fans.\(^{103}\) During this time, it was a common sight to see Israeli flags and the Star of David adorning the Spurs sections at away matches. Today, these symbols have generally been replaced with the Union Flag or the flag of St. George marked with various versions of “Yid” in the white space.\(^{104}\) Outside of White Hart Lane, although not officially sanctioned by the club, “Yiddo culture” is commodified with the selling of shirts, hats, scarves, and pins etc. that proudly display the Y-word in many different iterations. The Y-word is extremely controversial in England, so much so that in 2014, the Y-word was banned inside of stadiums, even if it were said by a Spurs supporter. In 2014, eight arrests were made involving the Y-word at Spurs matches.\(^{105}\) The Y-word has since been reconsidered to allow Tottenham supporters to use the word as self-identifying language while the use of the term in an anti-Semitic manner is still considered criminal.\(^{106}\) The debate over this term does not only rest at the level of the fans and local police; from celebrities to the prime minister, everybody wants to weigh in. The Prime

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\(^{103}\) Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” 243.
\(^{104}\) Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” 245.
\(^{106}\) Telegraph Sport, “‘Yid’ Chanting.”
Minister of the United Kingdom became involved when he was interviewed in 2013 by the Jewish Chronicle. He stated; “You have to think of the mens rea. There's a difference between Spurs fans self-describing themselves as Yids and someone calling someone a Yid as an insult. You have to be motivated by hate. Hate speech should be prosecuted – but only when it's motivated by hate.”

The Kick it Out organization is football’s self-proclaimed equality and inclusion organization. Beginning in 1993 as a small independent charity, ‘Let’s Kick Racism Out of Football,’ the organization has since widened its objectives to cover all aspects of inequality and exclusion. The organization works throughout England on initiatives that fight against racism and discrimination as well as promote educational and advocacy programs. Funded by the FA and PFA, Kick It Out also maintains close relationships with FIFA and UEFA. In 2011, Kick It Out released a 90-second film by comedian and writer, David Baddiel (a well-known Chelsea supporter) that aims to bring awareness to the Y-word as being a racist epithet. The premise of the film suggests that Tottenham supporters are using a racist word to self-identify that is bringing anti-Semiticism to the forefront of English football. Not only does the short film suggest that Spurs supporters are part of the problem, one of the club’s most famous and respected ex-players is used to convey this message. Spurs executive director Donna Cullen agrees that the focus of the

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109 “About.”
film should be on the opposition supporters using anti-Semitic language and not against the fans who have sought to protect themselves from anti-Semitism.\footnote{Gibson, “Campaign to stamp out Y-word.”}

When asked about his motivations for making the film, Baddiel stated that many people were unaware that the Y-word was, in fact, a racist term that can cause some Jews to feel uncomfortable.\footnote{Gibson, “Campaign to stamp out Y-word.”} However, he has not clearly put himself in the shoes of the Tottenham supporters who believe that the term has healing properties and joyfully promote themselves as Yids. The same way in which words such as “queer” have changed in meaning over time, so too has the Y-word for a certain minority of football fans in London. Individuals not knowing that the Y-word was, in fact, racist tells us a lot about the legitimacy of the term as racist. Umberto Eco argued in order for the meaning of a term to become true it needs to become socially accepted by even those who do not define themselves by it.\footnote{Eco, \textit{A Theory of Semiotics}.} The difficulty then exists with the Y-word as a term that is socially accepted by two disparate parties, by two very different definitions.

Despite the best efforts of David Baddiel and the Kick It Out campaign, the Yid Army of Tottenham is stronger and more visible than ever before. Thanks to the growing popularity of the game all over the world and the huge amount of television money coming in, the self-constructed ‘Yid’ identity in North London looks very secure. Tottenham Hotspur has existed in North London for well over a century now but have been known as the country’s “Jewish Club” for less than half of that period. What is it that makes this club practice their Jewishness so strongly? Being labeled a Jewish club”
can mean many different things to many different people. What makes this research so fascinating is the connection that Ajax and Spurs supporters have with a new form of Jewishness that does not discriminate based on political or religious lines. In fact, Spurs supporters are known for their lack of racial abuse. Danny Kelley wrote an article for Football365.com responding to the accusations that Spurs supporters reacted negatively to the 2001 transfer of one of their players to their arch-rivals Arsenal. Kelley contends the idea that Spurs fans’ anger over the transfer of their former Spurs captain, Sol Campbell was based on the fact that he was black.

“Let’s be straight about this; there used to be racism and White Hart Lane. It was in the late Seventies and it was stamped out by an initiative between the club and the fans called “Spurs Against the Nazis”… Spurs Against the Nazis worked and while you will always get the odd idiot, the organized racial abuse of players has not been heard at White Hart Lane for the best part of 20 years. The county’s most obviously Jewish club has even gone on to idolize an Arab player, Nayim.”

**Songs and Chants**

For decades, Spurs supporters have been subjected to hissing noises – intended to mimic the sound of gas chambers – jibes about foreskins, and songs about Adolf Hitler, punctuated by the chant of “Sieg Heil.” Rightly enough, Tottenham fans and Jewish people alike were (and remain) very disgusted. Taking what was once an insult, turning it’s meaning around, and creating a badge of honor is the common narrative around North London. Similar to how Ajax supporters have become known as Superjoden, Spurs supporters are known as Yids by themselves and by the greater football world. Supporters often refer to each other as ‘Yiddo’ as well as certain players on the field. The appellation

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of Yiddo has also been turned into one of the most common chants at White Hart Lane due to its simplicity and its salience toward the supporters. The chant goes as follows:

Yiddo, Yiddo (higher note) – Yiddo, Yiddo (lower note)

The demographics of North London today do not resemble those during the early part of the 20th century. As in Amsterdam, the Jewish population in the area is far less and the majority of the supporters at White Hart Lane rooting for Spurs are not Jewish as well. The use of the Y-word as a form of showing support for Spurs carries different meaning and context depending on who is using it. In this modern era, youngsters are mimicking their relatives who know the term as exclusively meaning supporter for their side. It is in this sense that gentile as well as Jewish, Spurs supporters are engaging in a form of mimicking. Since the Jewish members of the Tottenham support will remain religiously or politically Jewish long after the final whistle, they are thus mimicking the gentile supporters inside the grounds who are also involved in a form of imitation. The willingness of these fans to chant ‘Yiddo’ or declare that they are foot soldiers in the “Yid Army” is a liberating act of which religious Jews of the early 20th century would be amazed. This marks a significant shift away from the traditional Anglo-Jewish hesitation about public proclamations of one’s Jewish identity.

Of course, proclaiming a club’s fan base as Jewish, or performing a new, distinct type of Jewishness does not come without consequence. Whether or not Spurs support appropriated their Jewishness in response to others’ anti-Semitism or the opposition’s abuse began as a result of this Jewishness does not change the fact that abuse exists in
today’s game. Also, whether or not the appropriation of this identity should be encouraged or condemned ultimately comes down to individual experience. As Tottenham supporters are now legally allowed to proclaim their loyalty to the Yid Army, offended individuals or groups have a choice to make; they can either put up with it, boycott the club, or continue to push for social change. Considering the message of this next chant, Spurs fans do not seem very keen to heed the objections from outside groups.

We’ll sing what we want; we’ll sing what we want!
We’re Tottenham Hotspur; we’ll sing what we want!

Full disclosure, this chant of defiance is not exclusive to Tottenham Hotspur. Many other clubs in England have used this simple tune to reinforce the discourse surrounding the identity of their club. The chant is however very relevant for Tottenham and is often used to remind outsiders that their Jewishness cannot be reined in or controlled. In response to the 2014 changes of the law that allowed Spurs supporters to freely sing the Y-word with self-identification in mind, the club’s supporters truly embraced the message of the “we’ll sing what we want” chant and made sure that all other visiting football fans knew this.

In football as in the rest of life, it is not uncommon to embrace your discourse in the face of others’ displeasure with it. Henri Tajfel and John Turner describe this with their work on intergroup conflict in the 1970’s. These two social psychologists discovered that the sense of in-group belonging is so strong that if someone or something threatens the group, even if there is no direct threat to the individual, that person will still
feel that threat just because that person is part of that group.\textsuperscript{115} In a social experiment, Tajfel and Turner also found that ad hoc intergroup categorization leads to in-group favoritism and discrimination against the out-group. Most participants in Tajfel’s studies were more concerned with the maximum difference between groups. So much so that, participants were reluctant to share the rewards equally with the other group or give the other group a significant reward at all. They were also more willing to sacrifice greater self-profit in absolute terms if it meant sliding the overall profit margin in their own teams favors if even a little bit.\textsuperscript{116} Tajfel and Turner also introduce the methodology called the minimal group paradigm. This methodology allows social psychologists to study the minimal conditions required for discrimination to occur between groups.

This theory can be applied to the above Spurs chant, but it becomes even clearer when we consider the events in Paris, France by Chelsea FC supporters in early 2015. A large group of Caucasian Chelsea supporters who traveled to Paris to watch their club play a Champions League match against Paris Saint-Germain, were caught on video pushing a black man out of a metro carriage that had ample room for the passenger.\textsuperscript{117} Chelsea fans have a reputation for singing abusive chants motivated by race and hate; behavior that was reinforced by these fans chanting “We're racist, we're racist, and that's the way we like it, we like it, we like it” at the man that they pushed out of the

These fans in Paris were showing that they do not care whether or not their in-group is praised for their discourse but rather that the out-group is punished for being different. The chants of football supporters do not always seek to inflict maximum damage to their opposing groups, nor do they always seek to humiliate or cause any damage at all. But there are those that know where the buttons are and how to push them. Chelsea supporters are known button pushers and the discourse from the fans in Paris proves this.

In football, there is a whole host of determinants for in-group and out-group membership. The colors of the shirts, locations of stadiums, club names, and mottos, appropriated discursive identities, demographics of the local community, and many more. A full-scale analysis of football fandom and identity through the lens of the minimal group paradigm could show that it takes a specific difference between groups to create discrimination or that just being different at all creates an environment for abuse. Football has plenty of ways to make sure identity groups are defined and separate. On the other hand, football supporters from Tottenham have demonstrated that they care more about protecting their own identity than abusing other people for being different.

The third song in this analysis shows just how Spurs supporters have been targeted by abuse from opposition clubs. Tottenham Hotspur had been a fairly successful club in England but were especially talented in 1981 when Spurs reached the FA Cup final, the most prestigious tournament in English football. Prior to the match against

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118 Robinson, “Chelsea Fans.”
Manchester City at England’s national football ground, Wembley Stadium, Tottenham Hotspur released a musical single titled *Ossie’s Dream (Spurs Are On Their Way To Wembley)*. Performed by musical duo, Chas and Dave, the single made it to number 5 in the UK Singles Chart. The catchy chorus is as follows:

Spurs are on their way to Wembley,
Tott’num’s gunna do it again.
You can’t stop ‘em, the boys from Tott’num,
The boys from White Hart Lane.

The title of the track refers to the Argentinian midfielder Ossie Ardiles who was the soul and spirit of the 1981 squad. Tottenham went on to win the 1981 FA Cup on a late goal by Ardiles’ fellow countryman, Ricardo Villa. This song continues to be pulled out whenever Tottenham reach another cup final at Wembley as they did in 2015, coincidentally, against Chelsea FC.

Just as Tottenham supporters have taken the term “Yid” and turned it’s meaning around to suit their own narrative, Chelsea fans have taken Spurs’ beloved cup song, Ossie’s Dream, and changed its lyrics in the vilest of ways. It is with this song that opposing fans, not only from Chelsea, aim to inflict the maximum emotional harm to a group of fans that they see as homogeneously, religiously Jewish. It is here that opposition fans again misinterpret the discourse of the Spurs support. Their misguided sense that Tottenham Yids are religiously Jewish only adds to the malevolence of their actions. Seeing as how they perceive Tottenham’s Yid Army as religiously Jewish, what

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121 “1981 Tottenham v Man City.”
better way to strike at the core of their fears and collective trauma than to sing about the Holocaust? The alternate lyrics to the chorus of Ossie’s Dream are:

Spurs are on their way to Auschwitz, (Sieg Heil)
Hitler’s gunna gas ’em again.
The boys from Tott’num, the boys from Tott’num,
The Yids from White Hart Lane.\textsuperscript{122}

Any decent human being would argue that there is a difference between playfully showing your support for your club while rooting for your opposition to lose the match and the practice of hurling insults at groups which can leave scars long after the match has ended. This revised version runs the risk of endangering the mental health of both Jewish and gentile and supporters. The discourse that has emerged in light of these anti-Semitic songs has reaffirmed Tottenham’s Jewishness and when pundits and apologists blame the Spurs support for appropriating songs and symbols that outsiders see as inappropriate, they are engaging in a form of victim shaming which is never productive. The abuse suffered by Tottenham fans only serves to strengthen their in-group resolve and set the roots of Yid Culture even further into the ground.

The final song that is often heard around White Hart Lane (and also at away grounds) is the most hurtful of all. There is no place for this in the beautiful game nor in any corner of the planet. The discourse from Spurs fans of celebrating the Jewishness of the club from the early 20th century to today, in no manner, calls for abuse like this:

Hissing… (Meant to mimic the sound of a gas chamber.)
\textsuperscript{122} Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” 247.
Not only do religiously Jewish fans suffer from these offensive chants, everyone does. In the eyes of the abusers, Spurs supporters are not seen as just football supporters, they are seen as Jews who will likely be hurt by this practice. “I mean I’m always contending that the two scariest chants that I’ve ever heard in a football match have been the sound of monkey grunts, which you don’t hear at all now, and a gassing sound” says a black, Tottenham supporter. “…that is the one thing that makes Tottenham fans flip.”

And for good reason. The crime with chants like these do not belong to the party that welcomed the abuse, it belongs to those individuals or groups doing the abusing. The man trying to board a metro car in Paris was not asking to be abused and pushed off of the train because his skin was the wrong color. Even though Spurs fans have constructed their identity with pieces from other groups, as opposed to being born with black skin, the principle holds just as true. There is no place for this type of behavior. Ajax and Tottenham fans may have to reconcile their identity constructions with those whom they are borrowing songs and symbols, but they do not owe a thing to those opposition supporters who seek to shame and abuse strictly because Ajax and Spurs fans support a different football club.

Images

The images that were selected for this analysis reflect Tottenham’s Jewishness with the use of the Y-word, the mimicking of the Israeli flag, and the Star of David. Whereas Ajax supporters took the Israeli flag and added it’s likeness to existing Ajax logos, Spurs take the existing flag and modify it to fit their discourse. There have been

circumstances when Tottenham fans have flown a non-modified Israeli flag in stadiums, but it is much more common for the flag, as shown in image one, to appear around the Lane.

As described before, Tottenham fans refer to themselves and sometimes their players, as Yids. In the mind of the fan, a Yid defined is quite simply a Spurs supporter. When translated into English, the Y-word can be perceived as a pejorative but in its native tongue, “Yid” is a term of affection and familiarity. “Upon greeting an acquaintance, a standard, informal salutation would be “Vos macht a Yid?” (“How is a Jew?”). Tottenham fans embrace this word, consider it with no pejorative status, and wear its meaning with the familiarity that comes with greeting a close friend or family member. And this is clearly shown by the images they use.

Tottenham Image one: Memorabilia

The first image for this analysis is actually a collection of four images. The background is a still frame of a moment from an unknown Spurs match at White Hart Lane. The part of the image is dismissed in this analysis. The important aspects here are the images of a flag, a pin, and a shirt that all contain the words “Yid Army.” Not an army in the sense of going to war with the risk of losing one’s life, but an army in which in-groups and out-groups are clearly defined and in which soccer games are metaphors for battle. Sports, specifically football, are rife with war and battle symbolism. A player, typically the captain of a side, is known as a field general. In American football, linemen who push and shove each other are said to ‘battle in the trenches.’

124 Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” 238.
Manchester United supporters describe themselves as the Red Army just as Tottenham have constructed the Yid Army.

The flag and the pin in this image both include references to the Israeli flag, which includes the Star of David, and the text “Yid Army.” The flag image even goes as far as incorporating the Tottenham Hotspur cockerel logo into the Star of David. The link between the club and Jewishness is very clear. Again, just like Ajax supporters, this does not mean that Spurs fan are religiously or politically Jewish in the sense that rabbis and Israelis are, but the link between these groups is apparent. The final element of this image is a t-shirt that reads “Keep Calm and Join the Yid Army.” Above the text on the shirt is the crown of King George VI. The style of the shirt references a poster designed during World War II by the British Ministry of Information for publicity, propaganda, and morale boosting reasons. This style of shirt, with many different texts and messages, have become very popular today with vendors in Tottenham taking full advantage to print these Yid Army shirts.

This image makes it clear that the discourse surrounding the Y-word comes in many different forms and is readily available to those who seek it. Specifically with the pin and the t-shirt, a fan wearing these items is continuously projecting the Yid Culture discourse without being consciously aware of it. In this case, it is not required that a fan is actively singing or jumping. Wearable affirmations of the Yid discourse also allow for opposition supporters to more easily identify Tottenham’s Yids. While there is ambiguity between opposing groups in defining what ‘Yids’ actually means, the wearing of pins and

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t-shirts with the Y-word displayed so prominently reinforces specifically to both parties of anything, that Tottenham supporters are Yids.

Tottenham Image two: *Tour Flag*

The Israeli flag is not the only flag used by Tottenham supporters to show their Yid Culture discourse. The English national flag which consists of a red cross, known as the St. George cross, that lay upon a white background is often spotted when Tottenham travel abroad. This civil and state flag is very popular at sporting events to help distinguish England from the rest of Great Britain. The Premier League in which Tottenham participates in is made up of clubs from England and Wales, leaving out teams from the rest of the United Kingdom. There is a great sense of English pride in the Premier League; particularly in the spring when the UEFA Champions League ramps up. The Champions League is a competition that pits the best clubs from domestic leagues from all over Europe into a tournament that eventually crowns what is considered the best football club in the world. Supporters of English (or Welsh) Premier League clubs tend to embrace the St. George cross in this competition and root for their compatriots, even if they are normally a rival.

Given that there is substantial white space on the English flag, many club’s supporters take the opportunity to place symbols such as their club logo, images of trophies, the crest of the English FA, or words in this space. As seen in this second image, Spurs’ support has included text and symbols in each quadrant of the flag. In the upper areas are the emblems of the English Football Association and Tottenham Hotspur Football Club. In the bottom areas are the words “Yids on tour” and “We still believe.” of
The lower texts are typically in reference to Spurs participating in a match away from White Hart Lane although this cannot be confirmed in this particular photo.

Both the image of the FA crest and the Tottenham Hotspur logo are littered with history and symbolism. The FA uses a crest which bears three lions that have appropriated from the symbolic, English Coat of Arms. In 1154, King Henry II created the first Coat of Arms for the English Monarchy. The first royal coat had just a single golden lion upon a red background. Late in the 12th century, Richard the Lionheart, the son of Henry II, added a second and a third lion to the coat.126 The English FA’s crest as we know it today is represented by these same three lions (The Three Lions is also the nickname of the English national squad). Tottenham Hotspur’s club crest has changed many times over the last 133 years. Since 1921, the logo has featured in some fashion, a cockerel standing upon a football. As lions are known as fierce predators and the kings of their domain that act to strike fear in their opponents, cockerels fail to replicate the same level of intimidation. Spurs, however, were named after Sir Henry Percy, an English nobleman and valiant fighter of the late 14th century.127 Sir Henry, whose nickname was “Hotspur” due to his fiery personality, was an ancestor of the Northumberland family who lived where Tottenham Hotspur are located. Finally, the cockerel was chosen to represent the club because the fighting birds wear ‘spurs’ when they go into battle, making it an obvious choice for the club.128

128 Note: Henry “Hotspur” Percy was made famous as "Harry Hotspur" in William Shakespeare's Henry IV. He was the second Earl of Northumberland and lived in Tottenham in the 14th century.
The flag presented here emphasizes the Jewishness of the Tottenham support while tying it to their Englishness. It shows that Tottenham supporters are not just Yids in London but anywhere they go “on tour.” Although there are no symbols of religious or political Jewishness on this flag, these supporters are clearly stating to the world that these Tottenham fans are Yids who play their club football in England. Since this Yid Culture is on such display to opposing support, it is easy to understand how banter and abuse back from these fans displays a discourse of assuming that all Spurs supporters are Yids or Jewish. Of course not all Tottenham fans subscribe to this identity, but then again, not all opposition support believe that all Spurs fans are Jewish.

The flags represent a salience on the road that it does not have at home. In London, the stadium sits in what was once the Jewish part of town with symbols, images that Tottenham supporters do not need to emphasize. While on the road, flags, pins, scarves, t-shirts and many other types of symbolism are used to stand in for the Jewishness of home. Spurs supporters use flags in the way shown in the second image much more than their Ajax counterparts. Ajax combines the flag of Amsterdam and the Israeli flag whereas Tottenham takes the St. George cross and adds Jewishness and Spurs symbols to it; just in case the away support forgets who they are playing that day.

**The Spartacus Question**

The final piece of analysis of Tottenham hotspur and their Jewishness discourse comes for an article written for a popular internet blog named Cartilage Free Captain which is itself part of a network of sports blogs managed by SB Nation. The article titled *The Spartacus Question* by The Sleeper's Sleep (Nathan Bartel), breaks down one of the
more iconic scenes in 20th century cinema and relates it’s message, to one of the most existential questions of Tottenham Hotspur supporters: Who am I? What are ‘we’?” The article explores the history, present, and future of the Y-word and its relationship to the club as this research has attempted to do. As a Spurs fan himself, Bartel reflects on his emotional connection to the club and his hesitance around his personal use of the Y-word. Ultimately unsure of his authority to claim the term as his own, Bartel comes to the conclusion that he does not have the information, experience or authority to take that identity on for himself.129

The scene referred to in the article comes from the 1960 movie, *Spartacus*, where Kirk Douglas plays a slave named Spartacus who leads a violent revolt against the overpowering Roman Republic.130 The iconic scene of the defeated rebellion of slaves awaiting their judgement on a hillside from a Roman centurion below is fraught with metaphors and symbolism that can help to understand how Tottenham’s Y-word appropriation came to be and exists today. Of course, the scene from this movie cannot accurately capture the historical context or the pure hearted reasons for why Tottenham fans have adopted the Yids identity, but there are a few connections that warrant exploration.


130 *Spartacus*, directed by Stanley Kubrick (New York: Bryna Productions, 1960), DVD.
The Roman centurion announced to the captured slaves that their lives will be spared; “Slaves you were, and slaves you remain.” Crucifixion, the punishment for the slaves’ crimes, is to be waived under the circumstances that the leader of the rebellion, Spartacus, be identified as well as be made available for crucifixion himself. Understanding that he would potentially be saving thousands of lives, Spartacus moves to identify himself to the Romans. Spartacus must have had a great deal of charisma, leadership, and the unwavering loyalty of his men because before he was able to stand and identify himself, one after another, each of his fellow slaves on the hillside stand up and declared “I am Spartacus!” This act by the rebels take advantage of the only remaining power that they have left, by adopting the Spartacus identity for themselves, they halt the threat to Spartacus’ life as well as create a situation in which the Roman centurions had not accounted for. The meaning of the name Spartacus is thus transformed into a term that represents a defiant but solidified people that stood up to another group whom previously held the power over the slaves. Although not a perfect analogy for the adoption of the Yid identity, further comparisons can be made. 

This powerful scene can be best summed up as an expression of solidarity and defiance in the face of oppression and marginalization which presents an interesting context for framing the use of the Y-word at Tottenham. The Y-word itself is considered by some to be racist, antisocial, hurtful, ignorant, and offensive. The practice of slavery can also be described with these same four adjectives. Tottenham supporters

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131 The Sleeper’s Sleep, “The Spartacus Question.”
132 The Sleeper’s Sleep, “The Spartacus Question.”
have taken the name on in a way that did not single out any of their fans, regardless of their religious beliefs. Adoption of the Y-word as an identity has served to aggregate a fan base that had been wholly abused by outsiders with it. The contradiction that occurs is such that as Spurs fans have adopted this identity to protect some of their fans from outsiders abuse, the term has acted to solidify their Jewishness to the out-groups. Instead of sacrificing a small number of their fans to anti-Semitic abuse, the entire fan base, now considered Jewish to outside groups, is being abused together.

Using the Horowitz theory of ethnic conflicts, the *Spartacus Question* suggests that by appropriating the appellation of Yids within the supporters of this club, fans are attempting to realize both instrumental and symbolic power. Instrumentally, these fans are averting the threat of group extinction from outside abuse by standing together under a shared identity. Symbolically, the supporters are confirming their status to themselves and to the opposing support that seeks to shame Spurs’ fans for being a certain type of Jewish that not every fan subscribes to. The unique part about this case is that the appropriated identity in question was actually constructed by opposing fans but adopted by Tottenham. The slaves in the film *Spartacus* were not chanting “slaves, slaves” because that is what the Romans told them they were, they were creating confusion over their individual identity by lying about this point. There is something much more collective about what is going on in North London (and in Amsterdam). Supporters here are appropriating an identity as well as the symbols and songs that reinforce that identity by, as Thomas Locke hypothesized, legitimately inserting some of themselves into these appropriated items.
Bartel points out that words are replete with meaning and context that often change over time. Spurs supporters calling themselves a Yid in 2015 are not able to perfectly recreate the same Jewishness as a fan calling himself a Yid in 1973. Many decades have passed since the first Tottenham Yids starting spreading their type of Jewishness around White Hart Lane and a new generation of Yids are carrying on today’s Jewishness. But yet it is still dangerous to ascribe this identity to all Spurs fans. Some supporters, like Bartel, still have a difficult time in appropriating this term for themselves. There are examples of what Bartel calls “charged terminology,” loaded words that have gone through a change in meaning. Words such as “queer” and “nigger” have been transformed from their once derogatory definitions to become, albeit to different levels of admissibility, acceptable in certain areas of society.\textsuperscript{133}

Ultimately, the article summarizes that the adoption of Yid Culture needs to occur at a personal level. To some, it might not be enough to simply participate in the symbolic practice of Tottenham Jewishness, one may feel that in order to fully integrate into the group is to become a Yid. For this is yet another existential dilemma. To reap all of the benefits of belonging to a group, identity, esteem, protection, etc. does not necessarily depend on appropriating the Star of David or becoming a Tottenham Yid. Inherent to the participation in this new type of Jewishness is the knowledge that outside groups will not fully understand Tottenham’s discourse in the way that it is being presented in which case the consequences promise to offer further abuse toward all Tottenham fans. Forms of abuse cannot discriminate between Spurs fans proclaiming to be Yids and those who

\textsuperscript{133} Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” 238.
refrain from adopting this type of identity. Standing up for the abused Jewish community of post-war Tottenham is much different than proclaiming oneself as part of the Yid Army today. The term “Yid” does mean something different to today’s North Londoners than it did to the GI Generations. All of this serves as context for the future decisions for current and future Tottenham football supporters. When opposing supporters come to White Hart Lane and chant “Who are ya?” how will a fan answer? Will they be Spartacus? Will they be a Yid?
CHAPTER SIX: SYNTHESIS

Together, the cases of Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur present a great challenge to social scientists, particularly on the topics of identity, in-group/out-group relationships, morality, and what it means to have agency when appropriating symbols and speech. Individually, the supporters of these two clubs have used appropriation techniques to carve two vastly different types of Jewishness discourse. With a heterogeneous mixture of local, national, regional, religious, political, and sporting identities, Ajax and Spurs supporters have created something so unique in that their discourses are the intersections of a seemingly disparate set of themes.

It has been said many times already, but it bears repeating. Not every member of either fan base participates in or identifies themselves as Superjoden or as a Yid. Ajax and Spurs are not Jewish clubs but rather clubs for Jews as Uri Coronel put it. Opposition fans who aim to insult and abuse based on the misguided notion that these football supporters are either religiously or politically Jewish are very much misinterpreting the discourse of these supporters. On one hand, this is an understandable conclusion based on the shared symbols and songs between Judaism and these football clubs, but the Superjoden and Yid phenomena are now decades old and a fresh investigation of these problematic identities could help heal old wounds and prevent new ones from opening.
Neither Ajax nor Tottenham were established as Jewish teams. In fact, Jewishness was not encouraged at either club in the beginning. It is for this that the discourse of “reclaiming” their Jewish identities is incorrect. It is not if opposing supporters were given Jewishness from Amsterdam and London, and hurled it back like an unwanted item, both clubs applied the principles of appropriation to acquire their forms of Jewishness in their infancy. Both clubs were also located in the Jewish quarter or near a heavily Jewish community as well. It would be unfair to attribute their Jewishness to this fact alone since many other clubs around Europe (even in London) had situations that closely resembled this, but nevertheless, these communities added to the discourse of Jewishness at Ajax and Tottenham. It is also unfair to amalgamate Ajax and Spurs as Jewish clubs that represent their Jewishness in the same way or as if the supporters of these clubs were motivated together. The following section will compare how the songs and symbols presented by the fans of these clubs reflect types of Jewishness found in European football today.

**Songs and Chants**

Songs and chants are very common not only inside football grounds around the world but in all sporting events. The Olympic Anthem has been played during the opening and closing ceremonies since 1960 and in America, all major sporting events begin with the National Anthem.\(^{134}\) Singing is an easy way to show support for the club with many fans believing that with their help from the seats, the players on the pitch might perform better. Fans are thus acting as active agents in the overall success of their

clubs. Singing in the stands is also a way of creating stronger ties, unity and brotherhood within the supporters themselves. Singing or chanting in unison confirms group membership and clearly sets groups intentions apart from outside groups. In Amsterdam and London, supporters of two clubs go much further than singing “go team” or “I hope we win,” they create and maintain distinct identities which share many of the same characteristics of ethnic group formation.

On one hand, Ajax and Tottenham supporters seem to sing and chant in a fairly similar style. By proclaiming “Ja daar wonen Superjoden” and “Yid Army,” these supporters are letting outside groups know who they are facing on a given day. More importantly though is the self-proclamation in terms of its in-group building properties. These two supporters groups formed their Jewishness in response to threats on their fans from the outside. These songs reflect Henri Tajfel’s theory of intergroup conflict that suggests singing together creates a sense of in-group belonging which is so strong that individuals will respond to threats to the group even if that threat does not directly affect the individual.

Together, these clubs’ supporters have also participated in what Umberto Eco coined as “rhetorical code-switching.”¹³⁵ This is an idea which describes the appropriation of literary devices and transforming its meaning, not just in the definition of a term but also in the entire cultural representation of the acts associated with it. Ajax and Tottenham have switched the codes of these terms by injecting themselves and their own meaning into them. These meanings are, at least initially, hidden from the view of

¹³⁵ Efron, “When Is a Yid Not a Jew?,” 237.
outside parties which creates an environment of clouded judgment and misunderstanding. Without exploring the history and context surrounding the Superjoden and Yid Army, recommendations for action would be based on assumptions, stereotypes, and false truths. Certain supporters of these clubs are so heavily invested as Superjoden or Yids that an incorrect diagnosis of their discourse leads to potentially catastrophic consequences.

On the other hand, not all of the chants within the Amsterdam Arena and White Hart Lane provide the same message. Ajax supporters tie their Jewishness closer to religious and political Jewishness than do Spurs fans by singing the traditional Jewish song, Hava Nagila, and participating in the singing of the Israeli National Anthem in Haifa, Israel in 1999. However, their Jewishness represented by songs makes it clear that their fans have created a new type of Jewish group called the Superjoden whose primary objective is to show loyalty to a Dutch football club. Tottenham fans’ discourse as performed through song evokes feelings of kinship by rallying around the appellation Yids. Whether it is chanting the word by itself or proclaiming that their group of supporters is known at the Yid Army, Spurs have clearly defined the term as one of footballing Jewishness.

So why is it that opposing supporters still call for Ajax and Spurs fans to be sent “…to the gas” or that they are “…on their way to Auschwitz”? This response to discourse would make a great topic for another dissertation but for this discussion, it is enough to conclude that these opposing fans are not interpreting Ajax and Spurs’ Jewishness with the same codes as it is being created. Terms such as Superjoden and Yids are not constructed into the identities of what it means to support Ajax or Tottenham because
those fans are seeking to abuse or degrade the groups that identify with similar songs and symbols, but rather to celebrate their own history and kinship that makes being a member of that group so special.

The intersection where Superjoden and Yid culture meet the perceptions and responses to it by other fans can help teach us about intergroup relations and how parties perceive each other. An added benefit of being able to study this phenomenon within the sports world is that there will never be a shortage of confrontations, we know when they will take place, and the risk of violence is relatively low.

Images

In visual practice, Ajax supporters have the more diversified Jewishness of the two clubs. Their support is more likely to use the symbols of the Israeli flag and the Star of David. Amsterdam had the highest Jewish population of any pre-war European city and became known to Jews as “Mokum” which means safe haven in Yiddish. The connection between Amsterdam and the religious and political Jewish community is, in general, much closer than they are in London.

“We decided we were okay with Amsterdam being a Jew city and Ajax a Jewish club. At least, that was the story. We felt we were Jewish too. This may sound a bit silly perhaps, but it’s the glue holding us together, it’s what supporters binds. They sing about it, they wear the symbols, so it partly defines an Ajax supporter’s identity.”

Tottenham supporters show their Jewishness primarily with the adoption of a single term, ‘Yid.’ The Israeli flag and the Star of David are at times visible inside the grounds or outside the stadium, reconstructed on non-official merchandise, but they are

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136 Kuper, Ajax, the Dutch, the War.
137 Superjews, Nirit Peled.
not omnipresent in the way that they are in Amsterdam. When it comes down to which of
the two discourses are better known worldwide, Tottenham’s Yid Culture easily triumphs
over the Superjoden. The English Premier League is much more popular, profitable, and
publicly prolific than the Dutch top flight. €7.22 billion worth of television rights alone
over the next four years shows that the English league is only growing in popularity.
Rightly or wrongly, this spike in popularity is only going to serve to magnify the
Jewishness discourse around Tottenham. Unless those viewers who are new to the sport
learn the history of the club rather than passively associating them as the “Jewish Club,”
the problems of multiple interpretations of discourse that lead to confusion and
sometimes abuse, will continue in perpetuity.

Supporters in Amsterdam are extremely connected to their Jewishness and are not
afraid to make a visual spectacle of it. Of either team, the single greatest visual showing
of the club’s Jewishness came when Ajax fans unfurled a gigantic Israeli flag in the
stands of their stadium just prior to their 2003 Champions League match against Valencia
CF. Measuring over 300 meters squared, the flag was a powerful message to the world
(since the important match was highly televised) that Ajax supporters had something to
do with the Jewish community, even if their specific Jewishness discourse was not made
clear to the casual fan viewer at the time. On any other occasion, it is common to see
much smaller Israeli flags flying in the stadium. Aesthetically, the blue and white flag
seems even more prominent because it is set against the red and black club colors of Ajax
supporters. Seeing this, the casual fan might think that Ajax’s supporters are showing
their support for the Israeli state in a political sense. Whether this is what an individual
fan feels is unknown. Inside the Amsterdam Arena, the flag is a symbol of club support that shares meaning with religious Jews as well as Superjoden. The flag itself appropriated from the Jewish state, Ajax fans even refer to the Star of David positioned on the flag as the Ajax Star.

In London, the occasional Israeli flag is visible but to a much lesser extent than in Amsterdam. Spurs supporters rely on the English flag to display their Jewishness. Incorporating symbols of Englishness, local pride, and Yid culture on the English national flag is the typical medium for their fan’s Jewishness discourse to be visually displayed. As mentioned before, Spurs supporters show their Jewishness primarily through the use of the Y-word. This word is visually displayed on shirts, flags, pins, scarves, stickers, and just about anything else that can be printed on. Symbols like these make transmitting discourse much easier. Simply wearing a shirt emblazoned with “Yid Army” allows for a supporter to further discourse unconsciously while performing other tasks. Yid culture is woven into the identity of the club through these symbols and images. Of course, not all Spurs fans proclaim themselves to be Yids. Some may even only identify as Yids inside the stadium. In England and the Netherlands where the national sport is football, one’s affiliation to a football club carries a greater salience toward their identity in the United States for example. So much to the point that individual traits about their personality can be assumed by who they support.

In general, an individual’s primary identity is tied to their race or ethnicity. These feelings can be so strong that many are willing to fight to protect them. Addressing issues as serious as these within the context of sports may seem silly and unnecessary to some,
but not to Sir Alex Ferguson. Sir Alex is one of the most respected and admired managers in club football history. He managed Manchester United, one of the biggest clubs in the world for 26 years. In an interview with Kick It Out, Sir Alex described a way in which footballers had a vehicle to educate and change the face of racism in the league.

“Football is the best vehicle to handle most ills in the world, simply because it's the most participatory sport in the world, and it's the most keenly watched sport in the world. It creates a fervour among fans, and people's identities are interwoven into a club, from their grandfather to their father. It can be the most dominant part of people's lives, the whole strength of their life can be in the football ground. To young kids, footballers are heroes, and if heroes are saying, "racism, I'm not into that, I respect everyone", it has an effect. Football is the strongest vehicle in the world.”

Here, Ferguson is alluding to a point that some would not take seriously enough. He is saying that sport offers a platform which is underutilized for analyzing and addressing social identity issues. In general, sporting events offer researchers a relatively low-risk environment for studying clashes between identities that are very deeply held. Injected with historical context and sponsored by localities small and large, football identities specifically have the possibility of acting as valuable case studies for which larger identity clashes can benefit from. Identity issues are not the only type of conflict that could benefit from analysis through sports. For every Superjoden and Yiddo, there is another group who identifies with a political movement or ideology. One such example is found in the fans of two rival Scottish sides. Supporters of Rangers Football Club present themselves as supportive of the Protestant and Unionist communities in Scotland, as well

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as in Northern Ireland. Celtic Football Club’s support demonstrates their identity with symbols of Catholicism, Irish nationalism and Republicanism.  

Moving into the future, it helps to understand the vehicle in which these identities are being displayed. Football, as well as many other sports, presents a fortuitous venue for the study and eventual resolution of abuse based on socially constructed identities. Nelson Mandela was one of the greatest peace activists and conflict resolvers in modern history. Mandela believed that the power of sports was underutilized and could be used as a tool for creating a more peaceful world. In 2000, at the Laureus World Sports Awards in Monaco, Nelson Mandela delivered a powerful speech that spoke to the connection between sports and society.

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.”

Mandela played a key role in bringing the 1995 World Cup of Rugby to South Africa, the first major sporting event hosted in the country since the ending of Apartheid, for two major reasons. First, he wanted to show to the world that his rainbow nation was a nation ready to participate on the world stage. Secondly, he wanted the people of his own country to come together under a united symbol, the new national flag. Rugby was considered the game for whites where football was the black man’s sport. Mandela was able to use the World Cup to create solidarity between two racially diverse populations in order to support South Africa’s national rugby team, the Springboks.

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Religious and political abuse is definitely not confined to football, but bigotry and prejudice continue to rear their ugly heads from time to time. There is a wider context when it comes to football. For decades, abuse in football has been seen as acceptable. Some religiously Jewish individuals who have never been to a football match may be stunned to hear a stadium full of supporters chanting the Y-word. Would these people be any less stunned to hear chants about Emmanuel Adebayor and how he should have been the one shot in Angola? What about chants making fun of the 96 individuals that lost their lives on April 15, 1989, at the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough stadium?141

Both Ajax and Tottenham supporters have created similar but unique identities in the wake of anti-Semitic abuse hurled at their supporters. The socially constructed identities have taken the form of a new type of Jewishness by appropriating Jewish songs and symbols over the years in an effort to protect the small percentage of their fan bases that identify as religiously or politically Jewish. Based on the discourse coming from Ajax and Spurs supporters, some opposing fans have constructed a discourse of their own, one that assumes that all Ajax and Spurs fans are defined by the traditional definitions of Jewishness and, therefore, prone to anti-Semitic abuse. As easy as it may be to dismiss the notion that opposing supporters would conclude a whole set of fans could be defined as Jewish, the vile abuse that occurs inside the Ajax Arena and at White Hart Lane confirm this assumption.

Discourse, the way that Ajax and Tottenham supporters show their Jewishness, is shown in many ways. From flying the Israeli national flag, renaming the Star of David the ‘Ajax Star,’ to adopting a Yiddish word for ‘Jews’ as the term used to self-identify as a Spurs fan, traditional Jewishness has been given a footballing makeover to create one of the most fascinating and complex phenomena in sports. These cases involve more than just a few parties. Ajax and Spurs’ fans are not homogeneous groups, likewise, neither are opposition groups. One also has to consider those who identify by the traditional religious and political definitions of Jewishness. Some members of these groups are not very happy that their symbols and songs are being used by, in their eyes, non-Jews who are involved in resurrecting past traumatic experiences. The closer that these cases are examined, the more complex the issues become.

The role that sport plays in society should not be discounted and neither should the possibility of using sport to solve issues pertaining to culture, identity, and politics. Supporters groups construct identities that combine fandom and real world elements to create uniquely held worldviews. Using the regularity of sporting events, the vast amount of money and resources available, as well as the enormous reach of sport, millions of people can be shown the messages of love, cooperation, and tolerance that would serve to make the world a better place to live. The challenge remains to convince those who believe that sports are not an important part of everyday life or that sports can actually enact social change in society. This process promised to be lengthy and difficult. There are many roadblocks and obstacles to overcome. To change something, one has to first understand it. This research has only begun to scratch the surface of Jewishness.
constructed by the supporters of two European football clubs, further exploration and recommendations are required.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research primarily deals with identity; how it is created, maintained, and presented for others to see. A person’s identity helps to explain who they are, how they act, and many other elements in between. Sometimes identities are predetermined but sometimes a person is in control of determining their identity. In Amsterdam and London, two groups of football supporters have taken the latter option and constructed identities that have proved controversial for decades now. These identities have appropriated pieces from different types of Jewish culture to create uniquely related, independently Jewish, football supporter identities. Ajax Amsterdam and Tottenham Hotspur are not football clubs from Israel nor do they follow the Judaic faith, but yet they are known to football fans all over the world as Europe’s two biggest Jewish clubs.

To be clear, Ajax and Tottenham are not Jewish clubs in the sense of religious or political Jewishness, they are only Jewish in the way that they have constructed their own identities. This research was itself constructed in a way that outlines the theoretical evidence that underpins the analysis of two independent case studies. Ajax and Tottenham’s Jewishness emerged over time from a certain context, history, and remains fluid to this day. The agenda of this research was to help answer the questions: How did Jewishness become an option for group identification? Who gets to (re)produce Jewishness? By appropriating Jewish culture, have these things become part of the club’s
culture or do they remain borrowed? In order to answer these, theories of appropriation, social construction, and agency were presented.

By determining what could be appropriated, the research discovered that these clubs, according to John Locke, were justified in their usage of songs and symbols that had previously been used by other groups by inserting part of themselves into these symbols. Social construction theory illuminated the ways in which groups created unique identities and how those identities helped shield the group from outside abuse. This section also helps to explain how individual human behavior changes with group membership; that individuals will act on behalf of another group member who is in danger, even if there is no danger to the first individual. Also in the literature review was a section on agency, the ability of an individual to act independently of structural limits. This research showed that Ajax and Tottenham fans do not always have the agency needed to practice their Jewishness. While individual fans, confined by their experiences, cultural norms, morals, and other group affiliations, are free to choose whether or not they identify as Superjoden or Yids, structural oppression for the league structure or state laws place limits on their agency. Finally, the literature review concludes with a section on what it means to be Jewish. Most would consider a Jewish individual to be either a practitioner of Judaism or a citizen of the Jewish state of Israel. Through examinations of these two forms of Jewishness, this research concludes that footballing Jewishness is no less constructed nor legitimate than other forms of being Jewish.

Investigation of any one topic alone runs the risk of concluding that the topic is a one-off, unique phenomenon that cannot be compared to another phenomenon. This is
why this research chose to move forward with a comparative case study of two clubs that are seen to have appropriated similar symbols from a similar source. Data for this research comes from the way these two supporters groups talk about and present their identity for the world to see. Through their discourse, these fans are constantly maintaining, presenting, and reconstructing their identity in real time. Discourse analysis allows for those who claim a certain identity to be in charge of telling the story. It was simply the goal of this paper to analyze the way in which these fans have and continue to present themselves rather than to make a claim as to whether or not these fans are Jewish in a religious or political sense. Speaking on behalf of a group runs the risk of presenting information that was incorrectly interpreted. Ajax and Tottenham’s opposition support has demonstrated this by continuing to hurl anti-Semitic slur at these groups that prove not only bigoted and racist, but misinformed.

Another way in which Jewishness discourse in football is exacerbated is in the way the media presents skewed stories into clusters of half-truths and exaggerated details. Alternatively, stories that are presented on behalf of only one of the participating parties fails to shed light on the entire context of why all of the parties were or are behaving in a certain way. It is often the case too that there is a lack of space or time in which to properly educate an audience properly on the background and context of the story. The words, photographs, and graphics used by media present the information that authors, anchors, or editors think is important. This project is no different. Aside from simply presenting information about this issue, the author had to make decisions about what information would be presented and how it was to be organized for the reader.
There is a danger of presenting the information in a way that only speaks to one side of the story. Recognizing that during a war, for example, casualties occur on both sides, helps to remind the author that the appropriation of Jewish songs and symbols affects more than just those football supporters doing the appropriating. There is a wider Jewish community that feels as though something is again being stolen from them, something that reminds them of a time when an entire generation was stolen. Therefore, arguing for the creation of a new type of Jewishness runs the risk of alienating those who identify with other forms of Jewishness. The consequences of such actions would suggest a hierarchy of identities which is not what the fans of Ajax and Tottenham have attempted to produce. While this study has heavily criticized the actions of those supporters who hurl anti-Semitic slurs at football matches, it has not argued that any other forms of Jewishness are invalid or less legitimate than before. However, this study does recognize that while those responsible for appropriating Jewish cultural items into their club’s identity have promoted a favorable representation their type of Jewishness within their in-group, certain out-groups who also identify as Jewish have not fully embraced this new identity group.

The problems that these identities face is that in order to become legitimate throughout society, parties and out-groups are required to confirm their existence through the process societal integration. One benefit of this research is that it serves to create a conversation about the ways in which vulnerable populations can use the same means of appropriation to combat negative stereotypes within vulnerable or powerless populations. For instance, the general discourse coming from the media regarding the ongoing
migrant/refugee crisis in Europe and the Middle East attributes negative qualities and stereotypes to those trying to find a better life. It would be fascinating to discover ways in which these populations could appropriate different symbols or identities that would help improve their image as a burden on society to one that acknowledges their sacrifices and encourages more humane treatment for vulnerable populations. The same people who declare that something needs to be done to help migrant populations all over the world but refuses to open his own borders, is the same type of person who promotes acceptance for Ajax and Spurs fans to self-identify with their own Jewishness but still hurls anti-Semitic slurs at the entire fan base.

Yet there are still individuals who are hung up on the idea that Ajax and Tottenham cannot be Jewish clubs because they have not always been owned or operated by Jewish individuals. Although Tottenham is currently owned and operated by religiously Jewish individuals, club owner Joe Lewis and club chairman Daniel Levy, this is not the type of Jewishness that the supporters are practicing.\(^\text{142}\) It is more often that you hear people on the outside trying to define what these two clubs are not rather than acknowledging all of the complex ways in which a club’s supporters can and do identify as Jewish. Whether or not one considers Ajax or Spurs to be Jewish, there is no question that these clubs are Jewish friendly; they practice their form of Jewishness in their own unique ways. The goal of trying to figure out what is going on within the discourse of these two groups is to understand what context and history in order to reduce violence,

hatred, and abuse. It has been said that the continuation of the Jewish discourse of these supporters will only encourage further anti-Semitic abuse, which is wrong. That would be the same as saying that a woman is asking to be raped because she is wearing a short skirt. It’s wrong. Personal attacks and anti-Semitic abuse based on historical events should not be tolerated. There is no place for this type of rhetoric in the world, and especially in sports. Responding to racially and religiously charged abuse seems to be what led Ajax and Tottenham to adopt their discourses of Jewishness in the first place. The discourse coming from the supporters of Ajax and Tottenham tells us that their Jewishness was born out of a response to anti-Semitic abuse which, over time, became an embraced identity of the supporters. Wearing their Jewishness like a badge of honor.
APPENDIX A

Ajax Songs:

_Waar komen Joden toch vandaan?_

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Zrr-qWKmwc

_Wie niet springt is geen Jood_

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdpO-BUATTs

_Joden..._

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiPLujGAhk4

_Hamas, Hamas Juden ins gas!_

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7Mi5VZJLzI
APPENDIX B

Ajax Image one: Tattoo

![Tattoo Image](www.ajaxmuseum.nl)

Ajax Image two: Israeli Flag

![Israeli Flag Image](www.ajaxmuseum.nl)
Ajax Image three: Rob van der Zande

Ajax Image four: Hat
APPENDIX C

Tottenham Songs:

*Yiddo, Yiddo - Yiddo, Yiddo*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75oMOgv-uGk

*We’ll sing what we want*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEcMYuI8CoA

*Spurs are on their way to Wembley (Ossie’s Dream)*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3Pw2R9wnaI

*Spurs are on their way to Auschwitz, (Sieg Heil)*
N/A

Hissing…
N/A
APPENDIX D

Tottenham Image one: Memorabilia

Tottenham Image two: Tour Flag
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BIOGRAPHY

Jared Jack Purkey grew up in Chula Vista, California where he graduated from Bonita Vista High School in 2004. He received his Bachelor of Arts from George Mason University in 2014. Inspired to travel the world, he chose to study abroad in Malta where he received a dual Master’s in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security offered by George Mason University in cooperation with the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies at the University of Malta in 2015. He has visited 26 states within the United States and 13 countries on three continents.