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COMMUNITY POLITICS IN LIVERPOOL AND THE GOVERNANCE OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY*

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ABSTRACT. *This article studies the political significance of the schism that occurred at Liverpool's single professional football club in 1892 and which led to the incorporation of two clubs, Everton FC and Liverpool FC. Significantly, the management and direction of professional football had become bound up with community politics and identity at a time of important change in municipal politics when the tories' ascendancy faced a Liberal challenge partly predicated on the success of a virulent moral crusade over the influence of alcohol, social decay, and corruption in local government. At its simplest, the dispute at the club concerned allegations of commercial exploitation by the largest financial stakeholder. More fundamentally, rival factions were championing competing models for the role they believed a successful football club should be performing within the community which, in turn, embraced attempts by the political parties to engage male, working-class voters. Interestingly, the schism was* within *Protestant ranks for, despite the prominence often assigned to the role of sectarianism in Liverpool politics, differences between Catholics and Protestants played very little part in the dispute. This case study highlights the complexity of Liverpool political activities and alliances and reveals the importance of a multi-layered interplay of local and national issues.*

The early 1890s was a period of significant change in Liverpool municipal politics, with the local tory ascendancy of over thirty years' standing facing a serious challenge from the Liberal party. For some years, unreformed ward representation and large-scale out-migration from the town had threatened the tories' hold on power, but it was the voters' concerns over the drink problem and over the efficiency and probity of the incumbent administration that provided the fiery substance of debate that swung the political pendulum towards the Liberals.

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In this article we use a novel prism through which to view Liverpool municipal political forces in play at this time of flux: by examining issues of political conflict and community identity as revealed in the contemporary crisis affecting one of the city's most important social institutions, its professional football club, Everton FC. Significantly, the dispute at the club was rooted in local political rivalries and it provides a fascinating case study of the complex, multi-layered, and interconnected forces comprising the political and community dynamic. The study of the Everton dispute provides us with a rich, complex set of interrelated social and political forces at play in a major provincial centre. The particular manifestation of some of those forces may have been peculiar to the locality but it is equally clear that most of the political preoccupations in the city at that time (temperance, administrative probity, party engagement with the mass electorate, and Home Rule) were also those that occupied the national political scene and it is the interplay between local and national issues that provides a fuller picture of community politics. Interestingly, one important political aspect that was notable by its absence from the dispute was sectarianism between Catholics and Protestants. On the face of it, this seems surprising as within the historiography of Liverpool politics sectarianism has been given a prominent role, especially in attempts to assert an 'exceptional' nature for the city's municipal politics. However, despite the high profile and the bitterness of the dispute, the question of Catholicism was not a defining issue in the football crisis – indeed, a split *within* Protestant ranks over the drinks issue was to be the decisive one.

I

It was during the 1880s and 1890s that association football became established as a regular mass spectator sport in Britain, and Liverpool was one of the important provincial centres in which professional football emerged. An Everton football club had been established as a small chapel team in 1878, it became a founder member of the Football League in 1888 and, indeed, first won the championship in 1890–1.[1] By the early 1890s, however, the club was in serious difficulties, experiencing a traumatic internal schism that tore through its management and ownership. The outcome was the creation of a new club in addition to the existing one, resulting in the emergence of the two famous football clubs, Everton FC and Liverpool FC.

Our interpretation of these events emphasizes the importance of studying significant sporting organizations within their contemporary cultural, social, and political contexts. By the 1890s football clubs had become important foci of urban community identity, evoking a loyal following from the mainly male fan base.[2]

[1] On the early, pre-professional history see E. Midwinter, *Old Liverpool* (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp. 131–48; D. France and D. Prentice, *Virgin blues: 100 seasons at the top* (Witham, Essex, 2003).

[2] R. J. Holt, 'Football and the urban way of life in nineteenth-century Britain', in J. A. Mangan, ed., *Pleasure, profit, proselytism: British culture and sport at home and abroad, 1700–1914* (London, 1988), pp. 67–85; T. Mason, 'Football, sport of the north?', in J. Hill and J. Williams, *Sport and identity*

Professional clubs already attracted immense public interest, not only in the clubs' performance on the field but also in matters pertaining to the ownership and management of clubs. Avid coverage in local newspapers both reflected and fed that interest. It is not surprising, therefore, that politicians and other local dignitaries should be drawn to such high profile organizations. The 1867 Reform Act had, of course, extended the franchise, effectively ushering in the age of mass politics and, eventually, transforming the organization of political parties. The Act had given skilled and semi-skilled male artisans the vote and it appears that it was just that type of constituent who could afford the admission fee and leisure time to attend regular professional football matches.[3] On Merseyside during the late 1890s we estimate that average gate attendance at both Everton FC and Liverpool FC was about 10,000–15,000 each.[4] By comparison, the constituency size of the largest local authority ward, also called Everton, was about 23,000; whereas inner city wards had fewer than 2,000 constituents in the early 1890s.[5] Undoubtedly, for local politicians an association with a soccer team that attracted the loyalty of a large number of fans offered the potential for media exposure to a big proportion of the local electorate.[6] By the late Victorian period, ownership and management of a successful club could be an important political prize.[7]

It is in this regard that the early history of professional football clubs in Liverpool is highly significant because the social and political frictions that existed in the management and ownership of the original, single club provide an important insight into the nature of community politics. In the build-up to the

in the north of England (Keele, 1996), pp. 41–52. Also see J. Hill, 'Rite of spring: cup finals and community in the north of England', in ibid., pp. 85–111. See R. W. Lewis, 'The genesis of professional football: Bolton–Blackburn–Darwen, the centre of innovation', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 14 (1997), pp. 21–54, on developments at an early northern club. For a brief overview see D. A. Reid, 'Playing and praying', in M. Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge urban history of Britain*, II: *1840–1950* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 772–6; and J. Hill, *Sport, leisure and culture in twentieth-century Britain* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 24–8. More generally, see P. M. Young, *A history of British football* (London, 1968); and J. Walvin, *The people's game* (London, 1975). The 'official' story of the FA appears in A. Gibson and W. Pickford, *Association football and the men who made it* (4 vols., London, 1906).

[3] Income levels appear to have been a significant factor in the general absence of the unskilled in the early phase of professional club support – D. Russell, *Football and the English* (Preston, 1997), pp. 64–8; and T. Mason, *Association football and English society, 1863–1915* (Brighton, 1980), pp. 153–6.

[4] Based on a survey of match reports in the *Liverpool Football Echo*, *Liverpool Courier*, and *Liverpool Daily Post*. The average weekly home gate was to rise to 20,000–24,000 in the years immediately prior to the First World War. On national attendance figures see B. Tabner, *Through the turnstiles* (Harefield, 1992).

[5] N. Collins, *Politics and elections in nineteenth-century Liverpool* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 214, 217.

[6] For a careful analysis of the relationship between football and politics see N. Fishwick, *English football and society, 1910–1950* (Manchester, 1989), pp. 136–52. For regional studies see G. P. T. Finn and R. Guilianotti, *Football culture: local conflicts, global visions* (London, 2000); G. Jarvies and G. Walker, *Sport in the making of the Scottish nation: ninety minute patriots?* (Leicester, 1994); and A. Bairner and S. Shirlow, 'Territory, politics and soccer fandom in Northern Ireland and Sweden', *Football Studies*, 3 (2000), pp. 5–26.

[7] One contemporary example is that of the midlands small arms manufacturer, George Kynock, Unionist MP for Aston, 1886–1991, and president of Aston Villa FC. See J. Tann, 'Kynoch, George', in *Dictionary of business biography*, I (London, 1986), pp. 630–2.

schism, the football club's affairs became embroiled in local political dynamics: the divide between Liberals and Conservatives, between Nonconformists and Anglicans, and between the temperance movement and the brewing interest. They also reveal tensions over how best to secure the working-class vote. On the apparently narrower issues of club governance, the main friction that emerged was that between the retention of an autocratic ownership structure and the creation of a more democratic one but, in fact, that dispute, too, closely mapped the socio-political divide. We examine these issues in depth in the rest of the article.

II

The timing of the dispute at the Everton FC coincided with a growing intensity in political agitation over the drinks issue at both national and local level, and political differences over the moral and social effects of alcohol were central to the dispute at the club. Through the 1880s agitation for reform of the licensing laws had become much more proactive.[8] In particular, with refreshed evangelical zeal, the United Kingdom Alliance (established in 1853) galvanized opinion and lobbied hard for legislative change to restrict the trade in alcohol.[9] The Alliance's official position was to support any political candidate that endorsed its policy of 'local veto' but, as another election approached in the early 1890s, the Alliance moved decisively closer to the Liberals.[10]

The disarray caused in Gladstonian circles by the scandal enveloping Parnell following the O'Shea divorce case of 1890 (and the subsequent Bassetlaw by-election defeat) provoked an anguished, if forlorn search amongst the leadership for policies that might broaden the party's appeal beyond the increasingly problematical Home Rule issue.[11] In 'panic, [in] reaction against reliance on Home Rule alone'[12] and in an attempt to placate anxiety amongst the party rank-and-file, the ageing Gladstone and his leadership endorsed the National Liberal Federation's radical Newcastle Programme of 1891. This was very much an omnibus programme and the party leadership did not commit itself to any particular order of priorities but, significantly, an important element of that programme was the adoption of the proposal to instigate the so-called 'local option' or 'local veto' which would give electors a vote on the granting of liquor licences in their own

[8] L. Lewis Shiman, *Crusade against drink in Victorian England* (London, 1988); B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (Keele, 1994).

[9] A. E. Dingle, *The campaign for prohibition in Victorian England: the United Kingdom Alliance, 1872–1895* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1980).

[10] R. Douglas, *History of the Liberal party* (London, 1971); C. Cook, *A short history of the Liberal party, 1900–1976* (London, 1976). D. A. Hamer, *The politics of electoral pressure: a study in the history of Victorian reform agitations* (Hassocks, 1977), pp. 237–67, reveals the nature of the complexities of promoting single issue politics with, for instance, the Irish question cutting across commitments to temperance and, on occasions, Gladstonian Liberals fielding brewers as parliamentary candidates.

[11] M. Barker, *Gladstone and radicalism* (Brighton, 1975), pp. 200–40; D. A. Hamer, *Liberal policies in the age of Gladstone and Rosebery: a study in leadership and policy* (Oxford, 1972).

[12] Ibid., p. 173.

localities.[13] This new Liberal programme immediately transformed the political status of the temperance question – from 'fad' to, apparently, party policy – and the United Kingdom Alliance began to campaign actively for any Liberal candidate supporting the Newcastle Programme.[14]

An important consequence of the Liberals' anti-drink stance was to reinforce the traditionally close ties between the brewing industry and the Conservatives. The drinks industry organized politically, campaigned against the Liberals, and lobbied Conservatives to protect its interests.[15] The improved prospects for local determination over the drinks issue fuelled further the zeal of anti-drink moral crusaders and, within municipal politics, brought a sharpened edge to the conflict between local politicians. Significantly for our study, the dispute over professional football in Liverpool was occurring at this moment of great ferment in the drinks debate.

Just as significant, the timing of the problems at Everton FC also coincided with a critical juncture in the municipal history of the city of Liverpool. The Conservative party had dominated both local and parliamentary representation since the late 1850s and the widening of the franchise in 1867 had made no difference to that dominance. However, by the late 1880s the combination of burgeoning population growth and the failure to implement local authority reform was threatening Conservative ascendancy.[16] Overcrowding and poor living conditions in the town centre, and better communications and extensive new residential building outside the old town, led to substantial migration to outer wards, but until 1895 there was no general change in the number of councillors representing each ward on the town council. The result was decidedly undemocratic. Moreover, the out-migrants seem to have been disproportionately English and Welsh Protestants. Politically, the outcome was favourable to the Liberals as by the 1880s many of the residents of the small inner wards were of Irish Catholic descent and more inclined to vote for the Home Rule Liberals. In contrast, the overwhelmingly Protestant and Conservative Everton ward (23,000 voters) could return only twice the number of local representatives as the tiny inner wards such as Lime Street (with fewer than 1,500 voters). '[T]he Tories were doomed by the growing inequality of the wards. Only the Scotland [a dockside area with heavy Irish Nationalist support] of the non-Conservative wards contained over two thousand two hundred and fifty voters, while the safe tory wards of West Derby, Everton, and the two Toxteths ranged between nine

[13] Although the National Liberal Federation's 1891 programme as a whole was later to be viewed in Liberal circles as an electoral liability, D. A. Hamer, *John Morley: Liberal intellectual in politics* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 262–84, shows that at the beginning of the 1890s leading Gladstonian Liberals were seriously seeking to broaden the party's policy programme.

[14] Hamer, *The politics of electoral pressure*, pp. 268–304, examines the nature of the relationship between the Alliance and the party subsequent upon the endorsement of the Newcastle Programme.

[15] G. W. Gutzke, *Protecting the pub: brewers and publicans against temperance* (Woodbridge, 1989); T. R. Gourvish and R. G. Wilson, *The British brewing industry, 1830–1980* (Cambridge, 1994).

[16] B. D. White, *A history of the corporation of Liverpool, 1835–1914* (Liverpool, 1951), pp. 100–2.

thousand six hundred and twenty three thousand.'[17] The Liberals were able to oppose democratic reform by arguing that rateable value – which was higher in the inner wards – should determine representation rather than a headcount.[18] They were to reap the gains in the 1890 local elections when they made significant progress. In 1892 they were to win the national election (albeit with an insufficient majority and dependent on the support of Irish members)[19] and, in Liverpool, they finally broke the Conservatives' thirty-four-year rule and took over the running of the town council (although this, in fact, was to last for only three short years, for reform of ward representation was finally introduced in 1895 and Conservative ascendancy was quickly restored at the municipal election of that year).

Apart from the effects of out-migration and unreformed ward representation, three further, interrelated, factors formed part of the dynamics of contemporary local politics: the temperance movement; the struggle to represent workingmen and win popular support; and the rivalry between Orangemen and Catholics – all are important to our assessment of the football dispute.

First, in the 1880s and 1890s there emerged a fairly clear party divide over temperance (although in terms of national policy neither the Liberal nor the Conservative party was to be fully captured by respective protagonists in the temperance divide).[20] Just as on the national scene, the Liverpool Conservatives were traditionally associated with the drinks trade (the local party hierarchy included such brewers as Archibald Salvidge, Robert Cain, and John Houlding), and their political opponents were not slow to highlight the link. Liverpool had become notorious for the number of bars and associated drunkenness,[21] and the Liberals were anxious to underscore the link between alcohol and perceived social decay and moral disorder in the inner and dockside wards. This argument was also consistent with Liberal views that social evils arose from individuals' failings rather than inadequate welfare provision, and therefore there was no need for an extension of local state services.

In this campaign the Liberals were able to draw on Liverpool's long, vibrant temperance tradition. Of the eighty-three temperance organizations officially represented at the 1884 National Temperance Congress, twenty-three had been drawn from a range of Christian groupings in the town[22] and, by the late 1880s, Liverpool, along with Sheffield, was home to the most militant of the United

[17] Collins, *Politics and elections*, p. 217.

[18] S. Davies, *Liverpool labour: social and political influences on the development of the Labour Party in Liverpool, 1900–1939* (Keele, 1996), p. 101.

[19] D. Brooks, 'Gladstone's fourth administration', in D. Bebbington and R. Swift, eds., *Gladstone centenary essays* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 225–8; E. F. Biagini, *Gladstone* (London, 2000), pp. 108–9.

[20] B. Harrison, 'State intervention and moral reform in nineteenth-century England', in P. Hollis, ed., *Pressure from without in early Victorian England* (London, 1974), pp. 295–6.

[21] C. F. Aked, *England free and sober* (Liverpool, 1897); R. A. Armstrong, *The deadly shame of Liverpool: an appeal to the municipal voters* (Liverpool, 1890).

[22] National Temperance Congress, *Annual report 1884* (Joseph Livesy Collection, University of Central Lancashire, Preston), p. 249; P. T. Winskill, *History of the temperance movement in Liverpool and district* (London, 1887), p. 41, cites amongst other Liverpool organizations, the Catholic League of the

Kingdom Alliance's local electoral associations.[23] Vociferous in its attack on what it saw as decades of Conservative misrule, the Liverpool temperance movement transformed the city's social and political landscape. The respectable classes' anxieties about the disorderly and degraded social conditions of the inner wards ensured a receptive audience for the temperance message. Although he acknowledges some uncertainty about the accuracy of contemporary crime figures, White has pointed out that to Liverpool residents those figures must have been startling:

> Liverpool, with a population which in 1875 amounted to about one-fortieth of the [country's] population … accounted … for exactly one-tenth of the recorded cases of indictable crime in the country, nearly one-twelfth of non-indictable offences in general, and over one-tenth of apprehensions for drunkenness.[24]

Richard Acland Armstrong's *The deadly shame of Liverpool: an appeal to the municipal voters* (1890) condemned the drinks trade, the connivance of the tory hierarchy and the evil consequences of alcohol. A Unitarian clergyman, Armstrong had launched the 'Purity Crusade' in 1889, arguing that poverty and crime were direct results of the evil of drink: 'This evil is *the knitting together of the wholesale liquor trade, of drunkenness, and of prostitution on an enormous scale, in one vast, compact interest, and the power which that interest has obtained within the governing bodies of Liverpool.*'[25] Temperance campaigners drew on anti-aristocratic and anti-Establishment sentiment,[26] condemning the tories on the local watch and licensing committees for protecting privilege and the drinks interests to the detriment of the town. The Liberals, who were closely associated with the town's Nonconformists, were able to benefit directly from this groundswell of popular agitation – they backed the 'Purity Crusade', attacking corruption and waste in local government and nurturing middle-class concerns over the breakdown of social relations, as temperance campaigners raised anxieties about the risk to communal health from unemployment and poverty, both of which were said to derive from alcohol abuse.[27]

Another important component of municipal politics was the fact that the 1867 and subsequent electoral reforms had made it essential for all parties to concern themselves with attracting the workingman's vote[28] and this aspect of

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Cross, the Wesleyan Methodist Temperance Union, the Church of England Total Abstinence Society, the Welsh Total Abstinence Society, and the Hibernian Total Abstinence Society.

[23] Hamer, *The politics of electoral pressure*, pp. 253–4.

[24] White, *Corporation of Liverpool*, p. 105.

[25] Armstrong, *The deadly shame of Liverpool*, p. 5.

[26] E. F. Biagini, *Liberty, retrenchment and reform: popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 175–9, explores the nature of the appeal of temperance campaigners.

[27] Collins, *Politics and elections*, pp. 153–64; P. J. Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism. a political and social history of Liverpool, 1868–1939* (Liverpool, 1981), pp. 97–152.

[28] For a careful, stimulating analysis of the rise of 'party' and the interrelationship between local and national preoccupations see J. Lawrence, 'The dynamics of urban politics, 1867–1914', in J. Lawrence and M. Taylor, eds., *Party, state and society: electoral behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 79–105.

contemporary politics became an important element in the football club dispute. By the last decades of the century Labour was making little impact in the city (although a Liverpool labour representation committee was to be set up in 1894), so the main confrontation was between Liberals and Conservatives.[29] One political battle line in securing the workers' votes was drawn over the Irish question, with the Gladstonian Liberals supporting Home Rule and the Conservatives countering with empire and unionism (in 1892, in fact, there was just one Liberal Unionist on the council). One serious long-term conundrum for the Liberals, however, was that their commitment to local government economies seemed to rule out an expansion of improved housing, education, and other social services that might appeal to the workingman voter. Liberal support for non-sectarian educational provision also threatened their Catholic support. Moreover, it is far from clear that they would have gained electorally from their anti-drink stance. By incorporating it into their 'Purity Crusade' they sought to broaden its appeal and the atmosphere of moral panic so engendered could have drawn in middle-class votes. However, Harrison argues that moral crusades in the period cut across social class divisions.[30] In terms of the mass vote, the pub and the consumption of alcohol performed a critical social function for many workingmen (including the Irish) – in reality, they were a significant feature of masculine identity and activity for a sizeable portion of the urban workforce.[31] Moreover, as Lawrence has shown, popular toryism was able to appeal to workers' sentiments by claiming to be defending the workingman's leisure pursuits against the interference of fanatical abstentionists,[32] 'as the champions of a traditional – not to say mythical – popular culture of "cakes and ale", manly sports and living for the moment'.[33] As we shall see, a conflict of this sort between popular toryism and Liberal temperance formed part of the dynamics of the Everton dispute.

Strategically, the Liverpool Conservatives under the leadership of Arthur Bower Forwood had taken an important step to attract workers' support by advocating 'Tory Democracy'. This involved an adherence to traditions of state and church but subtly blended it with a more pragmatic approach to dealing with social problems facing the respectable workingman – albeit that Forwood's expectation was that the workers would largely follow and obey their 'natural leaders', rather than initiate changes.[34] Organizationally, the Working Men's Conservative Association (WMCA) had been formed in Liverpool in the late

[29] Davies, *Liverpool labour*.

[30] B. Harrison, 'Religion and recreation in nineteenth-century England', *Past and Present*, 38 (Dec. 1967), pp. 112–16.

[31] J. Lawrence, 'Class and gender in the making of urban toryism, 1880–1914', *English Historical Review*, 108 (1993), pp. 629–52. Also see K. McClelland, 'Some thoughts on masculinity and the "representative artisan" in Britain, 1850–1880', *Gender and History*, 1 (1989), pp. 164–77.

[32] Lawrence, 'Class and gender'; J. Lawrence, *Speaking for the people: party, language and popular politics in England, 1867–1914* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 104–8, 125–6.

[33] Lawrence, *Speaking for the people*, p. 107.

[34] Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, pp. 41–52.

1860s and it continued to provide an influential workingman's voice within the tory apparatus into the twentieth century even though it remained separate from the Liverpool Constitutional Association, the party's ruling body.[35] In fact, the tory defeat in 1892 probably reinforced the local party leadership's long-term strategy of courting the workingman's vote as a defence against Liberal (and later Labour) advances. In contrast, the Liverpool Liberals remained socially aloof from the workingman and rarely involved him in organizational matters.[36] Indeed, an attempt to form a Working Men's Liberal Association in 1873 failed to attract the patronage of the town's Liberal elite and was disbanded within the year.[37] Moreover, subsequent attempts at local Liberal alliances with Labour were never congenial and were often very strained.[38]

Yet another important dimension to the local political context was the issue of sectarianism, especially frictions between Catholics and Protestants. The presence of a large Irish community meant, of course, that nationalist divisions over Home Rule remained prominent in the town. The O'Shea case notwithstanding, Gladstonian Liberals appealed directly to many Irish voters, although the impact of the Irish question on Liverpool politics could be more complicated, with Liberal unionists inclined to offer support to the tories and Irish Nationalists sometimes preferring, in predominantly Irish Catholic wards or constituencies, to promote their own candidates to those of the Gladstonian Liberals (most noticeably in the Scotland division which was represented for many years by T. P. O'Connor, unopposed by the Liberals).[39] The sectarian divide was compounded by the presence of a powerful unionist Orange Order which, with its strong Anglican credentials, was affiliated to the local Conservative Constitutional Association and had important links with the influential WMCA, which was also overtly

[35] M. Pugh, *The tories and the people, 1880–1935* (Oxford, 1985), p. 9. This book provides a considered analysis of continued Conservative success in attracting mass support through a study of the Primrose League. J. Smith, *The taming of democracy: the Conservative party, 1880–1924* (Cardiff, 1997), provides a more general perspective.

[36] Collins, *Politics and elections*, pp. 105–8.

[37] Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, pp. 16–17.

[38] J. Belchem, *Merseypride: essays in Liverpool exceptionalism* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 155–76; W. A. Hamling, *A short history of the Liverpool Trades Council, 1848–1948* (Liverpool, 1948); B. D. Rees, *Local and parliamentary politics in Liverpool from 1800–1911* (London, 1999); J. Smith, 'Labour tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', *History Workshop*, 17 (1984), pp. 32–53; and E. L. Taplin, 'The Liverpool Trades Council, 1880–1914', *Bulletin of the North West Labour History Society*, 3 (1976), pp. 10–16.

[39] For an in-depth account of the relationship between the Liverpool Liberal party and the Liverpool Irish Nationalists see B. O'Connell 'The Irish Nationalist Party in Liverpool, 1873–1922' (MA thesis, Liverpool, 1971). Also see T. Burke, *A Catholic history of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1910); Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism*; Collins, *Politics and elections*, pp. 153–7; Belchem, *Merseypride*, pp. 155–76; T. Lane, *Liverpool: city of the sea* (Liverpool, 1997), pp. 99–111; Rees, *Local and parliamentary politics*; D. A. Roberts, 'Religion and politics in Liverpool since 1900' (M.Sc.(Econ.) thesis, London, 1965), pp. 1–33. More generally, see C. C. O'Brien, *Parnell and his party, 1880–1890* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 104–5, 193–4; J. Denvir, *The Irish in Britain from the earliest times to the fall and death of Parnell* (London, 1892), pp. 287–8, 317–28; and C. H. D. Howard, 'The Parnell manifesto of 21 November, 1885, and the schools question', *English Historical Review*, 62 (1947), pp. 42–8.

anti-Catholic.[40] The political horizons of Liverpool Protestant workers are said to have embraced empire, anti-religious ritualism, and Unionism; and the local brand of 'Tory Democracy' seemed to offer them a means of instituting some essential social reform.[41] More fundamentally, it is sometimes argued that over the long term the sectarian divide amongst the working class – albeit partly explained by the port's labour market structure – stunted the development of radical municipal politics in the city, bestowing on Liverpool politics an 'exceptional' character in which the tories were able to maintain local dominance over a major urban municipality until the 1930s.[42]

There is no denying the existence of sectarianism at street level[43] and ethno-religious conflict undoubtedly left its imprint on the socio-political development of Liverpool.[44] However, Davies has questioned the validity of the prominence given to viewing Liverpool politics through the prism of Irish affairs.[45] He argues for a more multi-layered complex of forces influencing working-class politics and, in the context of the dispute at Everton FC, we would endorse his view that 'locality can never be seen as a self-contained entity, but rather as being linked to regional and national developments'.[46] One fact that is notable from our examination of the schism at Everton FC is that, though it was a very bitter dispute that revealed deep political differences, Catholic–Protestant sectarianism played a very minor role.[47] Our exhaustive researches into the schism at the club reveal no

[40] For a discussion of the influence of the WMCA on local Conservatism see B. Whittingham-Jones, *Down with the orange caucus* (Liverpool, 1936); idem, *The pedigree of Liverpool politics: white, orange and green*, (Liverpool, 1936).

[41] S. Salvidge, *Salvidge of Liverpool: behind the political scene, 1890–1928* (London, 1934), provides an insight into the link between anti-ritualism, 'Tory Democracy' and Conservative working-class support.

[42] Collins, *Politics and elections*; J. Smith, 'Class, skill and sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880–1914', in R. J. Morris, ed., *Class, power and social structure in British nineteenth-century towns* (Leicester, 1986), pp. 158–215; Smith, 'Labour tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool'; T. Gallagher, 'A tale of two cities: communal strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914', in R. Swift and S. Gilley, eds., *The Irish in the Victorian city* (London, 1985), pp. 106–29; P. F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 45–52; P. T. Phillips, *The sectarian spirit: sectarianism, society, and politics in Victorian cotton towns* (Toronto, 1982), pp. 140–1; and Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*. Belchem, *Merseypride*, also promotes the concept of Liverpool 'exceptionalism'.

[43] F. Neal, *Sectarian violence: the Liverpool experience, 1819–1914: an aspect of Anglo-Irish history* (Manchester, 1988).

[44] C. G. Pooley, 'Migration, mobility and residential areas in nineteenth-century Liverpool' (Ph.D. thesis, Liverpool, 1978), pp. 294–317; O'Connell 'Irish Nationalist Party in Liverpool'.

[45] Davies, *Liverpool labour*; also see R. S. W. Davies, 'Differentiation in the working class, class consciousness, and the development of the Labour party in Liverpool up to 1939' (Ph.D. thesis, Liverpool John Moores University, 1993).

[46] Davies, *Liverpool labour*, p. 47. On the role of sectarianism in working-class politics also see J. Bohstedt, 'More than one working class: Protestant–Catholic riots in Edwardian Liverpool', in J. Belchem, ed., *Popular politics, riot and labour: essays in Liverpool history, 1790–1914* (Liverpool, 1992), pp. 173–216; A. Shallice, 'Orange and green and militancy: sectarianism and working class politics in Liverpool, 1900–1914', *Bulletin of the North West Labour History Society*, 6 (1979–80), pp. 15–32.

[47] See F. Spiegl, *The Listener*, 97, 2 June 1977, pp. 716–17, for an expression of the contrary – though unsupported – claim that the likely impetus for the schism was a 'religious war' amongst club

evidence to support any suggestion that its origins lay in sectarian differences between Protestant and Catholic members. It is true that the man at the centre of the dispute, John Houlding, was a local tory dignitary who had the general support of the Orange-leaning WMCA and, of course, it is also true that in a general sense differences between Liberals and Conservatives over Home Rule remained important within local politics. However, in no other way did differences between Catholics and Protestants enter into the dispute. Throughout the dispute there was no concept of a Catholic faction facing a rival Protestant faction (or any intent to create distinct Catholic or Protestant clubs as happened in Glasgow). Indeed, amongst the ruling committee members of Everton FC there was just one Catholic (J. C. Baxter), the rest were Protestants.

Although derived in a different context, our evidence on the Everton dispute is consistent with Davies's view that the dynamics of community politics were perhaps more complex and multi-layered than the concentration on sectarianism might suggest. Certainly there were party issues, but there were also political influences that cut across party and class. As we have seen temperance was one of these and perhaps, too, was the appeal of football. The dispute at Everton FC shows that by the early 1890s the control and function of a professional football club was seen by rival political elites as part of the moral and political appeal to the wider community, and especially to the male working-class electorate. Everton FC was to become a battleground for competing political and moral concepts. On the Liberal, Nonconformist side, it was a vehicle to take forward appeals for moral discipline and the elimination of vice and corruption – in electoral terms it was certainly an appeal to the middle classes, but also to the 'respectable' workingman. The Conservative champion at the club carried the banner of tory popularism, appealing directly to workingmen by his support for suitable social welfare provision and by his adherence to Protestantism and Union, but also by the empathy engendered by his great involvement in local football and, indeed, his connection with the drinks trade. The football dispute, thus, reveals a complex, multi-layered and interconnected array of political influences at play in the Liverpool community of the early 1890s. The anatomy of the dispute supports Lawrence's general argument for the importance of the close interdependency between 'the "local" and the "national", "popular" and "elite"'[48] that existed in contemporary politics. The nature of the schism at the

members. There is a more commonly held view that Everton FC (the supposedly 'Catholic team') and Liverpool FC (the supposedly 'Protestant team') eventually became the standard bearers of distinctive ethno-religious communities during the first half of the twentieth century but evidence remains largely anecdotal – see T. Campbell, *Rhapsody in green: great Celtic moments* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 285–6; B. Clegg, *The man who made Littlewoods* (London, 1993), p. 183; Alan Edge, *Faith of our fathers* (London, 1997), pp. 96–9; J. E. Handley, *The Celtic story: a history of the Celtic football club*, (London, 1960), p. 27; Bill Murray, *The Old Firm: sectarianism, sport and society in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 96n; J. Williams et al., *Football and football hooliganism in Liverpool* (Leicester, 1987), p. 18.

[48] Lawrence, *Speaking for the people*, p. 63.

professional football club in Liverpool in the early 1890s cannot be understood outside of the broader political contexts already discussed.

III

Houlding, John (1833–1902), hotel proprietor and brewer, prominent in Everton public life; Guardian 1872; councillor 1884; member Everton Burial Board; on management committee Stanley Hospital; chairman Everton Conservative Association 1885–1902; potential parliamentary candidate; president Liverpool Carters Union; member Liverpool Land and House Owners Association; Lord Mayor 1897–8; Orangeman; Freemason; football enthusiast, playing key role in foundation of Liverpool F.C. and Everton F.C.; left £45,000.[49]

The success of the temperance movement's 'Purity Crusade' in Liverpool was important in the struggle for control of Everton FC. From the 1870s when the new residential area was first built, the district of Everton had strong temperance connections with its own Good Templar Lodges and Band of Hope Lodges.[50] In contrast, the club's chief financier, John Houlding, was a prominent brewer. Houlding was central to the frictions at Everton FC. He was a self-made man and – as the above biographical summary shows – a prominent local Conservative, councillor for the city's most populous ward, Everton, and by the late 1880s he was president and main financial backer of the football club. In particular, he owned the land at Anfield Road where Everton FC played their home matches from 1885.

Within the historiography of football Houlding has been portrayed as something of 'a villain'.[51] Although it is acknowledged that – then as now – the motivations for involvement in the governance of a football club would have been multi-faceted (enthusiasm for the game, sense of community service, local prominence and esteem, and so on), the main charge against Houlding is that he was seeking to gain financially from his association with the club and it was the antagonism thus generated amongst club members that led to the

[49] Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, p. 495. Also see B. G. Orchard, *Liverpool legion of honour* (Birkenhead, 1893).

[50] The early temperance influence was reinforced by the Welsh Nonconformist building contractors who constructed the suburban houses and prevented the opening of licensed premises in streets they controlled – see J. R. Jones, *The Welsh builder on Merseyside: annals and lives* (Liverpool, 1946), p. 32.

[51] T. Keates, *History of the Everton football club: 1878–1928* (Trowbridge, 1928); P. M. Young, *Football on Merseyside* (London, 1963); T. Mason 'The blues and the reds', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 134 (1983), pp. 119–20; R. Day, 'The motivations of some football club directors: an aspect of the social history of association football, 1890–1914' (MA dissertation, Warwick, 1976); and B. W. Richardson, 'The development of professional football on Merseyside' (MA dissertation, Central Lancashire, 1983). Amongst contemporary critical comment see *Liverpool Echo* (*LE*), 17 Oct. 1891, 'Everton football club: adjourned meeting of members', p. 1; *Liverpool Courier* (*LC*), 26 Oct. 1891, 'Mr Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 6; *Liverpool Daily Post* (*LDP*), 21 Oct. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and the Everton football club: defence of his actions', p. 3.

split.[52] However, while commercial considerations were not insignificant, it is our contention that an undue concentration on financial aspects of Houlding's relationship to the club detracts from the main causes of the schism because it fails to appreciate predominant cultural and political contexts.

The narrow financial allegations against Houlding relate both to his brewing interest and to his position as the club's landlord and creditor. Turning first to his brewing interest, there has been a general suggestion by Collins and Vamplew that in an era of increased competition in the drinks trade the need to 'communicate with their primary market of working class males'[53] was a significant factor in stimulating the brewing industry's interest in football clubs during this period. Critics of Houlding have taken a similar view, arguing that his involvement with the club was, in large part, motivated by the commercial possibilities it provided for the promotion of his brewing firm, Houlding's Sparkling Ales. The sale of this ale to a captive Anfield Road match-day market, and the increase in traffic at one of his nearby public houses, the Sandon Hotel (which was used both as the club's unofficial headquarters and a changing area for the team on matchdays), are said by his critics to have been central motives for Houlding's involvement with Everton FC.[54] However, it seems to us that the extent of any substantial exploitation of the club through Houlding's brewing interests is highly questionable. Our searches have revealed no evidence in the local licensing records of permission ever being granted for the sale of alcohol at the club's ground,[55] nor during the whole acrimonious, mud-slinging dispute was mention ever made by his opponents of Houlding's beer actually being supplied at the ground. Whatever Houlding's motives, it seems no alcohol was ever sold at the ground and, thus, the extent of any commercial exploitation would have been limited.

The same is true of allegations that Houlding used his position as landlord of the Anfield Road ground, and as overall creditor to the club, to extract undue revenues for himself.[56] We find instead that he provided the Everton club with essential funds in the critical first few years of its professional life and provided essential loans to enable it to build ground capacity and, thus, underpin its commercial viability. In particular, in 1885 Houlding provided a £6,000 loan to purchase the Anfield Road site and charged the club only a very modest interest rate of just 1·66 per cent per annum, raising it to 4 per cent per annum only in the

[52] Brief accounts of the split can be found in Mason, *Association football and English society*; Russell, *Football and the English*; Midwinter, *Old Liverpool*, ch. 8; and S. Tischler, *Footballers and businessmen: the origins of professional soccer in England* (New York, 1980).

[53] T. Collins and W. Vamplew, 'The pub, the drink trade and the early years of modern football', *Sports Historian*, 20 (2000), p. 11.

[54] Day, 'Football club directors', p. 58; Mason, 'Blues and reds', p. 110.

[55] Licensing records of the Liverpool City Petty Sessions: 'Register of Licences other than Victuallers, 1888–1892', ref. 347, JUS 1/3 – Liverpool Record Office (LRO); 'Register of Alehouse Licences, 1886–1892', ref. 347, JUS 1/1 – LRO.

[56] Of the critics see Keates, *Everton*, p. 37; Day, 'Football club directors', p. 59; Mason, 'Blues and reds', p. 110.

1888–9 season when Everton FC joined the inaugural Football League and, thus, began to be in receipt of regular and more substantial revenues.[57] To put the loan of £6,000 in context, it was reported in the local press that an earlier attempt by the club to raise that amount through public subscription raised the princely sum of just £11.[58] In reality, it was Houlding's money that made the purchase of the Anfield Road site possible. He similarly lent £2,000 for ground improvements essential to raising future revenue streams.[59] The 5 per cent per annum he charged on this five-year loan (1886–91) may have been irksome to some club members – and even to some later commentators – but a 5 per cent rate was the sort of rate being charged on medium-term loans by Liverpool mortgage agencies during the period 1885 to 1891 for money lent on the mortgage of freehold and leasehold property,[60] and Houlding received no collateral for his loan and was almost certainly undertaking a riskier project by bankrolling a fledgling football club.[61]

Overall assessment of whether or not Houlding's financial dealings with Everton FC were exploitative would depend very much on the yardstick used. The period of Houlding's involvement – and the financial backing he provided – was critical to the early success of the club but the game in the North was still on the cusp of professionalization. If the expectation is that early investors in professional football should not have received any financial reward, then Houlding failed to meet such a strict philanthropic threshold. However, by the standards of a more reasonable commercial criterion, there is no evidence of financial exploitation – he was a self-made businessman prepared to tie up a fair proportion of his assets in the promotion of a local football team, but one who expected modest financial rewards. Undoubtedly, financial matters formed an important part of the discourse throughout the dispute but we believe that the roots of the schism were deeply embedded in differences over community politics and culture. As we shall argue, the club crisis of 1891–2 can more realistically be presented as the culmination of a struggle for power and control of the club between rival political factions.

IV

Matters at the club came to a head in 1891 because the owner of land adjacent to the Anfield Road site invoked a contractual clause attached to the original contract of sale which, if implemented, would have destroyed the commercial

[57] *LC*, 22 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton election: Mr Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 4; similarly, see *LE*, 17 Oct. 1891, 'Everton football club: adjourned meeting of members', p. 1.

[58] *LC*, 22 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton election: Mr Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 4.

[59] *LDP*, 21 Oct. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and the Everton football club: defence of his actions', p. 3.

[60] Based on a sample of local press advertisements from the *LC* and *LDP*, 1885 to 1891. For contemporary comment that highlights the beneficial effects of Houlding's financial arrangements see *LC*, 22 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton election: Mr Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 4; *LDP*, 21 Oct. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and the Everton football club: defence of his actions', p. 3.

[61] According to Keates, *Everton*, p. 126, the club's annual income for the season prior to Houlding's financial commitment had been just £200.

viability of the club. The site had been acquired in 1885 (and subsequently purchased by Houlding) from Joseph Orrell jnr who had stipulated that the perimeter of the land belonging to his uncle, John Orrell (local brewer and building contractor), should be left free to allow for the possible future construction of an access road.[62] However, having acquired the site – and as business expanded – in early 1891 the club erected a covered spectator stand on the specified plot. Seeing the possibility of commercial gain perhaps, in August of that year John Orrell announced his intention of developing his own land and building an access road.[63] The Everton club was thus dealt a major commercial blow – either destroy its new stand and the potential revenue it represented or find a means of compensating Orrell.[64] Neither the club nor Houlding could avoid a thorough rethink of their business plans.[65]

The crisis was to reveal major differences within the ownership and management over concepts of the appropriate communal role of a successful football club and over the most appropriate governance structure to realize those concepts. Some club members believed that Houlding, as landlord and club president, should negotiate with Orrell and pay him a high enough rent for his land to persuade him to withdraw his own plans. For his part, Houlding favoured a modern, corporate solution. He saw the way forward through the flotation of the club as a limited company (an increasing phenomenon in a number of sectors of the contemporary economy, including brewing), with the money thus raised from the sale of shares to be used to secure the club's future use of the ground by purchasing both Orrell's and his own interests in the site (with a cash payment of £3,000 and the granting of a 4 per cent mortgage of a further £3,000 to Houlding, and cash of £1,875 and mortgage of £3,000 for Orrell).[66] Houlding argued that his plan would secure the club's location, allow for an expansion of ground capacity, and afford the possibility of creating an athletics track which

[62] It has been assumed in all other accounts that Joseph Orrell was John Orrell's brother. In fact, Joseph Orrell snr (John Orrell's brother) had died in 1883, leaving the bulk of his estate to his son (also named Joseph) and it was with the son that Houlding had arranged the contract. Source: 'Will and grant of Joseph Orrell', Registry of Grants, Wills and Probate Index, High Holborn, London, ref. MHP 1012/1013.

[63] *LC*, 22 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton election: Mr Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 4; also see *LC*, 23 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton football club', p. 7. W. R. Clayton, a key figure opposed to Houlding in the club dispute, acknowledged Orrell's role in creating the initial 'difficulties' – see *LE*, 26 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton football club and its landlords' (letter from 'Forward'), p. 2: 'Mr Orrell, whose property in a sense was lying idle through no fault of Everton Football Club, naturally wanted employment for the land the same as Mr Houlding and this supplies the crux of the whole position.'

[64] At the time Orrell was also realizing his assets in his brewing firm and in 1893 he retired to the Wirral – Orrell Brewing Syndicate, Co. File BT/31/4962/33147. PRO; *LC*, 30 Nov. 1905, 'Funeral of Mr Joseph Orrell Joseph', p. 9.

[65] Some of the historical accounts imply collusion between Houlding and Orrell, representing a 'brewing interest', to squeeze money out of the club but whatever evidence we have found suggests no such involvement by Houlding – see D. Kennedy, 'The division of Everton football club into hostile factions: the development of professional football organisation on Merseyside, 1878–1914' (Ph.D. thesis, Leeds, 2003).

[66] *Liverpool Athletics and Dramatic News*, 22 Sept. 1891, 'Everton football club', p. 4.

might enable the ground to be used in the close season.[67] Initially Houlding's suggestion seems to have appealed to the club's executive committee which approved it unanimously in early September 1891.[68] However, his victory was short-lived because at a specially convened Extraordinary General Meeting on 15 September a majority of the committee then voted against, and Houlding's scheme was lost.

Houlding's opponents argued that his proposals amounted to an exploitation of the club's difficulties, as he opportunistically sought to reverse the declining value of his own investment (at a time of low land prices) whilst retaining a prominent position within the club.[69] From this point on, the mobilization of the membership in opposition to Houlding was organized and implacable. Bypassing Houlding, the executive committee rejected the incorporation plan, negotiated a new long-term tenancy with Orrell, and presented Houlding with an ultimatum. He had to accept not only a sharp reduction in the rent on his own land (which, of course, formed the bulk of the football ground itself) but also the loss of his right to nominate members to the executive committee.[70] On Houlding's inevitable rejection of this proposal, the committee won the overwhelming support of the members to launch its own limited liability company flotation.[71] Everton Football Club abandoned Houlding, relocated to nearby land in the Walton district and erected the Goodison Park stadium. In response, Houlding formed a new company, Liverpool Football Club and Athletic Grounds Company Limited, and adopted the Anfield Road site.

Part of that struggle concerned governance structures and their appropriateness to the nature and aims of the football club. In effect, the two factions offered rival models of the communal function of a successful football club in late Victorian urban England. The breakaway faction that formed the new Everton FC sought to ensure membership involvement in the ownership of the club, to establish a more representative governance structure. Houlding's faction, on the other hand, sought a modern corporate solution that would put the club on a sound financial basis, but it was a structure in which he would retain control. In this sense, Houlding was acting in the mould of other tory populists of the day – as a prominent supporter of a local football team and, indeed, as a self-made brewer he could establish an affinity with many of his working-class constituents, yet continue to command control of 'communal assets'. In terms of municipal politics these rival models could be seen as alternative means of appealing to – or, at least, building an affinity with – the mass working-class following that the sport was already attracting by the early 1890s.

[67] *LC*, 24 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton football club', p. 7.

[68] This was revealed by W. E. Barclay, the club secretary of Everton FC. See *LC*, 13 Oct. 1891, 'The Everton football club difficulty', p. 7.

[69] *LC*, 23 Sept. 1891, 'The Everton football club', p. 7.

[70] *LC*, 25 Jan. 1892, 'The Everton football club', p. 3; *LE*, 26 Jan, 1892, 'Everton football club', p. 7.

[71] *LDP*, 26 Jan. 1892, *LC*, 25 Jan. 1892, 'The Everton football club', p. 3; *LE*, 26 Jan, 1892, 'Everton football club', p. 7.

For a growing body of dissident club members the question of the most appropriate governance structure was a stark one: should the club be essentially representative in its governance, reflecting the views of the broad membership, or was it appropriate for it to be dominated by one individual whose business interests might conflict with the club's objects as a sporting organization? As early as 1888 concerns had been voiced amongst the membership over the influence of 'cliques' within the club's leadership.[72] Growing polarization over corporate philosophy was to become manifest in the keenly contested elections to the club's executive committee prior to the split[73] and in the dramatic rise in club membership, which rose from approximately 200 members in 1889 to almost 500 in 1891.[74] This is suggestive of an attempt by one or the other (or both) of the factions to engineer a majority for their plans to incorporate the club. Houlding, himself, clearly believed the upsurge in club membership to be against his interests, arguing that out of the 500 members of the club in 1891, '300 were practically new to it'[75] and opposed to him.

The growing schism within the club was partly informed by the financial wranglings already discussed but at a deeper level the concern was over who controlled the club and to what ends. Houlding's opponents sought to check what they saw as his overtly commercial motives. As one club member put it, Houlding's plan of 1891 to float the club by the creation of 12,000 £1 shares held the likelihood that 'Those with the longest purses would hold the voting power and they would take great care to place men on the directorate after their own hearts. The members with their small holdings would have very little voice in the management of the old club.'[76] The motives of the anti-Houlding faction in opposing his plan to incorporate the club can, perhaps, be gauged by the words of George Mahon, the first chairman of the board at the new, post-split Everton FC. Speaking at the inaugural AGM, Mahon stressed that the newly formed board thought it 'desirable not to allocate the shares in large blocks, by which means we would have the whole capital subscribed, but rather to have a [large] number of individual applications so that there will be more supporters of the club'.[77] Part of the motivation for the rejection of Houlding's incorporation scheme was the desire to retain the essential form of a 'members' club' into the limited company era, where a state-of-the-art stadium would be 'practically devoted to the cause we all have at heart',[78] rather than embracing Houlding's preferred corporate plan wherein profit motive may have conflicted with the sporting purposes of the club. In fact, these differences in corporate philosophy were to show up subsequently in significant differences in the share distribution of

[72] *Liverpool Review* (*LR*), 25 May 1889, 'Lively proceedings expected at next Everton football club annual general meeting', p. 4.

[73] See *LR*, 25 May 1889, 'John Houlding wants to sell out', p. 4; Keates, *Everton*, pp. 37–8.

[74] *LDP*, 21 Oct. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and the Everton football club: defence of his actions', p. 3.

[75] Ibid. [76] Letter to *LC*, 29 Sept. 1891, 'Everton football club: decision of the committee', p. 4.

[77] *LDP*, 30 Aug. 1892, 'Everton Football Club Company', p. 6.

[78] Everton FC AGM report, June 1895 – accessions box, file D (LRO).

the two newly incorporated Liverpool clubs. In the first decade of the clubs' existence as limited liability companies shareholding remained evenly and widely distributed at Everton FC, but concentrated at Liverpool FC. Thus, in 1892, 88 per cent of Everton FC shareholders held fewer than ten shares each in their club; and by 1902 this had declined only slightly to 86 per cent. In contrast, at Liverpool FC just over half of all shareholders (56 per cent) owned fewer than ten shares each in their club in both 1892 and 1902.[79] Significantly, given the furore over administrative control of the pre-incorporated Everton FC, the difference in ownership of shares at director level was even more stark. In 1892, just 6 per cent of shares in Everton FC were owned collectively by the ten original directors, and by 1902 the ten serving directors of the club then owned only 7 per cent of its shares. At Liverpool FC 54 per cent of club shares were owned by the eight original directors collectively, and by 1902 the eight serving directors owned 56 per cent of club shares.[80] Compared to Liverpool FC's, Everton FC's share distribution continued to reflect the desire for a more democratic 'members' club'.

The tenor of the dispute in the early 1890s over governance resonates strongly with subsequent frictions at a number of clubs through the twentieth century to the present day wherein the interests of corporate owners seeking commercial exploitation of the club has been seen to be contrary to that of fans, or members. However, the historical significance of the dispute at Everton rests not on governance issues alone but on the powerful political and social factors that pervaded the schism and provided conflicting ideologies of the role of a successful community club. We examine those factors in the rest of the article.

V

The factional struggle for control of the club became deeply intertwined in the wider moral and social concerns being expressed in the political sphere and control of the club became a contested prize in the moral and political dispute over drink. Houlding's adversaries saw the need to gain control of the club as part of a broad moral struggle facing the community. They felt the need to wrest power away from such a prominent representative of the evil drinks trade and to ensure the club's future as a force for temperance within the locality. In this they were able to enlist the support of the wider temperance community, attracting crusading support from prominent local politicians, Nonconformist preachers and lay people, and the Liberal press. As we have seen, the late 1880s and early 1890s witnessed the zenith of the anti-drinks campaign and the timing of the dispute at Everton FC meant the drink issue played a prominent role in that conflict. The conflict provides a clear instance of where local and national

[79] Kennedy, 'The division of Everton football club', pp. 215–20.

[80] Everton Football Club Company, file BT31/36624; and Liverpool Football Club and Athletic Grounds Company file, BT31/35668.

preoccupations overlapped. The non-sectarian nature of the dispute is also clear from the absence of any overt reference to Catholicism, indeed the fault line generated by the drinks issue could be found *within* Protestant ranks and, in the case of the Everton dispute, between Nonconformists and Anglicans. In party terms, the antagonism was between temperance Liberals and tories with drinks interests.

As both local and national temperance campaigns were reaching a crescendo, the drinks trade connections of John Houlding and his principal allies were seen as a matter of considerable embarrassment for many members of the district's football club. Houlding and the club's accountant, Simon Jude, were chairman and secretary respectively, of the Liverpool and District Incorporated Brewers' and Wine Spirits Merchants' Association.[81] Houlding's staunchest ally at the club was vice-president, Edwin Berry, who acted as solicitor to the Liverpool Licensed Victuallers' Association, and Simon Jude its secretary.[82] Berry, in fact, was condemned as 'the most prominent advocate of the drink traffic in our licensing courts'[83] by Alexander Guthrie, a leading figure in the Liverpool temperance movement and executive member of the United Kingdom Alliance.

Within the club Houlding's opponents were overwhelmingly Liberal, Nonconformists, and supporters of the temperance movement, to whom Houlding's brand of toryism and involvement with the supply of alcohol were an anathema. A key opponent to Houlding within the club was William Cuff[84] whose ideology informed his view of the club's wider role and significance, believing football to be potentially 'the greatest teetotal agency in the world'.[85] Another dogged opponent to Houlding was chartered accountant, George Mahon. He was probably the most able of all Houlding's critics in articulating membership fears that their president and his associates sought to incorporate the club in order to open it up to the control of brewers. Mahon made it plain throughout the dispute that he and his colleagues were determined to ensure that the drinks trade's designs on the club would be checked under a new regime away from Houlding's influence. Speaking at a club sub-committee meeting in March 1892, Mahon assured 'the friends of the club and outsiders' that they were 'not to sell intoxicating liquors on the [new] ground', and emphasized that in the new company 'brewers would not be financing the club'.[86] Significantly, both Cuff and Mahon were leading laymen at St Domingo's, the Methodist chapel from which the Everton club had originally developed. St Domingo's had strong

[81] *LDP*, 17 Nov. 1891, 'Liverpool Brewers and Spirit Merchants Association', p. 7.

[82] *Liverpool Licensed Victuallers and Brewers Journal*, 10 Jan. 1891, p. 5. In the same edition both Berry and Jude are cited as directors of a newly launched Northern Brewers and Victuallers Journal Company.

[83] *LDP*, 1 Nov. 1898, 'Municipal election meetings: Breckfield ward Liberalism', p. 6; Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, p. 419.

[84] See Cuff's obituary notice, *LDP*, 7 Feb. 1949, 'Fifty years a leader in soccer', p. 3.

[85] From Cuff's memoirs, *LDP*, 19 Feb. 1949, 'Don't stop Sunday play begged police', p. 3.

[86] *LDP*, 3 Mar. 1892, Everton committee meeting report, 'Everton football club', p. 7, and George Mahon's letter to *LDP* editor, p. 3; See also *LDP*, 16 Mar. 1892, 'The difficulties of the Everton football club', p. 6.

temperance credentials, with its own Temperance and Band of Hope Committee and, at the time of the dispute, the chapel's minister, Rev. James Le Huray, was vice-president of the Liverpool Temperance and Band of Hope Society.[87] Another opponent within the club was surgeon and JP Dr William Whitford, who was chairman of Everton Liberal Club and a prominent temperance reformer who frequently lectured on the proliferation of the drink interest and its danger to the local community.[88] For his consistent attacks on the failure of the Liverpool police and liquor licensing bench to crack down on publicans operating outside of the law, the *Liverpool Review* dubbed Whitford 'the elect hero of the fire and sword teetotallers'[89] (although another city journal less flatteringly called him 'a crank in the eternal liquor question').[90]

Two other key figures in the struggle against Houlding within Everton FC were William R. Clayton and Dr James Clement Baxter. Both men were active Liberals[91] publicly associated with the temperance movement, were executive committee members of the club prior to the split and – like Cuff and Mahon – they went on (post-Houlding) to become directors and chairmen of the new, incorporated Everton FC.[92]

The stand made against Houlding and his allies in the club drew financial support from two prominent outsiders, the industrialists, William Pickles Hartley (fruit preserve manufacturer) and Robert William Hudson (soap manufacturer). Hartley was a staunch Liberal in politics (representing the Liberal party on the town council), a leading Primitive Methodist layman, a life-long teetotaller, vice-president of the Liverpool Temperance and Band of Hope Society and vice-president of the British Temperance League.[93] R. W. Hudson was a Unitarian and – like his father, Robert Spiers Hudson – he was an active

[87] St Domingo chapel trust committee meeting minutes, 1879–1884; *Gores directory*, 1888, 'Associations and institutions'.

[88] 'Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Liquor Licensing Laws', *Parliamentary Papers*, XXXVI (1898), statement 26,450, p. 8, made by Capt. Nott-Bower, Chief Constable of Liverpool, at the Queen's Robing Room, House of Lords, 13 Apr. 1897.

[89] *LR*, 7 Nov. 1896, 'Open letter to Dr Whitford' (by 'Diogenes'), p. 4.

[90] *Porcupine*, 26 Dec. 1896, 'People who are talked about: Dr William Whitford'.

[91] Clayton was chairman of Formby Liberal Association and an executive member of Southport Liberal Association (Southport Liberal Association: annual reports 1899–1930; executive reports 1880–1930 – records kept at Atkinson library, Southport, Merseyside). Baxter was Liverpool city councillor for the predominantly Irish Catholic St Anne's ward from 1906 to 1921 (see Baxter's funeral report in *LDP*, 28 Jan. 1928, 'The funeral of Dr James Clement Baxter').

[92] Clayton's temperance credentials can be gauged by evidence in the years after the split that demonstrates that he gave weekly lectures to the Formby Congregational School's Band of Hope. Such Band of Hope societies were set up to provide moral guidance and help build up 'good character' in children, to teach them the perils of alcohol and to encourage them to sign a pledge of total abstinence of liquor. Dr Baxter is cited in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, 25 Oct. 1898, 'Municipal nominations', p. 7, as acting as the proposer for the temperance candidate, Jonathon Hargrove, for Breckfield ward (a candidate, incidentally, running against the tory and drink trade-sponsored Edwin Berry, the then director of Liverpool FC).

[93] D. J. Jeremy, *Dictionary of business biographies*, III (London, 1985), pp. 96–9; obituary notice, *LC*, 26 Oct. 1922, p. 7.

Liberal in politics and, in fact, was Dr Whitford's predecessor as chairman of the Kirkdale Liberal Association.[94] Hartley and Hudson were significant in that it was they who agreed to act as financial guarantors to the new football company once Houlding's influence had been severed.[95]

Houlding also faced the opposition of prominent outside moral crusaders. Alexander Guthrie – merchant, executive member of the United Kingdom Alliance, chair of the Liverpool branch of the United Kingdom Alliance and vice-chairman of the Liverpool Temperance and Band of Hope Society – threw his weight behind the attack on Houlding: 'His [Houlding's] position is perfectly clear. He stands before the community as the very embodiment of the drink interest – precisely that interest against whose domination Liverpool has at last begun to rise in revolt.'[96] Likewise, the Liberal and temperance-leaning *Liverpool Daily Post* and its sister paper, the *Liverpool Echo*, consistently intervened to Houlding's detriment. Thus, after the decision to expel Houlding and locate the club at Goodison Park, the *Daily Post* of 19 March 1892 was unable to contain its satisfaction:[97]

> Messrs Mahon and Clayton … took upon themselves a big task in trying to rid the Everton Club of an influence that had apparently grown stronger year after year … This independent action of Mr Mahon and his friends might be said to have produced the chaos the club found itself in, but having shaken off the incubus their action is now clear and defined … and it was gratifying to find that neither publicans nor moneylenders had been appealed to for assistance.

On the other hand, the tory-supporting *Liverpool Courier* and *Liverpool Evening Express* – which were controlled by the Conservative MP for Everton (1892–1905), John A.Willox, who was to be a future Liverpool FC shareholder and was Trustee of the Licensed Victuallers' and Brewers' Association – consistently took the side of Houlding. The *Courier* was at pains to reveal that it was the wire-pulling of Houlding's radical opponents in the Liberal press that lay behind the opposition to him at the football club. From the autumn of 1891 to the spring of 1892, the *Courier* published letters from members of the club (usually anonymous) critical of those in the club opposed to Houlding.

This press partisanship was yet another facet of the dispute. The *Liverpool Review* registered its own bewilderment at the involvement of both Radical and tory organs in the affairs of a football club:

> charges were made by a Radical organ, and, apparently, its Tory contemporary felt itself in honour bound to give the other and another version … Hitherto, simple novices in football have understood that the grand national winter game had about as much to do with questions of Home Rule and the pitch-forking of aldermen as the moon has to do with cold custard. Local football lights, however, would seem to think otherwise. As there is supposed

[94] *LC*, 7 Aug. 1884, 'Mr Robert Speirs Hudson', p. 4; Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, pp. 69, 383n.
[95] *LDP*, 16 Mar. 1892, 'The difficulties of the Everton football club', p. 6.
[96] *LDP*, 29 Oct. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and the Everton ward' (letter from A. Guthrie), p. 6.
[97] *LDP*, 19 Mar. 1892, 'The Everton club', p. 7.

to be a connection between moonbeams and baying dogs so they seem to make the connection with Liverpool football and politics.[98]

As we have seen, there was indeed a profound connection between affairs at the city's successful football club and the ferment that was local politics. Events at the club became engulfed in broad considerations of the values that a major sporting organization should represent to the community and, above all, whether or not it should be a beacon of temperance. Questions of Catholicism had no part in the dispute, instead the divide within Protestant ranks over the drinks issue and between Liberals and tories was most prominent.

VI

One other feature of the football club dispute was that it clearly exacerbated Houlding's own political difficulties in Everton and neighbouring Kirkdale, and threatened his wider political ambitions. In his defence he had to draw upon his support amongst the local working class and the nature of that support provides a good illustration of the working of tory popularism in the city.

At a point when temperance concerns were exercising his constituents, Houlding could ill afford to be cast as a brewer exploiting a local cultural asset. Early in 1892 an 'Old Tory' correspondent to the *Liverpool Courier* highlighted the problems facing Houlding in his aspirations to become tory candidate for the vacant Everton parliamentary division:

> There are two important factors which must not be lost sight of. [First] the political complexion of Everton has changed very considerably during the last ten to fifteen years. Streets that were filled with Protestants and Conservatives of the working class in those days are now partially occupied by Roman Catholics and radicals … [Second] I know something of the drift of temperance opinion in Everton, and how for many years … I have watched the steady advance and growth of that opinion, and I have no hesitation in saying that to press his [Houlding's] claim at the present moment will only lead to disaster.[99]

The partisan view of the editor of the *Liverpool Echo* was that

> Mr Houlding is now an aspirant for the honour of representing Everton in Parliament, and he is too shrewd a man to choose such a move [his conflict with the club committee over tenancy rights at the club ground] for displaying any uncalled for harshness in his treatment of an institution so popular within the limits of his hoped for constituency as the Everton Football Club … In the contrary event, however, we cannot but believe that the club will benefit by being cut loose from its public house connections.[100]

[98] *LR*, 28 May 1892, 'Houlding's bust football', p. 4.

[99] *LC*, 25 Jan. 1892, 'Everton parliamentary election' (letter from 'Old Tory'), p. 7. See also letters in *LDP*, 26 Jan. 1892, 'Parliamentary vacancy in Everton: Mr Houlding and the seat', p. 4, and *LDP*, 28 Jan. 1892, 'The Everton parliamentary vacancy', p. 6.

[100] *LE*, 26 Jan. 1892, Leader Comment, p. 3.

The politicization of the affairs of the football club had, in fact, begun much earlier and it is clear that Houlding had sought to use his association with it to his political advantage. As a self-made man of humble origins, Houlding was the type of representative of 'popular toryism' who was to be important in carrying the Conservative appeal to the working class:

> Houlding was once a daily wage-earner; but in 1870 he had founded a brewery. He became chairman of Everton Conservative Association in 1872 and a councillor in 1884. He also served on the Board of Guardians, Burial Board, and Hospital Committee; he was a Freemason, Orangeman, and churchman, and a benefactor also of Nonconformist bodies. Houlding epitomized the parochial patriot. His popularity [according to the Liberal-leaning, *Liverpool Review*, 26 May 1888] emanated from 'intimate acquaintance through experience of the condition and requirements of the working classes, absence of any pride of position, and a daily readiness to help in any undertaking, from a school-room concert to a parliamentary deputation'.[101]

His obituary in the *Liverpool Courier* of 18 March 1902 particularly stressed his work on behalf of ordinary people, through his efforts to improve working-class housing, and charitable efforts on behalf of the hospitals and aged. His sound Orange and Freemason credentials commended him to the Protestant workingman. In addition, his football and drink connections could be used to create an affinity with workingmen and their leisure pursuits, and he was prepared to use his Everton connection to his political advantage. Thus, as early as the municipal election campaign of 1885, club players and members had been employed to canvass on behalf of their president's candidature.[102]

However, Houlding was to be less fortunate when it came to parliamentary selection and the circumstances suggest that within Liverpool Conservative quarters there were definite barriers to the progress of a self-made man of his sort. In 1885 he had been persuaded by the local tory hierarchy to withdraw his claim for a safe parliamentary seat at either Everton or Kirkdale despite very strong support for him from local working-class constituency groups. In this the Liverpool party leader, Forwood, was decisive. Class prejudice and political judgement had been against Houlding, with Forwood particularly mindful of the national party's perceived dislike of 'a jumped-up brewer, who was "a little uncertain about his 'Hs'" … [Houlding] might pass as an agent of Tory Democracy, not as a leader'.[103] Moreover, in terms of the political balance in the local tory party, Forwood was careful to restrain pressures from below. As Waller has argued, Forwood's 'Tory Democracy' appeal to the broader electorate was 'hedged with parentheses'[104] and Houlding, with the common touch – even as a champion for the Conservative workingman – seems to have fallen victim to this prejudice within the party hierarchy. In 1892 the even greater sensitivity over Houlding's trade (and the likely boost that it would give to Liberal opponents

[101] Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, p. 63.
[102] See letter by club member 'OM' to *LDP*, 27 Oct. 1891, 'Mr Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 6.
[103] Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, pp. 63–4.
[104] Ibid., p. 64.

brandishing a temperance and purity shield) and the high profile of his troubles at Everton FC, obliged the brewer once again to withdraw claims to a safe parliamentary seat.

Houlding's local political ambitions fared somewhat better but they, too, faced a severe threat because of the dispute at the football club. One challenge came from the emergence of more independent working-class politics in artisan areas such as Everton. The Liverpool Trades Council (LTC) first placed a candidate in the Everton and Kirkdale ward in 1890, challenging the incumbent Conservative councillor. In 1891 – in the midst of the dispute at the football club – John Houlding faced a challenge for his own seat from an LTC Lib-Lab candidate, William Nicholson, leader of the local branch of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union. Nicholson's campaign was run as much as a personal attack on his opponent's outside interests as on ideological issues. Nicholson attacked Houlding as a representative of the drinks trade, as a member of the corrupt local tory hierarchy and, personally, as an autocrat.[105] The last point struck a chord with the many protestations of Everton FC members who denounced his attempt to conduct a 'one man government'[106] of the club. One club member publicly appealed to his colleagues to

> rally round Messrs Clayton and Mahon and the other members of the committee who have the pluck to fight manfully in the interests of the members [and] put an end to a one-man policy and to stamp out the autocratic, overbearing and domineering way the good old club has had to quietly coincide with in the past.[107]

Houlding's political opponents eagerly seized upon such comment. In a letter to the *Liverpool Daily Post*, James W. McGovern, the local branch secretary of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union, responded to an attack made on William Nicholson by Houlding at an Orange Institution meeting held in the latter's support. At that meeting Houlding had compared the sound running of the Carters' Union (a union not affiliated to the LTC and of which he, Houlding, was the president) with the mismanagement of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union. McGovern hit back:

> What Mr Houlding is going to do for the labouring classes is something on a par, I presume, with his football generosity, and should the electors be foolish enough to put the 'King' [Houlding's local nickname] in power another three years his interest in them will last as long as he can use them as he has the footballists, a la 'The Merchant of Venice'.[108]

Houlding and his supporters openly accused his critics in Everton FC of complicity in the attacks on him by his political opponents, and of bringing civic politics into the affairs of the club. An editorial in the *Liverpool Athletic News* denounced club members who had 'tried to make capital out of the subject [the club dispute] from his [Houlding's] candidature for municipal

[105] Ibid., pp. 120–1.
[106] *LDP* comment, 19 Mar. 1892, 'The Everton club', p. 7.
[107] *LDP*, 19 Feb. 1892, 'Everton football club' (letter from J. G. Allan), p. 7.
[108] *LDP*, 20 Oct. 1891, 'The Everton election' (letter from J. W. McGovern), p. 3.

honours'.[109] More specifically, Houlding accused George Mahon of assisting his LTC opponent, Nicholson, although Mahon had claimed that 'I don't know Mr Nicholson, Mr Houlding's opponent, nor have I ever offered to assist Mr Nicholson's candidature … The introduction of political elements into municipal matters is a curse and not a blessing to the well being of any district or community.'[110]

Mahon was no political innocent, though, and he had been a member of the Walton Liberal Association committee which a year earlier, in 1890, had endorsed a policy of action to

> do all we can to establish the Liberal Party in the council. At the present time that body was simply a great party machine in the hands of the Tories … we will never get Liberal representatives to parliament until we destroy the power of the Conservatives in the city council.[111]

Three years earlier, in 1887, Mahon had been a Liberal candidate in elections to the Walton Local Board when he had narrowly defeated Houlding's protégé, tory councillor, Dr John Utting.[112] Also in 1889, in his capacity as returning officer for the Walton division of Lancashire County Council, Mahon had incensed Houlding, the then election agent for tory candidate, Sir David Radcliffe, by rejecting Radcliffe's nomination on a technicality. At that time, Houlding accused Mahon of political sabotage, further complaining that bill posters bearing Mahon's name 'had been used to cover a large number of posters announcing Conservative party meetings'.[113] Commenting on the incident, the Liberal and temperance-leaning *Bootle Times* stated that Mahon's decision to disqualify Radcliffe 'would be lamented by the publicans and others inasmuch as it deprives them of a man who would most likely maintain their interests'.[114] There is no doubt that politics accounted for much of the animosity between the two men.

This was also true of Houlding's relationship with another of his leading opponents within Everton FC, Dr William Whitford. Whitford had close connections with Houlding's municipal opponent, Nicholson. As chairman of the Everton and Kirkdale Liberal Association (effectively, John Houlding's political shadow in the Everton ward), Whitford acted as Nicholson's election agent, castigating Houlding's 'iniquitous'[115] influence as a brewer in the district of Everton.

[109] *Liverpool Athletic News*, 8 Nov. 1891, pp. 4, 9.
[110] *LC*, 21 Oct. 1891, 'Mr Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 7.
[111] *Bootle Times* (*BT*), 1 Mar. 1890, 'Meeting of Walton Liberals', p. 8.
[112] *LDP*, 7 Apr. 1887, 'Local board election', p. 6.
[113] *BT*, 12 Jan. 1889, 'Sir David Radcliffe disqualified', p. 5.
[114] *BT*, 12 Jan. 1889, 'Walton whispers', p. 5.
[115] *LDP*, 13 Apr. 1892, 'The Liberal campaign in Everton', p. 6; *LC*, 24 Oct. 1891, 'Municipal elections: Mr Nicholson's candidature', p. 7.

In his counter-offensive to what he perceived to be a concerted political campaign against him from within the club, Houlding was able to enlist the support of the powerful WMCA. Under the leadership of Archibald Salvidge, the WMCA was to play a prominent role within Liverpool conservatism from the 1890s to the interwar years.[116] As noted above, the WMCA was Anti-Catholic in sentiment. It was also wholeheartedly committed to protectionism in trade and to interventionism within the local state, and it provided the Liverpool Conservative party with an important link between class and religious interests that helped ensure its continued political dominance (notwithstanding the brief Liberal interlude of the early 1890s). The WMCA threw its political weight behind Houlding. Accusing Houlding's opponents within and without the club of 'using the club as a lever in their efforts toward his [Houlding's] defeat', the WMCA declared the club dispute to be a 'political dodge', and pledged its support to secure Houlding's re-election to his ward seat.[117] Houlding's candidature was endorsed also by the *Liverpool Courier* and the *Evening Express* (both owned by the Conservative MP for Everton, John Willox) and by local MPs, M. W. Mattinson and T. May Smith (yet another brewer and wine merchant).

In the campaign itself, the drinks issue was prominent. Houlding's response was true to his populist credentials: 'he had been abused by the teetotal party, but claimed to be a temperate man, and liked a glass of good beer … and did not think England was anything worse for brewing good beer'.[118] In the event, Houlding survived the challenge from Nicholson, polling 7,120 votes to the latter's 5,588.[119]

But, as we have seen, the club dispute did thwart his parliamentary ambitions, despite his working-class support. As the following extracts from letters to the press show, in 1891–2 differences over club governance and over politics were hard to separate:

> Mr Houlding can please himself whether he will exercise his legal rights at the cost of the club or act the part of a generous landlord. [In the event that he did not take this latter option] probably the electors of Everton Ward will be asked to consider whether they are satisfied with their present representative, and if not to take steps to replace him. It will not be a question as between Mr Houlding and the club only, but the thousands of regular visitors to the ground will have to be reckoned with also.[120] … we will have nothing more to do with him, and we will have war to the knife with him when he dares come forward for public favour in the future.[121]

[116] Salvidge, *Salvidge of Liverpool*.

[117] *LC*, 20 Oct. 1891; *LDP*, 21 Oct. 1891.

[118] Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism*, p. 121, quoting from *LDP*, 27 Oct. 1891.

[119] *LC*, 20 Oct. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and his supporters: the Everton football club dispute'; *LDP*, 21 Oct. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and the Everton football club: defence of his actions', p. 3.

[120] *LDP*, 19 Sept. 1891, 'Mr John Houlding and the Everton football club', p. 7.

[121] *LDP*, 4 Feb. 1892, 'Everton football club' (letter from club member), p. 7.

Thus, the nature of this discourse shows clearly the strong links between football and politics in the minds of contemporary political activists and commentators. Houlding was a prominent local populist tory politician: a fairly wealthy businessman in his own right, but one from a humble background whose interests in football and other community activities – and, in a different respect, his interests in drink – were ones with which large numbers of workingmen could relate. He was an effective advocate of the local brand of 'Tory Democracy', mixing loyalty to empire, crown, and Unionism with a strong element of paternalistic concern for the interests of the workingman and a keen sense of community engagement. In the bitter dispute at Everton FC, it was to be his drink credentials and his more paternalistic (or 'autocratic' in the view of his opponents) approach to running the club that brought down on him the vehemence of the strong Nonconformist, temperance and Liberal elements within both the club and the broader community and these – and the caution displayed by the local party leadership – in turn threatened his own politic ambitions although his brand of popular toryism was able to retain his municipal base.

At the club, by 1892 the developing commercial contradictions within the original Everton club, allied to these strong socially and politically motivated personal animosities, could only be resolved by a complete split into two separate organizations.

VII

The story of the schism at Everton FC has been an important illustration of how far a successful professional football organization had become integrated into community identity and politics by the late Victorian period. Undoubtedly, there were elements of personal animosity and political opportunism within the dispute. However, the intensity of the wrangling over the governance and ownership of the club bears witness to the importance of perceptions of the club as a worthy political prize, as a means by which wealthy individuals could gain influence and prestige within the local community. Of course, this was an element of the governance of top football clubs that was to persist through the twentieth century and into the global sponsorship deals of the twenty-first century, but it is important to record its influence so early in the history of the professional game. The historical dispute at Everton also emphasizes significant contemporary perceptions of the role an iconic football club could play in moulding social behaviour. The owners and directors of the new Everton FC believed such an important social institution could be a bastion of 'purity', a model of Christian sobriety, of Nonconformist, Liberal ideals. In governance terms they sought to carry over the original ideal of a more democratic 'members' club' into the era of incorporation. Houlding, too, was well aware of the importance of a successful football club for community identity and involvement, but he believed a corporate structure based on a 'modern' business model (wherein investors had

control and could expect a reasonable rate of return) was more appropriate. He was aware, too, that proprietorial association with a successful and popular club could attract support from local working-class voters. His behaviour at Everton FC, and his subsequent success in establishing Liverpool FC, reveal his attempts to weld together politics and sport in such a way as to wield influence in both, to help secure the support base for his brand of 'Tory Democracy'. However, the difficulties he encountered at Everton FC also show the strength in the early 1890s of opposing political perceptions of the role of such an important local social institution. The alternative Liberal vision of the sober artisan football supporter, closely involved in the affairs of his club through membership and diverse shareholdings, and wary of autocratic manipulations from the drinks trade, proved capable of wrenching Everton FC from Houlding's control – even if, after only a short time, he was able to establish a successful rival club and, indeed, the tories were able to return to municipal dominance.

The details of this interesting case reveal that with regard to such issues as drink, party attempts to gain popular support, administrative efficiency, Liberal–tory rivalries and questions of Home Rule, Liverpool politics mirrored much of the political scene elsewhere in the country. Consistent with the views of Lawrence and Davies, the Everton dispute shows that community politics was a meld of multi-layered, interconnected local and national issues. Secondly on the nature of municipal politics in the city, it is clear from our account that Protestant–Catholic sectarianism played a largely peripheral role in the schism at Everton FC despite this being a high-profile, controversial, and emotive platform on which community identity was disputed. Divisions within Protestant ranks were much more in evidence, suggesting a complexity of community political alliances outside of sectarianism. Finally, and more generally, we believe that the special case of the schism at Everton FC is a stark demonstration of how the study of sporting organizations can provide much insight into the dynamics of Victorian communities.