

successful in explaining why they don't have a reason to believe.

Arab Soccer in a Jewish State: The Integrative Enclave, by **Tamir Sorek**. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 225pp. \$91.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780521870481

MIKE CRONIN
Boston College
croninmr@bc.edu

Israeli soccer is not something that even many soccer fans, outside that country, would know much about. Israel has only qualified for the World Cup finals once (1970), and its most famous coach, Avraham Grant, is known for his current position as manager at English Premier League side, Chelsea, rather than for his leadership of the national team from 2002–2006. In many ways, it is the journey into the world of domestic soccer, and the inter-relationships between Israelis and Arabs, which is the most refreshing aspect of Sorek's book. By entering this world, Sorek is able to illuminate a plethora of issues surrounding contemporary Israel, and in doing so, interrogates a host of political theories that have been applied to the functioning of sport, in a new setting.

The author defines his study as "a sociological-anthropological-historical project which utilizes diverse research methods" (p. 11), and indeed this is what he successfully manages to do. Sorek reconstructs the complexities of soccer in modern day Israel, and also offers evidence for the ethnic shape of the game prior to 1948. His research is offered, throughout the text, with clarity and a surprisingly light touch given the sheer amount of legwork that has gone into the book, which is evidenced in the appendices. Anthropologically, Sorek watches games, fans, and players, and offers intuitive and skilful readings of what happens on match days, and sociologically he reads, reconstructs, and probes those he interviews. These are drawn from a wide base and include sports administrators, club directors, activists, journalists, and players. On reading the book, one cannot fail to be impressed by the work that has gone into Sorek's research, and his feel for those he interviews and mixes with at games.

Where the book has real power is how Sorek uses this wealth of research to paint a picture of Arab soccer within Israel, and the way in which he uses his findings to interrogate how sport functions as a social, political, and identity-forming agent. Sorek's reading of the key literature, and his ability to contextualise each of the chapters within the dominant models of sports sociology (neo-Marxist, modernist, Gramscian, and so on) shows a real understanding of existing work and how it can be applied to the Israeli situation. The central argument of the book is that the Arab population in Israel does not use sport to challenge the Israeli hegemony. Given that many examples of the sports/politics mix argue that sport is a way minority groups challenge and usurp dominant identities, the Arab/Israeli example becomes more fascinating.

What Sorek demonstrates is that Arab soccer players, administrators, and supporters use soccer in Israel as a way to subsume themselves into the state within which they exist. They do not overtly or regularly use soccer as a means of challenging Israeli power, but rather to embrace many aspects of Israeli identity. Their language at the stadium is Hebrew, and overt symbols and chants that support a separatist Arab identity are largely absent. As Sorek concludes, "most of these fans devote effort to the construction of sports as an 'apolitical' arena and to the fortification of the boundaries between it and the political arena" (p. 187). As he demonstrates throughout the book, Arab soccer fans see the game as one that is to be embraced for itself, and also as an arena in which they can stress a celebratory sporting identity that is not antagonistic to the Israeli state. This, so Sorek contends, does create a whole series of related paradoxes. The lack of a direct support, through soccer, for an Arab identity, does effectively politicize the whole situation as he sees that there is an association between Arab support for soccer and demands for social equality. Equally, the fact that those Arabs who support soccer are more inclined to finding a home within an Israeli state that accepts their identity rather than challenging it, produces a correlation between attendance at games and support for Zionist parties in the political arena. This attempt, which is common among Arab followers of soccer, to find an accommodation with the Israeli

state, leads to them negating their Arab/Palestinian identity as a political construct.

In its entirety, this is a fascinating book that offers new ways of understanding the Arab/Israeli situation and, in its concentration on soccer, opens new avenues for those scholars working in the area of sport.

The Catholic Social Imagination: Activism and the Just Society in Mexico and the United States, by **Joseph M. Palacios**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007. 320pp. \$25.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226645018.

MARCO MARZANO

University of Bergamo (Italy)

marco.marzano@unibg.it

There no longer exists solely the "Catholic imagination," as described by Andrew Greeley. With publication of this book, there also exists a "Catholic social imagination"—a specific way of translating religious motives into public action, into battles for social justice.

This Catholic social imagination is influenced and oriented by the social doctrine of the Church, namely the systematic reflection first begun by the Catholic hierarchies in the nineteenth century (with Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 1891) in order to understand the new social problems produced by modernity, the advance of socialism, and the trade-union movement. Palacios opportunely observes that many of the problems concerning the social commitment of Catholics derive from the fact that John Paul II continued to consider the Church's social doctrine as deriving deductively from natural law. He therefore likened it to the moral theology based on unchanging principles and on a static vision of society, which fit badly with the dynamism of modern scientific thought.

This doctrinal and theoretical system is insufficient on its own to orient the behavior of Catholics. It is therefore conditioned, in its practical implementation, by the "social opportunity structure" in which it is applied. And it varies substantially from country to country, from culture to culture. Indeed, it appears in very different forms even in the two adjoining countries, the United States and Mexico, as observed by Palacios.

In the United States, the social Catholic imagination is culturally constructed through "the interplay of liturgy, sacraments, biblical reflection, civic activism, prophetic statements, multicultural integration, and gender, racial, and ethnic inclusivity" (p. 7). It has always been oriented by action against poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and for participation and social inclusion. In Mexico, religion is confined to the private sphere and the Catholic Church, to which the great majority of the population belong, and it has been inhibited from performing a public role at least since the 1917 constitution.

In the final pages of his book, Palacios introduces the four approaches through which, in his opinion, Catholics translate their desire for social justice into action. The first is what Palacios calls "ecclesial." This distinguishes the Mexican Church, traditionally reluctant to encourage the faithful to engage in external public action, and it consists of an attempt to promote social justice essentially *within* the Catholic Church. This policy translates into an invitation to continue the experience of the *comunidades eclesiale de base* and to build within the church a civil society parallel to external society. The second approach is what Palacios calls "Christian-inspired." In this case, the faithful act outside the local parochial context in independent civil society organizations. An example is the *Instituto Mexicano de la Doctrina Social*, which Palacios describes exhaustively in the fourth chapter. The third approach is based on "social ministry" taking the form of the supply of services managed by lay persons and intended to alleviate social injustices without, however, severing links with the life of the parish, the diocese, and the national church. One not infrequently finds, Palacios writing in this regard, "social justice ministers involved in civic associations or social movements representing the parish, diocese, or national church" (p. 218), and often working in collaboration with other civic actors. The last approach is the "faith-based citizen" approach which distinctively characterizes American Catholicism's ability, in Palacios' opinion, to give life to a "large independent infrastructure of social institutions for their religious and social purposes that have evolved into cooperative institutions in a pluralistic society" (p. 219). In this approach, Catholics, ordained or lay, can directly par-