



FACULDADE DE LETRAS
UNIVERSIDADE D
COIMBRA

Bernardo Antonio Azevedo Ferreira Costa

‘YOU’LL NEVER WALK ALONE’

HOW THE HILLSBOROUGH TRAGEDY AFFECTED
THE CITY OF LIVERPOOL

Dissertação de Mestrado em Estudos de Cultura, Literatura e Línguas Modernas no ramo de Estudos Ingleses e Americanos, orientada pela Professora Doutora Jacinta Maria Cunha da Rosa Matos, apresentada ao Departamento de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra

Junho de 2022

FACULDADE DE LETRAS

‘YOU’LL NEVER WALK ALONE’ HOW THE HILLSBOROUGH TRAGEDY AFFECTED THE CITY OF LIVERPOOL

Ficha Técnica

Tipo de trabalho	Dissertação
Título	‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’
Subtítulo	How the Hillsborough Tragedy affected the city of Liverpool
Autor/a	Bernardo Antonio Azevedo Ferreira Costa
Orientador/a(s)	Jacinta Maria Cunha da Rosa Matos
Júri	Presidente: Doutora Maria José Florentino Mendes Canelo 1. Doutor Stephen Daniel Wilson 2. Doutora Jacinta Maria Cunha da Rosa Matos
Identificação do Curso	2º Ciclo em Estudos de Cultura, Literatura e Línguas Modernas
Área científica	Literatura e Cultura
Especialidade/Ramo	Estudos Ingleses e Americanos
Data da defesa	25-07-2022
Classificação	18 valores

Agradecimentos

Aos meus pais, Ângela e Marcelo, não só por acreditarem em mim como ninguém, mas por me proporcionarem as bases necessárias para que eu pudesse seguir os meus sonhos. Ainda não aprendi português o suficiente para conseguir expressar minha gratidão e o meu amor por vocês. Talvez nunca aprenda...

Ao meu irmão João Marcelo, por ser o meu maior orgulho. Uma versão mais nova, mas muito mais esperta do que eu jamais sonhei em ser. Uma saudade e um pensamento diário. Que na falta da presença física, se tenha sempre o exemplo. Te amo, manezão!

À Amanda, por estar lá por mim quando nem eu estive em um ano que teve muito mais do que 365 dias e por nunca me deixar desistir, mostrando que a vida é muito mais bonita ao som do sotaque norte-paranaense. Não estaria aqui se não fosse por você. É a gente e nada mais!

Ao meu padrinho, tio Henrique, não só por ceder abrigo e “asilo diplomático” em Londres, mas por oferecer sempre apoio e carinho. Tia Lilda, Christian e Dudu também merecem uma nota por contribuírem para a “construção de memória coletiva”.

De um lado do Atlântico, ao Léo, eterno camarada, e à Giovanna, por nunca me deixarem esquecer de onde vim e quem sou e arrancarem risadas sinceras quando mais precisei. Do outro, à Verônica, por me lembrar sempre quem me tornei e me apoiar sempre, tendo lido cada página deste trabalho desde o primeiro esboço, e à Tomi, por ouvir mil ideias e apoiar cada uma delas.

À Professora Doutora Jacinta Matos, por desde o primeiro contato, ainda na Licenciatura, sempre demonstrar paciência com aquele menino brasileiro vindo da História e por ter acreditado neste projeto desde o começo. Sem a sua orientação e dedicação, não seria possível nem ao menos começar a caminhar neste percurso.

Por fim, ao Clube de Regatas do Flamengo, por ter me ensinado a lidar com as vitórias e derrotas da vida. Nas palavras de Zé Lins que levo comigo na pele, “amo o Flamengo como se fosse um pedaço da terra onde nasci”. Este trabalho, como todos os outros que já vieram e os que virão, foi forjado no concreto do Estádio do Maracanã. Não é, não foi e nunca vai ser sobre futebol. É sobre amor. É sobre fé. É sobre Flamengo.

Com fé em Deus e no Flamengo, seguimos!

Resumo

“You’ll Never Walk Alone”: Como a Tragédia de Hillsborough afetou a cidade de Liverpool

No dia 15 de abril de 1989, o Liverpool FC enfrentou o Nottingham Forest pela semifinal da FA Cup no estádio de Hillsborough. Com 6 minutos, a partida foi paralisada devido a um esmagamento provocado por superlotação no setor conhecido como Leppings Lane. Como resultado desse esmagamento, 97 torcedores do Liverpool perderam a vida, centenas ficaram feridos e milhares traumatizados naquele que foi o pior desastre esportivo na história britânica.

Logo após os eventos, a polícia de South Yorkshire (SYP) erroneamente culpou os torcedores do Liverpool pelo resultado trágico em um esquema manipulativo baseado em mentiras que provocaria consequências duradouras para as famílias enlutadas e sobreviventes. Alguns meses depois, LJ Taylor concluiria que os torcedores não tinham culpa, mas sim a SYP. Apesar disso, o veredito do inquérito original de 1990-1991 foi de “morte acidental”. Somente 23 anos depois, e muito por conta das ações das famílias, sobreviventes, torcedores e das pessoas de Liverpool, a verdade viria à tona. Em 2016, um novo inquérito chegou ao veredito de “homicídio ilegal”.

O principal objetivo desta dissertação é analisar a maneira como a Tragédia de Hillsborough afetou a cidade de Liverpool nas últimas três décadas. Para tal, será providenciada uma contextualização histórica relativamente a cidade e ao clube, além de olhar para outro desastre envolvendo torcedores do Liverpool: a Tragédia de Heysel. O campo dos *Trauma Studies* será utilizado como enquadramento teórico que será complementado por *Football Studies* e teorias críticas da História e da Memória. Os acontecimentos daquele sábado de abril também serão analisados, assim como as consequências imediatas.

Relativamente ao impacto do evento, a batalha judicial que se seguiu após Hillsborough será discutida e a luta das famílias e dos sobreviventes pela verdade e pela justiça também será explorada. O processo de luto coletivo da tragédia também será analisado, tentando se estabelecer de que maneira ela se tornou, através de um processo metonímico, parte da identidade e do caráter da cidade. Em uma nota final, projetando passos futuros, o legado de Hillsborough também será considerado, com menção ao *Real Truth Legacy Project* e à *Hillsborough Law*.

Palavras-chave: Tragédia de Hillsborough; Liverpool; Liverpool FC; Trauma; Memória coletiva

Abstract

“You’ll Never Walk Alone”: How the Hillsborough Tragedy affected the city of Liverpool

On 15 April 1989, Liverpool FC faced Nottingham Forest at the FA Cup semi-final at the Hillsborough Stadium. Six minutes on, the game was stopped due to a crush provoked by overcrowding at the Leppings Lane terrace. As a result of that crush, 97 Liverpool fans lost their lives, hundreds got injured and thousands were traumatised in what was the worst sports disaster in British history.

In the immediate aftermath, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) wrongly blamed the tragic outcome on Liverpool fans, in a manipulation scheme based on lies that would prove to have enduring consequences for the bereaved families and survivors. A few months later, LJ Taylor would conclude that the fans were not to blame and that the responsibility rested upon SYP. Despite this, the original inquest verdict of 1990-1991 was “accidental death”. It would take 23 years and the efforts of bereaved families, survivors, supporters and the people of Liverpool for the truth to finally come out. In 2016, a new inquest reached the verdict of “unlawfully killing”.

The main goal of this dissertation is to analyse the way the Hillsborough Tragedy has affected the city of Liverpool over the last three decades. In order to do this, a historical contextualization about the city and the club will be provided, while also looking at another disaster involving Liverpool fans: the Heysel Tragedy in 1985. Trauma Studies will be used as a theoretical framework, complemented by Football Studies and critical thinking on History and Memory. The happenings of that Saturday in April will also be closely looked into, as well as the immediate aftermath.

In terms of the impact of the event, the legal battle that followed Hillsborough will be discussed, and the fight of the bereaved families and survivors for truth and justice will also be explored. The way the tragedy was collectively mourned will also be analysed, trying to establish how it became, through a metonymic process, part of the city’s identity and character. On a final note, and looking at the future impact of the tragedy, the legacy of Hillsborough will be considered, with a particular mention of the Real Truth Legacy Project and the Hillsborough Law.

Keywords: Hillsborough Tragedy; Liverpool; Liverpool FC; Trauma; Collective memory

INDEX

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Scouse, not English	9
Chapter 2: 15 April 1989	28
Chapter 3: “When you walk through a storm”	45
3.1. “We climbed the hill in our own way”	45
3.1.1. The Taylor Report	45
3.1.2. Civil actions, Inquests and Private prosecutions	49
3.1.3. The Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP)	55
3.1.4. 2012-2021	61
3.2. “We’ll fight the fight for Liverpool”	64
3.2.1. The Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG)	65
3.2.2. The Hillsborough Justice Campaign (HJC)	66
3.2.3. The Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance (HSA)	68
3.2.4. <i>The Sun</i> ’s boycott	69
3.3 – “Beside the Hillsborough flame, I heard a Kopite mourning”	72
3.4 – “There’ll be glory round the fields of Anfield Road”	79
3.4.1. The Real Truth Legacy Project	79
3.4.2. The Hillsborough Law	81
Conclusion	85
Works Cited	89
Appendix	95

Introduction

As a historian, one of the first things that I learned throughout my major in History was something that, at first sight, may shock some of my colleagues that have a more traditional understanding of the subject: where history does not reach, literature will. And this is the reason why even though I will be discussing the historical origin and the sociological dimension of the world's most popular sport in the next few paragraphs, I believe that there is no better way to start this dissertation than with the words of the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, in his book *El fútbol a sol y sombra*, about a football fan:

Una vez por semana, el hincha huye de su casa y acude al estadio.

Flamean las banderas, suenan las matracas, los cohetes, los tambores, llueven las serpentinas y el papel picado: la ciudad desaparece, la rutina se olvida, sólo existe el templo. En este espacio sagrado, la única religión que no tiene ateos exhibe a sus divinidades. Aunque el hincha puede contemplar el milagro, más cómodamente, en la pantalla de la tele, prefiere emprender la peregrinación hacia este lugar donde puede ver en carne y hueso a sus ángeles batiéndose a duelo contra los demonios de turno. (Galeano, 1995: 7)¹

Throughout my life, few memories are so clear as the experience of watching a football match at Maracanã. It is almost like a ritual. With my dad and my best friend, we drive from my home to the neighbourhood of Tijuca, where we park at a petrol station and walk approximately twenty minutes to the vicinity of the stadium. There, we join the red and black mass, made up of thousands of different people united by the same passion. The smell of barbecue, the taste of beer, the symphony of music and the kaleidoscope of colours, all build up the anxiety inside my stomach and define one of the most important memories of my personal background.

The feeling of supporting your club, of being part of something bigger than yourself and able to make a difference to the outcome of the match, is something that, even though it can be described, will hardly be understood by those who have not experienced it. However, although

¹ Translated version: "Once a week, the fan flees his house for the stadium. Banners wave and the air resounds with noisemakers, firecrackers, and drums; it rains streamers and confetti. The city disappears, its routine forgotten. All that exists is the temple. In this sacred place, the only religion without atheists puts its divinities on display. Although the fan can contemplate the miracle more comfortably on TV, he prefers to make the pilgrimage to this spot where he can see his angels in the flesh doing battle against the demons of the day." (This translation was made by Mark Fried and published in the translated version of the book, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, identified in the bibliographic section of this thesis).

this difficulty exists it does not prevent what we might call the "translation" of this phenomenon. Differently from the Portuguese word "saudade", which does not have an exact translation in any language, the experience described above has hundreds, even thousands, of such correspondences. In Spain, it can be seen in the surroundings of Santiago Bernabéu or the Camp Nou. In Italy, the streets that lead to the San Siro or the Olympic Stadium of Rome are taken by storm by the Italian translation. In Argentina, the few meters that separate the El Cilindro from the Libertadores de América experience something very similar. But, if there are translations, one must have in mind that there is an "original" version, or at least something very close to it. In this case, the original version of the game we know is unquestionably English. But before exploring the English context, it is appropriate to begin by making some points about the nature and importance of football.

"La única religion que no tiene ateos" (Galeano, 1995: 7) can be rightly characterized as one of the biggest global phenomena of human history. Whether being played in a stadium by professional players with thousands of people in the stands or by children in streets and alleys worldwide, football configures itself as a sociological experience which deserves to be studied, debated and analysed in its own terms. According to the German historian Wolfram Pyta, "the reason for the growing research interest in football is the fact that it is a cultural phenomenon which gives expression to configurations of meaning in a very practical way" (Pyta in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 4). Some of those configurations of meaning can also be found in the answer German theologian Dorothee Sölle gave to a journalist when asked how she would explain to a child what happiness is, and she said that she would not, she would toss him a ball and let him play (Galeano, 1995: 243).

In the words of historian David Goldblatt, one of the most preeminent football theorists:

Football has not altered the course of history. Football did not kick-start the industrial revolution or build the world's cities. Football does not start, end or replace wars; it does not make peace or redraw the borders of the world. But is it not extraordinary that, in an epoch characterized by unprecedented global interconnectedness, the most universal cultural phenomenon in the world is football? Is it not worthy of note that, the moment male urban working classes have had a bit of time and money on their hands, they have chosen, almost everywhere, to play, watch, organize and follow football? Is it wise to recount the history of the modern world without some reference to this? Whether the historians like it or not, football cannot be taken out of the history of the modern world

and the history of the modern world is unevenly, erratically but indisputably etched into the history of football. (Goldblatt, 2007: xii-xiii)

As Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti state, "the game of football has a rich global history. Most cultures and civilisations seem to have played some kind of proto-football, involving the kicking of a ball between various groups of players." This can be seen from China to Central America, and historical records of a similar game can be found throughout medieval Europe (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 3). However, it is in England during the mid-nineteenth century that the modern version of the game was born, with the establishment of rules that would set it apart from the game of rugby, such as the prohibition of touching the ball with the hand, established by the Harrovian and Cambridge codes of football in 1863 (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 3).

"When the British Empire finally sank beneath the waves of history, it would leave behind only two monuments – one was the game of association football, the other was the expression 'Fuck off'" (*apud* Goldblatt, 2015: vii). This quote, by Sir Richard Turnbull, despite its considerable exaggeration, helps to build a notion of how big the impact of the "English game" was. It can even be regarded, for instance, as "one of the earliest forms of cultural globalisation" (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 4).

Although, in its earliest years, football was a game for social elites, played and watched by gentlemen, a series of factors such as the rising of wages, the increase in the numbers of workers who gained a Saturday half-holiday², and the interest of the English bourgeoisie turned a game which was once regarded as a "badge of social distinction" into "a truly popular pastime" (Russel in Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 15). However, it is important to note that, even though this question will not be explored in this thesis, "the label of 'People's Game', often attached to English football, but rarely interrogated, describes patterns of consumption and not patterns of control" (Russel in Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 16). It is undeniable that the game is still controlled by the power elites until this day and this control, with a few failed exceptions, has not been challenged (Russel in Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 16). According to historian David Russel, the reason behind this is that "fans are often simply too addicted to the game to threaten the structures that provide it, while many working-class fans

² A good example of the impact of this measure is the song *Every Other Saturday*: "Every other Saturday's me half day off / And it's off to the match I go / I love to take a stroll along the Anfield Road / Me and me old pal Joe". Although it was originally created by Rangers fans in the 1960s, it was adapted by Liverpool supporters and it is still sung at Anfield (*The Anfield Songbook*, 2019: 44).

have treated it much as they have treated wider social and political structures, as something to be tolerated and manipulated to suit needs, rather than overthrown.” (Russel in Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 17).

It is essential to understand the role of football in British society to build a theoretical framework to help us deal with the topic of this dissertation. Goldblatt states that four things illustrate the role of football in contemporary British society:

(...) first, the relative size and importance of football when measured against similar phenomena (...); secondly, its presence in both popular and elite cultures (...); thirdly, the degree to which a publicly advertised interest in football has become the norm among Britain's elites; and finally the degree to which the nation's political commentators have taken on football as a metaphor for the nation's ills. (Goldblatt, 2015: xii)

For instance, the North and South socioeconomic division of England, something that can never be ignored when discussing the British context, can also be looked at through the lens of the game:

Football certainly contributed considerably to the articulation of a perceived 'North-South' divide within English society. Although southern journalists rarely missed an opportunity to portray northern football fans 'oop for the coop' (or whatever fake dialect they chose) as picturesque if somewhat gauche provincials on the loose, it was northerners who drew the greatest imaginative sustenance from the game: the dominant south had only limited need of the cultural capital it offered. From early in the twentieth century northern fans have honed a potent set of oppositions setting their tough, competitive selves against 'soft southerners' who wilt when travelling beyond Hertfordshire (Holt 1989: 175-9). Similarly, northern successes over southern opponents have taken on considerable symbolic importance. This was undoubtedly the case in the 1930s when Arsenal's dominance of English club football was seen by many to mirror a (much simplified) economic situation exemplified by northern hardship and southern prosperity (Russel in Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999: 20).

Goldblatt also highlights the strong link between the game and working-class Britain. He states that even during and after Margaret Thatcher's government and the well-known privatisations and loss of power of working-class groups and institutions, with the fading of traditional working-class cultural forms and solidarities, such as social housing and the Cooperative movement, "football was still standing" (Goldblatt, 2015: ix):

Football does more than provide unrivalled pleasure on a Saturday afternoon. It keeps us in romantic association with our individual and collective past. It is a game of industrial England. It is no longer the exclusive preserve of men and women who work in the mines and factories. For the mines and factories are not the force they used to be... But in general it is a game of the sons and daughters of that old working-class. (Roy Hattersley, deputy leader of the Labour Party, 1990, *apud* Goldblatt, 2015: ix)

And why does this connection of football to industrial England and the working-class matter? Because the main topic of this thesis, the city of Liverpool and how it was affected by the Hillsborough Tragedy, cannot be fully understood without considering the historical context of the city and its place in British history. Although this content will be later explored in more depth, the connection between Liverpool, one of the main centres of industrial Britain, and the game of football is clear and undisputable.

This connection, however, is not related only to the city of Liverpool. It can help to explain, for example, the rivalry between Liverpool FC and Manchester United, as it mirrors the rivalry between the two industrial cities that started with the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1887 and is still going on till this day, with the cities battling both for the post of "cultural capital of the North and the footballing capital of England" (Goldblatt, 2015: 90).

But the closest connection between Liverpool and the game of football must be the one that happened during the 1980s. Perhaps one of the best definitions of this period is given by Goldblatt when he states that "football and politics in Liverpool in the 1980s had an air of magic realism, even of full-blown fantasy" (Goldblatt, 2015: 94). The contrast between the situation of the city and the performance of Liverpool FC had never been so great. It was precisely during this period of deindustrialization, privatisation, unemployment, social agitation and decline, that "Liverpool Football Club blossomed, winning ten League titles between 1977 and 1990 and four European Cups" (Goldblatt, 2015: 89). In the words of historian Frank Carlyle:

Liverpool Football Club was the saviour of those depressive times. Politically we were left in the wilderness. It was the club that got us away from the deprivation and unemployment. Everything went away simply because the Reds were such a fantastic team. The love of Liverpool for the ordinary people was a saviour. Not only were we delighted for ourselves, but it took us out of our depression... Make no mistake about it, they saved us. (*apud* Fieldsend, 2019: 102)

In 1977, in an almost prophetic way, Tony Lane wrote that:

Unemployment will continue to rise and housing conditions in the public sector will worsen. Young people, already disaffected, will turn increasingly to theft and destruction of public property. Old religious antipathies will revive, the Black community will be scapegoated. Riots will occasionally break out, shops looted and buildings fired. Repression will escalate to the point where the working class, failed by its own organisations, will be cowed into submission. (...). (*apud* Fieldsend, 2019: 112).

He would then proceed to add that if nothing was done to acknowledge and tackle these problems, "then we must all pray, along with the Chief Constable – albeit for different reasons, that the Reds at Anfield continue to win all the league titles and all the cups lest energies be directed elsewhere." (*apud* Fieldsend, 2019: 112).

Unfortunately, the success of the Reds was not able to prevent the riots that would occur during the 1980s nor the deterioration of the relationship between the city and Thatcher's administration. This "escape valve" from reality would suffer two major blows that would affect the city forever: Heysel and Hillsborough.

The first blow occurred on 29 May 1985 before the 1985 European Cup Final between Liverpool FC and Juventus FC at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels. Before the match, a scuffle between English and Italian fans led to the death of 39 innocent victims, mostly Italian fans. Liverpool fans were considered to be responsible for the tragedy and as a result, all English clubs were banned from European competitions for five years, with Liverpool being banned for an extra year. The main difference between the events at Heysel and Hillsborough is that the first, besides being proportionally smaller, was the immediate result of actions perpetrated by the fans, while the latter one – as acknowledged only after a protracted and painful process – was not.

On April 15, 1989, at the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at the Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, 97 Liverpool supporters lost their lives as the result of a fatal human crush before the beginning of the game. In the immediate aftermath, and for many years, both the police and the media blamed the fans for the disaster. As it is now finally recognised, after years of struggle and fighting by community groups in Liverpool and confirmed by the conclusions of the Hillsborough Independent Panel and the 2016 judicial inquest that followed it, Liverpool fans were not responsible for the disaster, which was rather the result of actions of the South Yorkshire Police.

David Goldblatt affirms that:

Hillsborough's impact on Liverpool's football culture has been multifaceted. The sheer emotional blow of the moment shaped and then broke the relationship of many people with football. Others clung harder and faster than ever. The waves of shock then mutated into the long terrible era of black propaganda, Murdoch scuttlebutt and the painful lying and denial by the authorities. Because so much of the story woven by the Murdoch press, the South Yorkshire Police and their many allies turned on the disreputable character of Scousers and their city, the emotional and symbolic relationship between the game and Liverpool was perhaps wound even tighter. (Goldblatt, 2015: 90)

This thesis will explore the impact at many levels of the Hillsborough Tragedy on the city of Liverpool and its manifold effects on the community up to the present. The dissertation will be divided into three main chapters. The first chapter will work as historical contextualization, where the following topics will be discussed: the background and specificities of the city of Liverpool and Liverpool FC and the consequences of the Heysel Tragedy. The theoretical framework of Trauma Studies, which will help us to understand this traumatic event for the city will also be introduced. On the first topic, Liverpool's social and historical context will be looked at, from the establishment of the city as a large industrial pole to the decadence it experienced throughout Thatcher's administration. The second topic, Liverpool FC, will explore the club itself, with a brief story of its creation and an emphasis on what happened after the arrival of Bill Shankly in the 1960s, perhaps the most important signing of the club's history, as he would lay the foundations for the success that would come years later, impacting the club, the fans and the city. Then, the Heysel Tragedy will be discussed, focusing on its impact on English football and how it affected the national's perspective about Hillsborough. Finally, Trauma Studies cannot be ignored when dealing with such a tragedy, and although this field can be considered relatively 'new', historically speaking, it provides important tools that will support the analysis of the impact of the Hillsborough Tragedy on the whole community.

The second chapter of this thesis focuses on the Hillsborough Tragedy itself. It will recount the events that took place on 15 April 1989, but also important factors that preceded it, such as the disputed choice of the Hillsborough stadium as the place to host the semi-final and the appointment of Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield. It will also explore the immediate aftermath of the episode and the news coverage of the tragedy.

Finally, the last, and perhaps most important chapter, will deal with the long term impact of the Hillsborough Tragedy. Throughout this chapter, the main points under discussion will be the legal battle that followed the disaster, covering the Taylor Report, the original inquests, the private prosecutions and LJ Stuart-Smith scrutiny, the creation of the Hillsborough Independent Panel and its subsequent report and the 2016 inquests; the different "Hillsborough groups", such as the Hillsborough Family Support Group, the Hillsborough Justice Campaign and the Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance, and their actions in the fight for truth and justice, including *The Sun*'s boycott; the collective memory, and collective mourning, of Hillsborough in the city of Liverpool; and the Hillsborough legacy, analysed through two different projects: the Real Truth Legacy Project and the Hillsborough Law.

Former Liverpool coach Bill Shankly once said that "football is not a matter of life and death; it is much more important than that" (Kelly, 1997: 312). If we pair this very popular saying with Galeano's statement that "una vez por semana, el hincha huye de su casa y acude al estadio" (Galeano, 1995: 7), we can see why the game is so important. In such turbulent times, 97 Liverpool fans went to Hillsborough to escape from reality for at least 90 minutes and be nothing more than a Red. 94 of them died that same day. 3 of them would die later as a result (one on 19 April of the same month, one in March 1993 and one in July 2021). Fathers, brothers, sisters, and children went to a football match and never came home. Having been to hundreds of matches throughout my life, this idea is something that crushes me and compels me to action. This work is, above all, an effort to try to comprehend how a tragedy of such proportions united a community under the same banners: trauma, memory, truth, and justice.

To the Hillsborough 97³: You Will Never Walk Alone⁴.

³ See Appendix 1 for a complete list of the 97 victims of the Hillsborough Tragedy.

⁴ This anthem, which is also present at the title of this dissertation, is, undoubtedly, the most famous Liverpool FC song. Originally written by Rodgers and Hammerstein in 1945 for the musical *Carousel*, its most famous version is the cover by Gerry and the Pacemakers released in 1963. Often referred to by the acronym YNWA, it was adopted by Liverpool fans and became a symbol incorporated by Liverpool FC, being sung at every single game. It is also present at the Shankly Gates in Anfield, erected in 1982, and also appear on Liverpool's FC crest as the gates were added to it in 1992. Personally, I believe it does capture the essence of being a football fan, but it has also acquired a deeper meaning after the Hillsborough Tragedy, becoming an anthem that would accompany the fans on their fight for truth and justice. (see *The Anfield Songbook*, 2019: 207-209)

Chapter 1: Scouse, not English⁵

In Adrian Tempany words, “the 1980s began eight months early” (Tempany, 2016: 1). This is a direct reference to the election of Margaret Thatcher as Britain’s Prime Minister in May 1979. Undoubtedly, the 1980s in England were shaped by the actions of the Thatcher administration and by the people’s response to them, whether positive or negative. Politically, in British contemporary history, there is not a decade so associated with one individual as the 1980s are with Margaret Thatcher (McSmith, 2010: 4). It can arguably be considered one of the most defining decades of the post-war period and its impact can still be felt up to this day.

Nothing ever happens without context and the Hillsborough Tragedy is no exception. To fully understand the happenings of 15 April 1989 and their impact on the city of Liverpool it is essential to provide and, to some extent, analyse the historical context of the 1980s. Even though this is not the main subject of the present thesis, without it it is impossible to comprehend the “full picture” and measure the true dimension of the disaster.

The political ideal of the “lady that was not for turning”⁶ can be summarized by one of her most famous quotes:

I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand “I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!” or “I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!” “I am homeless, the Government must house me!” and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! [...]. But it went too far. If children have a problem, it is society that is at fault. There is no such thing as society. – Thatcher, Margaret, 1987⁷

Thatcher’s administration would put an end to the “post-war consensus”, the agreement between both Labour and Conservative governments that consisted in the notion that:

the state should also play a key role in the provision of ‘welfare’, i.e. health care, education, income support, personal care for the elderly, children in need, and the

⁵ This is a reference to a banner displayed by Liverpool fans at Anfield where it could be read: “WE’RE NOT ENGLISH WE ARE SCOUSE” (see Appendix 12).

⁶ This is a reference to a speech given by Margaret Thatcher to the Conservative Party Conference on 10 October 1980: “To those waiting with bated breath for that favourite media catchphrase, the “U” turn, I have only one thing to say. ‘You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning.’”. The complete speech can be accessed at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104431>.

⁷ This quote comes from an interview given by Margaret Thatcher to journalist Douglas Key for *Women’s Own* on 23 September 1987. The complete interview can be accessed at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>

disabled, and housing. This went well beyond the idea of providing a 'safety-net' for the destitute, to one in which the state would guarantee a basic entitlement to a reasonable standard of living and the provision of suitable social resources, such as schooling and health care. One commentator referred to this as 'social citizenship', the establishment of basic social rights to parallel those of civil and political rights (Marshall, 1981). (Savage and Robbins, 1990: 3)

The Keynesian Welfare State, which ruled Britain for almost 35 years, would be under attack on several different fronts throughout the decade. Ideologically in line with the neoliberal ideals, the government saw the market, and not the state, as "the best mechanism for producing and distributing resources" (Savage and Robbins, 1990: 5), pulling the state out of great segments of the economy. Another point that must be considered is the emphasis on an individualistic ethos and the idea of individual responsibility, both, according to the government's view, depreciated by the Welfare State's creation of a "dependency culture" (Savage and Robbins, 1990: 6). This can be clearly seen in the famous "There is no such thing as society" quote already mentioned.

Lastly, the concept of "social authoritarianism" is often attributed to this period, by virtue of its association "with notions of 'firm' or 'resolute' government, and contrasted (...) with the 'consensus' politics of previous administrations" (Savage and Robbins, 1990: 6). According to Savage and Robbins, this notion is linked to a strong position of the government in a campaign for more "law and order", an increase in information control, a nationalistic approach to international matters and a confrontational style on the domestic front (Savage and Robbins, 1990: 7).

In a decade of privatisations, unemployment, riots and strikes, the city of Liverpool and its people stood up against Margaret Thatcher. To be from Liverpool, to be a Scouser in the 1980s meant resistance, fighting back against oppression. After the Heysel Tragedy, Thatcher described Liverpool as "a city possessed with a particularly violent nature" (*apud* Evans, 2018: 35). War had been declared. But to understand how the situation came to this point, it is important to look back at Liverpool's historical context.

One of the best general definitions of the city and its people is provided by historians John Belchem and Bryan Biggs in their book *Liverpool: City of Radicals*. It goes like this:

Facing out to sea, with its back turned on England, Liverpool is a place apart, a city on the edge. In the 'industrial' north but not of it, maritime Liverpool has always had a

rhythm of its own, dependent on the vagaries of wind and tide, an irregularity at odds with systematic work and time discipline, prerequisites of the industrial revolution. Imbued with a sense of independence, this foundational culture has been cherished by subsequent generations of Liverpudlians, sometimes to the despair of factory managers and labour movement organisers. Where the adjacent north of factories and mills was to the fore in the development of organised forms of radicalism, Liverpool became associated with truculence and wildcat militancy (...). This perceived 'bolshiness' extends far beyond industrial relations: being argumentative, 'having an opinion', is part and parcel of the city's image and identity. What Alan Bleasdale has described as 'a city that just likes to talk' is more often categorised as a city that insists on arguing. (Belchem and Biggs, 2011: 1)

This 'exceptionalism' that is often attached to the city can be traced back to when Liverpool was "the second city of the Empire" during the Georgian Era (Evans, 2018: 17). This post was achieved through the profit from the slave trade, with Liverpool being labelled as the "slaving capital of the world" (Belchem and Biggs, 2011: 2). The reason for the "outsideness" is not only the slave trade itself, as it was not the only city in England to do this, but is related to the fact that "Georgian Liverpool, (...), extolled its commercial success in the infamous trade in proud defiance of the meddlesome moralism of 'outside' abolitionist opinion" (Belchem and Biggs, 2011: 2). Another point that must be taken into account when considering the "outsider" status is the strong Irish influence that helped shape the city's character. This can be seen especially as an effect of the strong influx of Irish refugees that tried to escape the potato famine of 1846-47. This influx, combined with the strong 'anti-Irishness' feeling in England only strengthened the notion of Liverpool as an outside body in the English establishment (Belchem and Biggs, 2011: 18). Author Paul Du Noyer described Liverpool's insularity and isolation in *Wondrous Place*:

As far as Scousers are concerned, Liverpool is not a provincial city, but the Capital of itself. It is deeply insular, yet essentially outward looking: it faces the sea and all the lands beyond, but has turned its back on England. There were local men for whom Sierra Leone was a fact but London was only a rumour. They knew every dive in Buenos Aires but had no idea of the Costwolds. (*apud* Fieldsend, 2019: 6)

All those factors explored in the previous paragraphs added layers of meaning to the term 'Scouse'. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, 'Scouse' stands for "a person who comes from the Liverpool area, in northwest England" or "the form of English spoken by a

person from Liverpool”⁸. Those definitions are correct, but they do not cover the whole dimension of the term and its socio-cultural dimension. Journalist Tony Evans claims that the term became popular after the First World War, being developed like this:

At this point, scouse was a type of seaman’s stew – a corruption of the Scandinavian word ‘lobscouse’ – made of the cheapest ingredients. Carts in the Scotland Road area sold the inexpensive gruel to workmen, who were sneeringly nicknamed ‘Scousers’ by wealthier citizens. The term spread to mockingly describe the residents of this poverty-stricken area but before long the people of north Liverpool were adopting the tag with a sense of pride. Throughout the 1920s and ’30s it spread across the city and jumped the religious divide. (Evans, 2018: 20)

Daniel Fieldsend goes further and states that ‘Scouse’ is “as much of a mentality as it is a locality. (...) a set of values and a way of acting, dressing, thinking and voting which guides a lifestyle. It is what you read and what you denounce” (Fieldsend, 2019: 4). He then adds: “There’s a general belief that most Scousers share the same principles and aspirations in life, but that isn’t exactly true. (...). But on political and cultural matters of importance – of *real* importance – it is so often the case that Scousers group together and sing from the same hymn sheet, harmonising word-for-word as if they’ve heard the song before.” (Fieldsend, 2019: 4).

With this notion in mind, it is now possible to provide a brief historical contextualization of the outlook of Liverpool in the decade that preceded the Hillsborough Tragedy. After a huge cultural ‘boom’ provided by the emergence of The Beatles in the 1960s which made the eyes of the world turn to Liverpool, the situation went downhill in the following decade. Even before the election of Margaret Thatcher, the socio-economic situation of Liverpool had significantly changed, mostly as a result of the switch of Britain’s trading outlook from the Americas and the Commonwealth to Europe, causing the contraction of the docks and the relocation of industries (Evans, 2018: 21). As a result of this, 350 factories closed or went away from Merseyside between 1966 and 1977 and more than forty thousand jobs disappeared between 1970 and 1985 (Evans, 2018: 21). Historians Diane North and Peter Frost mention the notion that the city was undergoing a triple crisis:

an economic crisis in common with the rest of the country that saw manufacturing and port employment decimated; a geographical crisis that left a largely derelict city

⁸ Both definitions can be accessed at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/scouse>

marooned on the wrong side of the country; and a political crisis as the city's leaders failed to rise to these challenges (Frost and North, 2013: 27)

If this was the picture in the years before Thatcher, the situation would only be worsened by her administration's actions and policies. Fieldsend describes the beginning of the Thatcher years in Liverpool by saying that "life on Merseyside was twice as difficult as elsewhere" in the first year of her government (Fieldsend, 2019: 105). With unemployment rising by 120% between 1974 and 1981, the French journal *So Foot* described Liverpool's atmosphere in 1981 like this: "Liverpool is dying in the midst of a national crisis. The Northern Soul is no longer dancing because Maggie has recently come to power, sounding the end of the welfare state recess." (*apud* Fieldsend, 2019: 110). The situation was so bad that it reached the point of political scientist Brian Jacobs labelling the negative effects of global economic changes on British cities as the "Liverpool Syndrome" (Andrews, 2018: 20).

The year 1981 would mark the beginning of a decade of clashes between Liverpool and Thatcher's administration that would endure throughout her period in office. If the "People's March for Jobs"⁹ on the 2nd of May already called the nation's attention, the Toxteth riots would set the tone for the years to come, signalling that the "city of radicals" of Belchem and Biggs was going to see the peak of its radicalism.

The Toxteth riots are often classified as "race riots", being part of the larger nationwide movement that happened that year, but they are better described as being caused by "the interaction of deprivation, police harassment, high unemployment, and racial discrimination" (Andrews, 2018: 138). As already mentioned, the national panorama was deplorable, with Merseyside standing out as one of the regions most affected by the economic crisis and, in its own context, Toxteth was one of Liverpool's most deprived districts. Following the arrest of a young black man, Leroy Cooper, on 3 July 1981, protests erupted and a "battle" started between protesters and the police. This would last for 9 days and it went down in history as the first time CS gas was used in the UK outside Northern Ireland.

The riots made an impact, leading to political action from Michael Heseltine, "Minister for Merseyside" and Secretary of State for the Environment from 1979 to 1983 (Andrews, 2018: 76). With the memorandum "It Took A Riot", Heseltine publicly advocated for public and private investments on Merseyside and inner urban areas through Britain (Andrews, 2018: 76).

⁹ The "People's March for Jobs" was a march in protest against high unemployment in which 500 unemployed people marched from Liverpool to London.

He would proceed to visit the city almost every week for the next two years and established the Merseyside Task Force composed of 24 members split between civil servants and seconded managers (Frost and North, 2013: 21) These actions did not go unnoticed and Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, responded by questioning if: "our aim [should] be to stabilise the inner cities – as Michael [Heseltine] and the CPRS [Central Policy Review Staff] have suggested for Liverpool – or is this to pump water uphill? Should we rather go for "managed decline"?" (apud Andrew, 2018: 76). The expression "managed decline" encapsulated the Thatcher's administration view of Liverpool, abandoning the city to its fate. Fieldsend states that the riots were the first episode in which Thatcher crossed swords with the city (2019: 127). The next two would be the Militant Tendency and the Heysel Tragedy.

If the general election of 1983 was marked by a huge Tory victory which increased their majority to 144, what happened in Liverpool did not follow the national trend. In that year, Labour won 23 of the 33 seats in the local election. It was the beginning of the "Militant Years", which would last until 1985, "a standoff between a council and its government – them and us, syntax and semantics, Scousers versus the world" (Fieldsend, 2019: 142).

The council adopted a radical posture by drawing a budget with a £30 million deficit. It focused mainly on the adoption of social policies such as house-building programmes, investment in schools and creation of jobs (Andrews, 2018: 174). The only reason this posture was not directly attacked by the national government was that there was a much bigger issue at the time: the strike led by the National Union of Mineworkers. The conflict with the "enemy within"¹⁰, in Thatcher's words, was the only reason the Militant council was able to defend its position for a few extra months with extra money being released for Liverpool. One episode described by Evans shows the way the government saw the situation: "Teddy Taylor, a right-wing Tory MP, told Hatton (Deputy Leader of Liverpool City Council): 'Don't get too cocky. Scargill [the miners' leader] is our priority. But we'll come back for you later'" (apud Evans, 2018: 37). And they did.

By 1985, the Militant council was isolated, not being able to resist the government's offensive and trying to deal with internal conflicts. The budget conflict kept going and it reached its peak during the autumn, leading to the council's failed strategy of delivering redundancy notices to its more than 30.000 workers, "losing the support of local trade unionists and pushing

¹⁰ This quote comes from a speech given by Margaret Thatcher where she drew a parallel between the Falklands War (the enemy without) and the miners' strike (the enemy within). The speech notes and the press coverage can both be accessed at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105563>

the budget crisis to its limit (Andrews, 2018: 186). It was the end of the "Militant Years". Only two months earlier, the Heysel Tragedy had happened in Brussels, worsening the image of Liverpool in the country and affecting football in Merseyside on an unprecedented scale. But to fully comprehend this disaster and its consequences, it is essential to take a few steps back and see how Liverpool Football Club went to play its 5th European Cup final in only eight years.

Founded on June 3 1892 after former Everton FC president John Houlding broke from the club's board, Liverpool FC is the biggest and most important football club in the Merseyside region. If the second half of the century is memorable for the Reds, the same cannot be said about the first half. Throughout this time Liverpool FC won three Second Division League titles (1893-94, 1895-96 and 1904-05) and five First Division titles (1900-01, 1905-06, 1921-22, 1922-23 and 1946-47), with just one major trophy won from 1922 to 1964. To make things worse, in the post-war period Liverpool was relegated to the Second Division after fifty consecutive seasons on the top-tier of English football.

After a defeat to non-league Worcester City in January 1959, in FA Cup's 3rd round, the situation hit rock bottom (Williams, 2011: 290). Under the influence of John Moores, Everton's main benefactor, Eric Sawyer was appointed Liverpool's financial director, signalling a huge change in the boardroom's mentality (Williams in Belchem and Biggs, 2011: 127). The boardroom recognised that it was imperative to increase the spending on the team and that it had to give up the right to select Liverpool's first team. (Williams in Belchem and Biggs, 2011: 127). It is in this context, in December 1959, that Liverpool's FC most important signing arrived in Anfield: Bill Shankly.

The arrival of Shankly changed everything, the whole club's atmosphere, its very DNA. A Scottish socialist in the middle of a Conservative board, his impact was beyond measure. One of his most famous quotes, that helps to introduce the Shankly period and what would come later was his desire "to build Liverpool into a bastion of invincibility. Napoleon had that idea. He wanted to conquer the bloody world. I wanted Liverpool to be untouchable. My idea was to build Liverpool up and up until eventually everyone would have to submit and give in."¹¹.

¹¹This quote, and many others, by Shankly can be accessed at: <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/sport/football/football-news/liverpool-fc-legend-bill-shankly-3435313>

Stephen F. Kelly, author of Shankly's most famous biography, does not spare words to describe his personality and the connection between him, the city and the club. In his words:

Bill Shankly is more than just a legend. He has become a part of the fabric of Liverpool, an unmistakably Liverpudlian as Cilla Black, The Beatles or *Brookside*. (...). Liverpool was well capable of being just as obsessive, bizarre, emotional and contradictory as Shankly. They were almost one and the same character. He spoke the dreams of those on the Kop. (...) Shankly was a messiah who arrived at Anfield just as the city was set to burst on to the world map. It's hard to think of anyone else, who so captured the hearts and minds of Liverpool people" (Kelly, 1997: 1-3)

Under the management of Shankly and led in the field by figures such as Ian St. John, Ron Yeats and Roger Hunt, the Reds were promoted to First Division in 1962, won the league in 1964, 1966 and 1973, the FA Cup in 1965, the UEFA Cup in 1973 and reached the European Cup's semi-finals in 1964-1965. According to Goldblatt, these achievements were the result of the combination of several different factors:

Practically, his immediate achievements were to establish absolute authority within the club over football matters, and to create a support team of diverse talents – nicknamed the boot-room (...). At every level of organization, from transport (Liverpool were one of the first teams to travel by air to away games), to investment in training facilities, to the organization of training itself (the famed sweatboxes and small-space five-a-sides), Shankly was an obsessive. But alongside these innovations he established a model of football and team-building rooted in his early years in a small mining community in the west of Scotland. First, he pursued a vision of simple football. Pass the ball to someone else in red and then take up another position in which you can receive it. (...). But it was also a vision of football that prioritized the team over individual performance. Second, he brought a profound sense of solidarity to the dressing room, denoted by his own preference for tracksuits over lounge suits, for the training ground rather than his office. It was a solidarity materially enforced by a wage policy that refused to allow major differentials to emerge within the squad. (Goldblatt, 2007: 447-448)

But besides his extremely practical side, Shankly was a romantic (Goldblatt, 2007: 448). A producer of iconic quotes, Shankly made several impactful declarations to Liverpudlians throughout his lifetime. Once, when addressing the celebration of a trophy, he said that "Chairman Mao has never seen such a show of red strength as this" (*apud* Goldblatt, 2007: 448). He would often say that he came to Liverpool because of the people and their fighting

spirit and fighting vein, always mixed with tremendous kindness (Kelly, 1997: 2). In his words: "Although I am a Scot, I would be proud to be called a Scouser; I wanted to bring happiness to the people of Liverpool." (*apud* Fieldsend, 2019: 130).

However important Shankly's figure was, it should be acknowledged, as pointed out by Goldblatt, that "Shankly's Liverpool was always more than Shankly, the boot-room, the squad or the club. The phenomenon was also made by the fans and indeed by the whole city of Liverpool" (Goldblatt, 2007: 448). This concept was best seen in Shankly's relationship with Liverpool fans, especially the Spion Kop¹², which "stands as both the clearest example and the greatest innovator in fan culture in Britain in the 1960s." (Goldblatt, 2007: 449). The Kop, or the Bill Shankly boys as they call themselves, still sings until this day many songs to Shankly, with the most famous one probably being "We Love You Liverpool, We Do": "Shankly is our hero, he showed us how to play,/ The mighty Reds of Europe are out to win today./ He made a team of champions, with every man a king,/ And every game we love to win, and this is what we sing:/ We love you Liverpool, we do!" (*The Anfield Songbook*, 2019: 194).

In terms of his significance to the city of Liverpool, Shankly is often seen in comparison with The Beatles. Kelly argues that "The Beatles may have brought international acclaim to the city, but once they had achieved their glory they were off chasing the Yellow Brick Motorway to fame and fortune (...). But once he had arrived, Shankly, (...), was here to stay: he was never embarrassed by his fame, nor did he shirk the responsibilities it brought." (Kelly, 1997: 3). This same notion is also developed by Evans when he says that, although they made Liverpool into the most fashionable place to be, they "left for London as soon as their bank balance could justify it" (Evans, 2018: 21). Shankly was not born in Liverpool, but he chose to be a Scouser, in every sense of the term.

In 1974, Shankly would surprise the club and the city by publicly announcing his retirement. He had accomplished his goal; he had made the people happy. He followed by Bob Paisley, in what was considered to be a case of "The King is Dead! Long Live the King!" (Kelly, 1997: 302). Paisley was Liverpool's manager from 1974 to 1983, the most successful period in the team's history. Under his command, Liverpool FC won six League titles (1975-76, 1976-

¹² The Spion Kop, or simply The Kop, is the name of Liverpool's goal end supporters stand. It received its name by *Liverpool Echo's* journalist Ernest Edwards who, when seeing the new construction at Anfield in 1906, decided that it "recalled the fateful camaraderie and the ribbed heights of the killing fields of South Africa", and that it could be regarded as a "fitting and organically *living* memorial" for the Scousers who died during the Boer War in a battle on Spioenkop Hill (Williams in Belchem and Biggs, 2011: 129). It is still regarded as the most symbolical stand in Anfield and its "famous Kopites" can still be heard at every game.

77, 1978-79, 1979-80, 1981-82 and 1982-83), three League Cups (1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83), six Charity Shields (1974, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980 and 1982), one UEFA Cup (1975-76) and one UEFA Super Cup (1977). But the most important titles conquered by Paisley and the Reds were the three European Cups, an unprecedented moment in Liverpool's history.

The first European Cup came in 1977 after a victory of 3-1 against Borussia Mönchengladbach in Rome's Stadio Olimpico, with Terry McDermott, Tommy Smith and Phil Neal scoring for the Reds. This marked the beginning of an unparalleled period of dominance by an English club in Europe. 1977 was also the year of Kenny Dalglish's signing with Liverpool, another turning point in the club's history. The following year would see Liverpool retain the European Cup by managing to win the encounter with FC Bruges at Wembley. The 1-0 win was decided by the new King of the Kop's goal, Dalglish.

The year 1981 would see Liverpool reach its third European Cup after an 83-minute winning goal by Alan Kennedy against Real Madrid in Parc des Princes in Paris. At the end of this year, the Reds wasted their opportunity to become World Champions by losing 3-0 to Clube de Regatas do Flamengo in Tokyo¹³. Nonetheless as Goldblatt states, "the scale of their achievement is unparalleled in English football." (Goldblatt: 2007: 562). Even after Shankly's retirement, "The Liverpool Way' was retained: a tradition of simple football, pass and move, defending and attacking collectively, continuity of staff and players, respecting players autonomy but insisting on solidarity." (Goldblatt, 2007: 562).

According to Goldblatt, the "Paisley Era", which would last until his retirement in 1983, turned over the usual rule that footballing success and economic development walk side by side (Goldblatt, 2007: 562). To explain this statement, he develops on Paisley's period specificity, comparing it with Shankly's one:

While Bill Shankly first side had flourished in an age of working-class confidence, full employment and social mobility, the Liverpool FC he bequeathed to the city blossomed under conditions of urban decay, deindustrialization, mass unemployment and widespread disorder (...). In a city cast as an outsider in its own land, battered by the deliberately engineered economic downturns and clearouts of the early 1980s, Liverpool

¹³ Even though this match is not often mentioned by many English football historians, on a personal note, I must address the importance of this game to me, considered until this day to be Flamengo's most important game in history. Flamengo fans still sing about this game: "Em dezembro de 81, botou os ingleses na roda / 3 a 0 no Liverpool, ficou marcado na história". (Personal translation: "In December of '81, you ran circles around the English / 3-0 against Liverpool, went down in history").

Football Club was an enduring source of pride and a magnet for the energies and emotions of a public hungry for success. (Goldblatt, 2007: 562)

In 1984 Liverpool won its fourth European Cup, this time against AS Roma. Paisley had retired the year before, going down in history as one of Britain's most successful managers, and the club was now led by another "boot-room" figure, Joe Fagan. After a 1-1 draw on the regular time, Liverpool won by 4-2 on penalties. But more than the outcome of the match itself, it is important to look at the confrontations between Liverpool and Roma supporters on the streets of Rome before the game as they can be understood as a sign of what would happen the next year.

First, it is important to state that conflicts involving British fans in Europe were not new at the time. As researcher Clemens Kech states, "the 1970s and 1980s were widely regarded as the heyday of hooliganism, as violent behaviour among football supporters had reached an unprecedented level." (Kech in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 158). It is during this period that the term "English disease" is coined to refer to hooliganism all across Europe (Kech in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 158). Many examples of these conflicts and confrontations can be seen throughout the years:

Leeds Unites supporters ripped up Parc des Princes after their team was beaten by Bayern Munich in the 1975 European Cup final. Manchester United were expelled and then reinstated in the Cup-Winner's Cup in 1977 after trouble away at Saint-Etienne. England fans were tear-gassed in Turin after fighting interrupted a European Championships game against Belgium in 1980 and a year later there were ugly scenes in Basel during and after a defeat by Switzerland. (Evans, 2018: 12)

With Roma playing the final in the Stadio Olimpico, Liverpool fans were in what could accurately be described as "enemy territory". Before the game, there were several episodes of Liverpool supporters being attacked by Roma ultras. Although there were no fights between large groups, many Liverpoolians were being picked up and stabbed on the streets of Rome. After the match, with Liverpool's improbable win, Roma ultras set bins on fire, threw bricks and bottles and got into direct fights with Liverpool fans and the police, which led to the hospitalization of 90 fans (Fieldsend, 2019: 154).

A year later, the Reds would play their 5th European Cup final in 8 years. It was on the 29 May 1985 and Liverpool would face another Italian team, this time Juventus FC, to try to win its 5th title. The final was going to be played in Belgium, at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels.

By the end of the day, Michel Platini's goal gave the Cup to Juventus, but the outcome of the match was probably the least important aspect of the episode. 39 fans lost their lives as a result of confrontations between English and Italian fans. The Heysel Tragedy was one of the most tragic events in the history of football, the "moral ground zero" of European football (Goldblatt, 2007: 543).

The tragic events unrolled after a small group of Liverpool fans began to throw missiles and tried to break into the neutral sector of the stadium (sector Z). They were eventually able to invade the section and after a series of drunken charges and general panic amongst Juventus fans, most of them regular supporters (not Ultras), a wall collapsed and 39 supporters, mostly Italian, were crushed or suffocated to death. In this context, it is important to stress that "39" is not just a number, but it represents 39 innocent people whose lives came to an end, 39 people who went to a football match and never came home¹⁴.

Heysel must be analysed through different scopes and lenses. Historian John Williams argues that there are three reasons to be shocked at the tragedy that happened in Brussels. The first one is related to the feeling of inevitability of a tragedy as such happening involving British supporters and a dramatic combination of alcohol, xenophobic confrontations, bad policing schemes, ticketless supporters and poor stadium security. (Williams, 2011: 368).

The second reason according to Williams has to do with the fact that Liverpool supporters were the protagonists of the incident. He states that for almost 20 years the Reds had been to Europe with no evidence of large violent conflicts of any kind, having not been involved in any episode related to hooliganism. In his view, "Liverpool's hooliganism" was much more based on street style, robbing, travelling without tickets with only occasional episodes of small scale fighting far from the stadium area (Williams, 2011: 369). Evans and Fieldsend also explore this idea of a "Scouser hooligan". Evans goes on and defends that Merseyside teams had earned a respectable reputation in Europe, by mentioning the 21 consecutive years of

¹⁴ These people must be remembered and honoured. As a small gesture, their names will be displayed here: Rocco Acerra, Bruno Balli, Alfons Bos, Giancarlo Bruschera, Andrea Casula, Giovanni Casula, Nino Cerullo, Willy Chielens, Giuseppina Conti, Dirk Daenecky, Dionisio Fabbro, Jacques François, Eugenio Gagliano, Francesco Galli, Giancarlo Gonnelli, Alberto Guarini, Giovacchino Landini, Roberto Lorentini, Barbara Lusci, Franco Martelli, Gianni Mastroiaco, Sergio Bastino Mazzino, Loris Messori, Luciano Rocco Papaluca, Luigi Pidone, Benito Pistolato, Patrick Radcliffe, Domenico Ragazzi, Antonio Ragnanese, Claude Robert, Mario Ronchi, Domenico Russo, Tarcisio Salvi, Gianfranco Sarto, Giuseppe Spalaore, Mario Spanu, Tarcisio Venturin, Jean Michel Walla and Claudio Zavaroni.

European appearances by Liverpool and saying that, although significant numbers of Scousers travelled to European away games, "fighting got in the way of their main interests: shoplifting and drinking" (Evans, 2018: 13). Fieldsend adds to this notion by arguing that "Liverpool supporters were no angels, shoplifting on the continent and bunking on trains to get to matches, but they arrived in Rome shouldering Britain's reputation for mindless thuggery. The barbarians, as far as locals were concerned, had arrived." (Fieldsend, 2019: 150).

The third reason refers to the conditions of the match ground. Williams develops the argument that UEFA adopted a negligent posture and underestimated the tragic potential of an event with such large proportions, by choosing, in his words, "a truly terrible venue and the worst possible administrators of it for Europe's most important club fixture (...)" (Williams, 2011: 369). This is backed up by David Goldblatt, who affirms that:

Heysel Stadium itself was little short of a disgrace. Its concrete terraces were cracked by grass; its rotten hulking crush barriers were more decorative than effective. The decision of UEFA and the Belgian authorities to allow the final to be played there was reprehensible. This was the least of the Belgians' mistakes, given that they appointed a police officer in charge that night who had no experience of football crowds let alone an European Cup final. Bereft of any serious operational strategy or system of stewarding, the police were so hapless that the key officers inside the stadium had no batteries in their walkie-talkies (Goldblatt, 2007: 544).

Even though these points are valid arguments regarding the tragedy and cannot be ignored, one fact is clear and indisputable: Liverpool fans were responsible for the conflict and caused the death of 39 football fans. This must be reckoned with and helps to explain the reactions to Heysel, both in Europe and England, considering both contexts' particularities. This would also have a huge impact on the way the Hillsborough Tragedy was perceived in its immediate aftermath by the media, the government and the people in general.

In Europe, the disaster was perceived as the lowest point in the history of the game. French journal *L'Équipe* made a statement the following day that is commonly used to describe the shared notion of what happened: "If this is football, let it die" (*apud* Goldblatt, 2007: 543). Another point that must be taken into consideration is that, unlike most of the conflicts mentioned in this chapter, Heysel was not a tragedy that concerned only one country or an isolated group: it was a European tragedy (Goldblatt, 2007: 543).

But even being labelled as a European tragedy, the first reactions to it came from England. Under pressure from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, English clubs were withdrawn from European competitions by the Football Association within 48 hours of the end of the game (Evans, 2018: 7). The day after Heysel, Thatcher summoned football journalists to attend Downing Street and discuss the current status of English football. According to Evans, backed up by journalists who attended, she “was reluctant to accept that the troubled economic situation had any impact on hooliganism”, even though the journalists stated that it was ““a social phenomenon rather than a football phenomenon”” (Evans, 2018: 8).

Thatcher had the idea that the way crowds should be managed was through self-policing. This proved to be not only an absurd idea, but it showed her incapacity to see the whole dimension of the hooliganism problem. While the Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock went on to say that “the problem of football crowd violence is deep-rooted and it has many causes of which one of the most important is long-term unemployment” (*apud* Evans, 2018: 10), Thatcher saw it as a black and white issue. In the words of Dunning, “Heysel and the overall reaction to it... represented a peak in the politicisation of the English hooligan problem” (*apud* Kech in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 160).

With UEFA following in the footsteps of the FA and FIFA and endorsing the sanctions, English clubs would be banned from European competitions for a period of five years (with Liverpool FC being banned for an extra year). It was not something that only affected Liverpool, but the whole world of English football. If a year earlier *The Sunday Times* had described English football as a “slum sport played in slum stadiums increasingly watched by slum people” (*apud* Evans, 2018: 61), the situation would reach its lowest point with Heysel.

It can be argued that the government’s reaction to the tragedy can be understood as a direct attack on the city of Liverpool. Derek Hatton argues that Thatcher “was on a collision course with the city” and did everything in her power to “blacken the name of Liverpool”, using the Heysel disaster for the purpose (*apud* Evans, 2018: 17). Peter Reid and Neville Southall, former Everton players who played in Goodison Park at the time, both agree with this thought, adding that “the Tories were trying to decimate one of the world’s great cities” and that “it was not about football to the Tories (...). It was an assault against working-class people and their culture.” (*apud* Evans, 2018: 17). Even though these arguments are clearly partial, they must be presented when trying to comprehend the full picture of Heysel’s impact.

In Europe, Juventus was sentenced to play their first two European games behind closed doors and Belgium was barred by UEFA from hosting another final for 10 years. The police captain responsible for the stadium's security was sentenced, Belgian's FA secretary received six months for negligence and two senior officers were named for extraordinary negligence. Besides this, 14 Liverpool fans were found guilty of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to three years in prison (Fieldsend, 2019: 164). Kech points out other significant consequences of Heysel at a European level:

Another change for aficionados of the game came with the modification of stadia regulations. UEFA introduced 'stringent security requirements and provisions for all-seated spectators put into place at UEFA matches' (UEFA, 9 May 2014). Standing areas were outlawed. New structures were formed at a European level among legislators, organisers and authorities. The European agreement on violence and excesses, signed on 19 August 1985 in Strasbourg, marked the beginning of Europe-wide cooperation to battle the problem of violence among spectators (cf. Chisari, 2004, p. 215). (Kech in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 160).

Another one of the main factors that made Heysel into an European tragedy, in addition to the ones explored above, has to do with the notion of collective memory, a "sense of togetherness" that can be originated by different factors, including experiences and events lived by groups (Kech, in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 152). French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs invented the term "collective memory" in the 1920s arguing that "an individual's identity stems from the complex interaction between the individual's personal memories on the one hand and the collective memory of his or her social environment on the other hand. (...) the perception of the past depends upon interaction, communication, media and institutions to which the social framework is exposed (...)" (Kech, in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 152). In the 1980s, French historian Pierre Nora developed the term "*lieux de mémoire*" (sites of memory), which can be described as entries in the collective memory of a determined group. Kech, considering both these notions, argues that Heysel can be considered a European "*lieu de mémoire*", especially by the way it was perceived by the media at the time and the impact it has had since then.

All major European newspapers had Heysel on their front pages on the day following the tragedy. The coverage of the television networks must also be considered as it brought to light something that the majority of the audience had never seen on such a scale. As it was already stated, most of the confrontations involving hooligans happened outside the stadium, either between themselves or with the police, and did not make the headlines. Heysel was

different. Because of the dimension of the game and its coverage, Europe was watching. On the day and for many weeks later, Heysel would become a symbol. What happened in Brussels was regarded as the "opposite of culture and civilisation" and "a shameful symbol of European barbarism and brutal savageness", with the audience displaying identification and solidarity with the victims of the tragedy (Kech, in Pyta and Havemann, 2015: 162). As the next chapters will show, the Heysel Tragedy would have a great impact on the way Liverpoolians were regarded and eventually how Hillsborough was perceived outside the city of Liverpool.

One year after Heysel, Liverpool FC, already under the management of striker-manager Kenny Dalglish, went on to win a historical and very symbolic FA Cup against Everton FC and the league title. The Reds would also win the league title in 1988 and suffer an upsetting defeat to Wimbledon FC in the FA Cup final in the same year. This is how the Reds arrive in 1989, the year when the history of Liverpool and Liverpool FC would change forever.

It is impossible to fully understand the Hillsborough Tragedy and its impact without considering the theoretical framework of Trauma Studies. Bearing in mind that this is a relatively new research field and still under development, there are already some solid bases that can and will help the comprehension of not only the tragedy itself but how it affected and still affects the city of Liverpool and its people.

The subject of Trauma Studies went through a major shift in the last 40 years. Before that trauma was approached only through psychiatric and biomedical points of view, being considered a "disease of the mind", labelled as "traumatic neurosis", caused firstly by railroad accidents and eventually becoming associated with war in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder (Casper and Wertheimer, 2016: 2). Trauma would only become associated with the social sciences and humanities with the work of historians and cultural theorists who explored "history and memory (e.g., Caruth 1995; LaCapra 2001), narrative and its limits (e.g., Scarry 1985; Caruth 1996), memorialization (e.g., Sturken 1997, 2007; LaCapra 1998), cultural representations of trauma (e.g., Kaplan 2005), and genealogies of trauma (e.g., Leys 2000; Orr 2006)" (Casper and Wertheimer, 2016: 3). Through their work, trauma came to be understood as a cultural object produced by history and politics and subject to intervention, contestation and reinterpretation (Casper and Wertheimer, 2016: 3).

However, as pointed out by Wertheimer and Casper, the reality of events is not diminished by the theoretical points (Casper and Wertheimer, 2016: 3). It is important to state this as framing such traumatic events and regarding them through the lens of theoretical

discourse proves to be essential, but it does not reduce the impact or the pain caused by them, both of which can not be ignored. Critical trauma studies consist in the categorization of the response to these events not only as mere events but as traumatic ones, analysing and interpreting them with the correspondent vocabulary, temporality and knowledge, eventually trying to create and establish the "discourse of trauma" (Casper and Wertheimer, 2016: 3). It is very important to acknowledge the notion of trying as the field is not yet a consolidated one, having fluid and even contested barriers and scopes. This "trauma framework" has, however, proven itself vital for the development of any kind of conclusion regarding Hillsborough and cannot be ignored in any study of the event.

A crucial concept that must be dealt with when discussing Hillsborough and which is directly related to trauma is memory. The ideas developed by Fernando Catroga, Michael Brennan, Graham Dawson and Allen Meek are going to be fundamental and will also be explored later on in our discussion of how the tragedy was perceived and is remembered by Scousers. American historian Dominick LaCapra, a key figure in the field of trauma studies, will also deserve to be mentioned especially because of the way he develops the role of empathy in the writing of trauma, thus providing a deeper understanding of how to deal with testimonials, and the role played by survivors in the aftermath of tragic events (LaCapra, 2014). Acknowledging that these sources must be dealt with caution, LaCapra nonetheless recognises their value. In his words:

The importance of testimonies becomes more apparent when they are related to the way they provide something other than purely documentary knowledge. Testimonies are significant in the attempt to understand experience and its aftermath, including the role of memory and its lapses, in coming to terms with –or denying and repressing– the past. (LaCapra, 2014: 87)

But if Hillsborough is the focus of this thesis, it was not the only traumatic event in British sports' history. In the introduction to *Soccer and Disaster: International Perspectives*, editors Paul Darby, Martin Johnes and Gavin Mellor make a provocative statement: "Disaster is an overused word in football." (Darby *et al.*, 2004: 1). They go on about how relatively common episodes, such as a last-minute goal, a heavy defeat or a team being relegated to a lower division are usually described as a disaster by journalists, fans and players (Darby *et al.*, 2004: 1). Hillsborough is certainly the worst disaster that happened in British football, but the 20th century presents a series of events of such nature.

On 5 April 1902 at Ibrox Park in Glasgow, 25 people died and over 500 were injured after the collapse of a section of the terrace during an international match between England and Scotland. In 1923, the first Wembley FA Cup final witnessed 1000 people get injured due to overcrowding (even though the official attendance was 126.047, some estimates aim to the number of 250.000 people). Another FA Cup match, this time at Burnden Park in Bolton on 9 March 1946 with Bolton Wanderers facing Stoke City would result in the death of 33 people and injury of over 400, again due to the deadly combination of overcrowding and poor facilities (see Nicholson, 2016: 13 and Johnes in Darby *et al.*, 2004: 10-16).

This last tragedy resulted in the first of a sequence of reports regarding football stadiums' security: the Moelwyn Hughes Report. Amongst its recommendations were "the introduction of counting systems on turnstiles so that clubs could monitor how many people have been admitted, a review of safety barriers, and a mechanical means to ascertain when a certain enclosure had reached its capacity." (Nicholson, 2016: 13-14). Moelwyn Hughes also advised "a licensing scheme run by local authorities with penalties for non-compliance." (Johnes in Darby *et al.*, 2004: 15).

With the emergence of hooliganism in the 1960s, the debate regarding crowd management was intensified, resulting in three important inquiries into the conditions of football games:

Norman Chester's 1968 inquiry into the state of the game and how it could be developed for the public good noted that there was a need for better facilities at many grounds from the viewpoint of crowd safety and behaviour. Yet this brief mention was the only attention paid to the question of safety in the whole of the report. An independent 1968 report into the game noted that the recommendations of the Shortt and Moelwyn Hughes inquiries were often ignored, although they did carry some weight with football directors. The report felt that, in the absence of legislation, some clubs did 'not feel obliged to put their grounds into a state considered by the police to be necessary for crowd control'. A 1969 government report on crowd behaviour noted that although the self-regulation system worked 'satisfactorily', there was an advantage in replacing the 1948 certificates with up-to-date regular inspections. Consequently, the football associations of England, Scotland and Wales asked those clubs whose grounds had a capacity of 10,000 or more for an annual certificate that their grounds had been inspected by (undefined) qualified personnel (Johnes in Darby *et al.*, 2004: 16-17).

This system would prove to be flawed and in 1971 66 people were killed in a crush on a stairway while leaving the match between Rangers and Celtic at the Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow. After the recommendations of the Wheatley Report of a licensing system operated by local authorities, the 1975 Safety at Sports Ground Act was introduced by the government and established several technical safety requirements in football grounds (Johnes in Darby *et al.*, 2004: 17). However, as Johnes points out, the cost of the implementation of those measures could mean the end of small clubs. By Wheatley's recommendation, the Act was only initially applied to clubs in the English and Scottish first divisions, with second division clubs being brought under it only in 1979. This created anomalies as some small grounds were required to implement these changes, but large ones not necessarily so (like Sheffield United's, for example) (Johnes in Darby *et al.*, 2004: 17).

In May 1985 a fire at Valley Parade during a match between Bradford City and Lincoln City killed 56 people. Bradford was a third division club and, as seen, was not under the Act's regulation. This disaster led to the Popplewell Report, which made several safety recommendations. Amongst them was the signalling that, "had perimeter fences been erected around the pitch at Bradford, as was the case at many other grounds, the death toll would have been much higher." (Johnes in Darby *et al.*, 2004: 19). But the general concern was not with safety or with football fans, but rather with hooliganism. Popplewell's concern with the perimeter fences would prove to be right. On 15 April 1989, those same perimeter fences at the Hillsborough stadium would prove to be fatal for 97 Liverpool fans. Despite a long list of disasters and some half-hearted attempts to prevent them, it would take a catastrophe such as the Hillsborough Tragedy to change the sport, the city, the club and the country. Nothing would ever be the same.

Chapter 2: 15 April 1989

Liverpool and Nottingham Forest were playing in Sheffield at the Hillsborough stadium for the FA Cup semi-final. After John Aldridge scored the winner for the Reds, Liverpool fans experienced “a frightening crush in pens 3 and 4, behind the goal” (Tempany, 2016: 13). The scenario might seem a bit too familiar by now to readers of this thesis, but this did not happen in 1989. It happened a year earlier, on 9 April 1988. No fans were harmed that day and even though they went through this very disturbing situation, all of them were able to return home. A year later, this would not be the case. This was not the first episode of such nature to happen at Hillsborough and unfortunately it would not be the last.

In 1981, the FA Cup’ semi-final played at Hillsborough between Tottenham Hotspur and Wolverhampton Wanderers almost became a disaster. 38 Spurs fans were injured as the result of a crush with the capacity of the Leppings Lane being exceeded by over 400, but the South Yorkshire Police prevented the situation from escalating by shutting the tunnel and allowing 150 fans to climb over the fence (Tempany, 2016: 14) (see Nicholson, 2016: 16-18). As a consequence of this, the stadium was considered unusable for the semi-finals and would not be selected to host a game for six years, until it was selected again in 1987 for the game between Leeds United and Coventry City, with the ground undergoing some modifications throughout this period.

Although the Leppings Lane, being an open terrace, contributed to avoiding fatalities in 1981, later that year, the West terrace, which formed the Leppings Lane with the Northwest terrace, was divided into three pens. This should have reduced the capacity from 10.100 to 10.000, but the original estimate was maintained. The proposal of introducing turnstiles to count the number of spectators entering both terraces was shelved by Sheffield Wednesday, which resulted in the stadium being operated with an invalid safety certificate. Four years later, the central pen of the Leppings Lane was divided into two by a new fence, creating pens 3 and 4, and a new proposal for the installation of some means to measure the number of fans was again rejected (Tempany, 2016: 15).

The introduction of pens and fences in English stadiums, as seen in the previous chapter, must be understood in the context of hooliganism. The 1977 McElhone Report into football crowd behaviour recommended lateral fences to prevent sideways movement and perimeter fences at the front, which should be “not less than 1.8 meters high” and were designed to make access to the pitch impossible. Although the report made a recommendation that access points

were vital to allow for evacuations to the pitch if necessary, as Phil Scraton points out in his book *Hillsborough: The Truth*, it was very difficult to reconcile perimeter fencing with the use of the pitch for emergency evacuation (Scraton, 2016: 39). The division of terraces into pens made it almost impossible to control overcrowding, as the turnstiles would only provide the numbers for the entire terrace and the distribution of fans through these pens was unsupervised, resulting in some being regularly packed (usually the ones behind the goals) and others being under-filled.

In the 1988 semi-final fans were asked by police officers to show their tickets on their way to the stadium, which slowed down the crowd's approach. Although it worked on the outside of the ground and prevented any incidents, the situation on the inside was totally different. Many fans remember being crushed in pens 3 and 4, immediately behind the goal, accessed beneath the West stand down a 1-in-6 gradient tunnel with its entrance directly opposite the turnstiles. Officers restricted access to the tunnel once the pens were full and redirected fans to the side pens. Despite these measures, this did not fully prevent the crush, described by a fan in a letter to FA after the game:

The whole area was packed solid to the point where it was impossible to move and where I, and others around me, felt considerable concern for personal safety. As a result of the crush an umbrella I was holding in my hand was snapped in half against the crush barrier in front of me... My concern over safety was such – at times it was impossible to breathe – that at half-time I managed to extricate myself from the terrace, having taken the view that my personal safety was more important than watching the second half. (*apud* Fieldsend, 2019: 186)

Even with many complaints of a similar nature, Hillsborough was chosen to host its third consecutive FA Cup semi-final in 1989. Bearing these complaints in mind, Liverpool's chief executive, Peter Robinson, phoned the FA and asked for Old Trafford to stage the game, but the request was denied. He then urged for Liverpool fans to be allocated the Kop and Forest fans the Leppings Lane, as they were in smaller numbers than the Reds, but South Yorkshire Police was opposed to the idea (Tempany, 2016: 16). It would be a replay of the previous year, but the outcome of the day would be very different. Late football broadcaster Peter Jones signed off from BBC Radio 2's *Sports Report* at the end of the afternoon with one of the most symbolic quotes regarding the happenings of the Hillsborough Tragedy:

I think the biggest irony is that the sun is shining now, and Hillsborough's quiet, and over there, to the left, the green Yorkshire hills... and who would've known that people would die here in the stadium this afternoon. I don't necessarily want to reflect on Heysel, but I was there that night, broadcasting with Emyln Hughes, and he was sitting behind me this afternoon, and after half an hour of watching stretchers going out and oxygen cylinders being brought in, and ambulance sirens screaming, he touched me on the shoulder and he said, 'I can't take any more,' and Emyln Hughes left. The gymnasium here, at Hillsborough, is being used as a mortuary for the dead, and at this moment stewards have got little paper bags, and they're gathering up the personal belongings of the spectators... and there are red and white scarves of Liverpool, and red and white bobble hats of Liverpool, and red and white rosettes of Liverpool, and nothing else. And the sun shines now. (*apud* Tempany, 2016: 35-36)

The "red and white scarves of Liverpool" were the last remains of what had happened only a few hours earlier. 97 Liverpool fans went to Sheffield to watch a football game and were crushed to death at the Leppings Lane end of the Hillsborough stadium. Over 400 fans were injured. Thousands of survivors would be traumatised for the rest of their lives. It was the greatest sports tragedy in British history and its impact can still be felt on the team, the city, the country and the game. But how could it possibly have happened?

A disaster, especially one of such proportions as Hillsborough, does not happen by chance. As Scraton states, "it is always possible to argue that disasters or other tragedies 'wait to happen'. Inevitably, their origins can be shown in bad habits, flawed custom and practice and institutionalized complacency" (Scraton, 2016: 41). He then adds: "Others argue that disasters are the outcomes of a set of unfortunate circumstances, both unpredictable and random" (Scraton, 2016: 41). To summarize, he declares: "Disasters are regularly caused by a coincidence of predictable circumstances coming together unexpectedly" (Scraton, 2016: 100). In a way, this position works as a middle ground between a notion of reality as completely random and an irrevocable determinism. With these in mind, it is possible to try and make sense of the happenings on that afternoon in April 1989.

As it would be proved, the Hillsborough stadium had several infrastructural issues. It was an outdated stadium, operating without a valid safety certificate and remodelled under the idea that all football fans should be regarded as hooligans. But this was also the scenario of the previous two semi-finals and a series of matches played by Sheffield Wednesday. What were the "unfortunate circumstances" that provoked such a tragedy on that day?

The FA requested the use of Hillsborough on 20 March 1989. At this time, the F Division was still commanded by Chief Superintendent Brian Mole, an experienced match commander who was responsible for the police actions in 1987 (the delay of the game) and 1988 (the showing of tickets and the closing of the tunnel). But on 25 March he was transferred to Barnsley. For many years, this was seen as a routine reshuffle, but it is also believed to have been ordered by the Home Office after a "prank" at Sheffield's Hammerton Road was exposed (Scraton, 2016: 25). Either a routine reshuffle or part of a larger context, Mole's transfer would have a direct impact on the crowd control at the match. He was replaced by David Duckenfield, who had not policed the ground in a decade (Tempany, 2016: 22).

The 1989 Operational Order for the semi-final was practically the same as the 1988 one. In Scraton's words, "the previous year's Order was taken down, dusted, and, with a few minor alterations, reissued; complete with uncorrected spelling mistakes" (Scraton, 2016: 43). No mention was made by Mole or any officer of the crushing that had occurred in pens 3 and 4 of the Leppings Lane at the previous semi-final (Tempany, 2016: 22). Although there was no reference made to emergency procedures involving overcrowding or any problem on the terrace, 21 officers were responsible for policing the perimeter track, paying "particular attention... to prevent any person climbing the fence to gain access to the ground'. The perimeter fence gates were to 'remain bolted at all times' with 'no one... allowed access to the track from the terraces without the consent of a senior officer'" (Scraton, 2016: 44).

The Order, and by consequence the police, focused on alcohol as a major problem. From "random coach searches through to the monitoring of pubs", most of the policing outside the ground was directed against drinking (Scraton, 2016: 45). But if drinking was covered, the Order had major flaws that would prove fatal:

What the Operational Order failed to address was as striking as its priorities. Despite the warning signs, the 'Green Guide'¹⁵, police guidelines and official reports, there were no contingencies for the inevitable build-up outside the ground immediately before kick-off. There was nothing in the Order about the bottleneck at the Leppings Lane turnstiles and the obvious danger of congestion in the turnstile area. Both problems were well known to the police and there had been serious congestion in 1988. There were no

¹⁵ The "Green Guide", officially the *Guide to Safety at Sports Ground*, is an UK government-funded guidance book on spectator safety at sports ground. Its 1st edition dates back to 1973, with its creation being the result of a recommendation made on the Wheatley Report of 1971, following the Ibrox Disaster.

contingency plans for delaying the kick-off, for opening exit gates, for coping with over-full pens or for closing the tunnel leading into the central pens. (Scraton, 2016: 45)

At the beginning of April, Duckenfield went to Hillsborough to familiarise himself with the stadium, but the games he attended (Sheffield Wednesday against Wimbledon and Millwall) did not provide an atmosphere remotely close to what should be expected at the semi-final. Even though he visited the Leppings Lane end, he did not observe any potential problems. Duckenfield mistakenly assumed that the main responsibility regarding crowd management was under Sheffield Wednesday match stewards who would be on duty at the rear of the pens and the entrance of the tunnel (Scraton, 2016: 47). This was the beginning of a series of unfortunate events that would culminate in tragedy.

The big day had finally come. As fans made their way to Sheffield on that sunny Saturday, all they could think about was the highly anticipated game. Having won the semi-final the previous year, Liverpool had suffered a surprising defeat to Wimbledon FC at the Cup final and was trying to reach it once more to try and win its fourth Cup title. Forest, on the other hand, was aspiring to reach its third Cup final, the first one since the 1958/1959 season, when they were champions for the second time after defeating Luton Town.

Either by train, coach or car, the 54.000 expected fans started to arrive. Despite what had happened in Heysel four years earlier, police were not expecting any trouble from fans and their main focus was directed to drinking. The South Yorkshire Police was monitoring their arrival and proceeded to perform random checks on coaches, minibuses and cars, searching for alcohol and requesting supporters to show their tickets, which delayed many fans (Scraton, 2016: 51). As they arrived at their final destination, fans walked the police-supervised route to the ground. Scraton points out that even with the high number of police officers, fans were allowed to walk "freely" and a "carnival atmosphere" was created outside the ground, but Liverpool fans were not allowed to leave the determined route and were to be kept away, "at all costs", from Forest supporters (Scraton, 2016: 52).

Shortly after 2 p.m., people were arriving in greater numbers and the entry to the ground was slow. In the words of a Merseyside mounted officer, this happened in part "due to the fact that supporters were being searched prior to entering", but even with the swelling of the crowd around the turnstiles, the general mood "was one of high spirits, (...), with many people singing and chanting, but all good-humouredly" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 54). If this was the scenario, it

would quickly be altered and the influx of fans arriving at Leppings Lane was soon to be intensified as the kick-off time was approaching. In the words of Scraton:

At the ground the last half-hour point, 2.30 p.m., had come and gone. The build-up at the turnstiles was sudden and intense. Any semblance of queuing had disappeared as more and more people arrived and the bottleneck started to take its toll. The simple equation was that more people were arriving at the back of the enclosed area than were passing through the turnstiles at the front. Those just arriving from coaches, trains and cars knew that thousands more were still to come. As one officer observed: 'The crowd ... were getting very heated as time was getting on towards three o'clock and movement through the turnstiles appeared to be very slow.' A mounted officer felt the change all around: 'What had a few minutes earlier seemed to be a carnival kind of atmosphere was rapidly becoming electric and very hostile...' (Scraton, 2016: 56)

The design of the stadium contributed to this kind of gathering of fans (see Appendix 2). Leppings Lane had six sets of wrought-iron double gates, with the three to the left leading to a small area that fed 16 turnstiles and the three on the right opening into a smaller area which fed 7 turnstiles. There were three exit gates: A and B alongside the turnstiles and C around the corner from the smaller area. While these 23 turnstiles were supposed to process the 24,447 spectators from the Leppings Lane terrace and the West and North stands, the rest of the ground had to process 29,800, with 60 turnstiles available.

The 10,000 Liverpool fans with tickets to the Leppings Lane terrace walked through the smaller area, going through the seven turnstiles. Once inside, they reached an inner concourse which was directly opposed to a tunnel dropping down a 1-in-6 gradient onto the terrace. Scraton highlights that the word "standing" was posted over the tunnel next to the letter "B", which matched the letter on all terrace tickets, inducing fans to assume that this was the only terrace entrance, while this tunnel led only to the central pens 3 and 4 (Scraton, 2016: 58).

In the half-hour before kick-off, the area outside the gates became tightly packed. Restricted by walls, fences and gates to the front and sides, the only relief was from the back, but more and more fans were arriving, without any idea of the crush at the front. Within minutes, the situation became critical and the crush terrible, with fans struggling for breath. As noted by Scraton, "police and fans' accounts of what happened next differ" (Scraton, 2016: 59).

Describing this scenario, Superintendent Marshall noted "many 'mostly male' fans 'lying or sitting on the grass drinking from cans and bottles (...)'". But 'there was no trouble'

and ‘despite what seemed to me to be far too much drinking going on fans were well behaved’” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 59). Closer to the ground, a mounted officer recalls noticing “a general aroma of beer coming from the crowd fans”, appearing to be “affected by alcohol consumption and becoming more hostile” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 60). As the old and inefficient turnstiles were contributing to the swelling of the crowd, officers stated that “tempers became frayed and evidence of drunkenness became more and more pronounced”, with the crowd becoming “more and more unruly and nasty” and the “late arrivals worse for drink” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 60).

According to a police officer outside the ground, “the bulk of supporters appeared to be gripped by an urgency to get into the ground and get in now and if someone was hurt, so what...” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 60). The description of fans coming into the ground was of a “very distressed condition, trying to catch their breath”, again reinforcing that “many had obviously been drinking heavily” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 60). At this moment, the crush was becoming unbearable. Appeals were being broadcast for fans not to push towards the turnstiles, but the situation had already reached a critical point. With radio contact breaking up, officers started to ask permission for the only possible option: opening the gates.

The fans’ accounts, however, do not match up with the police ones. A Liverpool supporter recalls seeing a “large number of supporters trying to get into a small number of turnstiles” with “very little police presence” and no stewards outside the ground nor any “attempt to marshal supporters into lines in advance of our approaching the turnstile areas”, hearing a police officer “telling the supporters that it was their own fault for coming late” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 63).

In the words of another fan, “it was a normal day like so many other games that I’ve been to. No violence or heavy drinking, nothing like that”. He then adds: “when we got to the turnstiles it was chaos. There were hardly any police. It was nothing like Anfield where the police outside the ground get everyone sorted out as they arrive” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 64). The crush is described like this by a Liverpool supporter: “I couldn’t get my arms up and while people all around me were screaming, I could hear the fans arriving behind singing and chanting. They had no idea what it was like at the front” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 64).

To summarize, while the accounts of the build-up by the police blame the crush on the fans, who in their view had chosen to arrive late, had been drinking throughout the day and were determined to get to the turnstiles at all cost, even ignoring direct orders from the police, the fans’ account tells a different story, highlighting the fact that there were no stewarding

outside the crowd, the poor condition of the turnstiles and the "normality" of the crowd behaviour. It can surely be understood as a sign of what would follow the events of the day.

Throughout the development, and worsening, of the crush, Chief Superintendent Duckenfield was observing the situation from the police control box. Delaying the kick-off was an option that should only be adopted, in his view, if an "identifiable problem" would occur, such as "a serious incident, accident on the motorway or fog on the Pennines" (Scraton, 2016: 66). But the situation at the turnstiles had reached an unprecedented point. At 2.47 p.m., as people were being pulled from the press by officers, Superintendent Marshall requested the control box to open the gates. Three minutes later, he repeated, but this time he was much more emphatic: "Open the gates or someone is going to be seriously injured or killed" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 66). Despite the fact that his first instinct was to refuse, as "it would have defeated the objectives of the Operational Order" allowing drunken fans to get in, with missiles and without tickets, the sense of urgency in Marshall's voice and Duckenfield's lack of experience led to a decision that would have disastrous consequences: at 2.52 p.m. Duckenfield ordered exit gate C to be opened.

Inside the ground, the design of the terrace, the poor signalling and the lack of orientation, all already mentioned, caused an uneven filling of the pens. As early as 1.45 p.m., fans remember the crushing behind the goal, fuelled by "'a steady stream of fans making their way down the tunnel' with 'no steward or policeman to check this flow'" (Scraton, 2016: 70). While pens 3 and 4 were clearly close to full capacity, the pens to the side still had considerable space available. But when gate C was opened, the fans went through what seemed to be the only way in.

Adrian Tempany, extensively quoted throughout this thesis as the author of *And the Sun Shines Now: How Hillsborough and the Premier League Changed Britain*, was present at the Leppings Lane terrace and provides a detailed account of the crushing experience:

It was just over ten minutes until kick-off, and there were thousands of people still to get through the turnstiles. Inside, the central pens had been bursting for nearly 15 minutes. By now, my legs, my backside, my arms and my chest were numb. I could move my eyes, my mouth and my head, but no more. I was now paralysed from the neck down. My right foot seemed to move involuntarily, until I realised that it wasn't on the ground but planted on another man's calf. Around me, people were passing out. (Tempany, 2016: 27)

With the opening of the gate, what could be described as a tough experience became a terrifying one. Around 2.000 people that were just being crushed at the turnstiles were now feeling relieved and walking straight through the tunnel leading to pens 3 and 4, oblivious to the crushing situation in the pens. As fans were reaching the end of the tunnel, their description conveys the feeling of hitting a wall (Nicholson, 2016: 70). The pressure of bodies compressed fans to the front and more and more people were still walking down the tunnel (see Appendix 3). In the words of a Liverpool fan:

I'd been in packed crowds before but I knew this was different. We'd all been uncomfortable for nearly half an hour but thought it would sort itself out once the ground was full, everyone in and the game under way. It didn't happen. Once the teams were out it seemed to tighten. I was bent forward, from the waist, my full weight pressing down on people in front of me. At first the pain in my back was sharp but then it was in my chest. Suddenly it hit me, I was going to die. (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 72)

As the crush worsened, people called desperately for help, but it did not come: "(...) there was a lot of shouting to the police officers... on the track, for help, to do something, but it was as though he [police officer at the gate of pen 3] was waiting for an order to come through before he could act" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 73). Fans started to try and go into the pitch to escape the crush, trying to climb the perimeter fence and forcing the gate, but police officers pushed them back. Then a crush barrier collapsed under the pressure and weight of the crowd and "those behind the barrier went over the buckled metal. Those behind them were compressed downwards onto the pile of bodies. Most had no chance as they went down in a tangled mass of limbs" (Scraton, 2016: 74). In the words of Tempny:

I was vaguely aware that the game had kicked off, and that people were dead on their feet: with no room in which to fall, they were carried in the fitful surges like shop dummies. In pockets, the air above pens 3 and 4 was now thick with the smell of excrement and urine as people, slowly being asphyxiated, lost control of their bodily functions. (Tempny, 2016: 31)

At this time, as radio contact was still breaking up, most police officers at the stadium were still unaware of the situation inside the pens. At the gate, a police officer tried twice to pass a message asking if the gate could be opened, but received no response (Scraton, 2016: 77). Watching the terrace, Duckenfield saw the gate being opened and, in his words: "there were one or two fans coming on to the perimeter track... I thought individuals were taking advantage of the gate being opened to come out on to the perimeter track... I thought it was a

pitch invasion" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 79). This was the message that was transmitted to officers as they were instructed to rush to the Leppings Lane. Even recognising the situation, the mindset of the police, from top to bottom, was crowd disorder and hooliganism. They went to the terrace perimeter to control a pitch invasion, something caused by the fans themselves. But when they arrived,

"(...) it was immediately apparent that this was not a pitch invasion... There were a large number of dead/dying and injured persons in the crowd. People were crushed hard against the fence... a blob of humanity crushed behind them not moving. Some crushed against the fence were blue violet in colour, others had glazed eyes, apparently dead, others were covered in vomit." (...). "I could see that some people had attempted to protect the persons in front as their arms were wrapped around them and crushed into the chest of the person protected. Some were so small that you could only see their heads." (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 80)

The game was abandoned at 3.06 p.m. and the gate was finally opened. To enter the pen, however, officers had to climb "over and on to the bodies in order to get behind the spaghetti of bodies" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 81). As they tried to pull fans from the pile and pass them in a sort of chain through the gate and onto the pitch, there was "no way to select the living from the dead" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 81). Fans worked desperately alongside officers to pull the dying and injured from the pens, but it was an almost impossible mission. Despite their intention, as Scraton develops, "few people knew what they were doing" and "the only medical assistance officially on duty was provided by thirty St. John's Ambulance officers" (Scraton, 2016: 84).

The bodies were multiplying and the pitch was becoming congested. The first ones to be pulled from the pens were put down close to the fence and were now blocking the way for the evacuation. An ambulance made its way into the pitch carrying three stretchers, but more than a hundred were now needed. Officers around the tunnel were pulling fans back and making their way onto the pens. Fans ran to the trackside and started tearing down advertising hoardings to be used as improvised stretchers. "It was a tremendous, spontaneous effort but it underlined the inadequacy of medical support" (Scraton, 2016: 85).

While all this was happening, Duckenfield was still at the control box. A few moments after 3.15 p.m., Graham Kelly and Glen Kirton of the Football Association arrived at the control box accompanied by the Sheffield Wednesday club secretary to try and make sense of what was

happening. What followed was the beginning of a process that would leave its marks on survivors, fans and the city of Liverpool. When asked, Duckenfield "told them that Liverpool fans had forced gate C, causing an inrush into the stadium, down the tunnel and on to the backs of those already in the central pens" (Scraton, 2016: 82). Duckenfield lied. But it was not only a lie. He knew that the gate had been opened by his order, he knew fans were not to blame either for the initial crush at the turnstiles or for the packed pens, the poor signalling and the lack of crowd orientation. What he said was repeated by Kelly to the press and immediately broadcast around the country and the world: Liverpool fans, desperate to enter the game, had provoked the death of their own.

Recalling this, Duckenfield tries to justify his action:

"The blunt truth [was] that we had been asked to open a gate. I was not being deceitful... we were all in a state of shock, one might say. (...). I thought it correct to collect my thoughts and to assess the situation... I just thought at that stage that I should not communicate fully the situation... I may have misled Mr Kelly." (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 82)

In the meantime, the communication between the police themselves and with the emergency services was still problematic. By radio, officers still believed they were being called to control a fight or a crowd invasion. Fire service hydraulic cutting equipment only arrived at the terrace after 3.20 p.m.. The first ambulances only arrived around 3.15 p.m. Doctors and nurses that went to the game as fans rushed to the Leppings Lane, offering their services. In the words of one of these doctors, "All around were people either dead or unconscious, or seriously hurt. The supporters were fantastic... helping each other and trying to resuscitate people. Individual police officers were also doing what they could... somebody needed to take an overview of the situation..." (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 88).

One episode during this moment helps to illustrate this lack of organisation by the police and the miscommunication among rescue services. At about 3.35 p.m., an ambulance driver was told by his Assistant Chief Officer to drive onto the pitch but was not able to get very far. Before they could even enter, a police officer approached the ambulance and said that they could not go there, as "they're still fighting". After this, the senior officer told the driver to proceed regardless of what the police were indicating (Scraton, 2016: 89).

As the tragedy unfolded, Duckenfield became "site commander", bearing the responsibility for organising and leading the police response to the tragedy, "yet he gave no

specific instructions to prepare the gymnasium, as the designated clearing area for a major incident, or for the removal of vehicles from its vicinity", leaving the early-stage response to the initiative of individual police officers (Scraton, 2016: 91).

Injured fans were directed to the gymnasium, but the "dead were arriving in such numbers that it was impossible to try to establish whether, in fact, they were dead" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 92). Peter Carney, a Liverpool fan, lost consciousness in pen 3 and was carried by fellow supporters back up the tunnel, being laid down with people that were dead, with a jumper being placed over his head. But then he woke up. Left for dead, he regained consciousness without any external aid and was then taken to hospital (Tempany, 2016: 32 and Scraton, 2016: 88). This case shows how it is possible that many people were assumed dead when there was still a chance of recovery. As it would be proved only many years later, with an immediate, appropriate and coordinated response by the police and the emergency services, the outcome of Hillsborough could have been significantly less tragic.

In the view of Phil Scraton,

The failure to identify and respond to the protracted crush in the pens coupled with the lack of immediate medical aid to the dying raised serious questions over whether more lives could have been saved. That resuscitation was successful in some cases, that some placed with the dead actually recovered, left lingering doubts about the adequacy of much of the spontaneous treatment administered. Added to this, cursory examinations, often no more than feeling for a pulse, were conducted in the heat of the moment by inexperienced, non-medical people. With certainty of death often so difficult to establish in asphyxiated victims, the deeply disturbing possibility remained: that some people were taken into the gymnasium, laid out on the floor, their faces covered by clothes and bin-liners, solely on the assumption of death. (Scraton, 2016: 95)

The chaos on the pitch and in the gymnasium spilled on to the hospitals as the injured began to be transferred there. As Scraton points out, the numbers help to illuminate the picture: "In the first hour 88 people were taken to casualty at the Northern. Of these, 11 were recorded as dead on arrival, 56 were admitted and 21 treated and discharged. At the Hallamshire, of the 71 taken to casualty, one was dead on arrival, 25 were admitted and 45 treated and discharged" (Scraton, 2016: 104).

Now, many fans started searching for their relatives and friends. People who went to the game together, but in different areas of the stadium. People who were together at the Leppings

Lane terrace but were separated in the middle of the surge and the crush. Friends looking for the lads that were with them just a few hours earlier. Parents looking for their sons and daughters.

As Hammerton Road police station activated an incident-room, a senior church officer recalls a police request for "anywhere immediately adjacent which could be used as a relatives' reception centre" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 103). The place chosen was the boys' club directly opposite the station. The intention was for friends and relatives to wait at the club before being taken to the police station to give details of those missing, then return to the club to be registered and wait for further information, which would be provided by social workers, clergy and voluntary staff, who "proved to be 'invaluable', providing a 'buffer between distressed fans who had lost contact with their relatives and friends... and the police'" (Scraton, 2016: 103). As a social worker recalls, the boys' club did not seem to be under the control of a "clearly functioning management group" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 106). According to him, this was clear in the process of registration: "You had to register when you arrived, then you had to go over to the police station to make a statement, then you had to come back to the boys' club and re-register", which depended on the initial registration (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 106). To make the situation even worse: "Some people in the boys' club were kept waiting even though people in charge knew their relative or friend was dead" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 106).

It was now 6.45 p.m. and with the arrival of the coroner, the identification procedure was decided. Polaroid photographs of the faces of the dead were going to be the "first-line method" of identification by friends and families, numbered with each number being correspondent to the numbered bodies on the gymnasium. This was then followed by viewing and subsequent confirmation of the body (Scraton, 2016: 95).

Sometime after his arrival, the coroner, Dr Popper, did something that, in Scraton's words, "was to prove a most controversial decision with lasting and painful consequences" (Scraton, 2016: 106). Unprecedentedly, he authorised the taking of blood-alcohol samples and the recording of blood-alcohol levels from all the victims, children included (Scraton, 2016: 106). At the moment, Popper did not know if alcohol would be relevant, mostly because of the age of most of the victims, but, according to him, this was justified "given where it [the disaster] happened and all the circumstances surrounding it... the alcohol level was something which sprang to mind as [a factor] which could possibly be relevant" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 107).

The decision of taking blood-alcohol samples "given where it happened" was just another example of the mentality of the authorities involved in the tragedy, from the Operational Order to the collection of statements. Drinking and fans were two things that worked almost as synonyms. It was a kind of token, composed of different parts, which encapsulated the outsider's view of football and football fans: drunken hooligans who should be put inside pens and controlled from the minute they walked into the street. According to Phil Scraton:

Popper's decision immediately implied that each of the deceased could have been drunk and, in some way, could have contributed to their own and others' deaths. It was a received agenda already set by Duckenfield's lie and senior officers' initial assessments. It guaranteed that allegations of drunkenness would remain centre stage. It deeply hurt the bereaved as they realised that the naming of their dead would imply the shaming of their lives. (Scraton, 2016: 107)

The treatment of the bereaved friends and families by the police must also be analysed. The statement of Barry Devonside, a father who was at the game at the North Stand and lost his son Chris as a result of the crush at the Leppings Lane terrace, for example, vividly illustrates it. After an excruciating search that took over eight hours, going from the gymnasium to the hospital and eventually being sent back to the gymnasium again, he identified his son amongst the polaroids. After this, his son was brought to him on a trolley in "... like those sacks that you put people in, from an air disaster, with a zip right down the middle" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 108). After this, an officer opened the sack and Barry positively identified his son, "the police didn't want me to stay for a second longer than was necessary" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 108), and Chris was quickly taken away. Barry was taken away as the police wanted a statement of identification. After giving his son's name, address and age, it turned into something else:

Barry was asked what time they had arrived in Sheffield and whether they had stopped for a drink. Barry asked why these questions could be considered relevant to the identification: 'We're trying to build a picture of the whole day,' came the reply. The questioning focused on alcohol, pubs, off-licences and supermarkets, whether he had seen heavy drinking or bad behaviour. Barry continued to argue with the police and he was disgusted that, minutes after identifying Chris, and after all that he had been through, he was subjected to challenges of his account of events. He left the gymnasium at about 1 a.m.: 'Nobody tried to assess the physical or mental condition you were in. You were left to go off, that was horrendous. I was fortunate that I had a brother and brother-in-law that came and supported me completely...' (Scraton, 2016: 109)

Barry's experience was not an isolated case. In the words of a voluntary social worker that was at the gymnasium, the primary concern of the police was taking statements and collecting information (Scraton, 2016: 110). But Duckenfield's early lie, combined with the widespread and prejudiced mindset of the police, heavily influenced the questioning. The personal reputation of the victims was explored, especially anything related to alcohol or violence.

Les Steele, Philip Steele's father, a 15-year old boy who was at the terrace and got separated from his younger brother, was questioned about travelling and asked if they had stopped for a drink (Scraton, 2016: 115). After identifying her brother Richard, Stephanie Jones was immediately asked: "Do you know whether he had a drink on the way up here? What time did he leave home? What did he do the night before? Do you know whether he went for a drink the night before? Did he usually have a drink before the match?" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 121). Teri Sefton was questioned about which pub did she stop at on the way to Sheffield. Searching for her son Andrew, she had just arrived from Skelmersdale (Scraton, 2016: 125). After waiting for hours and identifying them by dark and poor-quality polaroids, people were denied a respectful moment with their late relatives and friends, often seeing them only through a glass, and immediately questioned on their assumed alcoholic habits. It was the beginning of a painful and distressing path for the families.

The next day, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visited Hillsborough, going to the hospitals and the stadium. Off-the-record commentaries made by her Press Secretary Bernard Ingham help to throw some light on what can be described as "the government's view": "I visited Hillsborough on the morning after the disaster. I know what I learned on the spot. There would have been no Hillsborough if a mob, who clearly tanked up, had not tried to force their way into the ground. To blame the police is a cop-out" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 139).

The media coverage of the events in Hillsborough was heavily influenced by Duckenfield's lie and the tone and interpretation of the police. 40 minutes after the game was stopped, BBC's radio broadcast "unconfirmed reports that a door was broken down" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 135). At 4.15 p.m., FA's Chief Executive Graham Kelly stated that Sheffield Wednesday secretary Graham Mackrell, after speaking to the senior officer in charge, confirmed that "at about ten to three was a surge... composed of about 500 Liverpool fans and the police say that a gate was forced and led to a crush in the terracing area... well under capacity, I'm told, there was still plenty of room inside that area..." (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 135).

Peter Wright, South Yorkshire Chief Constable, went on the evening press conference and blamed the crush outside the turnstiles on “the late arrival of large numbers of people”, this being reported as three and four thousand Liverpool fans turning up just five minutes before kick-off (Scraton, 2016: 135). As Scraton suggests, “the ‘forced gate’ theory was replaced by the ‘conspiracy theory’” (Scraton, 2016: 135), implying that “Liverpool fans, drunk and ticketless, planned to arrive immediately before kick-off, compelling the police to open exit gates. ‘Hooligan hysteria’, linked to the ‘Heysel factor’, turned Hillsborough into a public order issue. From the next morning this portrayal dominated much of the press coverage” (Scraton, 2016: 135).

3.000 to 4.000, seemingly uncontrolled, Liverpool supporters tried to “force through the turnstiles”, with the gate eventually “opened to stampeding Liverpool fans”, according to the *Sunday Mirror* on the day after the tragedy (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 135). Mackrell stated that “Forest supporters were in the ground early. Liverpool’s were not” and Peter Wright said that there was a “direct connection between the surge inside the ground and the incident outside” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 136). UEFA president Jacques George gave what can only be described as a shameful statement. As Scraton quotes:

He said that ‘People’s frenzy to enter the stadium, come what may, whatever the risk to the lives of others’ had caused the disaster. Barely disguising parallels drawn with Heysel, Georges likened Liverpool fans to ‘beasts waiting to charge into the arena’, concluding that what happened ‘was not far from hooliganism’. (Scraton, 2016: 136)

In the *Evening Standard*, Peter McKay “argued that gate C had been opened only because there was ‘risk of death or serious injury among the hysterically pushing fans’. The roots of the disaster were in the ‘tribal passions of Liverpool supporters’”, who “(...) literally killed themselves and others to be at the game”, victims of the “mindless passion, rage and violence that soccer attracts” (Scraton, 2016: 136). The *Liverpool Daily Post* relayed John Williams’ words that “Scouse killed Scouse for no better reason than 22 men were kicking a ball” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 137).

Then, three days later, the *Sheffield Star* published serious police allegations regarding the behaviour of Liverpool fans throughout the unrolling of the events. The headline “Fans in drunken attacks on police” was the start of a story where, according to officers, “‘ticketless thugs staged the crush [at the turnstiles] to gain entry’, but ‘yobs’ had ‘attacked an

ambulance man, threatened firemen and punched and urinated on policemen as they gave the kiss of life to stricken victims" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 137).

On 19 April, on its front page *The Sun* published an article entitled: "The Truth¹⁶: Some fans picked pockets of victims; Some fans urinated on the brave cops; Some fans beat up PC giving kiss of life". It painted "Liverpoolians as being animalistic, savage, untamed and less than human. And the public believed them" (Fieldsend, 2019: 193). Later on, this was proven to be part of a much larger scheme orchestrated by South Yorkshire police senior officers, who encouraged junior officers "not to write in their pocket-books and to submit 'recollections' of the day to their seniors" (Scraton, 2016: 138). Different columnists and journalists added to this widespread notion and *The Sun* was not the only one to publish such stories, but its size and repercussion proved to be critical. As Scraton puts it:

Within a week of Hillsborough, the 'Heysel factor' was comprehensively established. This time, the story went, 'they' had killed 'their own'. While counter allegations ran throughout the first few days, focusing unfairly on Superintendent Marshall as the 'man who opened the gate', nothing compared to the orchestrated campaign of vilification directed towards those who died and survived Hillsborough. Apart from provoking a sense of outrage it caused real pain and suffering among the bereaved, the survivors and their families. As one bereaved mother put it, 'We soon realised that we weren't only in a fight for justice for those who died but also to clear their names and the names of the fans who lived.' (Scraton, 2016: 138)

From the stadium's poor infrastructure to the replacement of the match commander, through the ineffective crowd management and the inappropriate emergence response, Hillsborough could have been avoided. It was not. Instead, 97 people lost their lives, hundreds got injured and thousands were traumatised for life. In its immediate aftermath, lies, by the police and the press, set the tone that would leave a mark on the city, the club and the people until this day. There is a chance that the impact of the tragedy may never be fully understood. But it is crucial to set it as the line on the horizon and walk towards it. Never alone. Trying to understand, analyse and discuss this impact honours the memories of the 97 victims. When Liverpool plays at Anfield a banner with the phrase "We'll fight the fight for Liverpool" can be seen on the stands. This is a story of how they fought and how they still keep fighting.

¹⁶ Kelvin MacKenzie, *The Sun*'s editor, originally intended to publish "You Scum" instead of "The Truth", but eventually settled on the last (Fieldsend, 2019: 193 and Scraton, 2016: 137).

Chapter 3: "When you walk through a storm"¹⁷

3.1. "We climbed the hill in our own way"¹⁸

After the initial shock, bereaved families and survivors started to ask a crucial question: "Who was responsible for the death of those 95¹⁹ fans?". But this was not asked only by them. The greatest tragedy in British sports history needed to be investigated. It had become a topic of national interest. And from the days following Hillsborough until 2021, through different lenses and through different stances, the tragedy would be closely scrutinised.

3.1.1. The Taylor Report

On 17 April 1989, one day after Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Home Secretary Douglas Hurd visited Hillsborough, Lord Justice Taylor was appointed by the Home Secretary to conduct a judicial inquiry into the disaster. The terms of the reference were: "to inquire into the events at Sheffield Wednesday football ground on 15 April 1989 and to make recommendations about the needs of crowd control and safety at sports events" (*Taylor Interim Report*, 1989: 1).

The Chief Constable of West Midlands Police (WMP), Geoffrey Dear, was invited to conduct the investigation and the gathering of evidence for the Taylor Inquiry, appointing Assistant Chief Constable, Mervyn Jones, for the task. The WMP was also responsible for the criminal investigation for the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) as well as the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

The day after being appointed, LJ Taylor and his team visited Hillsborough. He "accorded representation" to the bereaved and injured; the Football Supporters' Association; the Football Association (FA); Sheffield City Council; Sheffield Wednesday Football Club (SWFC); South Yorkshire Police and the South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority", later including the South Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service (SYMAS) and Dr Wilfred Eastwood, consultant engineer to the club (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 41).

¹⁷ This quote is a verse of Liverpool's anthem, "You'll Never Walk Alone", already mentioned.

¹⁸ This is a reference to a banner which is associated with the campaign for truth and justice. It comes from a Pink Floyd's song, *Fearless*, and it can often be seen at Liverpool games at Anfield (see Appendix 9).

¹⁹ As already stated, the number of victims at the time was 95, only reaching 97 with the passings of Tony Bland in 1993 and Andrew Devine in 2021.

On 26 April, a team of SYP officers started to discuss the process of statement-taking from officers who were on duty at Hillsborough. This group was led by Chief Superintendent Terry Wain and those recollections, "referred to as 'self-written' or 'self-taken', were not taken down under Criminal Justice Act Rules. They would also form the foundation for the presentation of a 'suitable case' to the Inquiries that followed" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 40).

Ten days after LJ Taylor's visit to Hillsborough, a preliminary hearing was held and the date of oral hearings was announced. It was at this time that the first of the "Hillsborough groups" was formed, the Hillsborough Solicitors' Group Steering Committee. This committee, formed by solicitors who represented families, had as its priority to "ensure that all facts... come out", concentrating 'upon issues which will affect civil liability... issues of safety and crowd control' (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 41). As a result of LJ Taylor's authorisation, the costs of legal representation of the bereaved and the survivors would come from public funds.

The Taylor Inquiry hearings opened at Sheffield Town Hall on 15 May, with members of the public being invited to call a freephone number to offer information. The investigation team registered 2.666 calls, 3.776 statements and 1.550 letters. Facing these numbers, LJ Taylor affirmed: "From this mass it was essential to select only sufficient good and reliable evidence necessary to establish the facts and causes of the disaster" (*Taylor Interim Report*, 1989: 2). Here, one of the first main aspects of the investigation must be problematised. As the Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel states:

1.117 SYP, however, submitted that in such a brief time period the WMP investigation was insufficient, arguing that much evidence had not been collected. It concluded that it was 'unsafe' for LJ Taylor 'to make findings of fact' at such an early stage.

1.118 While accepting that witnesses selected to give oral evidence constituted 'only a small fraction of those from whom statements were or could have been taken', LJ Taylor was 'satisfied that they were sufficient in number and reliability to ensure 'the necessary conclusions' could be achieved.

1.119 In aiming to publish an Interim Report within four months he had been 'assured' by the WMP Chief Constable that it was 'most unlikely' that further evidence gathered would 'significantly alter or add to the history of events which emerged at the hearing' (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 41-42).

Adrian Tempany raises the point that "either by accident or by design, key witness statements never found their way to Taylor's desk" (Tempany, 2016: 40). These included a number of doctors at the Sheffield hospitals, several fans who were present at the Leppings Lane, and the statement of Tony Edwards, the ambulance attendant "whose lonely vehicle was seen by millions of people on *Grandstand*, weaving its way along the pitch almost half an hour after the match was abandoned" (Tempany, 2016: 40). As he recalls, "There was no fighting! The survivors were deciding who we should deal with. The police weren't. We weren't." (*apud* Tempany, 2016: 40). He then adds: "Taylor was told I didn't exist. The police denied that my ambulance ever made it onto the pitch. But it's there, in their own CCTV footage. All these questions Taylor would have had to ask me were key to the mismanagement of Hillsborough." (*apud* Tempany, 2016: 40).

The question of survivors' and eyewitness' testimonies and the role they play in the outcome not only of a report such as the one produced by LJ Taylor but also in the general public's perspective, is a very delicate one. Historian Dominick LaCapra engages with this question, and the role played by historians in such contexts, by stating that:

At the extreme of fixation, one is inclined to privilege survivor testimonies as bearing witness to the past or even as conveying unmediated truth. One may also be inclined to identify with victims or at least with those in close, intimate contact with them. Still, historians who tend to generalize rashly a criticism of this tendency run the risk of going to another, overly objectifying extreme and of downplaying the importance of survivor testimonies. (LaCapra, 2014: xxii)

In a sense, the validation of their statements is directly related to the classical and now critically outmoded dichotomy between the subjective and the objective. In this context, they were discredited by a supposed subjective character, "contaminated" by their personal experiences. On the other hand, the pursuit of the so called "objectivity", which as a human experience might never be fully achieved, led to a breach explored by SYP to exclude and amend everything that did not agree with their version of the facts.

But if this problematization must be taken into account and survivor's testimonies should not be fetichized and those statements cannot be the only source for a proper historical account of the event, they must still be a part of the process, since they give us an inside view of events. However, as it was developed in the previous chapter, the portrayal of the tragedy by the media clearly ignored those testimonies. They followed an "official version" of the happenings at

Hillsborough, provided by SYP officers with a clear agenda, and, by the time LJ Taylor was producing his report, this had already been vehiculated for a significant amount of time and had contributed to establishing a national narrative about the tragedy. And it seemed that again crucial statements were being ignored. But surprisingly, even with this "national influence", LJ Taylor was not diverted from his own case and was not unduly influenced by the media portrayals.

On 1 August, the *Taylor Interim Report* was published. According to it, "The immediate cause of the gross overcrowding and hence the disaster was the failure, when gate C was opened, to cut off access to the central pens which were already overfull." (*Taylor Interim Report*, 1989: 47). The findings of the report, however, did not stop there.

The "sluggish reaction and response" by the police, combined with the lack of adequate preparation, as the Operational Order and the police strategy did not consider the possibility of heavy congestion at the turnstiles, led to a tragedy that was, in LJ Taylor words, "foreseeable" (*Taylor Interim Report*, 1989: 47). LJ Taylor also stated that "fear of hooliganism" resulted in an "imbalance between the need to quell a minority of troublemakers and the need to secure the safety and comfort of the majority" and concluded that "overcrowding" was the "real cause" of the disaster and that the "main reason" was "the failure of police control" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 42).

LJ Taylor also severely criticised the actions of officers at Hillsborough. In his words, the failure of Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield to close the tunnel after the opening of exit gate C and thus to avoid the tragedy was "a blunder of the first magnitude" (*Taylor Interim Report*, 1989: 40). The lie told by Duckenfield to Mr Kelly (Chief Executive of the FA), that there had been "an inrush due to fans forcing open a gate", "'was not only untruthful', but it 'set off a widely reported allegation against the supporters which caused grave offence and distress'" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 42). LJ Taylor considered the quality of the evidence provided by officers as inversely proportional to their rank and expressed "further concern that the police had initiated a vilification campaign directed towards Liverpool fans" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 43).

The *Taylor Interim Report* is one of the most crucial points in the history of Hillsborough²⁰. The findings of LJ Taylor, the establishment of the real cause of the tragedy

²⁰ Although it is not the main focus of this work, it must be underlined that the *Taylor Final Report* completely changed the face of English football forever. Amongst its recommendations, the change of all English major

and the recognition of Duckenfield's lie and the scheme orchestrated by the police to shift the blame on to Liverpool fans, were understood as a sign of recognition by the official power of the happenings at Hillsborough. Now, the "natural course" was for the investigation to be completed and the recognition and identification of those guilty for the outcome of the tragedy to be established. But things would not go so smoothly.

3.1.2. Civil actions, Inquests and Private prosecutions

Shortly after Hillsborough, civil actions for damages were initiated, with the issue being the "liability for the fatalities and for those who had sustained physical injuries and/or psychological distress while in the pens" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 44). In this context, the SYP and Sheffield Wednesday "blamed each other for different elements of the disaster and each refused to accept liability" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 45).

On 30 November 1989, the SYP Chief Constable and South Yorkshire Police Authority "had offered an out-of-court damages settlement to some of the bereaved and injured" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 45). As the report of Hillsborough Independent Panel points out, however, "a confidential deal was struck between the parties, each of whom agreed not to disclose details to the public. By doing so, the parties avoided a court ruling" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 45).

In the following months and years, SYP and SWFC made various compensation payments. Those payments and settlements were made "without admission of liability" (*apud The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 45). This action was heavily criticized by bereaved families and survivors, who wanted them to accept their responsibility for the tragedy.

On 30 August 1990, the Head of the Police Complaints Division of the Crown Prosecution Service decided that there was "no evidence to justify any criminal proceedings" against SYP, SWFC, Sheffield City Council or Eastwoods. Further, there was "insufficient evidence to justify proceedings against any officer of the South Yorkshire Police or any other person for any offence" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 46).

stadiums to the all-seater model is the most important one. The impact of the report is further explored by Adrian Tompkins in the book *And the Sun Shines Now: How Hillsborough and the Premier League Changed Britain*, extensively quoted throughout this thesis.

However, the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) concluded, after examining 17 complaints, that in the cases of Duckenfield and Murray, there was sufficient evidence for disciplinary action on the grounds of "neglect of duty". It was agreed that they would face a disciplinary hearing, which never happened. Throughout this process, Duckenfield was on sick leave and retired early on medical grounds in November, which led the PCA to decide against proceeding against Murray alone, putting an end to the disciplinary proceedings.

Immediately after the disaster, and due to the potential for prosecutions after the findings of LJ Taylor's inquiry, inquests were opened with the WMP investigation servicing the DPP, LJ Taylor and the Coroner. The bereaved were starting to be concerned about the slow progress of the investigation and the delaying of inquests, "eager to establish the precise circumstances in which their loved ones died and why the Coroner had considered it necessary to record blood alcohol levels of all who died" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 47).

In July 1989, the families were informed by the Hillsborough Steering Committee that the Coroner had the intention to hold a generic inquest "covering the general facts and matters which gave rise to the deaths immediately followed by 95 individual inquests (...) dealing with the situation of each of the deceased" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 47). However, on 6 March 1990, the Coroner called a pre-inquest review, attended by Mervyn Jones, the WMP Assistant Chief Constable, and solicitors of the other parties, where he developed his intention to hold inquests on a limited basis, reversing the previous intended sequence. The Coroner proposed to perform preliminary hearings with each family to hear the medical evidence, blood alcohol levels, possible location before death and identification of the victims.

Doug Fraser, the Steering Committee solicitor who represented the families, wrote to the families on 9 March, "stating that it was 'not possible' for 'all the information' to be released because of the possibility of criminal prosecution", later adding that "families would be 'satisfied with the factual information [in the summaries]... and not want to take any further action'" and that "the preliminary hearings would be 'low key... an exercise in distributing information to families about precisely how their loved ones died and where, and not an attempt to discover why or who was to blame" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 47-48).

The format proposed limited disclosure of evidence and prevented its examination and families that went to the Sheffield's Medico-Legal Centre were not able to have their questions

answered and were only given information about the blood alcohol levels of their loved ones and a brief summary of evidence provided by a WMP officer, with another officer showing all recorded sightings of the victims in photographs and videos.

On 19 November 1990, the inquests resumed in the generic form proposed at Sheffield Town Hall, being concluded only on 28 March 1991 after hearing evidence from 230 witnesses, which made it the longest inquests in English legal history at the time. From the twelve "interested parties" represented, six were "police interests" and, "in the absence of legal aid, survivors were not represented" (*The Report of Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 49).

The lack of survivors' representation is a point that deserves attention. It is clear by this that, at least at the time, clear distinctions were made among those affected by the happenings of Hillsborough. On one level, if the treatment and representation of the families deserve criticism for the way they were conducted, the absence of survivors in this process is a sign of something that would come later and would be a point of dispute between Hillsborough groups: what is the role played by survivors in this process? They did not lose their lives, but have they not lost friends? Have not their lives been completely changed by the experience they went through in Leppings Lane?

Survivors are an essential part of the trauma process and cannot be neglected or overlooked when dealing with and analysing traumatic processes. In absolute numbers, they are often the largest group of those who are affected by a tragedy and their importance must be acknowledged and dealt with in its specificity and particularities, especially when looking at the large web of collective memory and trauma produced by an event such as Hillsborough.

When discussing the matter of the role played by survivors and victims, Sousa Ribeiro paraphrases Gayatri Spivaks' famous question "can the subaltern speak?" and asks if the victim can speak (Ribeiro, 2017: 451). To him, however, more important than the answer to this question, which he believes is positive, are the conditions in which the victims, in this case the survivors, speaks. These conditions, he states, "exigem, (...), uma esfera pública em que o acto do testemunho possa esperar reciprocidade, isto é, pressupõem a disponibilidade dialógica para manter aberto um espaço de ressonância adequado para a voz – ou o grito – da vítima"²¹ (Ribeiro, 2017: 451). The failure to provide this public sphere not only enabled the building of

²¹ Personal translation: "These conditions demand (...) a public sphere in which the act of testimony may expect reciprocity, that is, assuming the dialogic availability to keep open a space of resonance to the voice – or the scream – of the victim."

an official narrative that confirmed SYP's version of the facts, but it also silenced the survivors' voices and excluded them as active participants on the episode.

Returning to the inquests, another action of the Coroner, one of the most controversial, would have lasting consequences: the 3.15 pm cut-off. According to him, by 3.15 pm "the real damage was done" (*apud The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 49). As stated in *The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*:

"[H]e reasoned that the 3.15 pm cut-off was consistent with the medical evidence and 'each individual death' was 'in exactly the same situation'. He concluded 'the fact that the person may survive an injury for a number of minutes or hours or even days, is not the question which I as a Coroner have to consider'. Crushing, he maintained, was the sole cause of death." (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 49)

As a consequence of this cut-off, a significant portion of the evidence concerning the emergency response and the immediate aftermath of the tragedy was not analysed. The witnesses and their "order" were both selected by the coroner: licensees and local residents, police officers and senior police officers, survivors and experts. The statements of residents and police officers "provided a strong foundation" for the ones provided by senior officers who were working with crowd management at Hillsborough. Discredited by LJ Taylor, who was already concerned about the "vilification campaign directed towards Liverpool fans", they "repeated their previous allegations about the behaviour of Liverpool fans" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 49). After the analysis of the evidence and the statements,

The Coroner directed the jury on two possible verdicts: unlawful killing and accidental death. He stated that 'the word "accident" straddles a whole spectrum of events from something over which no-one has control' where 'no-one could be blamed – to a situation where you are in fact satisfied that there has been carelessness, negligence, to a greater or lesser extent and that someone would have to make, for instance, compensation payments in civil litigation'. A verdict of accidental death did not mean that individuals were absolved from 'all and every measure of blame'. (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 50)

By a nine to two majority, on 28 March 1991, the jury gave its verdict: "accidental death". It was a direct hit to any hope that might have been nourished by the bereaved families.

As Scraton states, "bereaved families, survivors and witnesses, exhausted from the months of travelling, listening and waiting, broke down and cried." (Scraton, 2016: 175). Following the reaction of the families and the way it was described in the media, Scraton notes:

The media portrayed families' anger and frustration as bitterness, acrimony and a desire for revenge. But the overwhelming, shared feeling was that a serious miscarriage of justice had occurred: 'The inquests were a farce from beginning to end... The coroner clearly directed the jury to an accidental death verdict. He got what he wanted'; 'I cannot be totally objective but it would seem that the jury could only arrive at one verdict after the coroner's performance'; 'How can it be construed as an accident in view of the overall emphasis on negligence so prominent in Lord Justice Taylor's report?' (Scraton, 2016: 175-176)

In the words of Eddie Spearritt, father of Adam Edward Spearritt, a boy who was 14 years and 10 months old when he lost his life at Hillsborough, "it was as if every door was on closing on us. To tell the truth I didn't expect anything else. It was too big an issue, too many top people, too much to lose. The inquest was a farce but we all went along with it – we had to, there was no choice" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 176). But that would not mark the end of the fight.

On 6 April 1993, six families went to the High Court and were granted leave to carry on an application for a judicial review of the verdicts of the inquests. On 5 November 1993 LJ McCowan rejected the submission of the families that "the accidental death verdicts were either misleading or in error. Together with Mr Justice Turner he considered that the inquests had been properly conducted and there had been no suppression of important evidence" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 51). Regarding the 3.15 pm cut-off, LJ McCowan stated that criticism of the emergency services' response "would be 'irrelevant if all six were brain dead by 3.15 pm'" and that "further 'examination of the last minutes of their lives' would provide no further information, would be 'harrowing' and involve 'large number of witnesses... lasting if not for 96 days, for not far short'" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 51).

Four years later, on 30 June 1997, more than 40 Hillsborough families went to Westminster to attend a meeting with Jack Straw, Home Secretary in the then Labour Government, where he proposed an independent judicial scrutiny of new evidence, not available to the Taylor Inquiry or the inquests, that would be conducted by LJ Stuart-Smith. After visiting the SYP archive and SWFC, he met with the bereaved families in Liverpool on 6

October 1997 to explain that his role was to “decide whether to recommend that any fresh evidence that I find justifies a new public inquiry, new inquest or any other kind of legal proceedings or action by the authorities” (*apud The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 52).

After a series of proceedings, which included the reiteration of the Taylor Inquiry findings, meetings with individual families and their representatives and analysis of the “new evidence”, Mr Straw announced, on 18 February 1998, that despite being “considered ‘with great care’”, “no new evidence had emerged of such significance that it brought into question previous decisions, judgments, rulings or inquest verdicts” (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 54). Straw concluded that the conclusion reached by LJ Stuart-Smith was that there was no basis for a new public inquiry and that the evidence made available had not added anything to LJ Taylor’s inquiry. The bereaved families rejected the report.

An aspect that must be considered regarding the report produced by LJ Stuart-Smith has to do with the review and alteration of police statements. Before the scrutiny, an “SYP officer had revealed that in the immediate aftermath of the disaster officers had been instructed not to make entries in pocket-books but to submit handwritten recollections for word-processing.” (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 54). It was revealed that the Taylor Inquiry and the WMP investigation team were aware of the “review and alteration” process that the statements underwent, officially justified to remove personal opinion and conjecture, but they were also amended to remove criticism of senior officers and their management of the crowd (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 55).

As it was already stated, by the expurgation of any trace of “subjectivity” from the officers’ statements, SYP senior officers were able to produce a narrative that benefited the corporation, the only organizational “power” that could decide what was subjective or not and trace the dividing line wherever they found it more convenient. In this light, any hint of criticism was amended and withdrawn, and another silencing process took place, this time inside the police itself.

Although LJ Stuart-Smith examined approximately 100 altered statements, he concluded that only 26 had “comment and opinion” withdrawn from it, mainly concerning “lack of radios and poor communication, shortage of police at Leppings Lane and ‘lack of organisation by senior officers in the rescue organisation’”, and in the matters of “comment and opinion”, he felt that “the solicitors ‘could not be criticised for recommending their removal’”

and "that 'at least in some cases it would have been better' had some of the deletions not been made", but that they were "at worst... an error of judgment" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*: 2012, 55).

If this was not sufficient, in LJ Stuart-Smith's opinion, to generate a new legal process, its impact on the mourning process and collective memory of Hillsborough could not be ignored. Similar to the effects of the British government's actions and official positions regarding the Northern Ireland Troubles, especially "Bloody Sunday" (see Dawson *et al.*, 1999: 180-204), the alteration of police statements, and Duckenfield's "original" lie, shaped the perspective of Hillsborough and "changed" the rules of the game, shifting the blame onto Liverpool fans and leaving them no alternative but to fight for truth and justice.

The bereaved families were again let down. In August 1988, the Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG) initiated a private prosecution against David Duckenfield and Bernard Murray. On 16 February 2000, both officers were committed for trial and charged with manslaughter and misconduct in public office, while Duckenfield was also charged with misconduct "arising from an admitted lie told by him to the effect that the [exit] gates had been forced open by Liverpool fans" (*apud The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*: 2012, 56).

Mr Justice Hooper, the judge, noted: "the 'enduring grief' suffered by the bereaved' (...), compounded by 'a deep seated and obviously genuine grievance that those thought responsible' had not been prosecuted or 'even disciplined'" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 56). However, he also stated that if Duckenfield and Murray were found to be guilty of manslaughter, neither would face a prison sentence.

On 6 June 2000, the trial opened and it would go on for seven weeks. After 16 hours of discussion, a majority verdict was accepted. Mr Murray was acquitted and the jury did not reach a verdict on Mr Duckenfield and the application for a re-trial was refused by the judge. It seemed to be the end of a harrowing path for the bereaved families. And for a long time, this was true. But in 2009, another ray of hope appeared in the sky of Liverpool.

3.1.3. The Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP)

On 15 April 2009, on the 20th Anniversary Memorial of the Hillsborough Tragedy organised by the HFSG at Anfield, Andy Burnham, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, committed, in his address, "the government in principle to disclosing all public

documents relating to Hillsborough”, “waiving the restriction placed on government documents and public records for a minimum 30-year period, known as the ‘30-year rule’” (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 58). In July 2009, the HFSG, with support from a group of Merseyside MPs, presented the case for disclosure to the Home Secretary. In January 2010, the Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP) was appointed, with its remit being to:

Oversee full public disclosure of relevant government and local information within the limited constraints set out in the Panel’s disclosure protocol; Consult with the Hillsborough families to ensure that the views of those most affected by the tragedy are taken into account; Manage the process of public disclosure, ensuring that it takes place initially to the Hillsborough families and other involved parties, in an agreed manner and within a reasonable timescale, before information is made more widely available; in line with established practice, work with the Keeper of Public Records in preparing options for establishing an archive of Hillsborough documentation, including a catalogue of all central Governmental and local public agency information and a commentary on any information withheld for the benefit of the families or on legal or other grounds; produce a report explaining the work of the panel. The panel’s report will also illustrate how the information disclosed adds to public understanding of the tragedy and its aftermath. (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 4)

The Panel was chaired by James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool, and was composed of specialists from different areas: Professor Phil Scraton (academic criminologist and author of *Hillsborough: The Truth*, extensively quoted throughout this thesis), Katy Jones (TV producer and factual producer of the documentary “Hillsborough”), Peter Sissons (Liverpool-born journalist), Paul Leighton CBE (former Deputy Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland), Dr Bill Kirkup CBE (formerly associate medical director, Department of Health), Christine Gifford (member of the Lord Chancellor’s Advisory Council on Public Sector Information), Sarah Tyacke (former chief executive of the National Archives and Keeper of the Public Records) and Raju Bhatt (lawyer with specialization in inquests that involve allegations of abuse of power or neglect of duty within the police service).

The composition of the panel described above is an example of how the project was designed, from its beginning, with the objective of providing a complete overview of the tragedy. Its composition can be interpreted as a multi-disciplinary approach, underlining the importance of a broader understanding of history, enlarging the scope of the narrative to try and finally achieve the truth.

According to Phil Scraton,

The 'scope of the disclosure process' was planned 'to cover all documentation held by central government, local government and other public agencies' relating 'directly to events surrounding the Hillsborough tragedy up to and including the Taylor Report, the Lord Stuart-Smith review of Hillsborough papers in 1998–99 [sic] and the private prosecution in 2000'. Key agencies listed were 'the police, ambulance service, fire service, coroner and Sheffield City Council'. (...). The decision to withhold information would be decided 'on a case-by-case basis by the holding agency' and where possible 'information that cannot be disclosed to the public' would 'be disclosed on a closed and confidential basis to the panel and a description of the information provided for public disclosure'. (Scraton, 2016: 317)

On 12 September 2012, the Panel convened a press conference to present its findings. It had gone through 450.000 documents relating to the tragedy for over two years. Its discoveries were astonishing. In the words of Michael Mansfield QC, it exposed what was "the biggest cover-up in British history" (*apud* Tempany, 2016: 293).

Adrian Tempany was present at the Chapel of Our Lady, in Liverpool's Anglican cathedral, in his condition as a journalist covering the conference, but also as a Hillsborough survivor, and nearly broke the silence with his own tears "when it was revealed that 41 of the 96 who died might have been saved if the emergency response had been better co-ordinated" (Tempany, 2016: 294). This figure would be subsequently revised upwards, to as high as 58, but this initial finding was enough to invalidate the 3.15 pm cut-off adopted by the 1990-91 inquests. The panel also revealed that 164 police statements had been amended (this would later be revised upwards to 238 amended statements) and that the South Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service also amended statements provided by its officers. It also revealed the level at which members of the government and the police were cooperating in the preparation of material to be used at the original inquests, in the interests of SYP (Tempany, 2016: 294).

The HIP produced a report, divided into 3 parts. The first one provided "an overview of 'what was known', what was already in the public domain, at the time of the Hillsborough Panel's inaugural meeting in February 2010". The second one "is a detailed account, in 12 substantial chapters, of what the disclosed documents and other material added 'to public understanding' of the context, circumstances and aftermath of the disaster". The third part "provided the Panel's review of options for establishing and maintaining an archive of the documents made available by over 80 contributing organisations in hard copy, many of which

have been digitised and are now available online" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 4-5).

A summary of the chapters will be provided here only as a matter of contextualization, but they will not be analysed in depth. It is important to acknowledge before the summary that all the findings and points made by the panel were based on the disclosed documents.

Chapter 1 covers the period between 1981 and 1989, where it becomes evident that "the safety of the crowd admitted to the terrace was compromised on every level" and that "the risks were known and the crush in 1989 was foreseeable" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 6). Chapter 2 deals with the realisation that "the flaws in responding to the emerging crisis on the day were rooted in institutional tensions within and between organisations", which was reflected in "a policing and stewarding mindset predominantly concerned with crowd disorder; (...); the failure to anticipate the consequences within the central pens of not sealing the tunnel; the delay in realising that the crisis in the central pens was a consequence of overcrowding rather than crowd disorder" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 8).

Chapter 3 explores customs, practices, roles and responsibilities in the context of Hillsborough, especially the fact that many "traditional" customs and practices were not adopted by officers in 1989, and chapter 4 develops the emergency response and aftermath, where flaws are revealed at each stage, including delays and incorrect activation of the emergency plan, which had not been fully analysed before because of the 3.15 pm cut-off and the assumption that nothing could have been done. Chapter 5 analyses the medical evidence of the tragedy, confirming that "the notion of a single, unvarying and rapid pattern of death in all cases is unsustainable" and that the disclosed documents show the "repeated attempts that were made to find supporting evidence" to "the idea that alcohol contributed to the disaster", deemed as "fundamentally flawed" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 14).

Chapter 6 deals with the parallel investigations, highlighting that it is evident from the disclosed documents that "from the outset SYP sought to establish a case emphasising exceptional levels of drunkenness and aggression among Liverpool fans" and exploring a less known investigation conducted by the Health and Safety Executive, which found that "restricted access, poor condition and inadequate means of escape rendered the Leppings Lane terrace – particularly its central pens – structurally unsafe" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 16). While chapter 7 develops the context of civil litigation, showing

that "SYP sought to avoid any admission of liability in the settlement of compensation claims and in contribution proceedings against other organisations" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012:18), chapter 8 explores the coroner's inquiry, with the disclosed documents showing "that while the families' lawyers welcomed the Coroner's unusual decision to hold individual, preliminary hearings, many families were dissatisfied with the denial of an opportunity to enquire into the precise circumstances in which their loved ones died" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012:19).

In chapter 9 the generic hearing and the judicial process are looked into in more depth and chapter 10 deals exclusively with the 3.15 pm cut-off and its consequences. Chapter 11 explores the review and alteration of statements, discussing "the rationale behind their review and alteration", also showing that SYMAS's officers also had their statements altered. Finally, chapter 12 is entitled "Behind the headlines" and explores the origins, the promotion and reproduction of unsubstantiated allegations, showing that "the origin of these serious allegations was a local Sheffield press agency informed by several SYP officers, an SYP Police Federation spokesperson and a local MP", while also demonstrating "how the SYP Police Federation, supported informally by the SYP Chief Constable, sought to develop and publicise a version of the events that focused on several police officers' allegations of drunkenness, ticketlessness and violence among a large number of Liverpool fans", disclosing that "there is no evidence to support these allegations other than a few isolated examples of aggressive or verbally abusive behaviour clearly reflecting frustration and desperation" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 24).

As Phil Scraton stresses from the report's foreword:

The disclosed documents show that multiple factors were responsible for the deaths of the 96 victims of the Hillsborough tragedy and that the fans were not the cause of the disaster... that the bereaved families met a series of obstacles in their search for justice... The panel produces this report without any presumption of where it will lead. But it does so in the profound hope that greater transparency will bring to the families and to the wider public a greater understanding of the tragedy and its aftermath. For it is only with this transparency that the families and survivors, who have behaved with such dignity, can with some sense of truth and justice cherish the memory of their 96 loved ones. (*apud Scraton*, 2016: 340)

The reaction of the bereaved families was immediate. After 23 years of fighting and campaigning for justice and truth, they finally had a victory. The panel's findings confirmed what those who lost their loved ones and those who came back from Hillsborough with a trauma that would accompany them throughout their lives had always known. Overwhelmed, this was their response:

We have campaigned for 23 years for this but we never thought it would happen. It's unbelievable – not the findings but that it was all there and is now made public. All along we've been lied to, even our own lawyers let us down, but now it's there for all to see.

Deep down I knew it. I was there [at the stadium] and saw what happened with my own eyes. However much I had faith in the panel, I never thought the truth would come out. But now the Government has to listen.

We've been in this situation so many times. Lawyers, politicians, journalists – they all told us they believed the system had failed, that there was no justice and they made their promises. Yet there was always a 'but'. Today it was all said, straight out, and there were no 'buts'. (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 340)

Following the press conference, Prime Minister David Cameron delivered a national response, accepting the report's content and findings without reservation, stating that "(...) it is right for me today as Prime Minister to make a proper apology to the families of the 96 for all they have suffered over the past 23 years" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 341). Cameron talked about "a double injustice" suffered by the families: "The injustice of the appalling events – the failure of the state to protect their loved ones and the indefensible wait to get to the truth. And the injustice of the denigration of the deceased – that they were somehow at fault for their own deaths" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 341).

The findings of the panel dominated front pages all around Britain on the following day. "*The Sun*, whose vitriolic allegations had deeply distressed the bereaved and survivors, was repentant: '23 YEARS AFTER HILLSBOROUGH... THE REAL TRUTH'", adding "*The Sun*: We are profoundly sorry for false reports" (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 341). *The Daily Mirror* portrayed a "JUSTICE 96" shirt with the headline "THE TRUTH", and *The Guardian's* headline read "HILLSBOROUGH: THE RECKONING". After 23 years, they had won. Now, it seemed to be simply a matter of time for justice to take its course.

3.1.4. 2012-2021

On 10 October 2012, Keir Starmer, the Director of Public Prosecutions, announced that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) “would ‘consider’ the material disclosed by the panel to ‘identify what the focus of any further criminal investigation should be to determine whether there is now sufficient evidence to charge any individual or corporate body with any criminal offence. (...)’” (Scraton, 2016: 344). Ten days later the report was debated in the House of Commons. On this day, Theresa May committed the government “in the words of some of the families, to move from truth to justice” (*apud* Scraton, 2016: 345).

Lord Justice Goldring held the first preliminary hearing on 25 April 2013, acknowledging that “bereaved families had not ‘ceased in their pursuit of a full understanding of the events of the day’” (Scraton, 2016: 345). Four other preliminary hearings were held, establishing the scope of the inquest (stadium safety; preparations for the 1989 semi-final; crowd management on the day; emergency response; the pathological causes of death; and the experiences of each deceased person immediately prior to death (...), amendment of police statements and the recording of blood-alcohol levels) and other key issues.

On 31 March 2014, the inquests began. But things did not go as planned for the bereaved families and survivors. As Tempany points out,

Barely had proceedings got under way before Beggs, representing former Chief Superintendent Duckenfield and former Superintendents Roger Marshall and Roger Greenwood, began making the same tired allegations of drunkenness and misbehaviour against Liverpool supporters. (...). Counsel for the bereaved grew increasingly uneasy. As one of them told me: ‘The coroner allowed himself to be bullied by the police teams’ advocated into allowing evidence about Heysel and the 1980s hooliganism to be adduced, under the very thin guise of relevance to the mindset of officers, and their alleged fear that what was happening at Hillsborough was a pitch invasion rather than a disaster’. (...). The body of evidence produced in court by South Yorkshire Police was drawn overwhelmingly from the evidence they had assembled in the immediate aftermath. (Tempany, 2016: 301-303)

So, despite the findings of the HIP, the blame for the tragedy was still being shifted to Liverpool supporters. It was unbearable, almost like a replay of what happened in 1989-1991, when families were filled with hope by the findings of LJ Taylor, only to be disappointed by the inquest verdicts. But this was going to be different. It had to be.

On 11 March 2015, Duckenfield admitted he had lied to Graham Kelly about the "unauthorised entry" of Liverpool fans into Hillsborough. Two days later, he apologised to the families for the first time, claiming that "he had only appreciated the enormity of the tragedy on the release of the Hillsborough Independent Panel report (...): 'To the families, I say this, I am terribly sorry. It has now dawned on me what it means to you, and I am dreadfully sorry.'" (Tempany, 2016: 309). On 17 March, Duckenfield, under cross-examination by Paul Greaney QC, for the Police Federation, admitted that his failure to close down the tunnel that led to central pens "was the direct cause of the deaths of 96 persons in the Hillsborough tragedy" (*apud* Tempany: 313). But this would not be the end of the storm.

By the summer of 2015, the inquests were already six months behind schedule. For the next few months, the country's leading pathologists were heard concerning the final moments of the victims (their medical cause of death and the approximate time of death). But the verdict would finally come out in April 2016.

In the words of Daniel Fieldsend, 26 April 2016 was "a day which for anybody associated with Liverpool the city and Liverpool the club, produced a moment when time stopped. Everybody in later years would remember where they were when they found out" (Fieldsend, 2019: 215). After two years, everything "would rest on 14 questions – and on six women and three men from Warrington (...) restricted to uttering a few simple words in response to the coroner. 'Yes', 'No' or 'It is'. But with those words, they would rewrite history" (Tempany, 2016: 326).

Amongst the questions asked by the coroner, the focus was directed to numbers 6 and 7. The coroner asked: "Are you satisfied, so that are you sure, that those who died in the disaster were unlawfully killed? Is your answer Yes?". To which the forewoman's response was "It is". "People scream, and jump to their feet" (Tempany, 2016: 327). Then came question 7: "Was there any behaviour on the part of football supporters which caused or contributed to the dangerous situation at the Leppings Lane turnstiles? Is your answer No?". "It is". The coroner continued: "Was there any behaviour on the part of supporters which *may* have caused or contributed to the dangerous situation at the Leppings Lane turnstiles? Is your answer No?". "It is". (Tempany, 2016: 327).

Outside, the bereaved families gathered and spontaneously sang Liverpool FC's anthem, *You'll Never Walk Alone*. For 27 years they had walked through the storm, with their heads up high, not fearing the dark. They had finally reached the golden sky. Campaigns, meetings,

concerts, protests. It was all worth it. It came 27 years later, but the truth had been acknowledged.

Margaret Aspinall, chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group and mother of James Gary Aspinall, an 18-year-old boy who lost his life at Hillsborough, who refused to pick up her son's death certificate with the verdict of the original inquest of accidental death, gave her statement when leaving the court:

The fans should go home and be proud of themselves, they are the heroes. They did nothing wrong that day, and we did this for all of them, too. Our city always gets brought down, but yet again it's the tough people of Liverpool who have had to fight a cause that was so unjust and so unfair. (*apud The Guardian*, 2016²²)

The truth was out. It was time for justice. On 28 June 2017, following the verdict, the Crown Prosecution Service announces that six people are to be charged with offences concerning the disaster: David Duckenfield (Match Commander for SYP at Hillsborough), Graham Mackrell (SWFC's company secretary and safety officer at the time of the tragedy), Peter Metcalf (solicitor who acted for the SYP during the Taylor Inquiry and the first inquests), Donald Denton (former Chief Superintendent of SYP), Alan Foster (former Detective Chief Inspector of SYP) and Norman Bettison (former officer with SYP and Chief Constable of Merseyside and West Yorkshire Police). It was only a matter of time. Or so it seemed.

Facing four charges of misconduct in public office, Norman Bettison had all charges against him dropped in August 2018. In April 2019, Graham Mackrell was convicted of failing to discharge his duty under the Health and Safety Work Act, failing to take reasonable care to ensure there were enough turnstiles to prevent the build-up of fans, being fined £6,500 the next month. Leaving the court, Louise Brookes, who lost her brother Andrew at Hillsborough, "called the sentence "shameful" and said the fine amounted to £67.70 per life"²³.

The same jury that reached a sentence on Mackrell's case was unable to reach a verdict on the charge against David Duckenfield. On 28 November 2019, Duckenfield was found not

²² The article produced by *The Guardian* where this quote comes from can be accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/26/hillsborough-inquests-jury-says-96-victims-were-unlawfully-killed>

²³ The article produced by *BBC* where this quote comes from can be accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-48253507>

guilty of gross negligence manslaughter. It was another direct hit on the families. Again, there was no accountability for the unlawfully killing of the 97 Liverpool fans.

On 26 May 2021, Mr Justice William Davis ruled that Donald Denton, Alan Foster and Peter Metcalf had no case to answer. This verdict rested on a technicality: all three of them were accused of perverting the course of justice while changing accounts of SYP officers that were involved in the tragedy, but LJ Taylor's short inquiry was not a "full public inquiry", without the means to compel witnesses to attend and give evidence under oath, so there was no course of justice to pervert. It was the end of a battle that lasted for over 30 years.

The course of the legal battle in the aftermath of Hillsborough helps us to understand the way those affected by the tragedy fought for what they believed in. For many years, a fight for the truth. Then, a fight for justice. The outcome of it can be understood as frustrating; after all, no one was held accountable for the unlawfully killing of the 97 victims and a £6,500 fine was the sole product of the criminal inquests. But the main legacy of this battle can be defined in one word: resilience.

Resilience to continue fighting the lies told in the immediate aftermath and after having their hopes shattered by the 1990-91 inquests and their verdict of accidental death, even despite the findings of LJ Taylor. Resilience to not give up even after 20 years, after a failed scrutiny and failed prosecutions, and be able to produce the Hillsborough Independent Panel and its subsequent report. Being able to finally achieve the verdict of "unlawfully killing" and having their hopes high again, just for them to be brought down by the legal system once more. The legal procedures might be over, but what the bereaved families, Hillsborough survivors, Liverpool supporters and the people from Liverpool, through different ways and with different strategies, have done over the last three decades is a remarkable example of resilience and resistance that must be praised and which sets an extraordinary example to everyone who defies injustice.

3.2. "We'll fight the fight for Liverpool"²⁴

As was briefly explored in the previous section, different groups were formed in the aftermath of Hillsborough. Even though all of them played an important part in this fight, they did so through different paths. In this section, three of these groups and their respective actions

²⁴ This is a reference to a banner, already mentioned, that can be seen at Liverpool games at Anfield (see Appendix 8).

will be analysed: the Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG), the Hillsborough Justice Campaign (HJC) and the Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance (HSA). The boycott campaign of *The Sun* will also be explored.

3.2.1. The Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG)

The Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG) was founded in May 1989 by Trevor Hicks, who lost his daughters Sarah and Vicki at Hillsborough, and gathered bereaved families travelling to court for the Taylor Report inquiry (Fieldsend, 2019: 202), and it is arguably the most prominent group involved in the Hillsborough Tragedy. For over 30 years, it campaigned tirelessly for truth and justice on behalf of the 97 victims of the disaster.

As it was seen in the previous section, the HFSG was responsible for the private prosecution against David Duckenfield and Bernard Murray in 1998 and presented a case to the Home Secretary in 2009 for disclosure of all Hillsborough-related documents, which eventually led to the Hillsborough Independent Panel and its subsequent report. Throughout its period of existence, the HFSG was the main link between the legal establishment and Hillsborough victims and the bereaved. It also organised several different campaigns, fundraisings and memorial services throughout the years.

It folded its activities in 2021, with its chair, Margaret Aspinall, stating that it was “time now for families to move on, but also for the survivors to be able to move on and the city, because we have had Hillsborough thrown at us now for all them years”²⁵. Saying that they had gone as far as they could, she also reflected on her loss: “I didn’t realise how much I didn’t look into James’ case because I was busy doing things for everybody”.

This last quote can be further explored in a broader context, as it is not exclusive to Ms Aspinall. After Duckenfield’s retrial in 2019, Debbie Matthews, who lost her brother Brian at Hillsborough, expressed the same feeling: “If we would have had a criminal trial 30 years ago it would have been put to bed by now. We’ve not been allowed to grieve”²⁶.

As Michael Brennan states, “the public mourning which followed became infused with an attempt to restore the dignity of the supporters who died at Hillsborough and later dove-

²⁵ Ms Aspinall’s complete interview can be accessed at: <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/news/announcements/430756-margaret-aspinall-on-hillsborough-anniversary-and-hfsg>

²⁶ Ms Matthews’ quote can be accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/uk-england-merseyside-50506839>

tailed attempts (...) to bring criminal charges" (Brennan, 2003:8). From day one, families who had lost their loved ones had to deal with the lies (Duckenfield's, SYP's, *The Sun's*) and had to campaign for truth and justice. There was no time to mourn, they had to fight. Over 30 years later, it seems that most of the families have accepted that they did everything they could and it is now time to finally process the loss of the victims.

Still regarding the HFSG, it is important to highlight that the original group has never included survivors, only bereaved families. This, in addition to a dispute by a difference over tactics and criticisms regarding HFSG's "tolerance" with the legal establishment and its actions, led to the creation of another Hillsborough group: the Hillsborough Justice Campaign.

3.2.2. The Hillsborough Justice Campaign (HJC)

The Hillsborough Justice Campaign (HJC) had its first meetings in February 1998 with the joining up of a group of families with the Survivors and Supporters of Justice for All group, to pursue "a fresh approach (...) in the fight to achieve proper Justice"²⁷. For 22 years, the group had a shop next to Anfield at Walton Breck road, but it was shut down in 2020.

The group's 3 main aims and objectives are:

To pursue Justice for those 96 people who died in the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster of 1989, the bereaved Families, the Survivors who came perilously close to dying in Pens 3 and 4 and those unfortunate people still suffering from the ensuing trauma of the Disaster; To recruit members to the Organisation for the purpose of raising support for the Justice Campaign; To raise funds for the furtherance of the Justice Campaign.

The group has taken part in several different campaigns over the years. Amongst them, there is the distribution of leaflets and stickers to raise awareness about the campaign and a proposal for the observation of a minute's silence by all football clubs in the English and Scottish leagues at the games played near April 15. It has also organized a boycott of the game played between Liverpool and Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough on the 10th anniversary of the tragedy (only 14% of the away tickets were sold, the "most dismal response ever for Liverpool's final away game of the season"), largely motivated by the withdrawal of floral

²⁷ This and every other quote from this section can be accessed at the HJC website: <http://www.contrast.org/hillsborough/home.shtm>

tributes from the fans by South Yorkshire Police on the games played at Hillsborough in 1997 and 1998.

It has also supported a campaign against what they called "solicitor's negligence", the "absolute disgrace" that was the "legal help offered by the Solicitors on the steering groups". The group has organised various shows and concerts to raise awareness and funds for the campaign, sees itself as "Educational Assistance on Hillsborough Related Projects" and it is also a vocal supporter of the boycott of *The Sun's* newspaper, which will be explored on its own on the 3.2.4. section of this chapter.

As it was seen, the HJC was created almost as a dissident group from the HFSG (see Hattenstone and O'Sullivan, 1999). While HFSG was exclusively composed of bereaved families, HJC welcomed the survivors of the tragedy and supporters who wanted to help with the campaign, "tired of being "reasonable and dignified", deciding to pursue tactics that "have more in common with a strike: street protests, leafleting, boycotts, rallies" (Hattenstone and O'Sullivan, 1999). It was the adoption of a more "combative" approach, perhaps more aligned with the political context experienced by the people of Liverpool on the 1980s. The HFSG responded to this by expelling some members who joined the Justice Campaign.

The role of survivors is also a point of difference between the groups. As the experience of Anne Williams shows, survivors' experiences must be considered and looked at. Having lost her 15-year-old son Kevin at Hillsborough, Anne fought to uncover the truth regarding her son's final moments. Producing an investigation by herself, she was able to find a police officer, Debra Martin, who confirmed that Kevin said "mum" and passed away in her arms at 4 pm, therefore past the 3.15 pm cut-off. She also found three survivors who helped Kevin in his last hour. In her words, "they've had neither compensation nor treatment" (*apud* Hattenstone and O'Sullivan, 1999). One of them, Johnny Prescott, "was so badly affected. I think it helped him meeting me it meant he had someone to talk to. He'd been trying to deal with it himself. He's not been to a football match since Hillsborough. He closed off completely, it was his way of coping" (*apud* Hattenstone and O'Sullivan, 1999). Anne's personal journey was portrayed on ITV's miniseries *Anne: One Mother's Story*, aired in January 2022 with Maxine Peake playing the role of the Hillsborough campaigner.

As historian Graham Dawson states when developing the role of survivors and the building of collective memory, "The psychic struggle waged by the individual survivor to integrate traumatic memory within viable maps of meaning is given a social correlate in this

effort to read and understand personal testimonies as elements in a larger collective history” (Dawson *et al.*, 1999: 194).

In a sense, it was the beginning of a construction of a different “map of meaning”, to use Dawson’s concept, on the aftermath of the tragedy. HJC was able to produce a narrative which was not restricted only to the bereaved families, but welcomed survivors and, in a broader sense, the whole city.

The role played by survivors in this context proved to be essential. Survivors, in Sousa Ribeiro’s view, are “trapped” in a paradoxical situation: on one hand, they must assume and claim the victim’s status, demanding the right to indemnity, recognition and keeping alive the memory of the violence suffered by them; on the other hand, they need to refuse being imprisoned in the role of victim, trapped by the suffering, and must regain their position as subjects, reaffirming their identity (Ribeiro, 2017: 450-1). By being included in the fight, and therefore in the narrative, they were able to achieve agency and produce and attach a new sense to Hillsborough, a sense that what they went through was not in vain.

3.2.3. The Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance (HSA)

The Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance (HSA) is a Hillsborough-related group, the most recent one of the three here explored. In its own words, it is a group “for survivors, run by survivors of the Hillsborough Disaster”²⁸. It is a non-profit and non-funded organization, with the mission “to honour the survivors of Hillsborough, and all directly affected to provide mutual support and friendship for all those who continue to suffer from their experiences at Hillsborough in 1989”.

Its aims and objectives are:

To provide a forum for direct and indirect support and friendship; To provide a mutually respectful environment for fellow survivors to share their experiences and their ongoing impact.; To promote the social, emotional well being and mental health of all members through communication, shared experiences and access to specialist services such as Hillsborough Transformational Recovery Model (HTRM), not yet available on the NHS, as appropriate; To ensure all members feel valued and welcomed; To provide opportunities for members who feel isolated by distance or emotional well being to access direct and indirect support; To provide transparent information and

²⁸ This and every other quote from this section can be accessed at the HSA website: <https://www.hsa-us.co.uk/>

communication to all members; To educate others in survivors' experiences and their ongoing impact on mental health and well being. (Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance)

Unlike the two previous ones, the main focus of the HSA is on the survivors of the tragedy. And this focus, as it can be seen, does not end with the name of the group, but it goes beyond it. Here, it is important to highlight one of the main aspects of the group: the Hillsborough Transformational Recovery Model (HTRM). This consists of a therapy "designed by survivors, for survivors". According to the HSA, by May 2022, this has already helped 117 people with a success rate of 98%. Not available on the NHS, it is funded by donations and open to anyone who was at Hillsborough on the 15 April 1989 and is still struggling with the tragic events.

Besides the monthly meetings, individual visits and fundraising campaigns, the HSA promotes the HSA Merseyside Sports Tour, a 21-mile team walk that starts and ends at Anfield, visiting sports arenas on Merseyside (including Everton's Goodison Park). The main objective of the tour is to raise funds for the HTRM and the group's campaigns, while also working together with the Fans Supporting Foodbanks organisation.

3.2.4. *The Sun's* boycott

As was seen in the last chapter and the previous section, one of the most, if not the most, damaging portrayal of the Hillsborough Tragedy was produced by *The Sun* newspaper. On 19 April 1989, only four days after the happenings of the tragedy, it produced a front-page headline that would prove to have drastic consequences: "THE TRUTH".

LJ Taylor showed a few months later that the allegations made by the newspaper were false. There was no evidence of misbehaviour or misconduct by Liverpool supporters. The report produced by the Hillsborough Independent Panel demonstrated that "the origin of these serious allegations was a local Sheffield press agency informed by several SYP officers, an SYP Police Federation spokesperson and a local MP" (*The Report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel*, 2012: 24).

The Sun's boycott is a phenomenon which is not restricted to those directly affected by the events of Hillsborough. It is not even restricted to Liverpool supporters. It is a phenomenon that is supported throughout the Merseyside region and supported by people with different beliefs and backgrounds but united under the same banner.

It started as a reaction to the headline of April 19th 1989, with copies being burnt in the streets in Kirkby, the “first time newspapers had been publicly burned on British streets since the 1930s, in Jewish east London, when copies of *The Daily Mail* were set alight in response to their front page endorsement of British fascist Oswald Mosley and his pro-Nazi Blackshirts” (Brett, 2017). *The Sun* was not the only paper to print this version of the facts, but it was the only one to defend it and call it “The Truth”. Despite “sales in Merseyside dropping from 524,000 to 320,000 overnight, in the days following the infamous front page *The Sun* remained stubborn” (Brett, 2017), replying to letters of complaint with a note where it could be read: “If the price of a free press is a boycott of our newspaper, then it is a price we will have to pay” (*apud* Brett, 2017).

In 1992, Liverpool’s manager Graeme Souness appeared on the front page of *The Sun*, days after undergoing open-heart surgery and celebrating Liverpool’s victory. He was heavily criticised and apologised publicly for the interview. With the HJC, what was an “organic” boycott up until then, became “part of the “street battle” for justice (...) visualised with stickers, posters and other merchandise giving the boycott and battle for justice a now iconic face and utilising the match day crowd to spread the message” (Brett, 2017). In the words of Williams, “no match at Anfield today is complete without the distribution of ‘Justice’ and ‘Don’t Buy The Sun’ stickers” (Williams, 2011: 377)²⁹.

In July 2004, *The Sun* apologised in a piece, saying that it was “truly sorry’ for the most terrible mistake in its history” (*apud* Kay, 2017). The HJC described this apology by stating that “The Sun has seriously miscalculated the intelligence of Liverpool people who, we believe, will see through this cynical attempt to increase sales in the Merseyside region” (*apud* Kay, 2017).

Two years later, Kelvin Mackenzie, the one responsible for the original article, said: “I wasn’t sorry then and I’m not sorry now” (*apud* Kay, 2017). A few weeks later, to protest against him, Liverpool supporters organised a mosaic on the Kop on the FA Cup’s third-round game against Arsenal at Anfield, where it could be read “The Truth”, and for six minutes the fans chanted for “Justice for the 96”, making what was happening on the pitch secondary.

After the findings of the Hillsborough Independent Panel were made public in 2012, *The Sun* published “The Real Truth”, an article where it expressed its profound apologies for

²⁹ See Appendix 13.

the false reports of 1989. Again, those apologies were rejected by the bereaved families, survivors and supporters. But if the HIP report made the headlines, the same can not be said about the historical verdict of "unlawfully killing" in 2016, which did not appear on the front page of the paper, unlike the majority of the press covering the inquests.

On 14 September 2016, councillors of the Liverpool City Council approved unanimously a motion calling on retailers to stop selling the paper after months of campaigning from the Total Eclipse of The S*n and Shun the S*n groups, groups which direct their efforts to contributing to the boycott and raising awareness of it.

On 10 February 2017, Liverpool banned *The Sun* from Anfield and Melwood training ground, with the newspaper not being permitted to report on the club's matches from Anfield and being given no access to interview players or press conferences with Liverpool's manager Jürgen Klopp. In response to this, *The Sun* released a statement, where it can be read: "Banning journalists from a club is bad for fans and bad for football. *The Sun* deeply regrets its reporting of the tragic events at Hillsborough and understands the damage caused by those reports is still felt by many in the city. (...) whilst we can't undo the damage done we would like to further a dialogue with the city"³⁰.

In his book *Trauma and Media: Theories, Histories, and Images*, Allen Meek further develops the role played by the media in shaping the collective understanding in the aftermath of traumatic events such as Hillsborough. He "understands historical trauma as only revealed through intertextual constructions", referring to E. Ann Kaplan and the view that "trauma produces new subjects" (*apud* Meek, 2010: 6). To quote Kaplan and Wang on the "multiple roles of media representations:

The visual media do not just mirror those experiences; in their courting and staging of violence they are themselves the breeding ground of trauma, as well as the matrix of understanding and experiencing of a world out of joint. The visual media have become a cultural institution in which the traumatic experience of modernity can be recognized, negotiated, and reconfigured. (Kaplan and Wang 17) (*apud* Meek, 2010: 12)

The logic developed by Kaplan and Wang can be used to try to understand how the covering of Hillsborough by the media was able to create and solidify a narrative that proved to have lasting effects on the bereaved families, survivors and the city of Liverpool. As stated

³⁰ This quote can be accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/feb/10/liverpool-ban-the-sun-newspaper-over-hillsborough-coverage>

in chapter 2, *The Sun* was not the only newspaper that produced a narrative based on stereotypes that blamed Liverpool fans for the disaster, but it was the only one that sustained it in the name of a "free press".

The media were unable to provide the "public sphere", identified by Sousa Ribeiro and already mentioned in this chapter, that was, and in a way still is, necessary to those affected by a traumatic event to be able to have their voices heard. To the people of Liverpool, *The Sun* is the face of this failure and the main entity responsible for the establishment of a national prejudicial view of the tragedy.

It is also important to acknowledge that, while the HFSG has folded and the HJC has restricted and largely reduced its activities, the HSA and the boycott campaigns are still operating and working at what can be described as "full speed". This very own specificity can be looked at as the starting point of an important question: what is the limit of the militancy? Do the effects of a tragedy such as Hillsborough ever come to an end? From what was described in these sections, it seems that the fight never stops. It changes and adapts, but it never ends. Either by the bereaved families, Hillsborough survivors, Liverpool fans or the people of Merseyside, Hillsborough is part of them and this has reached a point of no return.

3.3. "Beside the Hillsborough flame, I heard a Kopite mourning"³¹

It is impossible to talk about Hillsborough and the way it affected, and affects, the city of Liverpool without looking into the collective memory of the city and the collective mourning it and its people went through. For some, like the words of former HFSG chair Margaret Aspinall quoted in the previous section of this chapter show, it is time to "move on". For others, this process might never come to an end. Of course, the legal battle explored in section 3.1. and the actions of organised groups and campaigns discussed in section 3.2. are part of this collective endeavour, but they do not paint the whole picture. How does the city of Liverpool, its clubs and its people reacted to Hillsborough and what place does Hillsborough have in the collective experience?

To explore these questions, it is important to provide some theoretical frameworks on memory and mourning. According to anthropologist Joël Candau, there are three levels of memory: proto-memory, memory itself and metamemory (*apud* Catroga, 2009: 11). The

³¹ This verse comes from the song *Fields of Anfield Road*, regularly sung by Liverpool supporters (see *The Anfield Songbook*, 2019: 48-49).

aftermath of Hillsborough can be explored by looking into the last two. While the survivors' experience can be defined as memory itself, closely linked to recollection and recognition, the collective experience of the city is related to the notion of metamemory, associated with the collective and historical memory (Catroga, 2009: 11).

Evoking Bulgarian philosopher Tzvetan Todorov, who stated that memory is always selective, Catroga defines memory as the "hot" and "affective" retention of traces (Catroga, 2009: 16). The Portuguese historian believes that the memory becomes part of the symbolic field, transforming itself into patrimony as it goes from lived recollection to institutionalized commemoration (Catroga, 2009: 21). This notion is linked by Catroga to funerary's symbolism as it eliminates time's corruption and allows those who died to "be alive" through other means (Catroga, 2009: 38).

In this sense, the adding of the eternal flames to Liverpool FC's crest in 1993 and the insignia on the back under the collar of the club's kit, featuring the number 97 between those same flames, are perfect examples of the notions developed by Catroga. By doing this, the club not only pays homage to the victims of the tragedy but, in a sense, ensures that they are remembered. In a broader context, this can also be regarded as a manifestation of the club's identity, with the tragedy now being an essential part of it.

Speaking of questions of identity and institutionalized commemoration, the club's museum at Anfield, which has a permanent exhibition covering its 130-year history, has a Hillsborough dedicated section. The section provides a brief explanation of the tragedy and contains the name of the "96 Reds we'll never forget"³². It also features an Everton FC shirt, Liverpool's greatest rival, signed by the then Everton manager, David Moyes, which has the phrase "REMEMBERING THE 96" on its back (see Appendix 4), an award given to Margaret Aspinall "in recognition of the incredible efforts by Margaret and the HFSG in their fight to get justice for the 96 Liverpool supporters who lost their lives at Hillsborough", two commemorative medals intended for VIP guests of the match who were never issued and a small section of items left by families and supporters on the Anfield pitch during April 1989. The club has also hosted annual memorial services at Anfield, open to the public and with attendances that have reached over 30,000 people, with the last one taking place in 2020 by the decision of the bereaved families. It was at one of these services, in 2009, that the commitment

³² The quotes from LFC's museum were collected during a visit on 8 November 2021 and were not updated yet to include the passing of Andrew Devine, the 97th victim of the disaster.

that would eventually lead to the creation of the Hillsborough Independent Panel was announced by Andy Burnham.

Anfield also hosts a Hillsborough memorial, located outside the stadium at 97 Avenue, "dedicated to those who lost their lives at the FA Cup semi-final", with the names of the 97 victims and their ages engraved in it. Up unto this day, many tributes can be seen at the memorial, including flowers, scarves and several types of memorabilia being laid by people who pay their respects to the victims (see Appendix 6).

The city of Liverpool has another important memorial located in the centre of the city: the Hillsborough Monument Memorial (see Appendix 7). It was commissioned by the Hillsborough Justice Campaign and sculpted by Tom Murphy, inaugurated in 2013. It is a big circular monument, with a raised design in low relief. "The people depicted in the design are 'the guardians of the memory', or 'people like us'. Their purpose is symbolic and other figures represent justice, hope and loss. (...). The people who passed away are represented by the birds who fly freely throughout the work"³³. It also contains the names of the victims and a poem by David Charters. Amongst the words engraved, it can be read: "The monument is a testimony to the good people of this city and beyond, who fought relentlessly for many years to have the true facts of the disaster established and publicly recorded"³⁴.

In a way, the memorials can be understood as expressions of identity and collective memory of Hillsborough that convey slightly different meanings. While the first one is most commonly associated with the HFSG and the victims, the second one, commissioned by the HJC, "is offered as a lasting tribute to the ninety-six men, women and children who were killed in the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster and also to the thousands of survivors who were injured and traumatised on April 15th, 1989". This difference reflects the different approaches of both groups as explored in the previous section.

Regarding the context of institutionalized commemoration, it is also essential to acknowledge the actions developed by Liverpool's local rival, Everton FC. Following the

³³ This quote and a more detailed explanation of the monument can be accessed at: <https://liverpoolsculptures.co.uk/the-hillsborough-monument-memorial/>

³⁴ Having been to both memorials as part of my visit to Liverpool in order to research this thesis and on a personal note, I believe it is important to state how powerful they are. I know that, in this kind of work and regarding this topic, there are several different theories that must be quoted and explored, but the importance of the feeling can not be undervalued. Both memorials project a very strong sentiment. When visiting them, even though I was born more than 9,000km away from Liverpool, I felt the pain as if I had lost someone I knew. Words may not be enough to describe it.

release of the Hillsborough Independent Panel in 2012, Everton produced a tribute to the victims where two mascots, a young girl in Everton blue with a number 9 on her back holding hands with a young boy in Liverpool red with a number 6 on his back, led players to the field to the sound of "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother", by The Hollies (see Appendix 5). In 2013, at the memorial service at Anfield, Everton's chairman Bill Kenwright gave a powerful speech, famously known by the phrase "They took on the wrong city – and they took on the wrong mums". In 2014 it was Everton's manager Roberto Martinez who talked about Hillsborough at the service: "I do not have to tell you that Everton are with you. Everton remembers. We will always".

On 7 February 2015, Everton unveiled a Hillsborough plaque at its ground, Goodison Park. The tribute has the image of the two mascots holding hands and the phrase "Everton Remembers", "In memory of the 96 Liverpool supporters who lost their lives at Hillsborough". Everton fan Stephen Kelly, who lost his brother Michael at the Leppings Lane in 1989, said: "I have always been grateful of the support from the blue side of the city. I hope that when Evertonians look at this they will feel proud of the way we've supported our neighbours"³⁵.

But this "brotherhood in arms"³⁶ is not something recent in the Everton-Liverpool relationship. Back in 1989, in the immediate aftermath of Hillsborough, on 22 April, a mile-long chain of scarves knotted together linked Liverpool's Anfield to Everton's Goodison Park. In Liverpool's first official game after the tragedy, a league game against Everton at Goodison Park, it was possible to see Liverpool supporters with a flag where it could be read "LFC FANS THANK EFC FANS" and a banner that read "THE KOP THANKS YOU ALL, WE NEVER WALKED ALONE" (Fieldsend, 2019: 202). On May 20, Liverpool faced Everton at the FA Cup final at the Wembley Stadium, but the game, won by Liverpool after two goals scored by Ian Rush in the extra-time, became secondary after the beautiful and powerful manifestation by both sets of supporters before the match who joined a chorus of "You'll Never Walk Alone" led by Gerry Marsden, lead singer of Gerry & the Pacemakers. This unity, surpassing every kind of football rivalry and divergence, is a clear sign of the metonymic process that the tragedy went through, becoming associated with the whole city and not only Liverpool FC.

³⁵ This quote can be accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-31193543>

³⁶ This is a reference to a banner unfurled by Everton fans at a game at Goodison Park played after the 2016's verdict of unlawfully killing, where it could be read: "Justice at Last, 96 Brothers in Arms".

The "mile of scarves", the behaviour of both sets of fans and the different tributes explored above are part of a much larger context which is the collective mourning of Hillsborough. This was thoroughly analysed and discussed in Michael Brennan's doctoral thesis "Mourning Identities: Hillsborough, Diana and the Production of Meaning" (2003). Brennan's work is an extensive research which looks into the culture of death and mourning and the specificities of the collective mourning of the Hillsborough Disaster and the passing of Princess Diana. He also analyses a very interesting source, the books of condolence, and traces different parallels through them.

When discussing the mourning of both these events, Brennan talks about "an unprecedented use of soft toys, flowers, and personal memorabilia, often of deep sentimental value, in the creation of spontaneous shrines" (Brennan, 2003: 121-2). He also mentions that "both witnessed a seeming re-visioning of funerary practice and protocol, in which established practices were ruthlessly undone" (Brennan, 2003: 122). In the case of the Hillsborough Disaster, Brennan mentions the "intertwining (...) of aspects of popular football fandom with more traditional aspects of religiosity", highlighting in the context the "use of a Liverpool FC banner as an altar cloth during the hastily convened Requiem Mass in the city's Metropolitan Cathedral the day following the disaster" (Brennan, 2003: 122).

In the context of religiosity, historian Dominick LaCapra develops the concept of "traumatropism" (LaCapra, 2014: xiv), which "includes the founding trauma as myth of origins, but it may also involve other transformations of trauma, often moving in the same 'postsecular' orbit as the foundational or originary trauma. Hence, (...), trauma may be transfigured into the sublime or the sacred, and the traumatized may be seen as martyrs or saints (...)" (LaCapra, 2014: xiv).

This association between the popular and the religious can be seen in the first week that followed the disaster and has been studied by multiple sociologists. The millions of people who visited Anfield during this period transformed it into a shrine to the victims of the tragedy in an act of "religious or spiritual pilgrimage" (Brennan, 2003: 123). "This pilgrimage, Davie (1993) suggests, transformed Anfield into the city's de facto third cathedral, behind or on a par with the Anglican and Metropolitan cathedrals" (Brennan, 2003: 123) (see Appendix 10). This notion is complemented by Davie with the mention "to the leaving not of religious but footballing icons and regalia at the of the alter during the requiem mass following the disaster

and to the signing, during the official Hillsborough Memorial Service on 29 April 1989, of Liverpool FC's adopted anthem, "You'll Never Walk Alone"³⁷ (Brennan, 2003: 124).

Regarding this matter, as Brennan states, "To say that football matters in Liverpool is (...) perhaps to understate its significance" (Brennan, 2003: 285). The importance of the role played by football in Merseyside, almost a secular religion³⁷, became much more evident in Hillsborough's aftermath. This religiosity, which can be seen on a general level of the game (the fan's weekly behaviour described by Galeano in the opening quote of this thesis, for example), turns into a powerful force in the city. Liverpool has its prophets and its saints, men who come and who are canonized through their actions at Anfield, performed in front of a crowd of believers. After Hillsborough, using LaCapra's theory, Liverpool now also has its martyrs.

When discussing the iconic, totemic and symbolic investment of meaning around Hillsborough, Brennan notes:

In Liverpool, a city steeped in the traditions of football, where it is combined with religion, class and a sense of place to constitute a unique 'local structure of feeling' (Williams, 1984), the Hillsborough disaster, I suggest, became emblematic of a series of losses to affect the city; from economic decline and the loss of its key shipping industries, to the loss of employment and the haemorrhaging of local population. It is these things — in addition to the obvious victims of the Hillsborough disaster — as key signifiers of local identity which were being unconsciously mourned in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster. The collective trauma of loss embodied in the deaths of 96 fans of a key 'totem' of the city, Liverpool F.C, served simultaneously — albeit temporarily — to (re)unite a city devastated by economic collapse, and to reawaken memories of people and places from the past. (Brennan, 2003: 129-30)

As it was developed throughout this thesis, the Hillsborough disaster was the final hit to a city that had spent a decade on the ropes. As stated, the tragedy, through a metonymic process, became part of the totemic identity of the city. It has become, for better or for worse, an important part of the Scouse identity, etched into the city's character. In Liverpool,

³⁷ A brief episode on the 1960s which helps to illustrate this matter is described by Phil Scraton: "What would you do if Jesus Christ came to Liverpool?" read the hoarding outside a church on Everton Brow. 'Move St John to outside right' was the response scrawled below" (Scraton, 2016: 29). However, this was not the catholic saint, but Ian St John, one of Liverpool's most successful players, a true Merseyside saint.

Hillsborough is not remembered, it is lived. It has gone beyond those directly affected by the tragedy (bereaved families and survivors) and has reached a macro-level of influence.

But having reached the level of collective memory, working as metamemory, the scope for manipulation and the political and ideological use (Catroga, 2009: 47) of an episode such as Hillsborough never went away. Thirty-three years later, Liverpool supporters are still regarded as a threat to the game of football and a recent episode proves it. On 29 May 2022, Liverpool went to Paris to face Real Madrid in the Champions League final. Outside the stadium, thousands of Liverpool fans were corralled into a bottleneck by the French police. With problems scanning tickets and security searches, French police teargassed indiscriminately fans who were trapped, some for more than 2 hours before the scheduled kick-off. This was largely recorded by Liverpool supporters and journalists who were covering the game.

On the spot, UEFA blamed the "late arrival of fans" as the cause of the events. This was immediately questioned by Merseyside police "which said the "vast majority of fans behaved in an exemplary manner" in "shocking circumstances""³⁸. Later that night, UEFA released a statement where it could be read: "In the lead-up to the game, the turnstiles at the Liverpool end became blocked by thousands of fans who had purchased fake tickets which did not work in the turnstiles". French interior minister, Gérald Darmanin, added to this version by stating that "thousands of British 'supporters', without tickets, or with fake tickets, have forced the entrances, and sometimes been violent to stadium staff"³⁹, thanking the police for their work. This version of the events was contested by Liverpool FC as thousands of fans with legitimate tickets had problems at the turnstiles and the club has demanded a formal investigation.

The events in the vicinity of the stadium triggered Hillsborough survivors' trauma, as is the case of Kevin Cowley, who was present at the 1989 and the Paris' game. In his words: "It took me years to get over Hillsborough and I feel like I've just relived Hillsborough again. Saturday was horrendous. I want to vocalise this because I spent so many years bottling up Hillsborough and that did so much to me that I have to do something this time"⁴⁰.

³⁸ This quote can be accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/may/29/liverpool-fans-likenterrifying-treatment-in-paris-to-hillsborough>

³⁹ Both UEFA's statement and Darmanin's declaration can be accessed at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/champions-league-kick-off-time-delayed-liverpool-b2089608.html>

⁴⁰ This quote can be accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/may/31/champions-league-paris-final-fiasco-triggers-hillsborough-survivor-trauma>

In the words of *The Guardian*'s journalist David Conn, "the causes of chaos can be terrifying simple: the police had no workable system to check for valid tickets some way from the turnstiles and instead held thousands of people in a ridiculous bottleneck for an age, before giving up completely"⁴¹. When discussing UEFA's initial announcement, blaming Liverpool supporters, Conn argues that it "was an unmistakable echo of the on-the-spot police cover-up at Hillsborough".

The happenings of the 2022 Champions League final show, without any doubt, that the Hillsborough Tragedy still affects the city of Liverpool. In David Conn's words, this "is the legacy of trauma thousands of Liverpool supporters are burdened with at every football match they attend". While the 97 were remembered, as they always are, through banners and scarves inside the stadium, Liverpool fans once again went through a horrible situation caused by a lack of police management and were blamed for it. For the Reds, that Saturday in April never seems to come to an end.

3.4. "There'll be glory round the Fields of Anfield Road"⁴²

Bearing in mind that most of the topics explored up until this point are history, in the common sense that understands it as a synonym for the past, it is important to try and project what can be defined as the "future" of Hillsborough. With the end of the legal battle and the folding of Hillsborough groups, a question must be posed: what happens now? To try to answer this question, two main points will be analysed. The first one is the Real Truth Legacy Project, which focuses on the educational sphere, and the second one is the "Hillsborough Law", focusing on the British legal system.

3.4.1. The Real Truth Legacy Project

The Real Truth Legacy Project is an educational campaign to "educate current and future generations about the injustice and Establishment cover-up of Hillsborough"⁴³. It was proposed in 2021 by Ian Byrne, MP for Liverpool West Derby and a Hillsborough survivor, and contains two main elements. The first one is a "political education toolkit for use by trade unions, Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) and like-minded organisations who wish to learn

⁴¹ David Conn's quotes can be accessed at: https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/may/31/no-excuse-for-uefa-echoing-hillsborough-by-instantly-blaming-liverpool-fans-paris?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

⁴² This verse, like the title of section 3.3. from this chapter, comes from the song *Fields of Anfield Road*, regularly sung by Liverpool supporters (see *The Anfield Songbook*, 2019: 48-49).

⁴³ This quote and every other quote on the 3.4.1 section can be accessed at the official website of the project: <https://www.ianbyrne.org/the-real-truth>

more about Hillsborough". This material, the "Real Truth", contains "significant input from families, survivors and leading Hillsborough campaigners". The second element is "a campaign to get education about Hillsborough added to the National Curriculum, including a dedicated "Hillsborough Day" in the Liverpool City Region, to take place on a day near the anniversary of the tragedy on 15th April each year."

It was originally discussed in November 2021 as an Early Day Motion (EDM) in parliament, where it can be read:

[It] furthermore recognises the important role of education in learning the lessons from the disaster, and calls on the Government to include the Hillsborough disaster in the national curriculum, a programme of education which should cover the events of the past 32 years, the continuing campaign for justice and how we ensure the events of that fateful day are not forgotten and that the ensuing miscarriage of justice is never repeated.

The project's focus on "learning the lessons from the disaster" is the most essential trait of it. Those lessons, as the tragedy itself, go far beyond the context of football and must be understood as becoming essential to the collective identity of the Merseyside region, but must also be considered when discussing England's national memory and important monuments.

On 26 January 2022, Liverpool city councillors passed Byrne's motion "unopposed by the council with full cross-party support". Every Merseyside primary and secondary school will promote a special assembly about the disaster, with access to dedicated teaching resource packs. In the words of Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor for Liverpool City Region, "The Hillsborough Day ensures the stories of the victims, and those who tirelessly campaigned for justice, will be remembered by future generations". According to Byrne, the next phase of the project is for it to be nationally adopted, with education about Hillsborough being added to the national curriculum

Two recent episodes help to demonstrate, in a clear way, the importance of this educational project. The first one happened in the 2022 FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Manchester City played at the Wembley Stadium on 16 April, where chanting from Manchester City fans disturbed a minute's silence that marked the 33rd anniversary of the tragedy. The second one happened only 3 days later, when Manchester United fans were heard singing "*The Sun* was right, you're murderers" at Anfield's away end and outside the stadium.

Both episodes can be wrongly understood as part of a “normal” context regarding sports rivalry, where limits are often crossed by fans. But they must be discussed as unacceptable behaviour from both sets of supporters and can not be tolerated in any context. In the words of Liverpool’s manager Jürgen Klopp regarding the chants:

(...) I am unbelievably disappointed that of late we have heard more and more songs being sung about the Hillsborough disaster. Really? The deaths of 97 people in a tragedy is now something that can be mocked? How did this happen?

We have staff at the club who lost loved ones at Hillsborough. There are supporters in the crowd at all of our games who lost friends or family members themselves or who survived the tragedy. They have already suffered more than enough.⁴⁴

Of course, disciplinary action against the fans, and eventually against the clubs, must be discussed. But education is the most secure way to ensure that this kind of episode will not be repeated, inside a stadium or anywhere else. Statements from the clubs are not enough to deal with this kind of action, which is not isolated and needs to be addressed in wider cultural terms. The Real Truth Legacy Project can be vital when dealing with this kind of problematic scenario, providing future changes in this narrow mentality of football fanaticism.

3.4.2. The Hillsborough Law

Following the verdict of unlawfully killing in the 2016 inquests, Theresa May, at the time Home Secretary, commissioned a review of the bereaved families' experience. This led to the production of a report entitled “‘The patronising disposition of unaccountable power’: A report to ensure the pain and suffering of the Hillsborough families is not repeated”. The report was produced by Liverpool’s Bishop James Jones and was published on 1 November 2017. As Bishop of Liverpool, he presided over the 10th, 15th and 20th-anniversary services at Anfield, also being chair of the Hillsborough Independent Panel and the Home Secretary’s adviser on Hillsborough.

According to the report,

‘[T]he patronising disposition of unaccountable power’ (...) does not just describe the families’ experience of the police, but also of other agencies and individuals across the criminal justice system and beyond. And it does not simply describe a historic state of

⁴⁴ LFC’S Matchday Programme (24/04/2022)

affairs, but instead one that stretches forward to today, including aspects of the most recent inquests. Neither is it an experience of those in positions of power which is unique to the Hillsborough families (...). So this report is not about a perspective on simply about 'how things were'. The families' experiences demonstrate a real and continuing need for change, and this report sets out proposals for how to bring about that change. (Jones, 2017: 6)

It defines the "patronising disposition" as a cultural condition, a "mindset which defines how organisations and people within them behave and which can act as unwritten, even unspoken, connection between individuals in organisations" (Jones, 2017: 6). According to Jones, "this mindset is not automatically changed, still less dislodged, by changes in policies and processes. What is needed is a change in attitude, culture, heart and mind" (Jones, 2017: 6).

The report contains 25 "points of learning", but Jones highlights three of them as crucial. First, the creation of a Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy, inspired by the experience of the Hillsborough families, with organisations which commit to it striving to:

In the event of a public tragedy, activate its emergency plan and deploy its resources to rescue victims, to support the bereaved and to protect the vulnerable; Place the public interest above our own reputation; Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts (...) to assist the search for the truth (...); Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short; Ensure all members of staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy. Where we fall short, we should apologise straightforwardly and genuinely; Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the public or the media. (Jones, 2017: 7)

The second point highlighted by Jones is the need for "proper participation" of bereaved families at inquests, which includes publicly funded legal representation, "an end to public bodies spending limitless sums", "a change to the way in which public bodies approach inquests" and changes to inquest procedures and the training of coroners, ensuring that the families are not mistreated in the process (Jones, 2017: 8).

The third and final point is the establishment of a “duty of candour” for police officers. According to Jones, “there is at present a gap in police accountability arrangements” and this duty of candour would address “the unacceptable behaviour of police officers – serving or retired – who fail to cooperate fully with investigations into alleged criminal offences or misconduct” (2017: 8).

Although this was a report commissioned by the government, it has not yet produced an official response. For this reason, a movement called “Hillsborough Law Now” was created by the bereaved families and survivors, backed up by Steve Rotheram, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, and Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester. The movement defends a reform of the legal system based on the “learning points” produced by Bishop Jones in 2017 and the incorporation of three more measures which have arisen from the Hillsborough trials after the publication of the report, which are “a requirement that the evidence and findings of major inquests must be taken fully into account at any subsequent criminal trials”, “clarification in law that major inquiries commissioned by the government or other official bodies constitute courses of public justice” and “a requirement that any criminal trials following a major inquest take place in a court with relevant expertise and status rather than a crown court”⁴⁵.

The project is backed by two former British prime ministers: Gordon Brown and Theresa May. Speaking at a Hillsborough Law Now event, Brown said that “no group of families should ever again have to walk alone” and that “it is to respect and honour the memory of all who died that we need the Hillsborough Law Now – no delays, no prevarications, no excuses – to secure justice for you and everyone who in the future may face the same challenges”⁴⁶. At the same event, Theresa May argued that “what happened at Hillsborough, the death of 97 Liverpool fans, failed by the state was tragedy enough for their families”, adding that “unless we act, the experience of the Hillsborough families and other will be repeated”. Former chair of the HFSG, Margaret Aspinall also spoke at the event: “I am not asking the government, I am demanding a Hillsborough Law to make this a fair and just system for the ordinary people of this country. That to me is important”.

In the words of Andy Burnham,

⁴⁵ These measures are part of a letter written by Rotheram and Burnham to all 650 MPs urging them to support the reforms of the legal system. The letter can be accessed in full at: <https://www.liverpoolworld.uk/whats-on/mps-urged-to-back-hillsborough-law-liverpool-mayors-moving-letter-to-parliament-in-full-3653765>

⁴⁶ The quotes from Theresa May, Gordon Brown and Margaret Aspinall can be accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-59913789>

The appalling treatment of the Hillsborough families at the hands of the legal system shames our nation. But it is sadly not unique. (...). From Peterloo 200 years ago to Grenfell today, ordinary bereaved families continue to be treated in a cruel and dismissive way by a justice system which favours the powerful and the connected. It is a pattern that keeps on repeating itself and it is time to break it. (...). We need to level up the scales of justice in favour of bereaved families so that the truth is established at the first time of asking. We must spare families the secondary trauma that is often inflicted by cruel treatment at the hands of the system. (...). Truth, justice and accountability will not flourish without a fundamental rebalancing of our legal, coronial and judicial systems.⁴⁷

Besides enjoying the support of families, survivors and campaigners, the project is being backed by Liverpool FC and has recently received the support of its local rivals, Everton FC, and other Premier League clubs such as Brighton & Hove Albion, Tottenham Hotspur and Brentford FC.

UEFA's initial reaction of blaming Liverpool supporters for the disastrous and terrible events at the 2022 Champions League final, as shown in the previous section, can be seen as another sign of the importance of a Hillsborough Law. Of course this is a national project, and with Brexit its repercussions in Europe might be limited, but it would set an important example to be followed worldwide and provide an honest and rightful legacy to the fight for truth and justice in the aftermath of the Hillsborough Tragedy.

⁴⁷ This quote can be accessed at: <https://www.thisisanfield.com/2022/01/hillsborough-law-now-calls-for-unprecedented-overhaul-of-justice-system/>

Conclusion

As I reach the last part of this thesis, I believe it is possible to take a step back, provide an overview of the issues discussed in this work, draw some relevant conclusions, both on a personal note and an academic one, and outline the different paths created by the research and analysis developed.

The conclusion of this thesis is also the conclusion of a year's work that included the reading of thousands of pages, dozens of sleepless nights, several meetings with Liverpool fans and academics, a trip to England and specifically to Liverpool, and three trips to see the Reds and be a part of the "Bill Shankly boys". It was not an easy task, but it proved to be a necessary, productive and enjoyable one.

Having explored the notion of collective memory and how it can be understood in the specific context of Liverpool, this work can be regarded as a symbolic contribution to the multiple layers of meaning attached to the Hillsborough Tragedy and its impact on the city. Thirty-three years after the tragic events of that Saturday afternoon, having analysed and explored the tragedy through different lenses, scopes and frameworks, one question comes up: how will Hillsborough be remembered?

Will it be associated with the *Taylor Report* and the complete change it produced on English football? From all-seating stadiums to several safety recommendations, a Liverpool lad from the 1980s, if transported to 2022 and taken to a game at Anfield, would not recognize much of it. From the complete alteration of The Kop to the inflated ticket prices and the seating policy during a Premier League game, everything would be different. Safer? Undoubtedly. Better? The answer might not be so clear.

Will it be remembered for the fight of the bereaved families, survivors and supporters for the uncovering of the truth and the pursuit of justice? The actions of the different groups mentioned throughout this thesis are certainly one of the aspects most commonly associated with Hillsborough. It was through them that, despite all the obstacles and difficulties, the truth finally came to light and was publicly acknowledged. Twenty-three years later, their fight led to the Hillsborough Independent Panel's report. Twenty-seven years on, it was time for the squashing of the "accidental death" verdict and the establishment of the verdict of "unlawfully killing". The resilience of the groups, and individuals, was what kept them on as they walked

through the storm, with their heads held up high, never afraid of the dark, knowing, at the very bottom of their hearts, that they would eventually reach the golden sky.

Will the tragedy be linked with the lies and manipulation orchestrated by official bodies like the South Yorkshire Police? With the publication of those same lies by several newspapers and the creation of a so-called "Truth"? For years the general perception of Hillsborough blamed the tragedy on the actions of Liverpool fans, regarded as drunken hooligans who forced their way into the stadium trampling everything and everybody on their path. Duckenfield's initial lie was repeated on every newspaper and television programme in England, eventually reaching Europe and a global audience. The shifting of the blame onto Liverpool supporters, recognised and criticised by LJ Taylor only a few months after the tragedy, left a mark that can still be felt by the survivors, the supporters and the city.

Can Hillsborough be understood as a mean by which the city of Liverpool reshaped its own image? As it was seen, the prejudice suffered by Liverpool supporters was not solely associated with the happenings of Heysel four years earlier, but it was rooted on a much deeper level, arising out of the city's exceptionalism, the North and South divide and the economic decline experienced by the city in the 1970s and 1980s. Through the actions performed by the people of Liverpool in the aftermath of the disaster, a new image was now being projected, linked to notions of resistance, resilience and hope. From Shankly to Klopp, Liverpool went through a lot, but the fighting spirit never failed them.

Hillsborough may perhaps also be remembered as a lesson in the context of football. Generally associated with warlike metaphors and a notion of endless battles on the field, football, and especially football supporters, can now look at the tragedy and focus on the brotherhood and camaraderie forged between Liverpool and Everton fans. As it was developed, through a metonymic process, this was no longer simply a matter of Red or Blue. Hillsborough was about the city of Liverpool as a whole, with lifelong rivals joining forces and producing memorable demonstrations of support. In a sense, today, to be a Scouser is to mourn Hillsborough and to fight for justice.

The legacy of Hillsborough might also be considered in other ways as a watershed moment. Projects such as the Real Truth Legacy Project and the Hillsborough Law help to show that the impact of the tragedy goes well beyond football and must be understood in its social implications. The educational focus of the first and the legal approach of the second can help build a different society for England's future generations.

As this dissertation has hopefully proved the Hillsborough Tragedy can, indeed, be remembered by any of the points mentioned above. It can even be remembered by all of them. But maybe the most important one has to deal with the breaking of a specific paradigm. German historian Walter Benjamin, in his work *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, develops his understanding of the historical method by stating that:

To historians who wish to relive an era, Futsel de Coulanges recommends that they blot out everything they know about the later course of history. (...). It is a process of empathy whose origin is the indolence of the heart, *acedia*, which despairs of grasping and holding the genuine historical image as it flares up briefly. Among medieval theologians it was regarded as the root cause of sadness. (...). The nature of this sadness stands out more clearly if one asks with whom the adherents of historicism actually empathize. The answer is inevitable: with the victor. And all the rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them. Hence, empathy with the victor invariably benefits the rulers. (Benjamin, 1968: 256)

This principle developed by Benjamin is more commonly quoted as the popular saying "history is written by the victors". And in the aftermath of Hillsborough, it was. Duckenfield, the SYP and the government all wrote history according to their own interests, as in the rule described by Benjamin. But thanks to the attitudes of the families and survivors, this paradigm was severely tested and challenged to breaking point. Thanks to the Hillsborough groups, we now tend to empathize with the victims rather than with the victors. They were able to reshape and retell history, not only according to their beliefs, but according to what had really happened on that day.

By doing this, they also helped to build a new notion of the victim's role in the aftermath of a traumatic event such as Hillsborough. What started as the appreciation of the survivors' contribution to the collective panorama and memory ended up by giving a real voice to those people, enabling them to occupy a leading, and active, position in their own lives, giving purpose to their trauma and in the process rewriting the history of the sport, the city and the whole culture.

Another aspect of this work which must be highlighted is the development of different ramifications which became visible as it evolved. First, it underlines the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to such events, relying on different fields such as Contemporary History, Cultural Studies and Trauma Studies. Only through the combination of the different

frameworks provided by those areas was it possible to build a comprehensive analysis of Hillsborough and its impact on the city of Liverpool.

Secondly, the topic proved to generate different points of interest that constitute valid and potential research topics which can be further explored on their own. Amongst them it can be mentioned the collective action of football supporters, fans' social identity and cultural representations, the role of the media in the shaping of collective memory and the impact of football-related episodes on society. But that would be another story for another - and a future - time.

As it was stated earlier in this thesis, the full impact of the Hillsborough Tragedy on the city and the people of Liverpool may never be fully understood, but the work developed here will hopefully be considered as a solid step in the direction of the building of collective knowledge and a contribution to the raising of awareness about the effects of an event which could be felt at so many levels and still affects so many people.

On 15 April 1989, 97 Liverpool fans went to a football match and never came home. This was the story of how their families fought to honour their lives, how survivors provided them a voice, how supporters took on their cause and how the city embraced them as part of its ethos. They climbed the hill on their own way, but they never walked alone.

Works Cited

ANDREWS, Aaron (2018). "Decline and the City: the Urban Crisis in Liverpool, c. 1968-1986". Doctoral Thesis. Leicester: University of Leicester.

ARMSTRONG, Gary & GIULIANOTTI, Richard (eds.) (1999). *Football Cultures and Identities*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

BBC News (2019). "Hillsborough disaster: Safety officer Graham Mackrell fined £6,500". 13 May. Last Accessed: 30/05/2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-48253507>

BBC News (2015). "Everton unveils Hillsborough plaque at Goodison Park". 7 Feb. Last Accessed: 29/05/2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-31193543>

BBC News (2019). "Hillsborough retrial reaction". 28 Nov. Last Accessed: 10/05/2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/uk-england-merseyside-50506839>

BBC News (2022). "Hillsborough Law would be valuable legacy to the 97 victims, says Theresa May". 7 Jan. Last Accessed: 30/05/2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-59913789>

BELCHEM, John (2000). *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool exceptionalism*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

BELCHEM, John & BIGGS, Bryan (eds.) (2011). *Liverpool: City of Radicals*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

BENJAMIN, Walter (1968). *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books.

BRAIDWOOD, Jamie (2022). "Champions League final kick-off delayed as police use tear gas on Liverpool fans". *The Independent*. 29 May. Last Accessed: 3/06/2022. <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/champions-league-kick-off-time-delayed-liverpool-b2089608.html>

BRENNAN, Michael J. (2003). "Mourning Identities: Hillsborough, Diana and the Production of Meaning". Doctoral Thesis. Warwick: University of Warwick.

BRETT, Davey (2017). "Liverpool Vs The Sun: How the City Rid Itself of the UK's Biggest Paper". *Vice*. 9 May. Last Accessed: 20/06/2022.

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/nz8ez8/liverpool-vs-the-sun-how-the-city-rid-itself-of-the-uks-biggest-paper>

CASPER, Monica J. & WERTHEIMER, Eric (eds.) (2016). *Critical Trauma Studies: Understanding Violence, Conflict and Memory in Everyday Life*. New York: NYU Press.

CATROGA, Fernando (2009). *Os Passos do Homem Como Restolho do Tempo: Memória e fim do fim da história*. Coimbra: Almedina.

CLELAND, Jamie & DOIDGE, Mark & MILLWARD, Peter & WIDDOP, Paul (eds.) (2018). *Collective Action and Football Fandom: A Relational Sociological Approach*. Palgrave Studies in Relational Sociology. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan

CONN, David (2016). "Hillsborough inquests jury rules 96 victims were unlawfully killed". *The Guardian*. 26 Apr. Last Accessed: 20/05/2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/26/hillsborough-inquests-jury-says-96-victims-were-unlawfully-killed>

——— (2017). "Liverpool ban Sun journalists over Hillsborough coverage". *The Guardian*. 10 Feb. Last Accessed: 14/04/2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/feb/10/liverpool-ban-the-sun-newspaper-over-hillsborough-coverage>

——— (2022). "No excuse for Uefa echoing Hillsborough by instantly blaming Liverpool fans". *The Guardian*. 31 May. Last Accessed: 10/06/2022. https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/may/31/no-excuse-for-uefa-echoing-hillsborough-by-instantly-blaming-liverpool-fans-paris?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

DARBY, Paul & JOHNES, Martin & MELLOR, Gavin (eds.) (2005). *Soccer and Disaster: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

DAWSON, Graham & LEYDESDORFF, Selma & ROGERS, Kim Lacy (eds.) (1999). *Trauma and Life Stories: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

EVANS, Tony (2018). *Two Tribes: Liverpool, Everton and a City on the Brink*. London: Bantam Books.

FIELDSEND, Dan (2019). *Local: A Club and its City: Liverpool's Social History*. Independently Published.

FROST, Diane & NORTH, Peter (2013). *Militant Liverpool: A City on the Edge*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

GALEANO, Eduardo (1995). *El fútbol a sol y sombra*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.

——— (2013). *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*. Translated by Mark Fried. New York: Nation Books.

GIULIANOTTI, Richard & WILLIAMS, John (eds.) (1994). *Game Without Frontiers: Football, identity and modernity*. Hampshire: Arena.

GOLDBLATT, David (2007). *The Ball Is Round: A Global History of Football*. London: Penguin Books.

——— (2015). *The Game of Our Lives: The English Premier League and the Making of Modern Britain*. London: Penguin Books.

GOULDING, Jeff (2018). *Red Odyssey: Liverpool FC 1892-2017*. Sussex: Pitch Publishing.

——— (2022). "‘Hillsborough Law Now’ calls for unprecedented overhaul of justice system". *This is Anfield*. 6 Jan. Last Accessed: 29/05/2022. <https://www.thisisanfield.com/2022/01/hillsborough-law-now-calls-for-unprecedented-overhaul-of-justice-system/>

HALLIDAY, Josh & CHRISAFIS, Angelique (2022). "Liverpool fans liken ‘terrifying’ treatment in Paris to Hillsborough". *The Guardian*. 29 May. Last Accessed: 06/06/2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/may/29/liverpool-fans-liken-terrifying-treatment-in-paris-to-hillsborough>

HATTENSTONE, Simon & O’SULLIVAN, Tom (1999). "Those who were left behind". *The Guardian*. 8 May. Last Accessed: 18/06/2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/1999/may/08/weekend7.weekend>

HUGHES, Simon (2019). *There She Goes: Liverpool, A City on Its Own: The Long Decade: 1979-1993*. Liverpool: deCoubertin Books.

HUNTER, Andy (2022). "‘I’m in pieces again’: Paris final fiasco triggers Hillsborough survivor trauma". *The Guardian*. 31 May. Last Accessed: 08/06/2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/may/31/champions-league-paris-final-fiasco-triggers-hillsborough-survivor-trauma>

JONES, Right Reverend James (2017). *'The patronising disposition of unaccountable power'* A report to ensure the pain and suffering of the Hillsborough families is not repeated. London: HMSO.

KAY, Dan (2017). "LFC finally bans The S*n: the history of the boycott". *Liverpool Echo*. 28 June. Last Accessed: 19/06/2022. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/lfc-finally-bans-sn-history-12589119>

KELLY, Stephen F. (1997). *Bill Shankly: It's Much More Important Than That*. London: Virgin Books.

LACAPRA, Dominick (2014). *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2nd edition). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

LIVERPOOL ECHO (2009). "Liverpool FC legend Bill Shankly – his most famous quotations". 1 Dec. Last Accessed: 04/04/2022. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/sport/football/football-news/liverpool-fc-legend-bill-shankly-3435313>

LIVERPOOL FC (2021). "Margaret Aspinall on Hillsborough anniversary and HFSG". 8 Apr. Last Accessed: 15/05/2022. <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/news/announcements/430756-margaret-aspinall-on-hillsborough-anniversary-and-hfsg>

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB (2019). *The Anfield Songbook: We Have Dreams and Songs to Sing*. Liverpool: Reach Sport.

MCSMITH, Andy (2010). *No Such Thing as Society: A History of Britain in the 1980s*. London: Constable & Robinson.

MILLWARD, Peter (2012). "Reclaiming the Kop? Analysing Liverpool Supporter's 21st Century Mobilizations". *Sociology*. Vol. 46 (4), pp. 633-648.

MEEK, Allen (2009). *Trauma and Media: Theories, Histories and Images*. London: Routledge.

MURPHY, Tom (2013). "The Hillsborough Monument Memorial". *Liverpool Sculptures*. Last Accessed: 18/05/2022. <https://liverpoolsculptures.co.uk/the-hillsborough-monument-memorial/>

NICHOLSON, Michael (2016). *The Hillsborough Disaster In Their Own Words*. Gloucestershire: Amberley.

PLATT, Mark (ed.) (2017). *The Red Journey: An oral history of Liverpool Football Club*. Liverpool: deCoubertin Books.

PYTA, Wolfram & HAVEMANN, Nils (eds.) (2015). *European Football and Collective Memory*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

RAYNOR, Dominic (2022). "MPs urged to back Hillsborough Law – Liverpool mayor's moving letter to parliament in full". *Liverpool World*. 14 Apr. Last Accessed: 14/06/2022. <https://www.liverpoolworld.uk/whats-on/mps-urged-to-back-hillsborough-law-liverpool-mayors-moving-letter-to-parliament-in-full-3653765>

RIBEIRO, António Sousa (2017). "O cómico e a violência: a autoridade da vítima". *The Edge of One of Many Circles: Homenagem a Irene Ramalho Santos*. Isabel Caldeira, Graça Capinha and Jacinta Matos (org.). Coimbra: Coimbra University Press, pp. 449-462.

SAMPSON, Kevin (2016). *Hillsborough Voices: The Real Story Told by the People Themselves*. London: Ebury Press.

SAVAGE, Stephen P. & ROBBINS, Lynton (1990). *Public Policy Under Thatcher*. New York: Macmillan.

SCRATON, Phill (2016). *Hillsborough: The Truth (Updated Edition)*. London: Mainstream Publishing.

STEWART, Graham (2013). *Bang! A History of Britain in the 1980s*. London: Atlantic Books.

TAYLOR, Lord Justice (1989). *The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster, 15 April 1989: Interim Report*. London: HMSO.

TAYLOR, Lord Justice (1990). *The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster, 15 April 1989: Final Report*. London: HMSO.

TEMPANY, Adrian (2016). *And the Sun Shines Now: How Hillsborough and the Premier League Changed Britain*. London: Faber & Faber.

THATCHER, Margaret (1980). "Speech to Conservative Party Conference ('the lady's not for turning') [*The Reason Why*]". *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*. Last Accessed: 15/05/2022. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104431>

—— (1984). "Interview for *Woman's Own* ("no such thing as society")". *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*. Last Accessed: 15/05/2022. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>

—— (1987). "Speech to 1922 Committee ("the enemy within")". *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*. Last Accessed: 14/05/2022. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105563>

TURNER, Alwyn W. (2008). *Rejoice! Rejoice! Britain in the 1980s*. London: Aurum Press.

WILLIAMS, John (2011). *Red Men: Liverpool Football Club: The Biography*. London: Mainstream Publishing Company.

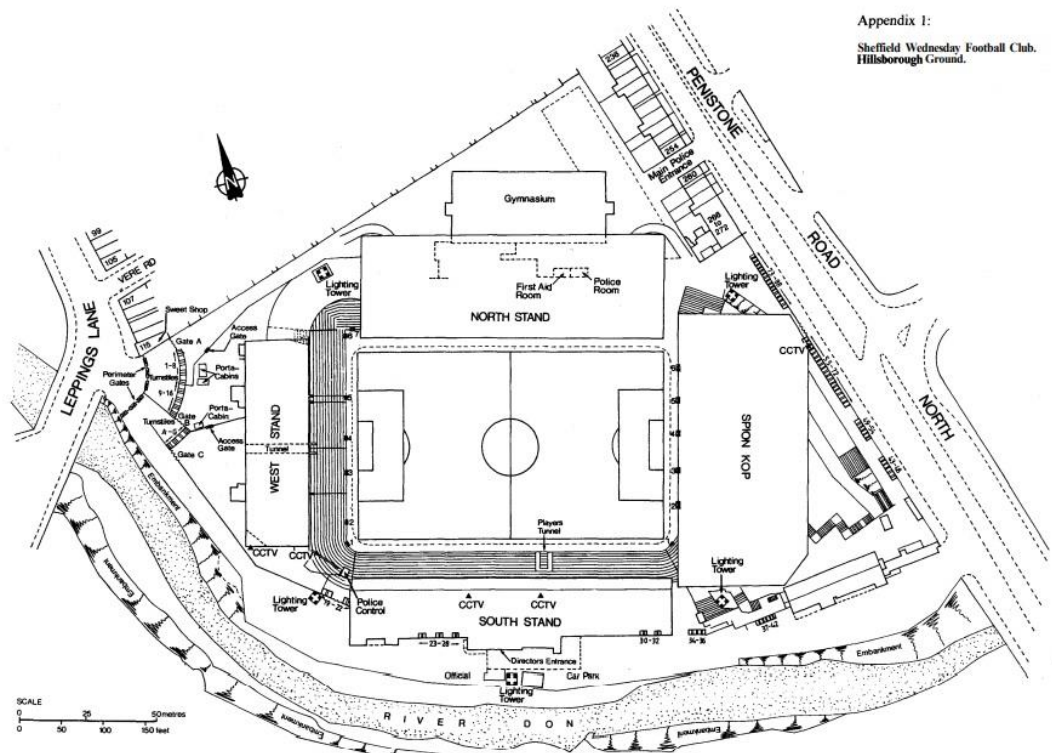
WILLIAMS, John & HOPKINS, Stephen & LONG, Cathy (eds.) (2001). *Passing Rhythms: Liverpool FC and the Transformation of Football*. Oxford: Berg.

Appendix

1. List of the 97 Hillsborough victims

John Alfred Anderson	Derrick George Godwin	Peter McDonnell
Colin Mark Ashcroft	Roy Harry Hamilton	Alan McGlone
James Gary Aspinall	Philip Hammond	Keith McGrath
Kester Roger Marcus Ball	Erick Hankin	Paul Brian Murray
Gerard Bernard Patrick Baron	Gary Harrison	Lee Nicol
Simon Bell	Stephen Francis Harrison	Stephen Francis O'Neill
Barry Sidney Bennett	Peter Andrew Harrison	Jonathon Owens
David John Benson	David Hawley	William Roy Pemberton
David William Birtle	James Robert Hennessey	Carl William Rimmer
Tony Bland	Paul Anthony Hewitson	David George Rimmer
Paul David Brady	Carl Darren Hewitt	Graham John Roberts
Andrew Mark Brookes	Nicholas Michael Hewitt	Steven Joseph Robinson
Carl Brown	Sarah Louise Hicks	Henry Charles Rogers
David Steven Brown	Victoria Jane Hicks	Andrew Sefton
Henry Thomas Burke	Gordon Rodney Horn	Inger Shah
Peter Andrew Burkett	Arthur Horrocks	Paula Ann Smith
Paul William Carlile	Thomas Howard	Adam Edward Spearritt
Raymond Thomas Chapman	Thomas Anthony Howard	Philip John Steele
Gary Christopher Church	Eric George Hughes	David Leonard Thomas
Joseph Clark	Alan Johnston	Patrick John Thompson
Paul Clark	Christine Ann Jones	Peter Reuben Thompson
Gary Collins	Gary Philip Jones	Stuart Paul William Thompson
Stephen Paul Copoc	Richard Jones	Peter Francis Tootle
Tracey Elizabeth Cox	Nicholas Peter Joynes	Christopher James Traynor
James Philip Delaney	Anthony Peter Kelly	Martin Kevin Traynor
Andrew Stanley Devine	Michael David Kelly	Kevin Tyrell
Christopher Barry Devonside	Carl David Lewis	Colin Wafer
Christopher Edwards	David William Mather	Ian David Whelan
Vincent Michael Fitzsimmons	Brian Christopher Matthews	Martin Kenneth Wild
Thomas Steven Fox	Francis Joseph McAllister	Kevin Daniel Williams
Jon-Paul Gilhooley	John McBrien	Graham John Wright
Barry Glover	Marian Hazel McCabe	
Ian Thomas Glover	Joseph Daniel McCarthy	

2. Hillsborough Stadium’s map



(Source: TAYLOR, Lord Justice (1989). *The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster, 15 April 1989: Interim Report*. London: HMSO)

3. Liverpool fans at Hillsborough



(Source: <https://time.com/4836782/hillsborough-disaster-history-charges/>)

4. Everton FC's shirt



(Source: Personal trip to LFC's museum on 8 November 2021)

5. Everton FC's mascot tribute



(Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00ypvz5>)

6. Hillsborough Memorial at Anfield



(Source: Personal trip to Anfield on 8 November 2021)

7. Hillsborough Monument Memorial at Liverpool



(Source: <https://liverpoolsculptures.co.uk/the-hillsborough-monument-memorial/>)

8. “We’ll fight the fight for Liverpool”



(Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/sport/football/1120714/Liverpool-news-Luis-Suarez-Philippe-Coutinho-Barcelona-Champions-League>)

9. “We climbed the hill in our own way”



(Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/the-art-of-banner-banter-poetry-on-the-terraces-8575594.html>)

10. Anfield stadium in the aftermath of the tragedy



(Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/oct/21/the-great-betrayal-how-the-hillsborough-families-were-failed-by-the-justice-system>)

11. Anfield’s tribute to the 97 victims (21/08/2021)



(Source: <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/anfield-pays-respect-poignant-tributes-21368534>)

12. We’re not English, we are Scouse



(Source: <https://www.goal.com/en-kw/news/why-do-liverpool-fans-boo-the-england-national-anthem/brksai15y4cw1vmddj2fbc6vz>)

13. “Don’t Buy The Sun”



(Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/premier-league/liverpool-news-dont-buy-the-sun-boycott-brexit-football-everton-a9081611.html>)