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## **Flowers of Scotland? Rugby Union, National Identities and Class Distinction**

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## **Abstract**

The relationship between rugby union and national identities in Scotland is analysed. By utilising Pierre Bourdieu's explanatory formula of practice the paper argues in favour of being sensitive to differing "spaces of rugby" within Scotland in order to accurately depict the subtle tensions implicit within contrasting supporter attitudes. The accumulation of gains in distinction among supporters becomes apparent and relates directly to the habitus and class trajectory within the clubs. These tensions allow class-based factors to emerge which differentiate city-based and Borders-based supporters. These are revealed in the attitudes towards a perceived *loss of a golden age*. Attitudes towards professionalism reveal a disdain for the eroding of the amateur ideal and a joint aversion to rugby being tied to "economic necessity". Furthermore, an apparent increase in new supporters is perceived as endangering the distinction enjoyed by the established supporters leading to these 'traditional' supporters transforming their practices in seeking to avoid devalued conformism. The paper concludes that a variety of identities exist in Scottish rugby and that sport, class and communities combine to constitute rather than merely contribute to these identities.

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## Introduction

The study of the relationship between rugby union and identities - local and national - within Scotland and the United Kingdom remains limited despite the occasional acknowledgement of its instructive potential.<sup>1</sup> This paper provides a brief overview of the historical development of club rugby union in Scotland, before drawing upon up to date empirical data which reveals the linkages between nation and class, as shown in the perceptions and attitudes of rugby union supporters from various locations within Scotland. The complexity of national identities within Scotland is highlighted before explicating the symbolic roles the rugby union clubs have historically played in constructing sporting identities in Scotland. Rugby union in Scotland is shown to inhabit particular “spaces of sport”<sup>2</sup> and, as Bourdieu asserts, “to understand a sport, whatever it may be, one must locate its position in the space of sports”.<sup>3</sup> Analysing the historical and social contexts in which they are situated illuminates the spaces of rugby union in Scotland. The research suggests that with the advent of the professional game in Scotland (and the United Kingdom) since 1996, a perceived loss of ‘a golden age’ has occurred for the more traditional rugby union supporter in Scotland. Furthermore, by analysing supporter attitudes towards professionalism alongside a perceived increase of new fans, this loss reveals itself more instructively as being grounded in class.

The study aims to build upon the existing work on rugby union and national identity, whilst beginning to address the conspicuous absence in the literature of analysis of the relationship between Scottish identity and rugby union. Despite the lack of Scottish focused work, the relationship between national identity and rugby union is well established within other countries of the United Kingdom and beyond.<sup>4</sup> Booth<sup>5</sup> highlights the role rugby union plays in South Africa, demonstrating the symbolic importance of the sport as a marker of Afrikaner identity and how ultimately rugby

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union was utilised by Nelson Mandela to legitimise both the sport, to non-whites, and the sharing of power between non-whites and whites. The current paper specifically builds upon the work of Grundlingh<sup>6</sup> and Andrews<sup>7</sup>, with the former revealing the centrality of class in shaping South African national identity. The latter, meanwhile, reveals how Welsh patriotism and British nationalism were fused in Welsh rugby union. "Rugby played a major role in reinforcing the British imperial identity of Wales".<sup>8</sup> In this way, the patriotism of the Welsh was fused and actually reinforced by their civic nationalism to the United Kingdom resulting in a dual national identity. This paper extends Grundlingh's and Andrews' respective claims to reveal that both class and a dual British / Scottish identity inhere within significant elements of the space of sport that is Scottish rugby union.

#### Complex Construction of 'Scottishness'

Bairner illuminates the ambiguous nature of Scottish identity when he states "being Scottish, however that is to be defined."<sup>9</sup> He argues that previous analyses have suffered from over-simplified discussions of the relationship between sport and Scotland and, in criticising these, attempts to critique "the simplistic nature of their arguments which lead inevitably to ... naïve assumptions concerning Scottish national identity."<sup>10</sup> Avoiding naïve assumptions leads Bairner to cite Jarvie and Walker from their own influential edited collection. They state that "while Scottish sport has both contributed to a sense of nation, class and even community it is important to ask the question whose nation? whose community?"<sup>11</sup> Although avoiding the *naïve assumption* term, Bradley clearly reiterates Bairner's thoughts. "A significant amount of references continually use the discourse of 'we', 'our country' and 'all the nation', in a way that ignores the variety of 'Scotlands' that exist".<sup>12</sup> As Bradley suggests, however, "these questions are not particularly Scottish ones and have a global significance".<sup>13</sup>

When analysing Scottish sport and national identity, even though there appears to be "no single idea of what 'Scottish' is and how it should be reflected or demonstrated",<sup>14</sup> one should bear in mind that in sporting terms at least, there is evidence of a Scottish national identity transcending local and 'other' divisions to

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produce a Scottish national identity. It is accepted that football has been the more nationalistic in Scotland with rugby union being viewed, historically at least, in national terms as reinforcing local community identities (linked to private schools in the cities or local towns in the Borders) and dual British and Scottish identities.<sup>15</sup>

It is the extent to which a Scottish sporting identity occurs that remains unclear. Bradley further notes “numerous ‘other’ identities in Scottish sport and society are often excluded in a range of acceptable manifestations of Scottishness”.<sup>16</sup> He highlights those “communities within Scottish society that have little affinity for things Scottish, especially national symbols”.<sup>17</sup> Similarly Bairner also draws attention to the Scots who “were not sufficiently enthralled by the dominant interpretation of what being Scottish actually means” and he stresses how important it is “to discern” what unites and divides Scots.<sup>18</sup> This theme of uniting and dividing within Scotland is well established throughout Scottish history, manifesting itself in a variety of ways from Scottish institutions reinforcing rather than challenging notions of Britishness,<sup>19</sup> to “noisy inaction”<sup>20</sup> - the passive focusing of national attention on peripheral issues - to Gregory Smith’s<sup>21</sup> well-known concept of “antisyzygy” – the combination of opposites – which contribute to the Scots’ “crisis of confidence”.<sup>22</sup> Indeed these factors have continued to shape and contour the dynamic relationship between Scotland, England and the rest of the United Kingdom, contributing to senses of nationhood.

Sport provides a lens through which the relationship between national identity and Scotland can be viewed revealing more complex varieties of ‘Scottishness’ “despite the (Scotland) supporters’ and much of the media’s homogeneity in terms of ‘the idea’ of Scotland.”<sup>23</sup> It is this ‘idea of Scotland’ to which we now turn and, in doing so, it is beneficial to consider the significance of Scotland’s rugby union clubs, and to assess their impact on *ideas of Scotland*.

### Spaces of Rugby Union

#### *Socio-Historic Context of Rugby Union in Scotland*

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The space of sports includes the (dynamic) social, historical, cultural and political contexts in which sport is situated. Bearing this in mind, the three rugby union clubs analysed are briefly discussed in order to contextualise their inclusion. The selection of clubs was based on the “spaces of sport” within which rugby union in Scotland exists. Kowalski suggests that rugby union in Scotland “with the exception of the textile and farming communities of the borders,<sup>24</sup> for long was the domain of the more Anglicised middle-classes of Edinburgh and Glasgow”.<sup>25</sup> It is largely undeniable that the sport is experienced differently between the middle-class city clubs and the Scottish Borders clubs in the south of the country. The Borders is the only area of the country where it is claimed to be truly a game for all classes.<sup>26</sup> It was felt, therefore, that Hawick, the Borders’ largest town and home of the most prominent Borders’ club (Hawick RFC), alongside Scotland’s largest cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow should be represented. Edinburgh Academical is perhaps the most established club in the country, while Glasgow Hawks is a recent addition to the Scottish game, being founded to lead the development of top class players from an amalgamation of two existing Glasgow clubs.

The centrality of the Scottish (city-based) fee-paying schools to the development of British and world rugby union is important. This central role was part of the wider Games Ethic developing in British education during the latter parts of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century.<sup>27</sup> Mangan refers to this as “Lorettonianism”, after the Edinburgh public school, Loretto from which much of the Games Ethic spread with the help of influential rector Hely Hutchinson Almond. Mangan enunciates the central role played by the public schools and their products who proceeded to work in prominent positions throughout the British Empire. Despite being developed in the public schools and with strong links to Edinburgh Academy, “Lorettonianism’s” influences spread wider than the elites and middle-classes:

Edinburgh Academy’s Almondian innovations became in time part  
And parcel of the curriculum of the famous Scottish middle class day  
schools, and then eventually the state secondary schools.<sup>28</sup>

Massie highlights that rugby was adopted by the Scottish fee-paying schools which themselves were established in Victorian Scotland and were largely based on the

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English / Anglicised model.<sup>29</sup> Mangan has acknowledged this linkage between (Anglicised) education and the Games Ethic in Scotland, arguing that what resulted was a 'cultural cloning' process:

...this 'Anglicisation' in fact, on closer scrutiny, certainly welcomed and supported by the Scottish (and Northern Irish and Welsh) middle classes, was as much an assimilation into a British middle-class cultural identity ... making the 'British' boys of Scottish middle class parents virtually indistinguishable in values, dress and behaviour, if not accent, from the larger community of middle and upper middle class boys in English public schools.<sup>30</sup>

It was, therefore, no sporting accident that led to rugby and not football, for example, being adopted and fostered in the Anglicised fee-paying schools of the middle classes and elites of Scotland. Indeed, this cultural cloning process is evidence of the determination by, and success of, middle class sections of Scotland to reinforce a dual British and Scottish identity. Moreover, their 'Scottishness', within *their* 'spaces' (of sport and education) fused and reinforced their civic Britishness.

Lorettonianism's heritage was evident long after its initial early influences, with the actions of the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU), which "kept long a reputation for staunch conservatism and rigid adherence to the principles of the amateur game".<sup>31</sup> Massie states that as late as 1971 there was opposition within the SRU to the appointment of a coach to the national team, noting that even when "the Union grudgingly gave way ... he (coach) was coyly described as 'advisor to the captain'".<sup>32</sup> One could suggest that this attitude enhanced the public perception of the SRU as being middle-class, eschewing any obvious linkage to professionalism in favour of the traditional middle-class values of amateurism, duty and self-discipline. Massie echoes Kowalski's earlier claim, suggesting that the Scottish game was only "truly a game for all classes"<sup>33</sup> in the Borders of Scotland, with the principle clubs in the cities being mostly associated with the fee-paying schools, ensuring that their membership was restricted to former pupils or teaching staff. This remained the case well into the twentieth century,<sup>34</sup> and has presumably affected the contemporary demographics of players and fans of the sport to at least a degree.



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Bairner discusses the relationship between rugby union and Scottish national identity, conceding that

rugby union has seldom been proposed as Scotland's national game. But more than any other sport in recent years, it appears to have tapped into patriotic sentiment and as a result to have won support from every section of Scottish society.<sup>35</sup>

At a time of significant political debate surrounding the possible break up of the United Kingdom – largely based on increasing calls within Scotland for self-governance - the SRU adopted the nationalistic song 'Flower of Scotland' for their Grand Slam match with England<sup>36</sup> at Murrayfield, the home of Scottish Rugby Union, leading Bairner to ask “were the people who had traditionally supported the Union now revealing an enthusiasm for Scottish independence?”<sup>37</sup> Bairner expands:

Rather, as Jarvie and Walker (1994) (p.4) suggest, “the adoption by such a conservative Scottish institution as the Scottish Rugby Union of the populist national anthem 'Flower of Scotland' at one level might seem insignificant and yet at another level it was a profound gesture of sentimentality which in part encapsulated for a brief instant the mood of many Scots”.<sup>38</sup>

The current and possible future relationship between rugby union and Scottish national identity is in need of analysis especially considering the continued prominence the sport has in Scotland. This is particularly so in an age when the football team, previously seen as the sporting wing of Scottish nationalism, no longer regularly competes in the latter stages of world class competitions, and does not play England, 'the auld enemy' and significant 'other' on an annual basis as it did before the 1990s. When one considers that the national rugby union team does both of these, the necessity of a socio-historical study into the relationship between rugby union and Scottish national identity is reinforced.

#### *“Spaces” of Scottish Rugby Union – Scottish Borders*

Hawick is the Borders' largest town and the rich traditions of Hawick Rugby Football Club combined with its widely recognised close-knit supporters make it a suitable choice to analyse. The dual importance of the rugby club and its supporters is emphasised by Bogle and Smith who state:

This support, indeed the very culture of the town, was, of course,

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a major factor in the success the club enjoyed in the Seventies – a conclusion shared by Stephen Jones of the *Sunday Times*, who sought to know ‘why Hawick, a small outwardly unremarkable town in the Scottish Border country, should consistently have, in context, the most successful rugby club in Europe’. He discovered a remarkable rugby club which inspires such devotion from the community that, ‘when the surrounding countryside explodes in russet and gold and bronze in autumn, Hawick people still see only green’<sup>39, 40</sup>.

Indeed, Hawick's links to the rugby game are firmly grounded in the history of the sport in Scotland. The original game of “Hawick Ba’”, played annually on Shrove Tuesday until around 1890, before being moved to weekends to suit the mill owners, has a long tradition pre-dating 1825 and is thought to have survived until the 1930s.<sup>41</sup>

The original official club, Hawick and Wilton Football Club, was formed in 1873, playing its first game, and the first ever Borders league match, that same year against neighbouring Langholm. In 1885 the club became Hawick Football Club.<sup>42</sup> In the post-war years Hawick established itself as an extremely successful Scottish club, having won the unofficial championship eight times by 1972, the Borders title fifteen times by 1973 and having established itself as sevens specialists. The club won its first official Scottish championship in 1973 and the first Scottish Cup in 1996 before winning the treble of Scottish Cup, Scottish league and Borders league in 2002-2003.<sup>43</sup>

A recurring theme within the town of Hawick and within the rugby club too is the importance of being born and bred in Hawick and this serves to compound a localised sense of community identity within the Borders. There is a primordial belief in the unique and ‘inherited’ character of the Border people from the days of the Reivers<sup>44</sup> and this is particularly evident in Hawick. The Reivers originally referred to the various peoples (tribal leaders, peasants, outlaws) who lived in the interlinking regions of the modern border between Scotland and England now known as Northumberland, Cumbria, The Borders and Dumfries and Galloway between 1250 and 1600.<sup>45</sup> Hawick has always had a strong tradition of fielding local players, with this reaching its peak in the famous ‘Fifteen Hawick Men’ of Cup Final Day in 1996.

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This game has been immortalised in the song 'They were a' Hawick men, every yin o thum Hawick men'.<sup>46</sup>

*"Spaces" of Scottish Rugby Union – Scottish Cities*

*Edinburgh Academical Football Club*

Edinburgh Academical Football Club (Accies)<sup>47</sup> is one of the most established rugby union clubs in Scotland, being responsible for the sport's early development in Scotland and beyond. It was the first senior club formed in Scotland and is the third oldest rugby union club still in existence in the world.<sup>48</sup> The club's first recorded match took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1858, though its associated school, Edinburgh Academy, had been playing various forms of rugby for a number of years. In 1855 Alexander and Francis Crombie, pupils from Edinburgh Academy, introduced the modern game to Scotland and Alexander who became the first captain of the Academicals is popularly described as 'the father of the game in Scotland'.<sup>49</sup> The fee-paying schools' connection to the development of British and world rugby union is recognised by Douglas who notes "the leading Scottish schools ... played a hugely significant role in the development of the game not just in Scotland but, through their Oxbridge connections, in England as well".<sup>50</sup> Douglas adds "Edinburgh Academy can, with the Royal High School, genuinely be said to have been in the vanguard of the movement which established rugby union football north of the border".<sup>51</sup> Douglas highlights the role played by ex-Academicals schoolboy, The Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Kingsburgh, who played at Raeburn Place as a schoolboy, collected gate money at the first international and played a pivotal role in the machinations which led to the formation of the International Board.

The Academicals' home ground situated at Raeburn Place in the heart of the new town of Edinburgh, hosted the world's first international rugby match between Scotland and England on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1871. The School acquired the land at Raeburn Place in 1854 – ironically for cricket playing purposes - as part of the School's desire to adhere to and encourage the principles of Muscular Christianity which were popular at this time.<sup>52</sup> The importance of these events in Scottish sporting history are emphasised by Douglas who, whilst discussing Raeburn Place, claims "this plot of

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land ... can rightly be termed the cradle of rugby union football in Scotland".<sup>53</sup> He laments "it is a great pity indeed that more is not made of its historic links with the birth of the Scottish game".<sup>54</sup>

In terms of supporters, the club have been noted for their passion. The official club history describes their Jubilee Dinner celebrations which included recognition of the club's supporters. "You have given us spectators of a class whose keenness might well be copied by other clubs".<sup>55</sup>

### *Glasgow Hawks Rugby Club*

Glasgow Hawks are a relatively recent addition to the club game in Scotland, having been formed in 1997 out of Glasgow Academicals and Glasgow High Kelvinside. Glasgow Academicals was formed in 1866 and Glasgow High Kelvinside in 1982, with the latter being an amalgamation of Glasgow High School Former Pupils, formed in 1884 and Kelvinside Academicals who were founded in 1888. These founder clubs played a major role in the development of rugby union in Scotland. In 1867 Glasgow Academical Football Club played West of Scotland in a fixture that is now one of the oldest surviving football matches in the world.<sup>56</sup>

In 1870 Glasgow Academical became the first Scottish football club (of either code) to tour England, playing matches against Manchester and Liverpool. J.W. Arthur of Glasgow Academical was a signatory to a letter challenging the clubs of England at the rugby code. This letter, signed by many others from the Scottish game, led to the aforementioned first Scotland and England rugby international in 1871.

In 1871, Glasgow Academical joined the (English) Rugby Football Union, which was formed in 1871 as no Scottish body existed at this particular time. That same year, they played host to the world's oldest district match against Edinburgh. The Scottish Football Union formed in 1873 with Glasgow Academical being one of its founder members. Glasgow Academical became the first Scottish club to play in London beating Blackheath in 1878. This was followed in 1882 by a tour of England with Edinburgh Academical. In 1883 Glasgow Academical moved to the ground now

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known as Old Anniesland. In 1922 ten thousand spectators watched Glasgow Academical play Heriots at New Anniesland. This remained a record for a Scottish club game for 74 years. The Glasgow Hawks play their fixtures at Old Anniesland, sharing their ground and facilities with the High School of Glasgow. Although the Glasgow Hawks are an amalgamation of other clubs, these clubs retain a sense of their identity, competing in competitions under their own name.

In analysing these three clubs which exist in three different spaces of rugby union, Bourdieu's explanatory formula of 'practice', as expressed in *Distinction*, is utilised. Here, Bourdieu outlines: '[(Habitus) (Capital)] + Field = Practice'.<sup>57</sup> In order to utilise Bourdieu's model, for the present paper, it is useful to elaborate further Bourdieu's conceptualisation of this formula. Crossley neatly summarises the model, explaining that essentially for Bourdieu:

practice is the result of various habitual schemas and dispositions (habitus), combined with resources (capital), being activated by certain structured social conditions (field) which they, in turn, belong to and variously reproduce and modify.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, Bourdieu's assertion that not all practitioners are playing the same sport becomes evident. The empirical data presented reveals that different practitioners of rugby union in Scotland are shown to differ in terms of their habitual schemas, resources, social conditions, meanings conferred, and ultimately, their regional and national identities and these are clearly shown to be related to class factors.

### The Loss of a Golden Age

#### *Amateurism v Professionalism*

The empirical data shows that there is a belief in and desire to maintain an 'amateur' ethos accompanied by a perception that this is being lost, endangering the future of club rugby in Scotland. One Glasgow Hawks respondent notes:

While people resented it (professionalism), the spectators say well, it's not the way it used to be and there's no doubt the numbers of spectators dropped at that point, and they didn't drop to go and watch the pro game. They dropped because you know they were used to amateur rugby and enjoyed amateur rugby and then the whole situation changed.<sup>59</sup>

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Meanwhile, an Edinburgh Accies respondent blames professionalism for the loss of financial backers and paying supporters:

It (professionalism) has impacted very, very dramatically ... And we as a club found out very quickly [that] a lot of our financial support disappeared like snow off a dyke because a lot of people took objection to the professionalisation ... It virtually devastated rugby in Scotland and Scottish rugby now is only making a recovery... That whole base has disappeared like snow off a dyke and they haven't moved across to the professional game ... And I think that is very sad that these people have gone ... They just disappeared.<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps the antipathy towards professionalism was most evident during discussions about local rivals, 'the other', revealing subtle (class based) differences across the clubs. Edinburgh Accies respondents argued that all Edinburgh clubs dislike fellow Edinburgh club Heriots as a result of its efficient and professional type of approach. Additionally, in the Borders, Hawick respondents claim that other Borders clubs dislike fellow Borders club Melrose for their professional approach too, as summed up in the following:

Melrose have been seen to be the best run club in the Borders through their Sevens ... They've been able to pay players and entice players to come and play for them and there were foreigners there which Hawick don't have and Gala don't have ... That team is there for knocking ... My rugby has always been working-class. Cause I'm working-class and I've been involved and played and supported, and I think the majority of the people that go to Mansfield<sup>61</sup> are just the ordinary working man ... I don't think Hawick will be any different from any of the other Borders clubs, other than Melrose possibly They've got a big kind of corporate type thing, middle-class. Melrose have always been 'come on the rose'. It's a posher area. It's a satellite town and it's just well-off people that live in Melrose and it's not just your ordinary Tom, Dick and Harries ... Everybody's border rival, everybody wants to beat Melrose.<sup>62</sup>

In understanding these supporters' antipathy towards rivals and professionalism, one should analyse within the context of a working-class (Borders) and middle-class (Edinburgh and Glasgow) habitus, embodying class-based differences in taste and "gains in distinction" exclusively associated within each "space of sport". As Bourdieu explains, practice is infused with varying definitions of capital. "Conflicts over the legitimate way of doing it, or over the resources for doing it almost always retranslate social differences into the specific logic of the field."<sup>63</sup>

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Retranslating the social differences into the specific logic of this field, one can see that the legitimate practices of Hawick and the two city clubs differ according to subtle differences over resources and values between the Borders and city populations. Bourdieu's discussion of the "distance from necessity" becomes instructive, allowing us to clearly see the determination of some to maintain that rugby is "only a game". He reminds us of:

... the accumulation of a cultural capital which can only be acquired by means of a sort of withdrawal from economic necessity ... to be able to play the games of culture with the playful seriousness which Plato demanded, a seriousness without the 'spirit of seriousness'.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the development of the professional game, which demands the embracing of economic necessity, endangers the accumulation of cultural capital for the most distinguished fractions – those most able and willing to maintain the maxim that rugby is, and crucially should be, only a game. Many Borders clubs dislike fellow Borders club Melrose for getting 'above their station' or 'selling out' (in a largely working-class space) while Edinburgh clubs dislike Heriots for ruining the cherished 'amateur' ethos (in an upper middle-class space), thus transforming the "aesthetic disposition"<sup>65</sup> into one of seriousness attached to "economic necessity".

Perhaps the middle-class aversion to the professional ethos – to maintain a "seriousness" without the "spirit of seriousness" - is most sharply captured by Bourdieu's following insights:

The meaning of a practice casts light on the class distribution of practices and this distribution casts light on the differential meaning of the practice ... This, far from escaping the logic of the field and its struggles, is most often the work of those who ... are required to ensure the imposition and inculcation of the *schemes of perception* and action which, in practice, organise the practices, and who are inclined to present the explanations they produce as grounded in reason or nature.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, sections of the upper middle-class fraction (Edinburgh Accies and Glasgow Hawks to a lesser extent<sup>67</sup>) mourn the loss of a golden age and are disdainful towards aspects of the professional game. Their habitus forming "schemes of perception" and preferred "action organising the practice" present amateurism as the *natural* way. In

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this respect, the professional game subsequently endangers the aesthetic disposition and the dominant class fraction's power within the field, for professionalism demands the inverse conditions associated with those lauded by that class fraction's conditions for accumulating social / cultural capital – namely, it demands the complete embracing of, rather than withdrawal from, “economic necessity”.

In presenting these class based differences, a major theoretical point is thus; the class fraction's relationship to the practice is marked by that fraction's “schemes of perception”, which in turn, are linked to the class fraction's social trajectory in the space of sport – whether one is “veering towards the tastes of another class”<sup>68</sup> and this may include being perceived to be too lower or upper-class for a particular class fraction. Therefore, when of similar class, the rugby rivalry usually derives from the perception of the ‘other’ being unworthy of their (shared) class and this (un)worthiness is specifically grounded in the class fraction's ‘distance from necessity’, which, as Bourdieu argues, is tied to the trajectory that a class fraction inhabits.<sup>69</sup> In rugby, therefore, the different class fractions' attitudes towards professional rugby and the perceived loss of a golden age are instructive. The largely middle-class habitus of Scottish city rugby (Glasgow and Edinburgh) have a shared disdain for the professional ethos based on the perceived eroding of a class based amateur ethos. Meanwhile, in the working-class ‘field’ of the Scottish Borders rugby, Hawick respondents exhibit disdain towards Melrose for embracing professionalism too successfully and in so doing, ‘getting above their station’. Rugby supporters within specific ‘fields’, therefore, accumulate gains in distinction by eschewing, for contrasting reasons specific to their trajectories and habitus within their particular ‘field’, explicit associations to middle-class identifiers.

#### *New Fans – The Parvenus*

In terms of sporting linkages to Scottish national identity, a major point to emerge from the perceived loss of a golden age was a perception that Scotland's national rugby union team has gained ‘new’ fans in recent years and that they are not universally accepted. These themes are partially supported by respondents from all clubs interviewed, revealing the perception of increasing numbers of ‘non-traditional’



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rugby supporters – likened by some respondents to ‘football fans’ – attending regional and international fixtures in Scotland. In describing these ‘new’ supporters, one Hawick respondent labels them “kilted warriors,”<sup>70</sup> and she asserts that in the last ten years increasing numbers of Scotland rugby supporters have begun disrupting traditional behaviours:

There are now vast numbers of folk who go to rugby and some of them I think haven't got a clue about what rugby's about ... It used to be that the crowd was very well mannered. You know if there was a player taking a penalty or conversion then the crowd was quiet but now there's the element coming in where very, very few players are given silence for their kick and it's come in right through [all levels of rugby] ... I would say there's been a decline in manners among the crowd ... There are a lot more fans wearing kilts now than there ever used to be.<sup>71</sup>

The extent to which the antipathy shown towards the newly emerging “kilted warriors” is class based remains unclear. One Edinburgh Accies respondent adds:

There are certainly different people [who] come to the internationals now than perhaps ten years ago. You wouldn't have seen them at Murrayfield. You sit next to them, you listen to them, you hear the language and you go, ‘these aren't the people that we used to have here ten years ago’.<sup>72</sup>

Bourdieu's insights on the declining petite bourgeoisie rejecting the virtues of the new petite bourgeoisie<sup>73</sup> partially justifies these claims being theorised within a class-based context. Whilst it may simply be the *manner* in which the newcomers support the team, it may be the increasingly obvious display of Scottish nationalist dress and behaviour which offends the traditionally conservative fans associated with Scottish rugby union who have tended to be sympathetic to the Union of Scotland and England within the United Kingdom. These two themes – the petite bourgeoisie rejecting the emerging petite bourgeoisie's virtues, and rejection of Scottish sporting nationalism - are captured neatly by one Edinburgh Accies respondent lamenting:

there are lots coming to watch us and filling the stadium ... there is a broader Scottish kinda support and it's almost like a Scottish uniform is starting to appear now of a Scotland rugby shirt, a jersey, a pair of Timberland boots with socks down below the knees ... I used to wear a kilt [to matches] but now I wouldn't be seen dead in it. I don't want to be associated with that sort of em, almost false patriotism that seems to be walking around. I'm almost trying to disassociate myself from that now. I see those guys going around

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Paris and Dublin and all the rest of the internationals. They can go that way (he points to opposite corner) and I'm going to go this way thank you very much. You know I'm still supporting my country but I'm not going to be associated with that.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore, with increasing numbers of new fans (outsiders), certain aspects of supporting the Scotland team appear to have taken on a different meaning resulting in this Edinburgh Accies fan adapting his behaviour in order to maintain the impression he desires. This 'broader' support, which engages in practices and behaviour which seem incompatible with the "front"<sup>75</sup> being maintained by this fan illuminate the subtle class tensions implicit within the Scotland rugby support and in the ways in which they express their Scottishness. These become visible by the competing ways they acquire gains in distinction. On one level there appears to be the 'new' fan, the "parvenus"<sup>76</sup> whose tastes are veering towards those of another class and whose very presence simultaneously contributes to these pre-existing dominant class tastes being transformed into negative symbols ("false patriotism") for the dominant class. That is, the "outsider" 'football' type patriot fan is perceived by the established traditional fan to be bringing increasing levels of nationalism and boorishness to rugby. Consequently, on another level, these previously accepted practices (such as wearing tartan) are suddenly being avoided rather than embraced by that dominant class and, the existing dominant class fraction – illustrated by the Edinburgh Accies fan in this case – maintain their distinction by shifting their preferences.

Whilst there are increasing numbers of vulgar newcomers bereft of competence, in the eyes of the established group at least, for these established group members, there emerges a danger of becoming mere caricatures resulting in reduced gains in distinction. We are reminded here that in seeking gains in distinction groups often strive to avoid sheep-like conformism.<sup>77</sup> Thus, when participation is increasing – with the arrival of 'new' (post-fans) fans – rarity cannot be guaranteed by participation alone. Therefore, for some fans at least, avoiding the devalued "sheep-like" conformity helps maintain their distinction. As Elias shows, "contact with outsiders threatens an 'insider' with the lowering of their own status within the established group" and leads to the established group members sharing a "fear of pollution"<sup>78</sup> from newcomers. These fans' increasing refusal to wear the traditional kilt at Scotland

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rugby matches seems likely to be a conscious reinforcement of a dual British / Scottish identity<sup>79</sup>. It seems equally likely, however, to be part of a process of social class distinction whereby 'traditional' supporters are distancing themselves from the newcomer 'football types' and non-traditional supporters – otherwise translated as working-class football supporters. These comments may be more fully explained when one remembers that the 'traditional' habitus of the rugby fan in Scotland has historically been closely aligned to a specific club and, in the cities at least, involves middle-class and public school influences and traditions, which Mangan,<sup>80</sup> as previously noted, described as involving an Anglicising “cultural cloning process. This should be juxtaposed with Scotland fans at recent rugby matches behaving increasingly more like the football type of fan – as a result, perhaps, of both football fans crossing over codes and also with more traditional rugby fans embodying a football type habitus. Additionally, there may also be a “sporting” habitus which exhibits no technical or physical expertise or capital for its possessors, but is linked more to merely enjoying watching sport.

### Conclusion

Rugby union supporters in Scotland cherish the fading amateur ethos, which, in tandem with increasing professionalism, is believed to be eroding the fabric of the game in Scotland. At a deeper level, the subtle class machinations between the Borders and city rugby clubs reveals differences in their attitudes towards this loss of a golden age and is demonstrated by their respective approaches to making gains in distinction within their specific fields.

Distinction is accumulated according to differing class trajectories and habitus, and these are revealed in the attitudes and perceptions of many rugby union supporters. Therefore, the middle-class city clubs of Glasgow Hawks and Edinburgh Accies express an antipathy towards fellow city club Heriots (from Edinburgh) for being “too professional” and “mercenary” in their approach, while the Borders (and more working-class) club Hawick dislike fellow Borders club Melrose for “getting above their station”. At a superficial level this points towards a shared disdain for the eroding of the amateur ideal and nostalgia for a golden age. At a deeper level,

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however, the joint antipathy expressed towards professionalism by interview respondents from both types of club (middle-class city clubs and working-class Borders club) reveals a joint aversion – for different reasons related to their trajectories and habitus - to rugby union being tied to “economic necessity”.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, one can see clearly therefore, that rugby union supporters accumulate gains in distinction by *avoiding* explicit associations to middle-class identifiers – most clearly exemplified by the upper middle-class Edinburgh Accies avoiding the rather crude professionalism of fellow Edinburgh club Heriots, and the largely working-class Hawick avoiding the ‘delusions of grandeur’ associated with fellow Borders club Melrose.

Significant numbers of respondents expressed a belief in ‘new’ fans appearing at international fixtures within the last ten years, and again, with analysis, the perceptions regarding these developments reveal subtle differences in relation to class and national identity. Rugby has apparently experienced an increase in football type boorishness and nationalism at fixtures. This is partially evidenced by claims of a rapid increase in the public display of tartan and national dress in recent years as well as a perceived drop in manners and decency at Scotland rugby matches. It is possible to posit that there may well be a cross over of football fans now attending rugby fixtures and that with the lack of international competition between Scotland and England at football, rugby provides fresh territory for the expression of a ‘more traditional’ type of nationalism on the sporting stage. It remains problematic to assign one universal Scottish identity to rugby union (and sport), with it being more pragmatic to acknowledge a variety of contrasting and sometimes contradictory identities. Furthermore, the centrality of class dimensions has been shown to inhere in the competing varieties of Scottishness, justifying more subtle analyses of the relationship between class, nation and sport in future studies within Scotland and beyond. Moreover Jarvie and Walker’s claim that “Scottish sport has both contributed to a sense of nation, class and even community”<sup>82</sup> represents only part of the story. Scottish sport, Scottish class and Scottish communities combine to constitute Scottish nationhood rather than merely contributing to it!

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<sup>1</sup> cf. E. DUNNING and K. SHEARD, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players. A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby*, Oxford 1979/2005.

cf. J. MAGUIRE and J. TUCK, "Global Sports and Patriot Games: Rugby Union and National Identity in a United Sporting Kingdom Since 1945", in: M. CRONIN and D. MAYALL (eds.), *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*, London 1998, pp. 103-126.

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- cf. J. TUCK, "The Men in White. Reflections on Rugby Union, the Media and Englishness", in: *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 38(2003)2, pp. 177-199.
- cf. J. KELLY, *Flowers of Scotland? A Sociological Analysis of National Identities, Rugby Union and Association Football in Scotland*, Loughborough PhD Diss.
- <sup>2</sup>cf. P. BOURDIEU, "Program for a Sociology of Sport", in: *Sociology of Sport Journal* 5(1988), pp. 153-161.
- <sup>3</sup> BOURDIEU, "Program", p. 153.
- <sup>4</sup> cf. R. ARCHER and A. BOUILLON, *The South African Game: Sport and Racism*, London 1982.
- cf. W. CLAASEN, *More Than Just Rugby*, Johannesburg, 1985.
- cf. D. ANDREWS, "Sport and the Masculine Hegemony of the Modern Nation: Welsh Rugby, Culture and Society, 1890-1914", in: J. NAURIGHT and T.J.L. CHANDLER (eds.), *Making Men. Rugby and Masculine Identity*, London 1996, pp. 50-69.
- cf. J. NAURIGHT, "A Besieged Tribe?: Nostalgia, White Cultural Identity and the Role of Rugby in a Changing South Africa", in: *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 31(1996)1, pp. 69-85.
- <sup>5</sup> cf. D. BOOTH, "Recapturing the Moment? Global Rugby, Economics and the Politics of the Nation in Post-Apartheid South Africa", in: T.J.L. CHANDLER and J. NAURIGHT (eds.), *Making the Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce*, London 1999, pp. 181-200.
- <sup>6</sup> cf. A. GRUNDLINGH, "Playing for Power? Rugby, Afrikaner Nationalism and Masculinity in South Africa, c.1900-c.1970", in: T.J.L. CHANDLER and J. NAURIGHT (eds.), *Making the Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce*, London 1999, pp. 181-200.
- <sup>7</sup> cf. ANDREWS, "Sport and The Masculine", pp. 50-69.
- <sup>8</sup> ANDREWS, "Sport and The Masculine", p. 64.
- <sup>9</sup> A. BAIRNER, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalisation: European and North American Perspectives*, New York, 2001, p. 46.
- <sup>10</sup> BAIRNER, "Sport, Nationalism", p. 46.
- <sup>11</sup> G. JARVIE and G. WALKER, "Ninety Minute Patriots? Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation", in: G. JARVIE and G. WALKER (eds.), *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation. Ninety-Minute Patriots?*, Leicester 1994, p. 3.
- <sup>12</sup> J. BRADLEY, "The Patriot Game: Football's Famous 'Tartan Army'", in: *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 37(2002)2, p. 194.
- <sup>13</sup> BRADLEY, "The Patriot Game", p. 194.
- <sup>14</sup> BRADLEY, "The Patriot Game", p. 194.
- <sup>15</sup> cf. BRADLEY, "The Patriot Game", pp. 184-185.
- cf. KELLY, "Flowers", pp. 63-83.
- <sup>16</sup> BRADLEY, "The Patriot Game", p. 195.
- <sup>17</sup> BRADLEY, "The Patriot Game", p. 194.
- <sup>18</sup> BAIRNER, "Sport, Nationalism", p. 50.
- <sup>19</sup> Cc. T.C. SMOUT, "Perspectives on the Scottish Identity", in: *Scottish Affairs* 6(1994)Winter, pp. 110-113.
- <sup>20</sup> N.T. PHILLIPSON, "Nationalism and Ideology", in: J.N. WOLFE (ed.), *Government and Nationalism in Scotland*, Edinburgh 1969, p. 186.
- <sup>21</sup> cf. G. GREGORY SMITH, *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence*, London 1919.
- <sup>22</sup> cf. C. CRAIG, *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence*, Edinburgh 2003.
- <sup>23</sup> BRADLEY, "The Patriot Game", p. 194.
- <sup>24</sup> 'Border' and 'Borders' refer to the southern region in Scotland made up of small towns and villages which share a border with England. Many of these towns and villages have traditional economic and cultural links to the farming and textile mills. See KELLY, "Flowers".
- <sup>25</sup> R. KOWALSKI, "'Cry for us Argentina'. Sport and National Identity in Late Twentieth-Century Scotland", in: A.SMITH and D. PORTER (eds.), *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World*, London 2004, p. 73.
- <sup>26</sup> cf. K. BOGLE and R. SMITH, *The Green Machine. One Hundred and Twenty Five Years of Hawick Rugby*, Hawick 1998.
- cf. A. MASSIE, *Portrait of Scottish Rugby*, Edinburgh 2000.
- cf. L. SPEIRS, *The Border League Story*, Galashiels 2000.
- <sup>27</sup> cf. J.A. MANGAN, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, London 1998.
- <sup>28</sup> MANGAN, "Athleticism", p. 195.
- <sup>29</sup> cf. MASSIE, "Portrait".

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- <sup>30</sup> MANGAN, "Athleticism", p. 190.
- <sup>31</sup> MASSIE, "Portrait", p. 253.
- <sup>32</sup> MASSIE, "Portrait", p. 253.
- <sup>33</sup> MASSIE, "Portrait", p. 251.
- <sup>34</sup> cf. MASSIE, "Portrait".
- <sup>35</sup> BAIRNER, "Sport, Nationalism", p. 63.
- <sup>36</sup> This is even more significant, considering the nationalistic "Flower of Scotland" replaced the United Kingdom anthem "God Save the Queen" and includes a reference to "sending (the English) Proud Edward's army home (England) tae (to) think again"
- <sup>37</sup> BAIRNER, "Sport, Nationalism", p. 63.
- <sup>38</sup> BAIRNER, "Sport, Nationalism", p. 63.
- <sup>39</sup> This refers to the green jersey worn by Hawick players
- <sup>40</sup> BOGLE and SMITH, "The Green", pp. 62-63.
- <sup>41</sup> BOGLE and SMITH, "The Green". p.3.
- <sup>42</sup> cf. BOGLE and SMITH, "The Green".
- <sup>43</sup> cf. BOGLE and SMITH, "The Green".
- cf. SPEIRS, "The Border".
- <sup>44</sup> cf. KELLY, "Flowers", pp. 173-178.
- cf. SPEIRS, "The Border".
- <sup>45</sup> cf. G. MACDONALD FRASER, *The Steel Bonnets: The Story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers*, London 1989.
- <sup>46</sup> cf. BOGLE and SMITH, "The Green".
- <sup>47</sup> Sometimes the club are referred to as Edinburgh Academicals. Accies is often used for shorthand.
- <sup>48</sup> cf. D. DOUGLAS, *The Thistle. A Chronicle of Scottish Rugby*, Edinburgh 1997.
- <sup>49</sup> ACADEMICAL FOOTBALL CLUB, *The Edinburgh Academical Football Club Centenary History. A History of the Club and of Football at The Edinburgh Academy*, Edinburgh 1958, p. 11.
- cf. DOUGLAS, "The Thistle".
- <sup>50</sup> DOUGLAS, "The Thistle", p. 11.
- <sup>51</sup> DOUGLAS, "The Thistle", p. 30.
- <sup>52</sup> cf. DOUGLAS, "The Thistle".
- <sup>53</sup> DOUGLAS, "The Thistle", p. 11.
- <sup>54</sup> DOUGLAS, "The Thistle", p. 46.
- <sup>55</sup> ACADEMICAL FOOTBALL CLUB, "The Edinburgh", p. 70.
- <sup>56</sup> cf. HAWKS, *Promotional Pamphlet*, Glasgow 2004.
- <sup>57</sup> P. BOURDIEU, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London 1984, p. 101.
- <sup>58</sup> N. CROSSLEY, *The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire*, London 2001
- <sup>59</sup> KELLY. "Flowers", Interview Transcripts, George, p. 6. (The names are pseudonyms and the page number refers to page of quote within the transcription notes)
- <sup>60</sup> KELLY. "Flowers", Interview Transcripts, Sean, pp. 9-11.
- <sup>61</sup> Mansfield is the home of Hawick Rugby Football Club
- <sup>62</sup> KELLY. "Flowers", Interview Transcripts, Jake, pp. 18-23.
- <sup>63</sup> BOURDIEU, "Distinction", p. 211.
- <sup>64</sup> BOURDIEU, "Distinction", pp. 53-54.
- <sup>65</sup> cf. BOURDIEU, "Distinction".
- <sup>66</sup> BOURDIEU, "Distinction", p. 212, (my emphasis).
- <sup>67</sup> On one level this may seem paradoxical given the 'professional' nature of the amalgamated Glasgow Hawks in attempting to re-structure the member clubs to compete against top clubs. However, given the level of disdain towards 'professionalism' by respondents – sometimes personally felt, sometimes ascribed to wider sections of their own support base – interview evidence supports this claim.
- <sup>68</sup> C. WILKES, "Bourdieu's Class", in: R. HARKER, C. MAHAR and C. WILKES (eds.), *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu. The Practice of Theory*, Basingstoke 1990, p. 126.
- <sup>69</sup> cf. BOURDIEU, "Distinction".
- <sup>70</sup> Although the term 'warrior' is used, the context implies a metaphorical nationalist fighting a pseudo-political battle through sport rather than a warrior fighting in the literal (physical) sense
- <sup>71</sup> KELLY, "Flowers", Interview Transcripts, Meg, p. 5.
- <sup>72</sup> KELLY, "Flowers", Interview Transcripts, Colin, p. 21.
- <sup>73</sup> cf. BOURDIEU, "Distinction", pp. 214-217.

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<sup>74</sup> KELLY, "Flowers", Interview Transcripts, Colin, p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> cf. E. GOFFMAN, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York 1959.

<sup>76</sup> cf. BOURDIEU, "Distinction".

<sup>77</sup> cf. BOURDIEU, "Distinction", pp. 214-215.

<sup>78</sup> N. ELIAS, "A Theoretical Essay on Established and Outsider Relations", in: N. ELIAS and J. SCOTSON, *The Established and the Outsiders*, London 1994, p. xxiv.

<sup>79</sup> The author acknowledges that kilt wearing and displays of tartanry in *other* contexts and "spaces" is not seen by these same fractions as signifying Scottish nationalism. On the contrary, in some "spaces" these class fractions conspicuously display tartan in acts which serve to reinforce both a dual Scottish / British identity and a class-based hierarchical system. An example of such a "space" is the annual Burns Suppers held to commemorate the birth of Scottish poet Robert Burns on January 25<sup>th</sup> and which often involve a 'Loyal Toast' to the Queen of the United Kingdom.

<sup>80</sup> MANGAN, "Athleticism", p. 190.

<sup>81</sup> cf. BOURDIEU, "Distinction", pp. 53-54.

<sup>82</sup> JARVIE and WALKER, "Ninety Minute", p. 3.