

Scottish Football and Northern Ireland:
The Role of Sport in Communal Identification and Ethnonational Conflict

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Abstract

Nations and communities are created and represented through a myriad of different processes. Significantly, ‘everyday’ social rituals and practices contribute in the same ways as political practices to the creation and maintenance of communities and nations. It is important, therefore, that the social rituals which create, maintain, and (re)imagine nations and communities are considered alongside the political rituals which serve similar purposes. One of the most noteworthy everyday practices is sport: the basis of the discussion presented in this paper. For members of diaspora and immigrant communities in particular, sport offers an outlet for them to express and retain their identity. What this paper examines is how football (soccer) in Glasgow, Scotland, represents an outlet of political and ethnic identity for members of the Irish diaspora in Scotland. The two main football teams in Scotland tend to be viewed as representative of the two sides of the Irish conflict: Glasgow Celtic with Catholic Nationalism and Glasgow Rangers with Protestant Unionism. Specifically, therefore, this paper examines how football in Glasgow reinforces and reifies the existing communal divisions between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Loyalists. While neither Rangers or Celtic openly encourage divisiveness or sectarianism, they are nonetheless inextricably linked to two competing versions of Christianity that have yet to be reconciled either in Ireland, Northern Ireland or Scotland and as such serve as representatives of competing British and Irish nationalisms. The result, therefore, is that these teams have the potential to represent the continuing social aspects of the Northern Irish conflict.

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Introduction

The focus of this paper is the relationship between sport and ethnonationalism, and the role that sport plays in creating and maintaining the nation while also playing a crucial role in the preservation and transformation of ethnic and nationalist conflicts particularly within immigrant and diaspora communities. Moreover, this paper seeks to examine where a consideration of sport fits within the framework of international relations theory and within the discipline as a whole. My argument is that sport should be viewed as an important issue to be considered for those who study nationalism and international relations (IR) because it represents a very powerful political tool in the nation- and identity-building project. Sport is used as a method of not only promoting and building both internal and external prestige, but also as a method of providing both recognition and isolation from other nations, which are central themes within the traditional IR paradigm. Therefore, this paper is broken into two halves. In the first half I make the case for the inclusion of sport and 'everyday' social rituals in considerations of IR theory. The second half of the paper is focuses on football (soccer) culture in Glasgow, Scotland, and considers its implications for Irish ethnonational identity and conflict issues.

This paper is intended to provide a discussion of the role that sport, football specifically, plays in the maintenance and perpetuation of ethnic conflict through the lens of international relations theory. It examines the culture of football that exists in Glasgow, Scotland, in particular between Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers. The sectarian nature of football in Glasgow mirrors the ethnic conflicts of Ireland, and therefore I argue that an analysis of football in Scotland demonstrates that sport is a crucial medium through which Irish identity conflicts are manifested. Moreover, I argue that while the institutionalized conflict in Northern Ireland is fading as the result of disarmaments and power-sharing agreements, the conflict's remaining discontents often find their voice by being the supporter of one team over the other. Because sport represents such a powerful tool in the maintenance of identity, it is also a powerful tool in the perpetuation of conflict.

Sport and Social Life

Briefly, it is important to point out here that sport is an inherent part of social and political culture in nearly every society on earth. The mixture of sport and politics has a long history, and the relationship between the two stretches back at least to the ancient Greeks.² Therefore, sport has played, and continues to play, a significant role in constructing, maintaining and re-imagining national and ethnic identities. In other words,

Sport is clearly an arena where personal identities can be both examined and established ... Sport has therefore become an important conduit for a sense of collective resentment and popular consciousness and has been used by different groups (be they established, emergent or outsider) to maintain or change identities.³

Moreover, football (soccer) in particular, has the ability to inadvertently supply a public point of access to on-going political discourses about the health and vitality of the nation.⁴ In addition, the power of sport to produce intense passions amongst its followers cannot be overlooked. Football is the world's most popular sport, and it has the ability to elicit highly intense emotions from its

² Andrew Strenk, "At what price victory? The world of international sport and politics", The Annals of the American Academy, 445, September 1979, p. 128

³ Joseph Maguire and Jason Tuck, "Global Sports and Patriot Games: Rugby Union and National Identity in the United Kingdom since 1945", in Mike Cronin and David Myall, eds., Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation, Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998, pp. 107 – 108

⁴ Dilwyn Porter, "Your boys took one hell of a beating!: English football and British decline, c. 1950 – 1980", in Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter, eds., Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 46

spectators. Football is, arguably, the only universal language of the masses. “Major football tournaments – notably the World Cup finals – provide global referents for conversation among international peoples.”⁵ With this in mind, a consideration of sport within IR theory will make IR more observant and aware of the impact that social rituals and everyday life practices have on what we conceive of as ‘the international’.

Furthermore, it is also important to point out that the identities of sports fans have remained remarkably resilient in the face of the increased corporate presence on the field, as well as with the highly transnational character of major sports teams. In fact, Allison goes so far as to argue that, “National identity is the *most marketable* product in sport.”⁶ (emphasis my own) Fans still see their team as *their* team, they claim ownership over their successes, and especially with regard to football, and teams are still seen as representatives of very specific communities. For example, Chelsea is about the Chelsea borough in London, and not about Samsung, the corporate sponsor whose name is emblazoned prominently on the team uniforms. Moreover, it matters little that Chelsea is owned by a Russian billionaire, Roman Abramovich, who has spent millions of pounds enticing foreign players to the team. Interestingly, Chelsea was the first ‘English’ club to field a team made up entirely of non-British players in the 1999 – 2000 season.⁷ However, Chelsea, despite all the appearances to the contrary, remains a team that is about Chelsea. Sport is remarkably resilient in the face of the homogenizing forces of globalization, and in this sense is comparable to religion given the depth of commitment and resistance to external (globalizing) forces. Frey and Eitzen argue that, “Sport is a very prominent social institution in almost every society because it combines the characteristics found in any institution with a unique appeal only duplicated by, perhaps, religion.”⁸ Even Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, “...regarded sport as a religion, with its own church, dogma and culture, but above all with religious feelings.”⁹

Sport and International Relations: Assessing their relationship

Levermore and Budd point out that an analysis of sport requires a constant interrogation of the basic tenets of realism and thus was not accepted as an important variable until realism faced serious challenges by other theories of international relations.¹⁰ IR theorists are now increasingly willing to probe and examine the presence of ‘the international’ in ‘everyday life’, and therefore are more apt to see the connection between sport and power, sport and national prestige, sport and security. Levermore argues that, “...there are areas in which sport has some, if not a major, role to play in security studies... [and] conflict resolution.”¹¹ Moreover, Lowe, Kanin and Strenk argue that

⁵ Richard Giulianotti, “The sociability of sport: Scotland football supporters as interpreted through the sociology of Georg Simmel”, International Review for the Sociology of Sport, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2005, p. 294

⁶ Lincoln Allison, “Sport and Nationalism”, in Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning, eds., Handbook of Sports Studies, London: Sage, 2000, p. 346

⁷ Carlton Brick, “Can’t Live With Them. Can’t Live Without Them: Reflections on Manchester United”, in Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti, Fear and Loathing in World Football, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001, p. 10

⁸ James H. Frey and D. Stanley Eitzen, “Sport and Society”, Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 17, p. 503

⁹ Swantje Scharenberg, “Religion and Sport”, in James Riordan and Arnd Krüger, The International Politics of Sport in the Twentieth Century, London & New York: E & FN Spon, 1999, p. 91

¹⁰ Roger Levermore and Adrian Budd, “Sport and international relations: continued neglect?” in Roger Levermore and Adrian Budd, eds. Sport and International Relations: An Emerging Relationship, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 11

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6

“...sport can be identified as a phenomenon of international concern.”¹² Because IR theory has shifted away from such a strict and unflinching emphasis on seeing that state as a black box, or a billiard ball, as it has often been called in the IR literature, IR theory can become more open to a consideration of the role of individuals and societies, and from this can seriously consider the social habits and behaviours of these individuals and societies as they impact international relations. Moreover, a rejection of the strict, unsustainable and inaccurate delineation between public and private, in political terms, opens the door further to allowing for an analysis of sport as it is related to politics.¹³ In other words, “A focus on the politics *in* sport is predicated upon a view of politics which does not recognize the demarcation between the public and the private and which does not recognize the demarcation between the public and the private and which treats politics as a ubiquitous aspect of all social institutions, including schools, sports clubs and governing bodies.”¹⁴ By advocating a more inclusive approach, IR theory can begin to consider the impact that sport has on international relations, state prestige and ethno-nationalist sentiments and conflicts.

At the outset, it is important to note here that I have not found any IR theorists who have outright dismissed a consideration of sport as a variable of some value. However, sports, like other ‘social’ institutions, have often been neglected and ignored by mainstream IR theory. What is particularly interesting about the neglect of sport, however, is that unlike other intercultural relations, sport is inherently competitive.¹⁵ This observation makes the parallels between sport and the themes of mainstream IR theory seem obvious, yet explicit reference to sport as a variable in the literature has been few and far between. There are a number of reasons why this is so, including the persistence of the debate between realism and idealism in IR. IR theory has of course branched out far beyond this dichotomous distinction, in the classic sense and at its core, IR remains rooted in these debates. While realism is, in its most simple form, about struggles over power, the idealist approach argues that foreign relations can also be premised upon shared values.

While it is important that we not make a straw man out of realism, as it is considerably more complex than the analysis which has been presented here, the fact remains that prestige can be separated from power and that they can be sought after in different ways. Moreover, though it is incredibly difficult to generalize the role of the state in sport¹⁶, this does not detract from the fact that such a relationship exists. States and other agents can seek out prestige on the behalf of nations and civil societies in a number of different ways. In other words, “The extent to which sport can generate ‘power’ must be marginal and elusive ... , but it is a natural source of prestige.”¹⁷ What can be extrapolated from this is that, in the absence of the kinds of political *power* games which typified the cold war, *prestige* becomes the elusive marker which states strive for, and sport is one of many ways through which prestige is garnered. In terms of how this fits into international relations theory, this is demonstrative of the fact that strict emphasis on the struggle for *power* is no longer reflective of the current state of international affairs. “Prestige that [can] be exploited domestically and internationally [can] come cheaply, but with apparently significant rewards.”¹⁸ Moreover, Lowe, Kanin and Strenk argue that, “If sport is a useful instrument in public diplomacy because of its

¹² Benjamin Lowe, David B. Kanin and Andrew Strenk, “Preface”, in Lowe, Kanin and Strenk, eds., Sport and International Relations, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Company, 1978, p. iv

¹³ Barrie Houlihan, “Politics and sport”, in Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning, eds., Handbook of Sports Studies, London: Sage Publications, 2000, p. 213

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 214

¹⁵ Benjamin Lowe, David B. Kanin and Andrew Strenk, “Preface”, in Lowe, Kanin and Strenk, eds., p. iii

¹⁶ see Houlihan, in Coakley and Dunning, eds., p. 215

¹⁷ Lincoln Allison and Terry Monnington, “Sport, prestige and international relations”, Government and Opposition, Vol. 37, No. 1, Winter 2002, p. 112

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 126

public, politically peripheral nature, and unusual in intercultural relations because of its intrinsically competitive nature, it is also important in international relations...”¹⁹ Finally, an examination of sport demonstrates that, contrary to realism, social and cultural institutions carry as much, if not more, weight than states when it comes to forging individuals identities and loyalties. Therefore, more analysis of the types of social rituals which contribute to the gaining of state, national, or sub-national prestige is important.

When considering sport without the utilization of realist analysis it should become clearer that sport is important because, among other things, sport impacts our understanding of how agency/power dynamics are manifested through cultural forms²⁰, and that sport is used in foreign relations in a variety of ways, most notably through sporting boycotts.²¹ Moreover, governments can seek to apply sanctions upon other countries by influencing the allocation of major sporting events like the Olympics or football’s World Cup.²² Sporting boycotts or protests are a ‘soft’ form of diplomacy in which it is unlikely that any actual conflict will result, however, the public impact of this kind of diplomacy cannot be understated given the intense global interest in, and media coverage of, international sporting events. Finally, sports diplomacy can also serve the function of signalling the re-entry of a state into the international community.²³

The Olympic Games have become the most obvious and wide-scale manifestation of the connection between sport and politics. Pierre de Coubertin saw the Olympics as a vehicle for

¹⁹ Lowe, Kanin and Strenk, “Preface”, in Lowe, Kanin and Strenk, eds. p. v

²⁰ See John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, eds., Power Games: A Critical Sociology of Sport; London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

²¹ For example, the 1936 Berlin Olympics (also colloquially known as the ‘Nazi Olympics’) were the subject of major controversy and threatened boycotts, especially from the United States. While the US did, in the end, send a team (resulting in the famous Jesse Owens track victory), Canada stuck with the boycott and did not send a team. Both Canada and the US boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In retaliation, the Soviet bloc boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. South Africa was banned from international rugby union and cricket tournaments, as well as from the Olympic Games from 1968 until 1992 because of global concern over the apartheid regime. More recently, Zimbabwe has had their international cricket team banned by the International Cricket Council over concern for the political state of the country under Robert Mugabe’s rule. In 2002 the English cricket team refused to play a game in Harare to protest the Zimbabwean political situation. (For a brief list of some modern sporting boycotts, see: Simon Jeffery, “Timeline: sporting boycotts” (30 December, 2002), available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/dec/30/zimbabwe.politics>, accessed 20 June 2008). With the recent Beijing Olympics, calls for a boycott were heard almost daily, though no country actually followed through on the threat and engaged in a boycott. The actual political effects of sporting boycotts are perhaps negligible, but the fact remains that sporting boycotts are an inexpensive and very public way for states to flex some muscle on the international political scene. Allison and Monnington point out that, while trade sanctions may impose high costs on workers and capitalists, sporting contacts are largely substitutable. (Allison and Monnington, “Sport, prestige and international relations”, p. 108).

²² For example, many countries were opposed to the awarding of the 2008 Summer Olympics to Beijing because of China’s human rights record and on-going oppression of the Tibetan people. The British government, in particular, was of the view that, “...the Chinese economy was becoming simply too important for a serious trade embargo so that the ‘New’ Labour government’s stated aspiration to pursue a ‘moral’ foreign policy would have to be pursued by other means in the case of a state which had become (especially in relation to its policy in Tibet) one of the major violations of Western human rights doctrine.” (Allison and Monnington, “Sport, prestige and international relations”, p. 109)

²³ For example, the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 represented Japan’s return into the good graces of the West after the events of World War II. Munich’s Games of 1972 symbolised acceptance of West Germany while also lying to rest the ghosts of Nazism, while South Africa’s participation in the 1992 Barcelona Games demonstrated that South Africa was a ‘new’ country, ready to show the world it was eager to dispense with its apartheid past. (Houlihan, in Coakley and Dunning, eds., p. 219)

fostering world brotherhood and international goodwill, and this remains the rallying cry of the International Olympic Committee to this day. However, “This creed presupposes - - indeed, invites - - political involvement in the Games. Yet in the countless examples where sport between nations has attenuated, or in fact created, ethnocentric boundaries, rival nations have blamed each other for allowing politics to impinge on the sanctity of the Olympic arena.”²⁴ Hatfield goes so far as to argue that, “Pointedly, Olympic sport has evolved from a politically naïve vision into a politically volatile reality, and from a socially innocuous phenomenon into an event capable of eliciting such ethnocentric behaviour as to plunge nations into all-out warfare.”²⁵ Despite claims that the Olympics, and sport in general, are apolitical, the Games often act as a political platform upon which political messages can be sent to many more spectators than could otherwise be reached through traditional political means. Moreover, the cost of hosting the Olympics is well beyond the budgets of many states. Therefore, “For those nations that continue to dream of hosting a major international sporting tournament, the inevitable need to turn to external funding agencies to finance such a project will once more, for many, rekindle images of neocolonialism and economic dependency.”²⁶

Indeed, as discussed above, concern for power and prestige are central themes in international relations, where international sporting diplomacy and the Olympic Games play into these themes nicely. Overall, “Success in sports events, and particularly the hosting of sports events, provides a benign and uncritical backdrop for the parade of national achievement.”²⁷ Moreover, major sporting events like the Olympics or World Cup have the ability to draw larger and more interested crowds than, for example, an annual meeting of the UN General Assembly, making the ‘parade of national achievement’ more visible through sport than through traditional political forms. In addition, because sport is a part of everyday life they provide an access point through which ‘the international’ can be viewed and examined by the masses.

Sport has often not been considered the domain of ‘serious’ academic intellectuals because it is about ‘fun’ and leisure, two things not readily associated with the types of research generally undertaken by academics in international relations and within academia as a whole. Allison and Monnington have referred to this as the “myth of autonomy”, which suggested that sport has little impact on human and social relations.²⁸ Sport is often not viewed as ‘serious’ part of the political culture of any given society. Sport, however, is a companion phenomenon to culture itself. It is not inferior to, or autonomous of culture, but rather it is a variety of it.²⁹ Maheu argues that, “For nothing in the world today is younger or has greater potentialities than sport, and nothing is older and richer than culture, and it is of vital importance to us that there should be interpenetration and mutual understanding between the two.”³⁰ Moreover, in an increasingly globalized world, the impact of sport on culture and identity needs considerably more analysis as it has undoubtedly grown more complex under these conditions.³¹

With this in mind, it should come as no surprise that recently, the connection between sport and the state has been increasingly established in the study of IR. It is now becoming more widely accepted that the development of sport is inextricably tied to the development of the state, and of

²⁴ Frederick C. Hatfield, “Ethnocentrism and conflict in Olympic competition: Parallels and Trends”, in Lowe, et al., p. 191

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 191

²⁶ Allison and Monnington, “Sport, international relations and prestige”, p. 131

²⁷ Houlihan, in Coakley and Dunning, eds., p. 216

²⁸ Allison and Monnington, “Sport, prestige and international relations”, p. 106.

²⁹ Maheu, in Lowe, et al., p. 11

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20

³¹ Joseph Maguire, Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999, p. 176

state prestige, given that, “Most major liberation movements which have fought for the establishment of nation-states have made use of physical activities and mass sport as a means of creating a national identity.”³² This has been particularly true in the third world, where newly-independent nations have resurrected indigenous sports which were discouraged during the colonial period, while at the same time heartily adopting the sports which were popular among the colonial rulers. Indeed, there are few things more satisfying than beating the former rulers at their own game.

In another way, sport is used to help formulate the ‘imagined’ community or ‘imagined’ state, which was especially important in the Third World as post-independence euphoria began to wane and existing tribal, linguistic and ethnic divisions began to reassert themselves.³³ “To secure authority over sport and the necessary power to permit its use as a political tool, many African governments established Western systems of sport and physical education, but often with stricter government control and direction.”³⁴ As Cronin and Myall point out, “It is within this idea of the imagined community, as set out by Anderson, that sport functions.”³⁵ Indeed, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) which oversees Gaelic sport in Ireland virtually invented games which they claimed as indigenous to Ireland during the organizations early years in the late 1800s as a way to promote the unity and coherence of the Irish community and Irish identity.³⁶

What the preceding discussion should make clear is that sport and the state are inextricably linked to one another, and that sport itself is inherently political. Despite the desire for state authorities to claim that sport is not political, that it is out of their realm and to be left to non-state agencies, when it comes to nation-building and the creation of national prestige, sport is immensely powerful and is a major avenue by which these goals are accomplished. Moreover, the notion that sporting victories and losses are seen as symbolic of the health of the nation is also important. Perception matters in international relations³⁷, as well as in questions of nationalism and identity, and sport is a conduit for the way these variables are manifested in the international political realm.

With this in mind, the questions about identity and everyday life which surround IR literature can be examined through an analysis of sport. The linkages which exist between sport and national identity are too obvious to be denied, as “...sporting competition arguably provides the primary expression of imagined communities; the nation becoming more ‘real’ in the domain of sport”.³⁸ Moreover, and especially crucial to the cases under examination here, sport represents more than just, “...a mere barometer which gauges the levels of political division. It is also an integral element in the actual politics of division.”³⁹

³² see Jean Marie Brohm, “Theses Toward A Political Sociology of Sport”, in Alan Tomlinson, ed., The Sports Studies Reader, London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

³³ Allison and Monnington, “Sport, international relations and prestige”, pp. 124 – 125

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125

³⁵ Mike Cronin and David Myall, “Sport and ethnicity: Some introductory remarks”, in Mike Cronin and David Myall, eds., Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation, Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998, p. 2

³⁶ Alan Bairner and Paul Darby, “Divided Sport in a Divided Society: Northern Ireland”, in John Sugden and Alan Bairner, eds., Sport in Divided Societies, Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport (UK) Ltd., 2000, p. 53

³⁷ For a deeper and more comprehensive discussion of this, see David Campbell, Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

³⁸ Maguire and Tuck, in Cronin and Myall, eds., p. 106

³⁹ John Sugden and Alan Bairner, eds. Sport In Divided Societies, Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport (UK) Ltd., 2000, p. 7

Sport, Everyday Life and International Relations

The preceding discussion has made it clear that sport is an area of social life which has consequences for how we conceive of international relations. In other words, sport occupies an area of 'everyday life' which is crucial to our understanding of how 'the international' is constructed and conceived of. Sport has often been dismissed as a variable of importance because it is about leisure, 'fun' and 'play', and thus is considered to occupy a space outside of the traditional borders of politics. What this perspective ignores, however, is that it is precisely the workings of everyday life and everyday social rituals which define our conceptions of the domestic and the international, thus also defining our construction of what is political.

Most importantly for the research I am undertaking here, everyday life also impacts immensely upon our construction of our identities. For example, the people of Ireland can't help but notice the nationalist and unionist murals which are prominently displayed in city centres around their province. By extension, the everyday practice of walking to work or to the corner shop has an impact upon the ways in which identity in Ireland is constructed. Even moderates cannot help but be affected by seeing the murals as part of their everyday life. In addition, because football is such a major part of life in Glasgow, even non-football fans, in their everyday lives, are influenced and affected by the sectarian strife which exists between Celtic and Rangers.

By borrowing from feminist and international political economy literature, my research allows for a further interrogation of the basic tenets of mainstream international relations theory. Cynthia Enloe, for example, argues in reference to our traditional ideas of what international politics 'looks like' that, "The real landscape of international politics is less exclusively male."⁴⁰ Taken further, I would argue that the real landscape of international politics is less exclusively/ostensibly *political*. Feminist methodology in particular is helpful for the advocacy of an everyday life approach to the study of international politics. While gender is more a topic of consideration today than it has been in the field previously, it still occupies a silent space in many ways. It is important to note that part of the reason for the continuation of the silent space being considered here is that the state-centric view that has tended to dominate the study of IR is not only exclusionary for women, but also that it is problematic in the sense that it generates theories which have little in the way of explanatory, let alone predictive capabilities. Furthermore, it is also important to point out that the exclusion of gender in analysis of IR is due to the fact that the study of politics makes a clear demarcation between the public and private realms, and those who study politics tend to deal exclusively with the former. Finally, in terms of the study of *international* politics, the public and private distinction comes to refer to the distinction between the international and the domestic, again with scholars focusing exclusively on the former. Because women are so often considered to be associated with the private, domestic sphere, and because this has led to the gendered nature of the study of IR, there has been little space for gender and feminist theory. Elshtain, for example, points out that,

Any final definition of or limitation in the scope of what constitutes politics may (and does) hide the fact that interests are served by these very limitations. The analyst who begins a discussion with the assumption that politics has to do with tough bargaining processes for which men, for a variety of reasons, are most suited, and that moral values are a part of the "softer" virtues relegated to churches, women, and private lives, will be blinded to certain features of the social and political world

⁴⁰ Cynthia Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics, Berkley: University of California Press, 1989, p. 1

which an observer who is critical of the status quo will see as problems to be explained rather than givens needing no explanation.⁴¹

This has also generally been the case for sport and international relations. By occupying a sphere outside of the traditional parameters of what is considered to be political action, sport occupies a silent space within IR, reaffirming problematic dichotomous distinctions between the public and private.

Post-modernism and post-structuralism are also concerned with the construction of social binaries premised upon apparent objective realities. By rejecting the 'natural' ordering of the social world, especially as it refers to the ordering between genders, the Self and Other, and inside and outside, all of these approaches are valuable to an emancipatory project which critiques and problematises the taken for granted assumptions of mainstream IR theory. The result of the silent spaces in IR is the clear demarcation between the 'inside' and the 'outside', the 'powerful' and the 'powerless'. In terms of a feminist perspective, these binaries have the effect of diminishing, "...the legitimacy of women as 'knowers'."⁴² Their knowledge, presuming they have any, does not count as legitimate knowledge given that it has been acquired within, and therefore can only speak to, the private sphere.

Similarly, sport is often considered to be outside of the realm of 'real' politics, and thus suffers from the same type of invisibility that gender analysis does within mainstream IR. The binaries between the inside and outside, domestic and international, and political and non-political which are created by a state-centric analysis of international relations are also problematic for our understanding of sport. Feminist scholars often argue that the everyday lives of women are important for our understanding of the international; however, often it is their everyday lives which are ignored and dismissed as being of little consequence to our understanding of how the international political system works. Therefore, feminist scholars argue that an understanding of international relations needs to go beyond the strict (and frankly inaccurate) boundaries which demarcate what is considered political and non-political. My research seeks a similar end. By arguing that everyday life and social ritual, like sport, are ostensibly political apparatuses through which our identities and conceptions of the international are constructed, we can create a more nuanced and therefore more accurate understanding of international relations and ethnonational conflict.

The Irish in Glasgow: The Irish Diaspora, Scottish Protestantism/Calvinism and Scottish Football

With the theoretical background of my argument now well-established, it is important to examine the impact of the Irish community in Glasgow in order to provide some background to the political significance of the Celtic and Rangers football teams. Scotland and Ireland have had relations with one another for centuries, but their relationship became considerably more complex under the guise of the industrial revolution and Irish potato famine. Scotland came to the industrial revolution slightly later than England, but the problems associated with it were just as severe. The issues associated with massive and rapid urbanisation were a major problem, and The Cowgate in Edinburgh, and the Saltmarket, Gallowgate and Gorbals areas of Glasgow were becoming more than just areas dominated by the working classes, they were turning into slums. Overcrowding, lack

⁴¹ Jean Bethke Elshtain, Real Politics: At the Centre of Everyday Life, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, p. 12

⁴² J. Ann Tickner, referencing Sylvester, 1994a: 316, "You just don't understand: Troubled engagements between Feminist and IR Theorists", International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 4, December 1997, p. 612

of privacy and sanitary provision, health problems of epidemic proportions, sectarianism and police harassment became part of the day to day reality of life for many in Glasgow. Maver notes that, “a disturbing netherside to urban culture had also been identified, one that would have been familiar to Dickens, in the seemingly uncontrolled manifestation of drunkenness and anti-social behaviour on the part of the poor.”⁴³ The socio-economic decline of inner city areas which created the slums was a consequence of highly unstable nature of Victorian economics. As a result of this, it was noted that in the nineteenth century, the Gorbals, a borough in the East End of Glasgow, had deteriorated into, “perhaps the worst and certainly most notorious slum in Europe.”⁴⁴

Part of the reason for the huge rise in population in Glasgow’s inner city areas was due to immigration from both rural and urban Scots, Scottish Highlanders, and of course, the Irish fleeing the potato famine. Immigration from Ireland was nothing new in Glasgow; however, the sheer scale of it marked the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ There was no other city in Britain that had as many Irish born inhabitants.⁴⁶ Mitchison points out that by 1831 over one-sixth of those living in Glasgow had been born in Ireland and that, “everywhere the Irish filled the bottom slots”⁴⁷ of society. By 1848 there were one thousand Irish arriving on boats every week.⁴⁸ Not only were the Irish foreigners by birth, their Catholic religion further removed them from mainstream Glasgow society. They were found at the bottom ranks of every job, the lowest paid, and the ones whose stability was more threatened by volatile Victorian market fluctuations. Obviously, because of this, the Irish were forced to live in the worst slums of Glasgow, thus making up a significant proportion of those living in the Gorbals, Govan and the East End of Glasgow in general.

The nature of Scottish poor laws further discriminated against those confined to the slums of Glasgow. Based on voluntary church contribution, and heavily reliant on Calvinist notions of self-reliance and self-help, monetary aid was in short supply. In addition, the Victorian attitude that the poor deserved their situation through some sin or fault of their own was prevalent. For no one was this attitude worse than for the Irish, whose strange and backward religion and propensity for drink were seen as the reasons for their poverty, and not the highly volatile nature of the Victorian economy and the Glaswegian industries in which they worked.

The discrimination felt by Irish Catholics was the result of the fact that, “There are few countries where the Protestant Reformation was more complete than in Scotland.”⁴⁹ John Knox saw to it that all symbols of popery were removed in Scotland, to be replaced with austere Calvinist symbols. The result was that, “Catholicism in Scotland was ... confirmed as an alien creed. It was the religion of Rome or the religion of Ireland: in neither case was it Scottish.”⁵⁰ The result was that Scotland developed a fervently anti-Catholic character. A startling example of this notion comes from the fact that in Glasgow in the 1790s there were only 39 recorded Catholic individuals, while

⁴³ Irene Maver, “Urbanisation”, in Anthony Cooke, Ian Donnachie, Ann MacSween and Christopher A. Whatley, eds., Modern Scottish History 1707 to the Present: Volume I The Transformation of Scotland, 1707-1850, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 1998 p. 173

⁴⁴ M. Lindsay, Portrait of Glasgow, London: Hale, 1972, quoted in J.G. Robb, “Suburb and Slum in Gorbals”, in George Gordon and Dick, Brian, eds. Scottish Urban History, Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983, p. 135

⁴⁵ Maver, “Urbanisation”, in Donnachie et al., Modern Scottish History, p. 165

⁴⁶ T.M. Devine, “The Urban Crisis”, in T.M. Devine and Gordon Jackson, eds. Glasgow Volume I: Beginnings to 1830, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 407

⁴⁷ Rosalind Mitchison, The Old Poor Law in Scotland: The Experience of Poverty, 1574-1845, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000 p. 166

⁴⁸ T.C. Smout, A Century of the Scottish People, 1830-1950, London: Fontana Press, 1986 p. 22

⁴⁹ Murray, p. 93

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 95

there were 43 recorded anti-Catholic societies.⁵¹ Indeed, despite the fact that interaction between Scotland and Ireland had been going on for centuries, anti-Irish and anti-Catholic discrimination pervaded all facets of life in Scotland in the nineteenth century, and these sentiments continue to be present today.

It was from these conditions, therefore, that the Celtic Football Club was created. Ironically, it was assumed that Scottish contact with Catholics would reduce bigotry and racism, and yet Celtic had, and continues to have, the opposite effect.⁵² Moreover, Celtic Football Club is often blamed for being responsible for all of Scotland's sectarian ills, which is highly problematic and ignores the systematic and long-standing anti-Catholic prejudice which existed and still exists in Scotland.⁵³ Rangers had been in the league since 1872, but did not begin as a 'Protestant' club. Even in the early days, the rivalry between the two teams was not nearly as intense as it is now. While football in Scotland has always been ethnic in nature⁵⁴, it was during the First World War, and particularly during the Irish Home Rule crisis, that the rivalry intensified between the two Glasgow sides and that both teams took on the characteristics which they are associated with today: Rangers with Protestant Unionism and Celtic with Irish Catholic Nationalism.

It is against this backdrop, therefore, that the strange duality of the Irish and British face of Scotland is manifested. Caught between two competing visions of the British Empire and religion, football in Glasgow became a social and cultural outlet through which political ideas and identities were manifested by the working classes. Those who had nationalist or unionist sympathies could use football as a way of identifying themselves. In this way, therefore, the social implications of football fandom in Glasgow should not be overlooked. Celtic and Rangers continue to attract fans who share similar political leanings, and as such, are worthy of examination for those interested in the ethnonational conflicts within Britain and Ireland. Football in Glasgow is inextricably linked to the manner in which Irish identities in Scotland are performed, and as such, demonstrates how social rituals and everyday life have the ability to give us insight into the ways in which the "Irish problem" is re-created and re-imagined in Scotland.

Case Studies: Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers

Both Celtic and Rangers are based in Glasgow, Scotland but draw large levels of support from all over Scotland, Europe, and indeed, the world. Interestingly, over eight percent of season ticket holders for the teams reside outside of Scotland.⁵⁵ The two sides, year in and year out, dominate the Scottish Premier League largely because the revenues generated by their popularity give them the ability to field talented teams. Rangers were founded in 1872, while Celtic did not show up until much later in 1888, and the two teams first played each other on the 28th of May, 1888, in front of a mere two thousand spectators.⁵⁶ Today, Ibrox Stadium, home of the Rangers,

⁵¹ Daniel Burdsey and Robert Chappell, "'And if you know your history': An examination of the formation of football clubs in Scotland and their role in the construction of social identity", The Sports Historian, No. 21, Vol. 1, p. 96

⁵² Gerry P.T. Finn, "Faith, Hope and Bigotry: Case Studies of Anti-Catholic Prejudice in Scottish Soccer and Society", in Jarvie and Walker, eds., p. 99

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 91

⁵⁴ Joseph M. Bradley, "Sport and the Contestation of Cultural and Ethnic and Identities in Scotland", in Cronin and Myall, eds., p. 131

⁵⁵ Grant Allan, Stewart Dunlop and Kim Swales, "The economic impact of regular season sporting competitions: The Glasgow Old Firm football spectators as sports tourists", Journal of Sport & Tourism, Vol. 12, No. 2, May 2007, p. 64

⁵⁶ Murray, p. 9

can seat just over 51,000⁵⁷ people while Celtic Park holds over 60,000.⁵⁸ The teams have 40,000 and 50,000 season ticket holders, respectively.⁵⁹ Games at the two grounds regularly sell out, and not just when the two teams are playing each other. Therefore, in a city of less than 600,000 people⁶⁰ it is obvious that teams which draw these levels of support are a major part of the city's social and sporting landscape.

The two teams are often referred to as 'The Old Firm' because of the massive amounts of wealth they are able to generate, and because often they are viewed, by fans of smaller Scottish teams, as colluding with one another to ensure their dominance of the Scottish Premier League at the expense of all others. "Their duopoly in Scotland is effectively incontestable by any other Scottish club largely for financial reasons. In 2001, the turnover of Celtic and Rangers was about \$64 million and \$71 million, respectively; the next largest budgets were under \$13 million, for Hearts and Hibernian (both Edinburgh clubs). Thus, no club outside the Old Firm has won the league since 1985..."⁶¹ and it is rare that another team can even claim second place. Outside of The Old Firm, however, Glasgow has always been historically known as a city of rabid football fans, with the city having witnessed some of the largest football crowds ever recorded to watch football matches.⁶²

In the early days, it became clear that the teams attracted spectators who weren't particularly interested in football, as it was becoming increasingly obvious that the teams represented more than just simple, good football and instead represented something more deep-seated about Scottish society and the place of the Irish within Scotland.⁶³ This period was also characterised by each team adopting the policy of only signing players who 'fit' the characteristics that the team was becoming associated with. In other words, Rangers no longer signed Catholic players, and Celtic, while not enacting a steady rule on the matter, always had a more organic relationship with the Catholic community and it therefore seemed natural for them to rarely sign anyone of the Protestant faith.^{64 65}

⁵⁷ "Ibrox", available at: <http://www.stadiumguide.com/ibrox.htm>. Accessed 20 June 2008.

⁵⁸ "Celtic Park", available at: <http://www.stadiumguide.com/celticpark.htm>. Accessed 20 June 2008.

⁵⁹ Joseph M. Bradley, Celtic Minded: Essays on Religion, Politics, Society, Identity ... and Football, Scotland: Argyll Publishing, 2004, p. 13

⁶⁰ "Population", available at: <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E3BE21DA-4D84-4CC4-9C02-2E526FDD9169/0/populationaug07.pdf>. Accessed 21 June 2008.

⁶¹ Richard Giulianotti, "Celtic, the UEFA Cup final, and the condition of Scottish club football: Notes and recommendations from Seville, Spain", Journal of Sport & Social Issues, Vol. 27, No. 3, August 2003, pp. 207 – 208

⁶² Bradley, p. 13. These records include 136,505 for Celtic versus Leeds United in the European Champions Cup Semi-Final in 1970, and 147,365 for the Scottish Cup Final between Aberdeen and Celtic at Hampden Park.

⁶³ Murray, p. 12

⁶⁴ Tom Gallagher, Glasgow: The Uneasy Peace. Religious Tension in Modern Scotland, 1819 – 1914, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987, p. 99. Mo Johnston, by no means the first Catholic player to represent the Rangers side, was the first *openly* Catholic player they signed, in 1989. Johnston was also a former Celtic star.

⁶⁵ It is worth noting here Bradley's observation that: "...most football clubs grew out of pre-existing social relationships: many had political national and religious dimensions to them. Sporting clubs require a base for both establishment and support and these things have made a crucial contribution to the very existence of sport and competition across the globe. Therefore, Celtic's ethnic and religious origins are less unique than is often thought the case." Bradley, in Cronin and Myall, eds., p. 131. While this may be true, the perception that Celtic and Rangers have been, are, and always will be Catholic and Protestant clubs respectively, is what permeates Scottish football and what results in the mirroring of the Northern Irish conflict in Scotland. Bradley rightfully points out that, "While a complex interweaving of sport, culture, tradition, nationalism, religion and politics was closely linked to the establishment and evolution of main clubs in Scotland, it was particularly so in the case of Rangers and Celtic." Bradley, in Cronin and Myall, eds., p. 133

Rangers were founded in 1872 and were not immediately associated with Protestantism and Unionism. Nor were they particularly successful. Their identity as the 'Protestant' team was manufactured as the result of their attempts to curb Celtic's success, attempts which were then associated with the defence of Scottish identity and British nationalism. Celtic, on the other hand, was founded in 1888 with explicit religious aims and saw almost immediate success. In fact, within a decade of their founding, Celtic had totally revolutionized British football with their play, attendance records and revenue generation, but they were not without their critics. Hibernian, the Edinburgh team which had previously enjoyed some success in the league, were effectively put out of business as the 'Catholic' team in Scotland by Celtic's superior play. Celtic also developed a habit of poaching players away from Hibs, though Celtic claimed that since most of those players were from the west coast of Scotland anyway, it was natural for them to want to play in Glasgow, closer to home.⁶⁶

Celtic was founded by Brother Walfrid, an Irish immigrant of the Marist Order who fled the Irish potato famine only to find himself mired in the Catholic slums which dominated the East End of Glasgow. He was surrounded by other Irish immigrants who were, like him, being subject to racial, religious and ethnic discrimination at the hands of the 'native' Scottish population. As Murray argues, the Scots and Irish were living under a cultural and social apartheid.⁶⁷ With few outlets in which Irish Catholics could proudly display their heritage, Walfrid decided to start a football team which would not only allow the Irish to take pride in themselves, but that would also keep young Irish men out of the pubs and away from the kind of licentiousness that was stereotypical of the Irish community in Glasgow. Supporting Celtic became the de facto method through which one's Irish identity could be proclaimed and celebrated, given that there was so little tolerance in Scotland for other outright displays of this nature. The relationship between Celtic and the Glaswegian Irish community has not lessened in over a century of their existence, and evidence of this can be found in a passage from Tommy Burns, a former Celtic player and manager was quoted on the BBC as saying, "They [the players] have to remember that it's more than just a football team they're playing for. They're playing for a cause and a people."⁶⁸

The year 1888 was also significant for the Rangers club, as it was the year that John Ure Primrose was elected patron of the club. Primrose was an active Unionist and freemason who steered the club into a political alliance with the Orange Order. He was also known to be publicly and vociferously anti-Irish and anti-Catholic.⁶⁹ Therefore, while the aim of Celtic was to help Irish immigrants form a hybridized Irish-Scottish-British identity, the reaction of Rangers solidified the polarity which continues to exist between the two teams to this day.

Glasgow and Football Sectarianism

It is important to point out that the city of Glasgow is not geographically divided along religious lines in the same way that Belfast is, however, it is certainly true that there are pubs and bars which are associated with supporters of one team over another, and where someone supporting the other team would not feel welcome. Although there are no 'peace walls' in Glasgow, culturally and socially, religious divides are evident. While neither team would openly admit that they court sectarian tendencies, it is fairly obvious that sectarian overtones are intimately connected with both teams. Furthermore, it would be completely inaccurate to argue that other football teams are also not associated with different (often conflicting) identities, or that fan violence has not tainted their reputations. What is unique, however, is that, "Bitterness, bigotry or ideology: it is this combined

⁶⁶ Murray., p. 21

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 100

⁶⁸ Tommy Burns on the BBC, 1999. Quoted in Burdsey and Chappell, p. 94

⁶⁹ Burdsey and Chappell, p. 98

with sound business sense that sets the Old Firm apart from any other major sporting engagement anywhere else in the world.”⁷⁰ According to Murray, all the characteristics of Glasgow are summed up when the Old Firm meets, because the origins of their rivalry are located deep within Scottish history and rooted in Irish immigration. “Their games are no mere local derby, but a clash of cultures, two world views with Rangers championing the cause of Protestantism, Celtic that of catholicism.”⁷¹ Moreover, “The Old Firm and Scottish society are indissolubly linked, and always have been.”⁷²

While the organizations ‘officially’ discourage the singing of sectarian songs and waving of sectarian themed flags within the grounds, these actions remain common occurrences at the matches. In 1952 the Scottish Football Association (SFA) even banned teams from displaying any flag, “...which could be construed as having nothing to do with Scotland.”⁷³ Celtic was asked to stop flying the Irish tricolour in their grounds on the basis that it was not Scottish and that it promoted problematic sectarianism. However, no organization during this period also asked Rangers to cease with their discriminatory policies against Roman Catholic players. Whether the teams officially encourage it or not, they are inextricably linked to two competing visions of Christianity that have yet to be reconciled either in Northern Ireland or Scotland.⁷⁴

What is of obvious interest here is the fact that, what is essentially a foreign conflict (Ireland), finds many of its manifestations in Scotland. This most certainly is a unique situation, but one which is explained by the Irish diaspora in Glasgow, as discussed above. What this means for Scottish national identity, however, is worthy of further consideration. To many Scots, football is a symbol of Scottish nationality.⁷⁵ However, this idea ignores the fact that the problems of sectarianism in Glasgow, and indeed elsewhere in Scottish football, do more to undermine Scottish football’s ability to forge a national identity and to create a national consciousness.⁷⁶ Bairner points out that, “Not only regional differences, but a number of other factors of which sectarianism is the most pronounced, weaken the claim for football as a cornerstone of national unity.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, there are questions about the extent to which Rangers and Celtic fans support the Scottish national team. Given that Rangers fans are more sympathetic to England and the British Crown, they are more suspicious of the kinds of Scottish nationalism which is associated with the Tartan Army⁷⁸, and

⁷⁰ Murray, p. 32

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 1

⁷² Ibid., p. 2

⁷³ Bradley, in Cronin and Myall, eds., p. 134

⁷⁴ see Murray, The Old Firm

⁷⁵ Alan Bairner, “Football and the idea of Scotland”, in Jarvie and Walker, eds., p. 9

⁷⁶ I should point out here that to assume that the Scottish sense of nationality is derived solely from their relationship to their football teams, is of course, a massive over statement. Obviously not everyone in Scotland watches football or supports one of the Scottish teams. There are clear class, gender, and race divisions between football fans and non-football fans. What is true, however, is that (as mentioned earlier) in a relatively small city the impact of football in Glasgow cannot be overlooked. Regardless of if one is a football fan or not, the fact remains that the political, national and religious landscape in Glasgow is, to a great extent, determined by the sport. While not all Canadians enjoy ice hockey, it seems clear that when asked to name an element of the Canadian identity that even non-hockey fans will name the sport. The same is true, but to a much greater extent in Scotland. Obviously more research needs to be undertaken in this area, as some empirical data to support this notion would be helpful here.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 16 – 17

⁷⁸ The Tartan Army is the name given to the fans of the Scottish national team. Interestingly, the Tartan Army has always prided itself on the superior behaviour of their fans, especially when compared to the kinds of trouble English fans have often gotten themselves into when travelling to see their team play abroad. The international reputation of the Tartan Army, therefore, is used as evidence of the superiority of Scottish football, and of the difference and separation between Scotland and England. In a roundabout way, the Tartan Army is but one of

thus more inclined *not* to support Scotland in their international matches.⁷⁹ Celtic fans, on the other hand, because of their sympathy for nationalist struggles, are slightly more likely to support Scotland internationally than Rangers fans are. However, they are even *more* likely to support Ireland at the international level, using the Irish national team as a platform to voice their support for Irish reunification and argue the validity of the Republican cause.⁸⁰ Bradley points, out that,

Emphasizing the significance of Irish identity to Celtic's followers, a survey conducted in 1990 revealed that Celtic supporters (and Catholics generally) have less affinity with many Scottish symbols than have other significant populations of Scotland (including other football clubs' fans, the Orange Institution and members of the Church of Scotland). In fact, a majority of Celtic supporters choose Irish symbols over Scottish ones while almost no other fans choose these.⁸¹

Lincoln Allison also points out that, "The Scottish football team ... expresses significant vestiges of the religious and political wars which rent the British Isles in the seventeenth century. It may unite the politically opposed forces of Unionism and Nationalism, but it does still represent a *protestant* Scotland."⁸² Finally, as Bradley argues, "...ethno-religious cleavage in Scotland is expressed outside as well as inside the football environment: football is but an extension of other social and political perceptions, myths and realities."⁸³ What is obvious, therefore, is that not only do Celtic and Rangers mirror the conflicts in Ulster and Ireland, but they also heavily impact upon the Scottish nation's ability to unify and to claim a coherent Scottish identity.

The founding myths of the two teams are perpetuated through the colours of the uniforms the teams wear (Celtic: green and white hoops, Rangers: blue, white and red, with orange as the alternate), the songs their fans sing and the flags they wave at the games. Bairner points out that, "...when we are confronted by myths about national sporting traditions, it is important that we recognize that the myths are not bad simply by virtue of their being myths. Of course, we would also do well to examine the precise ways in which myths are used with what ramifications."⁸⁴ Because these teams are so important to so many people in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and indeed, across the world, their significance for the Northern Irish political situation and those who see themselves as intimately connected with it, cannot be understated. Celtic remains the primary outlet through which Irish Catholic identities in Scotland are focused. This loyalty is evidenced by the results of a major project on Irish identity in Britain in 2001 – 2002. Surveys were given to respondents with at least one Irish born parent or grandparent. The result was that, "Regardless of gender, age, and social class, all respondents in Scotland – with only one exception – reported that Celtic was their favored football club, and further, that this had significance for their sense of Irishness in Scotland."⁸⁵ Even attempts by the Gaelic Athletic Association to penetrate Scottish society and promote Gaelic games have been relatively unsuccessful because of the pre-existing

many symbols which reinforce the idea that Scotland is a nation on its own, and that it was only by an accident of history (or deliberate conquest, depending on one's point of view), that Scotland remains legally a part of the United Kingdom. However, it is easy to overstate the public good behaviour of the Tartan Army as evidence of the presence of a unified Scottish national consciousness.

⁷⁹ Bairner, in Jarvie and Walker, eds., p. 19

⁸⁰ see Murray, The Old Firm

⁸¹ Bradley, in Cronin and Myall, eds., p. 130

⁸² Allison, in Coakley and Dunning, eds., p. 348

⁸³ Bradley, in Cronin and Myall, eds., p. 146

⁸⁴ Bairner, Sport, Nationalism and Globalization, p. 5

⁸⁵ Joseph M. Bradley, "Celtic football club, Irish ethnicity, and Scottish society", New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring/Earrach, 2008, p. 98

popularity of Celtic.⁸⁶ Likewise, Rangers act as a conduit for the promotion of unionism and Protestantism at the expense of the formation of a coherent Scottish nation and Scottish identity. With the two sides representing such diametrically opposed positions, it is not surprising that football is a major part of the Northern Irish conflict, as well as of the formation of the conflicts associated social rituals and social identities. Murray argues that, “The hatred that fills the air at these games is almost physical in its impact, as Glasgow plays out in bloodless microcosm the tragedy being enacted in Ulster.”⁸⁷ The Northern Irish conflict, therefore, finds one of its many manifestations through the social rituals associated with football matches in Glasgow, and therefore football represents an important outlet through which the conflict will continue to manifest itself.

Conclusion

The sectarian nature of Scottish football mirrors the Northern Irish conflict in a number of ways, most notably in the ways in which social, religious, cultural and ethnic divisions are reinforced. Sport may have the potential to unify disparate factions, but it can also reinforce their division. While all societies are to a certain extent divided, the question remains as to whether sport exacerbates, reifies or bridges these divisions.⁸⁸ MacClancy points out that, “Sports ... may be used to fulfill a plethora of functions: to define more sharply the already established boundaries of moral and political communities; to assist in the creation of new social identities; to give physical expression to certain social values and to act as a means of reflecting on those values; to serve as potentially contested space by opposed groups.”⁸⁹ In addition, Harvey points out that,

Nations that exist within nation-states also use sport to promote their own claims for sovereignty and the promotion of their interests as ethnic groups within established states. Different forms of communities are solidified or even constructed through sport. Other nations enhance their identity through affirmation or contestation of the hegemonic national model.⁹⁰

Therefore, sport offers an avenue through which the Irish community in Glasgow can continue to express itself, as well as for the Scottish nation to attempt to build itself into something which is coherent and definable. Houlihan points out that, regarding the Irish situation in particular, that the history of that country, “...probably provides the first example of sport being used as a political resource in a nationalist and anticolonialist movement.”⁹¹ Sport is the domain of the masses, and the political opinion of the masses can be much more easily expressed in the stadium than it can in the halls of government. What is urgently needed is a deeper analysis of what impact and effect the political opinions of sports fans have on ‘actual’ politics. I have already argued here that there is, indeed, a relationship between sport and politics, but a deeper probing of what, exactly, this relationship means is crucial not only for the cases under consideration here, but also for international relations in general.

The relationship between the city of Glasgow and its Irish community is long and complex, and therefore it should not be surprising that nationalist and unionist sentiments are just as evident in Sauchiehall St. in Glasgow as they are in the Falls Rd. and Shankhill Rd. neighbourhoods of

⁸⁶ Joseph M. Bradley, “Heritage, Culture and Identity: The Gaelic Athletic Association in Scotland”, in Jarvie, ed., p. 175

⁸⁷ Murray, p. 59

⁸⁸ Bairner and Sugden, in Sugden and Bairner, eds., p. 2

⁸⁹ MacClancy, p. 7

⁹⁰ Jean Harvey, “Sport and Québec Nationalism: Ethnic or Civic Identity?”, in Sugden and Bairner, eds., p.

⁹¹ Houlihan, in Coakley and Dunning, eds., p. 216

Belfast.⁹² It is because of the strength and historical embeddedness of this relationship that a consideration of the impact of sport, and in this case, football in particular, has on social and ethnic identities is crucial for our understanding of the continuing salience of the Northern Irish conflict, as well as for the state of the Scottish nation. A deeper examination of this relationship requires mainstream IR theory to be more cognisant of the power that everyday life and social rituals have in forming an individual's political, ethnic, religious and national identity. By taking cues from feminist literature, IR theorists are able to reject the inaccurate public/private divide which pervades our understanding of 'the international'. Moreover, an increased focus on the literature on the 'everyday' international political economy allows us to be aware that, "Our everyday actions have important consequences for the constitution and transformation of the local, national, regional and global contexts."⁹³ Finally, borrowing from post-modernist and post-structuralist approaches allow us to question more concretely the actions which we claim are political, while also encouraging us to critique and problematise the binaries which pervade our knowledge of 'the international'.

⁹² See Joseph M. Bradley, "Sport and the Contestation of Cultural and Ethnic Identities in Scottish Society", in Cronin and Myall, eds.

⁹³ John M. Hobson and Leonard Seabrooke, "Everyday IPE: Revealing everyday forms of change in the world economy", in John M. Hobson and Leonard Seabrooke, eds., Everyday Politics of the World Economy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 1

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