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**Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd**

**CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT**

**DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)**

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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SOCIAL COMPLEXITY  
OF SPORTING NATIONALISMS DURING THE BRITISH  
AND IRISH LIONS TOUR OF 2013.**

**SOCIO-CULTURAL**

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An Investigation Into the Social Complexity of  
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## **ABSTRACT:**

This thesis is broadly concerned with the role that international sport plays in the construction and representation of national identity, Wales in particular. It addresses the complex relationship between sport and nationalism through an investigation into how these sporting nationalisms are created, firstly, to symbolise nations and national character. Secondly, it addresses how national-states such as the United Kingdom uses sports to foster a British sense of nationalism and how the agglomeration of four different nations and cultures interact during the British and Irish Lions. The complex nature of these interactions will be examined with reference to the concepts of 'imagined communities', 'invented traditions' and the exposition of national habitus codes. This was achieved through the focus group discussions, collecting qualitative data and categorising their thoughts/views into general themes.

The results demonstrated how Wales have used rugby as a signifier of national character to mask over the internal division within the nation and its communities. The main sources of the Welsh identity were examined through examining habitus codes. The findings showed that although Welsh fans engage in supporting British sporting teams and its 'unified' image, it is mostly through an unobstructed view of their single national identity – that the deep, underlying 'I/we/us' relations come to surface during the Lions, especially through the external threats such as biased team selections during the Lions tour.



# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

## 1.0. Introduction.

Smith and Porter (2004) described the relationship between sport and national identity as complex and multifaceted. National identity, unlike citizenship, is not an official record of an individual's nationhood; it relates to the individuals' shared sense of belonging to that nation. Topic and Coakley (2010) defined national identity as a shared sense of nationhood, created by the images and stories associated with an identifiable nation-state. Within this relationship the sports arena can provide a powerful source for both the construction and representation of national identity (Poulton, 2004). International sporting competition, it could be argued (Tuck, 2003; Maguire and Poulton, 1999), provides the primary expression of nations, where the nation becomes more 'real' in the domain of sport. In the case of Wales, it could be argued that rugby has been an example of how it is seen as a collective symbol to which all within the country share a sense of belonging to.

Wales, a nation within a national-state, Britain, have adopted rugby as the common symbol for their national identity, based on being separate from England. The English and British identities are seen as being synonymous (MacRury and Poynter, 1999) with England arguably the most dominant nation within the United Kingdom in regards to politics and economy. However, although Wales have voted for devolution, it has never fully pushed for total separation away from England and the United Kingdom, rather using the British sporting stage as means to prove itself as an equal nation. The British state arguably uses sport in the same way Wales has, in trying to instil a sense of British nationhood for all the four nations. However, the Olympic team does not always portray a viable 'Four nations united' image, as seen with previous controversies. The Lions, however, seems to attract the support of all nations within the United Kingdom.

The juxtaposing of the English against the Celtic nations in the annual 6 nations championship, whilst also uniting them as British and Irish Lions every four years has consequently created a cultural paradox (Bloyce et al, 2010). The British and Irish Lions tour of 2013 saw their first successful tour since 1997, and with an overwhelming amount of Welsh players in the test squad and support through the iconic phrase 'Sea of Red' in British media in regards to the Lions' fans. Bloyce et al (2010) revealed how the four nations adopt a 'four nations united' image at the start of the tour, through the process of un-tagging the national identities of the players, however, when feelings of unjust or biased selection were felt from one of the nations, the collective 'we' image quickly unravelled. The research proposes to explore the complexity of sporting nationalisms within events such as the British and Irish Lions rugby tour.

# **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## 2.1. 'Nation' and 'National Consciousness'.

Canovan (1998) stated that most scholars of nationalism have come to agreement that it is an extraordinarily hard subject on which to get a conceptual grip. To alleviate the current complexity of the relationship between nationalism and sport, there is firstly a need to clarify the meaning of the term, nation. The definition of 'nation' has been cause for argument and contention by past authors in modern sociology. Giddens (1985) observed that a nation could only exist when a state had a unified administrative reach over the territory in which its sovereignty is claimed. Smith (2001) defined nation as a human community occupying a homeland, with common myths and a shared history. Giddens' (1985) definition implies that the realms of the nation (cultural) and state (political) are at one (McCrone and Kiely, 2000), while Smith's (2001) definition seems to avoid this extreme of equating the nation with communities defined purely by political boundaries (Norman, 1999). However, past studies such as Smith (1991) argued that 'nation' is a fairly modern concept. Contemporary societies seem to place great value on national consciousness when defining a nation. This has resulted in the acceptance by modernists of the premise that nations aren't natural entities, but rather the construction of modern society. Influential concepts such as 'Invented traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) and 'Imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983), have allowed the impression of the nation to be seen as a modern phenomenon. These concepts are especially relevant to the point made earlier, how national consciousness has become crucial in defining a nation: making it seem more 'real' for the individuals who live within its established boundaries.

Anderson (1983) explained the notion of 'imagined communities' through the comparison of the nation as a larger community to a small community, like a village. Due to the fact that although members of these 'communities' would never get to know, meet or hear their fellow members, unless they belonged to a smaller community such as a village; each member has a shared image of their communion. Actual small communities as described above, where face to face contact does exist can then be juxtaposed to nations and the feeling of shared identity amongst people. When juxtaposing these small communities to nations, Anderson (1983) suggests that the distinguishing feature of these nations viewed as a larger community is that they are categorized by the way they are imagined.

Nevertheless, these large communities viewed as a nation are limited in the fact that, beyond their boundaries; are other nations/large communities. This concept can be related to Billig's (1995) notion that in modern times a greater significance has been placed in 'boundaries' to which there is an actual point at which the ratio between the familiar and the unfamiliar become critical, as seen in a nation.

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) introduced another important concept, with their notion of 'invented traditions'; they assumed that if no suitable past exists, then one can be invented. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) explained that these 'invented traditions' can be seen as something that may seem or claim to be old in origin - but are often invented or even originated recently. 'Invented traditions' can be seen as a set of practices which seek to inculcate certain values and norms implying automatic continuity with the past. This concept relates to the practices used in international sport; where these 'invented' traditions are implemented to foster uniqueness and continuity with the past. Johnes (2004) cited such traditions within rugby; how Max Boyce's chant 'Oggi-Oggi' helped affirm Wales' national stadium as a 'Welsh Mecca' (p.53). Both these concepts share a common discourse, that all nations are imagined in respect to a mix of popular mythology, invented tradition and cultural artefacts (Smith and Porter, 2004).

Tuck (2003) believed that national character is defined through interconnected social funds of knowledge. Thus, in effect, national character can be related with Giddens' (1984) notions of 'practical consciousness' and 'discursive consciousness'; meaning that national communities should be viewed as more than imaginary, simple products of 'discursive consciousness'. These signifiers of national character are not 'imagined', they provide a real and powerful emotional vocabulary for communities (Tuck, 2003). Tuck (2003) observed that habitus codes are an example of these signifiers of national character, which work in between the two levels of consciousness which reawaken sleeping memories, and through the practical actions of individuals, make the nation seem more 'real'. Tuck (2003) explained this further:

These memories form the very building blocks of the 'narrative of the nation' which, through the 'remembering' of shared collective experiences and 'invented traditions', defines I/we relations which, by reference to an 'imagined community', imparts meaning to the nation. (p.180, 2003).

The construction/reinforcing of our 'I/we identity' through discursive practices and practical actions enables us to share things in common, but also separating 'us' from 'them'. These notions, such as 'I/we identity' and sleeping memories will be explained later on in this section. While valuable in establishing a framework to theorising national character, Anderson's (1983) and Hobsbawm and Rangers' (1983) concepts appear to neglect the interplay between the two levels of consciousness noted above, dealing only with 'discursive consciousness'. Although both concepts were of assistance in making sense of the relationship between sport and the nation, Elias' (1991) exposition of habitus codes exemplifies these 'real' signifiers of national character which are not wholly imagined (Tuck, 2003).

## 2.2. Habitus Codes.

According to Tuck (2003), the Eliasian thought behind concepts such as habitus could help uncover the binds that link the individual, nation and sport together. Elias (1991) observed that the exposition of habitus was one of the conceptual keys which aided in the dissolving of the false dichotomy between the individual and society. Tuck (2003) explained habitus as a complex, multi-layered container of identifications within the subconscious; which could be appreciated further when considering the 'individual' and 'social' layers which interlock within this conceptual container (Elias, 1991). The individual level refers to the series of learned behavioural dispositions unique to the individual, while the social level refers to a collection of personality characteristics which individuals share in common with other members of 'their' group (Tuck, 2003). The intertwining of the individual and society can be more clearly explained by Elias' (1991) notion that there can be no 'I' without the presence of a 'we'. Poulton (2004) supported the above notion that an individual is not only an 'I', but belongs to group and therefore a 'we'. Elias (1991) explained national character as a layer of social habitus which is built deeply in the personality of an individual - countering conventional conceptualization of the individual, nation and national character as separate entities (Poulton, 2004). Importantly, Elias (1991) noted that social habitus' (or national character) formation was tough, but also flexible; always being in flux. Tuck (2003) observed how this 'flexibility' is constantly tested by the increasing effects of globalization, citing the three main implications it may have: the weakening or strengthening of nations due to/or in resistance to globalization. The final implication would be the pluralization of identities, to create a hybrid in place of declining national identities (Tuck, 2003). However, the nation still remains a powerful force in spite of globalization's effect (Smith, 1995).

Elias (1994) referred to a 'fantasy shield' which is used to preserve national character from decline, protecting the established groups' status. Tuck (2003) simplified this notion, stating how national habitus is protected by contrasting the best elements of the established group, against the worst elements of 'them' – outsiders who don't share the same personality characteristics in the social layer of their habitus codes. This deepening of an 'I/we' identity acts like a double-bind; which enables 'us' to separate 'us' from 'them' (Maguire and Poulton, 1999). Through this form of protection of national character, the we-identity of the national collective hardens; bringing the nation closer to the individual's 'I' identity. Tuck (2003) said that through this process and individual can become an embodiment of the nation, and the nation becomes that individual.

Elias' (1996) study of the Germans revealed that, over many years, the fortunes of the nation (we-identity) became embedded into the habitus of the individuals ('I' identity);



supporting Elias' (1994) observation earlier. Maguire and Poulton (1999) described this as an emotional bond between the individual and the nation, referring to it as series of sleeping memories; organised around common symbols. These memories are the root of a nation's narrative, strengthening the I/we relation. Tuck (2003) directly links this 'remembering' of shared collective experiences with invented traditions, and how these notions define I/we relations within an imagined community of the nation. Tuck (2003) notes that the fortune of a nation continually influences national habitus through forming a link with the 'we-layer' of personal identity. Tuck goes on to observe how fluctuations in the power ratios between social groups (or external threat), effects this 'we-layer' by causing it to become hardened or softened. Tuck believed that national character is grounded in a series of 'habitus networks' which are contoured by flows of 'national habitus codes' such as symbolic images and language. Habitus codes can be viewed as a two-sided mechanism which operates between subjectivity (I) and objectivity (we), sustaining the imagined national community. Therefore 'we' learn about 'our' history and 'our' society through these habitus codes which are built around different entities that assist 'us' in knowing who we are, how we should think, how to feel, and how to behave (Poulton, 2004). In essence, habitus codes are a product of social construction – subjectively imagined and sustained. The subjective (individual) sustain these national habitus codes which have a collective and external influence on individuals.

These national habitus codes seem to trigger national sentiment within the context of international sport. Poulton (2004) and Kretchmar (1988) seem to agree how sport is an example of the protective 'shield' mentioned earlier; that international sporting games/competitions are viewed as contests between 'us' and 'them'. Smith and Porter (2004) highlighted the importance of how sport can create a sense of nationhood, citing international competitions as means to generate occasions where nations are embodied as something real and visible. Smith and Porter (2004) refer to Hobsbawm's argument that sport, for males especially, has been uniquely effective in generating a sense of belonging to the nation; resulting in the national sporting teams becoming the focus/embodiment for the imagined communities/nations. Elaborate.

### 2.3. Rugby as a symbol for Wales.

The imagined community of millions seem more real as a team of eleven named people. The individual, even the one who only cheers, becomes a symbol of his nation himself. (Hobsbawm, p.143, 1983).

International sport has great appeal to the 'imagined community' of Wales, a nation governed by a national-state (United Kingdom), as means to visibly represent themselves as a culturally independent nation, with their own unique nationality. However, Johnes (2000) observed how Wales is a nation which is divided geographically, linguistically and ethnically – resulting in a plethora of different meanings to what 'Welshness'. Johnes (2004) argued that sport, rugby in particular, has been an active and dominant agent in creating and sustaining the Welsh national identity, referring to Hobsbawm's (1983) statement above, it implies that Wales have used rugby as a tool in which it has masked over internal divisions to give everyone in Wales a common symbol to affiliate their Welsh identity with. Arguably, it is rugby that is the most dominant sport in Wales, with great support for the national team. Tuck (2003) claimed that the health of Wales as a nation is perceived as inseparable from the success/failure of the rugby team. Rugby was originally a winter game for English public schools, but the Welsh used the sport as means to incorporate their new nationalistic identity. This seems to imply counter-hegemonic imperialism, how the Welsh have sought to take a sport in which England was dominant and used for public school boys, as a tool to defeat them and establish itself as an equal within the British state. Andrews (1991) believed that the Welsh were intent on basing this new identity on historical differences with their neighbouring country, England; this relates to the discussion earlier about Elias' notion of how the collective 'we/us' compare 'our' best elements with the worst elements of 'them'. Furthermore, Andrews (1991) believed that the Welsh were attempting to promote an indigenous Welsh culture by linking aspects of the current Wales (for instance, rugby) to a historical past, the Celts. This statement clearly interlinks with Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) notion of invented traditions, seeking to create certain values which imply continuity with the past. This is also visible in Johnes' (2000) observation on how Wales, when trying to implement rugby as its national sport, attempted to give Welsh roots to the English public school sport – relating it to the ancient game 'Cnappan'. Johnes (2000) also believed that sports, like rugby, offered the Welsh a great opportunity to get one over the English, without the extremities of a political movement. Johnes (2004) reports how Welsh rugby international matches against England became more nationalistic, with the Welsh fans booing the English national anthem, God save the queen. Wales' rugby identity was nationalistic and instilled a sense of national pride, but Wales were still under the governance of Great Britain. After failures

in political advances, such as the 1979 referendum for devolution, Wales are finally making their political ambitions clearer. Iorwerth et al (2014) believed that every nation usually aspires towards some degree of political autonomy. According to Tuck (2003), some of the Celtic nations in the British Isles are reasserting their nationalist claims through advocating for the dissolution of the United Kingdom. Wales, as well as Scotland, have achieved political advances in the form of devolution, with Scotland having a big upcoming vote on independence soon. If cultural nations such as Wales and Scotland strive for more political power, then what effect does this have on the national-state, United Kingdom?

#### 2.4. The British Identity.

McCrone and Kiely (2000) believed there has always been something fundamentally problematic about the national/state identity of the British Isles. Due to the Celtic nations, such as Wales or Scotland, seeking to affirm their own unique nationalities, it has caused some individuals of those nations to treat their nationality and citizenship as different orders of concept. McCrone and Kiely (2000) explained this problematic view further, stating that they may view their nationality, or nation-ness, as Scottish or Welsh, whereas their citizenship (state-ness) is British. This problematic view relates to Nairn's (1977) view that Britain is languishing amid a crisis of identity. A potential reason behind this problematic confusion of identity could be the lack of clarity as to what the British identity actually is. MacRury and Poynter (2010) believed that the English and British identities have been typically considered as synonymous, which could relate to why the Celtic nations have sought to create their own national identities. According to Iorwerth et al (2014), for multi-national states, such as Britain, to be viable there needs to be some degree of cultural similarity to exist alongside a narrow sense of belonging or identity. But, the weaker this sense of identity becomes, the more likely nations will seek political independence (Iorwerth et al, 2014). What it implies, is that culture and politics tend to converge, meaning it does not result in cultural homogeneity on the one hand, or political independence on the other (Iorwerth et al, 2014). Contrary to the views of Ware (1998), cultural nations and political nation-states are not two separate phenomena. Iorwerth et al (2014) explains, using the Wales-Britain case; how Britain depends on the existence of a British culture and identity to legitimise the British state, however, its vitality depends on how it succeeds to allow cultural and national diversity within a broad British identity. This would suggest that it would be possible to be both Welsh and British, due to the fact individuals often have multiple identities. The results of the 1997 referendum survey, clearly supports this notion: results showed how Welsh people are divided in how they see

their national identity, with 34% stating they felt equally Welsh and British (Johnes, 2004). Therefore, although cultural nations exist within Britain, it doesn't mean it can't be seen as a cultural entity. Sport has played a role in the strengthening of British identity, much like it has for cultural nations.

## 2.5. British Sporting Teams.

John Major, the former UK prime minister, observed that sport is a central part of Britain's national heritage, being one of the defining characteristics of nationhood. A Great Britain team, with representatives from all nations, contests every four years at the Olympics. The creation of such multi-national teams often present cultural complexities, which can be problematic. The 2012 Olympic games in London was supposed to reaffirm the British identity and foster a strong sense of nationhood for all the nations Great Britain represented. However, the 2012 Olympics did show the complexities the British identity has can lead to controversies. Iorwerth et al (2014) cited the example of the inclusion of a Great Britain football team, especially for the 2012 games (first time for decades), which sparked uproar in the Scottish, Welsh and Irish football associations; worried it may undermine their agreements with FIFA. Another example would be the outrage in Scotland when it was announced that the Olympic rings were to be placed on Edinburgh castle, which angered Scottish inhabitants due to the fact the majority of the Olympics took place in London and not in Edinburgh. These show the role sport has played in disrupting the axiomatic associations between identities, cultures, nations and states by allowing the cultural nations within the political states to express themselves. However, the British and Irish Lions rugby team seems to attract support from all the nations within Great Britain: even the Republic of Ireland, which isn't under the govern of Britain, joins this team. The Lions rugby team is represented by Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England and tours one of the three big Southern Hemisphere teams every four years, attracting mass support and media attention.

## 2.6. The British and Irish Lions.

The juxtaposing of the English against the Celtic nations in the annual 6 nations championship, whilst also uniting them as British and Irish Lions every four years has consequently created a cultural paradox (Bloyce et al, 2010). Bloyce et al (2010) explained that the juxtapositioning of inter-national tensions between the four Home Nations with the construction of a more transitory allegiance to a seemingly unified Lions/British sense of nationalism generates a habitus problem. This problem delves from the earlier stated relation of 'I/we' and how these four nations, especially Wales, have used this relation to distinguish their blurred borders from England. In regards to Elias' habitus codes, Bloyce et al (2010) believes that shifts in the diminishing of contrasts and increasing varieties of Britishness in recent times may have some relationship with habitus codes surrounding the British and Irish Lions, making it an interesting subject to research into.

Bloyce et al (2010) examines the press coverage (Welsh, Irish, English and Scottish newspapers) of the 2005 Lions series in New Zealand. Their findings centred around how the newspapers reinforced national habitus and invented traditions, resulting in the heightening of the English-Celtic nations' rivalry despite the media's attempts of invoking a sense of Lions unity. Firstly, there is a need to understand the context of the 2005 tour which may have provoked the heightened sense of English-Celtic rivalry: The Lions had an extremely poor tour, resulting in a 3-0 whitewash to New Zealand. Bloyce et al (2010) reports that just under half the team were English, although Wales had just won the Grand Slam, which results in the Welsh newspapers to call upon the coach, Woodward, to adopt 'The Welsh Way' to turn the Lions' performances. The findings seem to suggest each nation's newspaper 'looked after their own' – praising individuals from the nation, and calling for changes if they were not picked. The 2013 Lions tour, however, was much more favourable towards the Welsh, with Wales' head coach in charge and many players picked for the Lions' squad.

Bloyce et al (2010) showed how the British and Irish Lions management, and media at first, tried to portray a unified image. This was achieved by not tagging players or coaches to a single national identity, rather trying to promote the notion of four countries striving to achieve the same goal. In relation to Elias' habitus codes earlier, it becomes clear how the Lions try to create a strong 'we' sense, through invented traditions of past victories or successful players/coaches. However, due to feelings of biased selections – certain newspapers from Celtic nations started to tag national identities to athletes, calling upon the management to select certain players – this shows how weak the 'we' shared sense is, breaking down and back to their own national identities to protect 'us' from

'them'. However, the 2013 Lions tour was much more favourable towards the Welsh, with Wales' head coach in charge and many players picked for the Lions' squad, so I propose to investigate this area of research, how the Welsh and British identity interacts during such multi-national team events. Rather than investigate the effect discursive practices such as the media has, I propose to explore the practical consciousness of Welsh people in regards to their own identity, firstly, then how supporting teams such as the British and Irish Lions may affect their sense of identity.

# **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### 3.1. Methodology: Qualitative Research

Barbour (2007) defined qualitative research as means to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' in a variety of ways (p.xii). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that qualitative research has a different ontological position from traditional quantitative research. They concurred that the works of a qualitative researcher allows them to construct the reality they see rather than the inquiry merely being a spectator activity. Shank (1995) supported Lincoln and Guba's (1985) argument that the foundations of qualitative research are based on values and judgements, not facts. Silverman (2000) considered that the openness of qualitative research is useful and positive, where the values and judgements of the researcher can become explicitly stated. A qualitative method can be utilised to capture the participants' feelings and thoughts; it has the ability within it to uncover implicit meaning and provide a greater depth and richness of detail (Creswell, 1994). However, Shank (1995) highlighted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) argument that although the philosophical foundations of qualitative research is relativistic and that validity and scope is directed by subjective value judgements, the findings of qualitative research should remain as empirical and scientific as quantitative research.

### 3.2. Focus Groups.

As stated earlier, Barbour (2007) defined qualitative research as means to understand or explain social phenomena in a variety of ways: one of which is relevant to the research carried out in this study:

By analyzing interactions and communications in the making. This can be based on observing or recording practices of interacting and communicating and analyzing this material. (p.xii, 2007)

The research method chosen for this study was focus group discussions, where the purpose was to listen and gather information from the participants. Krueger and Casey (2009) noted that focus groups are an effective method to better understand how people feel or think about an issue. Krueger and Casey (2009) elaborated further, noting how the data in focus groups are solicited through open-ended questions – allowing the possibility for key themes to surface from the respondents' answers. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) defined a focus group as a group discussion where the researcher actively encourages, and remains attentive to, the group interaction. This concurs with Barbour's (2007) definition of qualitative research above: the key element would be to conduct a focus group discussion to promote interaction/discussion – rather than asking a list of the same questions to each participant in their turn (Barbour, 2007). The benefits of this style of



research is also the collection of a range of opinions of different people (Krueger and Casey, 2009), without having to interview every one individually. Barbour (2007) highlighted that for this to be successful, the running of the focus group discussion must encourage participants to talk amongst themselves rather than interacting only with the researcher.

### 3.3. Sample.

Four members of a Welsh speaking rugby club based in Cardiff, Clwb Rygbi Cymry Caerdydd, will be invited to take part in the study. This rugby club attracts many players from different regions or countries, not all being Welsh and Welsh speaking. The participants chosen are from different areas, and are invited to share their own experiences and feelings in an open discussion. The second focus group conducted invited three Welsh students at Cardiff Metropolitan University, who weren't raised as Welsh speakers, to take part in the study. Due to the majority of the group from Clwb Rygbi Cymry Caerdydd being Welsh speakers, and playing for a Welsh speaking club, they would feel an immediate strong connection to the Welsh identity. I sought to investigate how these students perceived their national identity and connection to the Welsh identity, having not been raised as Welsh speakers.

Barbour (2007) highlighted the need for participants to have enough in common with each other to make the discussion seem appropriate, yet have varied experiences/perspectives to allow the possibility of debate or differences in opinion. By using a smaller number of participants, interviews can be more open-ended, meaning that in-depth information can be obtained from the interview; allowing a chance for better, detailed evaluation of what was discussed during the interview. It also allowed me, the interviewer, the freedom and openness to ask questions related to their answers, rather than having a constructed interview/discussion. The discussion sought to evaluate their thoughts on their own national and state identity. This was to discover how they see some of the cultural values/traditions which are associated with Wales and how International/ Multi-national sporting teams are an influential agent in building national character.

### 3.4. Validity/Reliability.

In regards to ethical concerns, Barbour (2007) stated that ethical issues should not be interpreted as completing application forms for ethics committees. To ensure ethical validity: participant information sheets and informed consent forms were gathered prior to the study (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Kevern and Webb (2001) raised a possible ethical concern within focus groups, how the discussions may throw up comments which may cause offence to others. In order to prevent this, strategic sampling was utilised, minimising any risk of offense by creating focus groups in which the respondents had common experiences or views. The data collected complied with the Data Protection Act (1998) which ensured the anonymity of the respondents' identities/names from the analysis, referring to them only as 'respondents', thus protecting the confidentiality of their views and identity.

A neutral environment was used to conduct the interviews, to ensure reliability and validity of interview results. The environment must be suitable to ensure participants' comfort for the duration of the interview. A Dictaphone was used to record the interviews, thus avoiding human error and increasing the reliability of results, to give a precise overview of what was said and discussed. The measurement of the data involved listening to the audio tape of the discussion repeatedly, as well as re-reading the transcripts to check for clarity and validity of any quotes used or discussed.

To assess the validity and reliability of the data collected, the data was to be compared to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concepts of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to discuss the truth value of any findings. Credibility refers to whether the results of qualitative research are credible from the participants' perspectives, this was achieved by allowing participants to check the transcripts of what they had said and what was to be used in the study. Transferability determines the extent of which the results can be generalized to other contexts or settings; the findings determined how rugby has been used as a common symbol for Welsh identity and the dual nationality nature in regards to their British identity (enjoying both cultures within sport), these findings concur with Bairner's (1994) observation of how Scotland used football as their common symbol for Scottish national identity and how they, also, seemed to have a sense of dual nationality. Dependability is based on the assumption that the replicability control of changes that occur in the research context is needed. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results/findings could be confirmed or related to by other research findings, findings in regards to support towards the Lions team and how fragile

this relationship between the different nations within the United Kingdom were related to the findings of Bloyce et al (2010).

### 3.5. Procedure:

A larger number of participants than stated were initially contacted in order to ensure a correct sample for the study. If more than the required amount replied then participants were chosen strategically for the final sample. Consent forms were to be handed out to the participants prior to the focus group discussions, and only those who gave informed consent could take part in the research study, and provision of the context of the study was also given to participants before they gave consent (Appendix B). A focus group discussion was arranged with the chosen participants of the study, at a time and place which was convenient to them all. The duration of the discussions varied from twenty to forty minutes, allowing enough time for the participants to be informed about the study, and interact with each other, discussing key topics related to the research question and to be debriefed after the discussion. To ensure good practise, an interview guide was used to only to guide the discussion towards certain topics related to the research, which allowed the freedom to react and ask questions to certain topics or areas the group discussed to reveal greater depth to answers given. A pilot study took place before interviewing the focus groups chosen; a method which is supported by Griggs (2010). In doing this, the focus group discussions are trustworthy and should run smoothly with appropriately chosen questions to encourage interaction. The pilot interview allows changes to be made if any practical issues are discovered related to the interview before the interview. In accordance to Krueger and Casey's (2009) observation earlier, the questions set in the interview guide were open-ended (see Appendix 3). The open ended questions were to encourage discussion between the participants' views and feelings, however, some questions were omitted due to my role as an observer – listening and asking questions in relation to what the respondents had discussed.

### 3.6. Data Analysis:

Having collected the relevant material the essence, the following procedure was to return to the research question to sort and evaluate information gathered, in connection with the research question and the concepts identified. The first stage of the analysis involved transcribing the focus group discussions.

Following the discussion, it was transcribed and confirmed by the participants before being analysed, using an inductive method. Due to working with long transcripts, the majority of analysis was focused on key or primary topics discussed within the discussion. Litosseliti

(2003) concurs with this method, citing some questions may not warrant the same amount of analysis, and other questions may be eliminated as simply background questions. The process of analysis, explicitation, was broken into different stages; referring to Groenewald's (2004) explanation of this process. The first stage was to delineate units of meaning from the discussions, before clustering these units of meanings to form potential themes. Each interview/discussion was summarised, using the themes formed from the units of meaning to sign post parts of the discussion which would be relevant to the discussion. The different formed themes from the discussions were then examined again, linking any themes which arose in both focus groups to create general themes, while also noting unique themes that were found to be discussed in the next part of the study.

Like most methods of qualitative data analysis, the process of explicitation involved extracting a series of themes from the data collected. To help ensure clarity within the findings, answers from the discussions will be coded; using the categories that derive from the discussions as a guide. Therefore movement back and forth between conceptualization, data collection, analysis and interpretation was expected (Bryman, 2004). Barbour (2007) explained how the discussions conducted should allow the researcher, when coding categories, the flexibility to incorporate themes introduced by the focus group participants as well as using the topic guide as a starting point. Using the Dictaphone recordings, narratives were produced of the discussions before seeking the participants' verification of the findings for the validity of the study and ensure that the participants were satisfied with the information they provided to be used in the study.

# **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS/DISCUSSION**

#### 4.1. Introduction.

As previously stated, this study followed Groenewald's (2004) process of explicitation with each focus group discussion undertaken, to establish general and unique themes which arose during the discussions that took place. These themes will be used as sub-headings for the discussion. The qualitative findings will support the discussion of these key themes, whilst also referring back to literature to explain or discuss the implications of the qualitative findings.

#### 4.2. The Welsh Identity.

"I'm Welsh, I consider myself Welsh before I consider myself British, definitely": Two respondents referred to how, if they were to check into a hotel, they would naturally state their nationality was Welsh, although their passports state them as British citizens. McCrone and Kiely (2000) believed that this confusion may be due to how Welsh people view their nationality and citizenship as different orders of concept, they're likely to view their nationality as Welsh, but their citizenship is British. McCrone and Kiely (2000) explained the possible cause of this is that nationality is viewed as a cultural concept, binding people on the basis of a shared identity, whilst citizenship is more of a political concept which derives from the individual's relationship to the state. However, in modern society it is becoming clearer that both these concepts are in a complex relationship with each other, each requires the other (McCrone and Kiely, 2000).

The respondents believed their Welsh identity was something they were raised as. Tuck (2003) explained how the individual level of habitus codes refers to series of learned behaviour, unique to the individual. When asked why they felt their national identity was Welsh, the majority of participants referred to how they were raised with a strong sense of Welsh identity; they identified their parents and geographical locations as influential factors in the forming of their beliefs and sense of identity. Respondents from the first group referred to how they felt they were groomed to be pro-Welsh, and even anti-royalist. The majority of respondents concurred that they would consider themselves being Welsh, before British. Respondents from both groups seemed to relay the same notion as each other; how having a traditional Welsh family upbringing and being in a geographical location which is mainly Welsh as influencing factors as to why they would claim to be Welsh, before British. Tuck (2003) explained how the second level of habitus codes, the social level, is the collection of personality characteristics which individuals share in common with other members of 'their' group. To feel 'Welsh', an individual is wary and

appreciates the shared personality characteristics to other members who are Welsh and a shared sense of belonging is created, creating a collective sense of 'us'. Elias (1991) elaborated, explaining that there can be no 'I' without the presence of a 'we'. The respondents referred to how their upbringing in a pro-Welsh geographical location influenced their belief that they were Welsh, installing a belief that they were part of a nation. One respondent explained how everyone in their community were proud Welsh people, and promoted everything Welsh.

Maguire and Poulton (1999) described how the bond between the individual and the nation is emotional, referring to it as series of sleeping memories; organised around common symbols. These memories are the root of a nation's narrative, strengthening the I/we relation mentioned earlier. During the discussions, it became clear that there were common symbols mentioned in relation to their sense of belonging to Wales. The first focus group cited the use of Welsh flags to be seen everywhere during international sporting contests as an example of a common symbol to which everyone; women, men and children, could see clearly what their identity is and understand the concept of being Welsh. One respondent cited national icons/symbols such as carrying a daffodil or a leek could be used to demonstrate their Welsh identity clearly. The respondents discussed how these symbols, and the use/demonstrations of these symbols (through waving the Welsh flag, for example) signified what the Welsh identity was, and fostered the overwhelming sense of 'us' as a nation, especially during sporting contests.

As discussed above, and when referring back to the literature review; it becomes clear how habitus codes works in relation to how the majority of participants in both focus groups felt Welsh, and part of a national community of some kind. Poulton (2004) believed that 'we' learn about 'our' history and 'our' knowledge through these habitus codes which are built to assist 'us' in knowing who we are, how we should think, feel and how to behave. This notion is certainly relayed by one respondent: "I think a lot of this behaviour and feelings you have are taught or learned". One respondent referred to how, being raised with certain cultural values, made it unmistakable that they are Welsh:

It's an easy thing if you speak the Welsh language... Sing at the eisteddfod... Have that kind of upbringing where you go to Capel and all that sort of stuff... The language is a help, in terms of being able to identify something which separates us from England, but I don't think people who can't speak it are any less Welsh.

The respondents from the first group discussed how easy it was for them to feel affiliated with the Welsh identity, speaking the Welsh language, but they raised the point on whether non-Welsh speaking individuals would feel less Welsh. One respondent believed feeling Welsh wasn't so much as speaking Welsh or being a part of the Eisteddfod, but being who

they feel they are, “Intrinsically, you are what you feel inside”. The respondents identified sport’s role in their relationship to their identity/belonging to Wales. Rugby is Wales’ primary sport, attracting mass support from across the country. One respondent highlighted how being Welsh and playing rugby fostered their perception of Welsh identity. Another respondent highlighted how rugby could be seen as a broad cultural symbol in which people could affiliate themselves with Wales, referring to how it was a great way to show their pride towards Wales. Smith and Porter (2004) refer to Hobsbawm’s earlier argument that sport has been uniquely effective in generating a sense of belonging to the nation, sometimes resulting in the national sporting teams become the focus for the imagined communities/nations.

#### 4.3. Rugby as an ‘Umbrella Identity’ for Wales.

Tuck (2003) believed that the health of Wales as a nation could be perceived as inseparable from the success or failures of the rugby team. Such a bold statement could be seen as over-exaggeration, however, Johnes (2000) referred to how rugby in Wales, in the past, has been in decline alongside the economy during times of depression across Wales: “Rugby’s role as a symbol of Wales’ well-being seemed to hold true in bad as well as good times” (p.100, 2000). One respondent referred back to the context and build up leading to when Wales voted in favour for a Welsh Assembly; how the millennium stadium, Wales’ national rugby stadium, being built was highly symbolic at the time and marked Wales’ progression as a highly competent rugby nation. They refer to how Wales was also on a 10 match winning streak, and along with other cultural upsurges such as music, there was a mass feeling of how great Wales was: “We can do all this stuff on our own”. Another respondent believed that Wales’ success on the rugby pitch helps the Welsh national identity to some extent, being something everyone can rejoice in and share with all. The importance of sport to facilitate and create a sense of nationhood and pride in their nation was highlighted in the first focus group, relating it to their thoughts on why Scotland may not vote for independence: “Look at the success of their sporting teams of late; rugby down the pan... Rangers – bust!”. Scotland’s football teams compete independently, in a Scottish league (different to Wales’ top teams) so the fall of one of their greatest teams, Rangers, may reflect in some people’s eyes why total separation from the British state wouldn’t be beneficial.

Wales’ rugby team competes annually in the 6 nations rugby tournament, going against the likes of England, and France. Kretchmar (1988) believed that sport is full of contraries,



an international arena where 'us' and 'them' are clearly distinguished. Maguire and Poulton (1999) believed that the deepening of an 'I/we' identity, as mentioned earlier, enable 'us' to separate 'us' from 'them'; this is achieved through contrasting the best elements of 'us', against the worst elements of 'them'. This was relayed by one respondent; they felt that one of the characteristics of the Welsh identity was the strong sense of being different from England: "...identify something which separates us from England". The general consensus from the respondents was that rugby allows Wales the chance to clearly distinguish themselves from the English (whom they view as 'the old enemy'), and regard it as the most important fixture - defeating the English creates a sense of national joy. Both focus groups referred to their personal experiences, how they may have English friends, but for the duration of the rugby match between Wales and England – they view each other as rivals, engaging in 'banter' between both nations, however, their friendships with their English counterparts remain unaffected. The second focus group referred to how the media attempts to 'hype up' this sense of rivalry in the build up to England against Wales, usually referring to the old rivalry, one respondent cited a banned TV advert; where Scottish, Irish and Welsh fans said it was England they wanted to beat the most, whilst England fans seemed confused as to who they wanted to defeat.

The respondents observed that the media's effect on promoting Welsh rugby has made rugby a national symbol/icon for Wales. The respondents refer to how billboards use the Welsh national team iconography to entice new businesses: "You could also have 3 million people supporting you if your business comes to Wales" (referring to the Welsh national team's overwhelming support). The respondents observed how they would use Welsh sporting icons to identify their nation, rather than accepting the common notion that they were British/English, when travelling abroad: "Don't give up the fight that easily, you can use people – sportspeople or Tom Jones, Ryan Giggs". A respondent referred to how in a local Eisteddfod, the competition was to create Welsh icons using groggs – unsurprisingly most children decided to sculpt Welsh rugby icons as their national icons. The media can be seen as a strong discursive practice which affects the practical consciousness of the individual, through identifying rugby as a means to strengthen the 'I/we' identity by supporting Wales, by contrasting 'us' against 'them' (England). This is evident in one respondents' recollection of their childhood and the golf was on – a child his age encouraged him to watch Ian Woosnam, a famous Welsh golfer. Although the child didn't watch golf, the fuss that had been made about him, because he was a Welsh representative, made them feel compelled to share and promote the successes of Welsh athletes.

However, the interplay between discursive practices and practical consciousness does not affect everyone the same way. Tuck (2003) cited habitus codes as an example of how signifiers of national character works in between the discursive and practical, reawakening sleeping memories, and the practical actions or feelings of the individual make the nation seem more 'real' and they become an embodiment of it. Generally, most respondents agreed that playing rugby and supporting the national team were a strong part of their identity; but not every Welsh person in the country speaks Welsh, or are raised in a pro-Welsh community or play rugby/support it. One respondent claimed to feel more British than Welsh, due to their preferred sport – boxing. They felt that the Welsh media seemed to neglect amateur boxing in Wales, referring to the anonymity of successful Welsh boxer, Fred Evans, who won a silver medal in the Olympics. As an individual athlete, the pinnacle of their career would be to represent Great Britain at the Olympics, an aspiration they hope to fulfil. The reason for this could be that the signifiers of national character and discursive practices mentioned above, don't seem to affect his practical consciousness in the way that they feel a part of the nation – their practical actions do not embody what they view, from discursive practices and national character signifiers, as the actions of a patriotic Welsh person and don't feel a strong emotional bond to their nation. A respondent drew attention to the possible confusion surrounding individual athletes' perception of their identity, citing how it's peculiar that these athletes represent a team, when they're individuals competing in individual events.

Rugby has already been distinguished as a signifier of national character for Wales, however, sport seems to gloss over the different meanings that the people Wales attach to their nationality, allowing them to assert their Welshness in the face of internal division (Johnes, 2004). The study findings revealed that although rugby is effective in sustaining the Welsh national identity, the internal division can be seen from their personal experiences playing for their rugby club, the only Welsh-speaking rugby club in Cardiff. The respondents raised the point that some people may feel less Welsh in comparison to Welsh speakers as themselves, however they believed it shouldn't. They believed this has been the cause for conflict and anger being shown towards them when playing for their club, referring to how they have been called a "Welsh c\*\*\*" by Welshmen from clubs within the Cardiff area. This internal division of Welsh communities relates to Billig's (1995) observation that the further one would travel from their community, the less they would have in common with other individuals from different communities, and in today's society, a greater significance has been placed upon these differences, creating clearer boundaries. Of course rugby was/is supposed to lessen these communal differences so everyone could unite under a common symbol (Johnes, 2000). The reasons behind Wales

adopting rugby as their national sport and symbol of identity was because rugby offered a useful way of binding new communities, made up of an agglomeration of people from different localities and nations (Johnes, 2000). This is was due to an influx of in-migrants from England to Welsh communities when the coal mines in South Wales provided a booming economy – Wales had to be flexible in who it saw as their sons (Johnes, 2000). One respondent observed that rugby clubs have been a central part of many communities in Wales, confirming its cultural value as a symbol everyone can relate to and feel Welsh.

Few respondents concurred that the success of the Welsh rugby team and their affiliation with the Welsh identity wasn't synonymous to their political beliefs/identity. Wales have voted in favour of devolution since the failure of the 1979 referendum. Tuck (2003) observed how some of the Celtic nations in the British Isles are reasserting their nationalist claims through advocating for the dissolution of the British state, which seems relevant to the current political advances by both Wales and Scotland - Scotland having a big upcoming referendum on independence. Wales' vote for devolution could be seen as following Scotland's political advances, hoping for increases political autonomy. However, in contrast to Scotland, Wales' inhabitants have doubts as to whether or not devolution has had a positive effect for Wales (Johnes, 2004). Johnes' (2004) observation on how Welsh people are unsure of political advances are relayed by the respondents - although the majority identify themselves as being outright Welsh, there remains doubts whether more political advances would improve the current economic situation: "It's based far more on economics and whether we'd be able to sustain it. People know that the Welsh economy is largely public sector.

This is also likely because sport demonstrates the dual nature of national identity in Wales; on the one hand they desire recognition as a separate identity, but without pressing for complete separation (Johnes, 2000). Although Wales defeating England creates national joy, and the international match context is used to clearly separate both countries, sport predominantly reaffirms Wales' place in the British state. One respondent picked up on this, referring to how they felt that Welsh sport isn't doing enough to promote the Welsh identity:

Do Wales use sport as a means to push things? Yes, but I don't know if we're doing it in the right way. I think we push in a very similar way to what England do; we don't really create or show our true identity in some sporting events... Something that is truly different.

Holt (1989) refers to how Ireland created and promoted their own separate identity clearly from England, through the creation of the Gaelic games, a unique cultural tradition belonging to Ireland and promoting it as a national sport. Wales, however, used the

English' own sport against them to reaffirm their status as an equal nation in the British state, as well as using it as a national signifier of Welsh identity. This is epitomised by the concluding remarks of two respondents: "I'm happy enough to be within the British union... *As long as we can stick it to them every time we play at Twickenham!*". The respondents seemed happy to remain within the British state, so long as they are allowed to promote their own unique cultural identity, "We are a separate country within a conglomerate".

#### 4.4. Perceptions of Britain, and the British Identity.

The Union Jack flag doesn't do anything for me personally, and I associate it mainly with England... The England football team... Stuff like football hooliganism... I don't like it at all.

MacRury and Poynter (2010) argued that the English and British identities have been typically considered as synonymous, to which participants from both focus groups concurred with, especially in foreign countries outside the United Kingdom. One respondent cited personal experiences abroad where foreign people struggled to understand that there are four different nations within the British state, associating Britain with England, the royal family and the houses of parliament in London. Another respondent concurred, referring to how some people assumed Wales was a part of England: "Is that in England?".

McCrone and Kiely (2000) explained that the possible cause for this confusion regarding England and Britain being synonymous is due to the fact that the majority of people, especially English people, assumed that Great Britain was essentially a Greater England - which has led to a long-term confusion between England and Britain. Polley (2004) noted how it wasn't until the 2002 world cup that English football fans adopted the flag of St George as the symbol of English sport, moving away from using the Union Jack flag. Polley (2004) also noted how this suggested English people were finally waking up from history, recognising that the unquestionable use of the Union flag as a symbol of England, was no longer viable. McCrone and Kiely (2000) concurred that the British nations has only recently, in the late twentieth century, begun to come to terms with the long term confusion between England and Britain, which may have been caused by the nationalistic movements of Scotland and Wales. Polley's (2004) statements certainly apply to one respondents' statements earlier regarding to how they viewed the Union Jack flag. It also provides a possible explanation to the widespread confusion abroad regarding Britain and England as being synonymous: football is arguably the most popular sport in the world, with the football world cup finals being viewed by millions from numerous countries across

the globe. England are a regular competing team in the world cup, rarely failing to qualify and usually reaching the knockout stages. If English fans used the Union flag as their symbol on a global stage such as the world cup, it is not surprising how foreign people made the assumption that England represents Britain. Holt (1989) believed the confusion regarding England and Britain was simple – England dominated the British Isles, being superior in population and resources.

#### 4.5. Perceptions of British Sporting Teams.

Viewing England as the economically and politically dominant force has fed a sense of antagonism towards them, from a Welsh perspective (Holt, 1989). The second focus group certainly highlighted this notion when discussing their support towards British teams in the Olympics. One respondent referred to how the English receive much more funding towards the development of sport of their country's athletes, compared to Wales – giving English athletes a better start. Participant C concurred, stating they would support a Welsh athlete competing for Great Britain, before other British athletes, due to how the Welsh athlete has had to beat challenging athletes from across the border with higher funding and better facilities, to get to the Olympics. This sense of proudness towards Welsh athletes competing for Great Britain was also noted in the first focus group, as they mentioned how they would make sure to be in the house to watch Colin Jackson run in the Olympics, because he was Welsh, whereas in regards to other British athletes, they may not have bothered to watch it. Bairner's (1994) observations are relevant here; how although Welsh athletes compete in British teams, they are seen to be representing Wales – the performances of these athletes are viewed from a relatively unobstructed perspective of a single identity. Arguably, this shows how even in a British team context, the Welsh fans maintain a strong sense of 'us' in looking out and supporting their own athletes, appreciating how they have beaten 'them' (athletes from the other nations within Britain) to get to the Olympics.

However, although the majority claimed they would be proud of Welsh success within the Great Britain team and support them passionately; the participants of the first focus group revealed how they couldn't help but feel a British sense of proudness, and support the team: one respondent disclosed how he felt a bit fickle in supporting the Great Britain team, and was amazed at the Olympic opening ceremony in London, feeling proud to be British. All respondents, although considering themselves Welsh before being British, refer to how the Olympics did create a sense of national pride towards Britain because of its

success and presentation; referring to the hype made about the mass work of volunteers during the London Olympics to foster a sense of pride and the success of the London Olympics as a great way to unite everyone. One respondent believed this is because people like being affiliated with success, and with the Olympics in London being one of the most successful ever for Great Britain, it would appear everyone felt the 'Olympic feel good factor' and felt a part of the success— implying that sport fuels British identity.

It was explained earlier how some of the participants viewed British symbols as being synonymous with England, and how they were raised to be pro-Welsh. However one respondent raised an interesting point for discussion: how although he'd been raised anti-royalist, his grandparents had been massively pro-royalist and would strongly consider themselves British. Clearly, this implies a dramatic shift in between generations in regards to the sense of identity towards Britain. Iorwerth et al (2014) observed that, for multi-national states such as Britain, to be viable there needs to be some degree of cultural similarity to exist alongside a narrow sense of belonging or identity. With Wales reasserting their identity through the forms of cultural symbols such as the language and rugby, it seemed to distance itself away from the British/English identity, which could explain the shift in sense of identity over the generations.

#### 4.6. Perceptions of The British and Irish Lions.

I think in terms of importance, it's nice for individual players to receive recognition that they're one of the best players and it's very important to them, and there's a chance for everybody to come together and finally support a team.

The above statement implies that the respondents seem to relish the chance to watch the best players in the United Kingdom join together for 'an old-style type of tour' against one of top teams in the world. This is the important notion about the Lions; old rivalries are forgotten and emphasis is placed on the sense of four nations uniting. Bloyce et al (2010) observed how, prior to the 2005 Lions tour, the media attempted to reduce tagging players to separate national identities – instead trying to foster a sense of unitedness: "Power of four: One objective" (p.449, 2010). One respondent recalls how the Lions was portrayed: "If you listen to what these people who are actively involved with the team are talking about, what motivates them, it's about coming together". The Lions is, possibly, more successful than the Olympics at generating and sustaining this image of four nations uniting because it is viewed as an agglomeration of four different cultures and nations, without it being dominated by England (as the Olympics can be viewed), and the portrayal of four nations uniting is seen much more real due to the fair representation. Iorwerth et al

(2014) drew attention to the backlash which ensued when it was announced that there would be a Great Britain football team competing in the 2012 Olympics – England are by far the most dominant football team in the United Kingdom, so fans assumed it would essentially be an England team with one or two players from the Celtic nations. However, the Lions may be an agglomeration of four different cultures, one respondent refers to his experiences going abroad to watch the Lions:

“In terms of the amount of mixing we did with fellow Lions fans, it was quite limited... Even though I was supporting the team, the extent to which I shared an identity with Joe Bloggs from Croydon, or even Jock from Edinburgh, was limited. We were all there because we had a stake in it.”

The respondents' final statement seems to highlight the important notion as to why the Lions seems to attract support. As discussed earlier, there remains a sense of antagonism towards the Olympics and how English athletes are perceived to have had easier and more opportunities than other athletes from the Celtic nations – due to better funding and resources. However, with rugby being Wales' main sport, and how competent they have been in past 6 nations tournaments – the Lions seems to offer fairer representation of athletes from Wales, Ireland, England and Scotland. This what the respondent refers to having a 'stake in it', referring how every nation has a representative usually within the Lions team. The above statement could interlink with Iorwerth et al's (2014) observation that for multi-national states, such as Britain, to be viable there needs to be some degree of cultural similarity to exist alongside a narrow sense of belonging or identity. The respondent noted how the degree of cultural similarity was limited, but they were there for the same reason – to support the Lions and the representatives of their nations.

One respondent cited how Wales' successful history within the Lions was something in which attracted support: “A lot of Welsh players have been captains or coaches of the Lions, like Carwyn Jones and the Lions team that beat New Zealand”. This notion of how Wales' successful past in the Lions can be related back to Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) concept of invented traditions, how referring back to these old glories create a sense of affiliation to Welsh rugby fans. Bloyce et al (2010) picked up on this, also, highlighting how the Welsh media glorified Gareth Jenkins' coaching of the midweek team, referring to how he had sought inspiration from the success of Carwyn Jones.

However, Bloyce et al (2010) reported how the media of the Celtic nations slowly started to react angrily to team selections, believing there was an English bias in the selection of the test teams – further enhancing the Anglo-Celtic separation, rather than the 'unified' front that had been portrayed at the start of the tour. One respondent claimed they went through different emotions, supporting the Lions; at one hand they wanted as many players on the

tour possibly, but on the other hand they were just glad to see some of them being able to play alongside players such as Brian O'Driscoll, an icon of world and Irish rugby. The respondents drew attention to an example of how this 'unified' front quickly undoes itself if one of the nations involved feel that there has been any bias selections:

But, I mean, it was interesting to see the fall-out when Brian O'Driscoll was not selected for that third test, wasn't it? Because suddenly the Irish became very nasty towards the entire game.

The respondents agreed that although the Lions seemed to draw the support of all four nations, it is a fragile alliance – as seen in media/public backlashes before because of team selections. As the respondent earlier stated, all four nations have a stake in it, and the fans want to see as much representation for their nation possible.



# **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

## 5.0. Conclusion.

The findings of this study concluded that the majority of respondents felt they had a strong affiliation with the Welsh identity, certainly more so than the British identity; mainly because of the way they were raised by a Welsh family, within a Welsh community. Their concept of their own national identity certainly concurs with Topic and Coakley's (2010) definition of national identity, how their sense of nationhood is grounded on a shared sense of belonging. However, internal division within the Welsh identity is evident, sometimes resulting in conflict – as discussed in the respondents' personal experiences playing for the only Welsh-speaking rugby club in Cardiff. Anderson's (1983) notion of 'imagined communities' certainly relates to the findings of this study, how the image of Wales as a collective nation becomes 'real' during international rugby matches, masking the internal division, and making the nation seem like a collective 'us', strengthening the 'I/we' relation in the face of external threat in the form of international teams such as England – 'them'. The respondents' discussion seemed to imply that there is still mass confusion surrounding the British identity being synonymous with the English identity, however, Wales' sporting success seems to allow individuals to recognise Wales as a separate or equal nation within the United Kingdom.

However, although the respondents strongly felt Welsh, before British, they admitted to supporting British teams in events such as the Olympics and the British and Irish Lions rugby team. The findings seemed to imply that although they supported the Great Britain team in the Olympics, they would make more of an effort to support Welsh athletes – viewing it from an unobstructed view of a single national identity (Bairner, 1994). Another underlying finding was a sense of antagonism towards English athletes, how they had more opportunities due to much more funding and better resources. There seemed to be, although they supported the Olympic teams, a deep underlying sense of 'I/we' relation in regards to the Welsh athletes, and how they had overcome the competition of 'them' to earn a place in the Olympics. These underlying feelings seemed to weaken in regards to the British and Irish Lions; seeing it more of an agglomeration of four different nations/cultures with fairer representations of the four nations. The findings seemed to concur with the findings of Bloyce et al (2010); how the media and Lions management try and portray a 'four nations united' image, reducing in national tagging of athletes' national identities. Through the use of 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) the Lions were able to tie past glories and successes to individual nations and how they became united and worked well together, such as Wales' past successes involving Lions tours. The media and management staff seem to use these invented traditions and the un-

tagging of national identities to players to try and foster a British 'I/we' relation, using the Southern Hemisphere teams as the external threat – 'them'. However, as stated earlier in regards to the Olympics, there is an underlying sense of 'I/we' relation to their separate sporting nationalisms. When the external threat becomes biased selection or unjust, as seen with Brian O'Driscoll, the united 'I/we' image seems to unravel, going back to the old 'us' vs 'them' paradox seen annually in the six nations. The practical implication of these findings would be to, either study into Irish people's views on the Lions (seeing as they're not a part of the British state) or examine the media coverage of the 2013 Lions tour and how the press or the management staff tried to sustain this image of unity between four nations.

A clear limitation to the study was the size of the sample, the two focus group discussions conducted, in no way, reflects the general feelings of the whole country. However, the findings of the sample used showed the respondents' strong Welsh identity had no correlation to their political beliefs regarding more political advances. This contrasts the findings of Bond and Rosie (2010), which observed how strong affiliation with a Welsh identity and language saw a correlation with political views supporting independence. The implication of these findings may be that future studies, researching into sporting and political identities within Wales, should incorporate a bigger sample – covering different parts of Wales.

In regards to the research problem, the British and Irish Lions pose a stage in which there is a complex unification of sporting nationalisms. The British and Irish Lions' popularity is mostly, arguably, because it is seen as a fairer agglomeration of the four nations – especially in the eyes of the Welsh, with rugby being their main and most successful national sport. Clearly, the Lions tries to generate a sense of British nationalism, using of the agglomeration of four nations and cultures ('us'/'we') to create a 'united' image. This is mostly due to the use of discursive practices such as the media attempting to effect the practical consciousness of the individuals – successfully, to some extent, when considering the amount of Welsh, Scottish, Irish and English fans go abroad to support them. However, as highlighted in the findings of the study, the cultural similarity of this agglomeration of different cultures is weak – a fragile alliance. The findings showed that, although the 'four nations united' image is sustained through most Lions tours, the underlying fact is that the individuals', especially the Welsh respondents in this study, sporting nationalisms remain unaffected and come to surface if an external threat through the forms of unjust and biased selections against Welsh individuals arises.

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# **APPENDICES**



**APPENDIX A:  
ETHICS STATUS.**

Ethic Approval Form

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

**If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency such as the NHS or MoD, you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your NHS application in order that your School is aware of the project.**

The document *Guidelines for obtaining ethics approval* will help you complete this form. It is available from the [Cardiff Met website](#).

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to your School Research Ethics Committee.

**PLEASE NOTE:**


**Participant recruitment or data collection must not commence until ethics approval has been obtained.**

**PART ONE**

Name of applicant:	Evan Eben Pugh Jones
Supervisor (if student project):	Hywel Iorwerth
School:	Sport
Student number (if applicable):	St20003148
Programme enrolled on (if applicable):	Sport and Physical Education
Project Title:	An Investigation Into the Social Complexity of Sporting Nationalisms during the British and Irish Lions tour of 2013.
Expected Start Date:	01/09/2013
Approximate Duration:	Six months
Funding Body (if applicable):	None
Other researcher(s) working on the project:	None
Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?	No
Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?	No

<b>In no more than 150 words, give a non technical summary of the project</b>
The national identity of Wales is arguably divided, especially concerning British national identity. Sport is seen as a major agent that is used to create and maintain national identity; Wales and rugby are the example used in this study. Welsh fans tend not to support the English national team, especially in rugby, but the overall feeling towards the British and Irish Lions is different. The aim of the research is to investigate how British and Welsh national identity interact with each other, using the British and Irish Lions tour as a platform to investigate the feelings of Welsh fans towards the Lions, for example; whether or not they support them and why.

<b>Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:</b>	
Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain	No
Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples	No
Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)	No
Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)	No
If you have answered YES to any of these questions, no further information regarding your project is required.	
If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form	

<b>DECLARATION:</b>	
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework	
Signature of the applicant: <i>Evan Jones</i>	Date: 29/04/2013
<b>FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY</b>	
Name of supervisor: Hywel Iorwerth	Date: 20/05/2013
Signature of supervisor: 	

<b>Research Ethics Committee use only</b>	
Decision reached:	Project approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project approved in principle <input type="checkbox"/> Decision deferred <input type="checkbox"/> Project not approved <input type="checkbox"/> Project rejected <input type="checkbox"/>
Project reference number: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	
Name: Hywel Iorwerth	Date: 20/05/2013
Signature:	
Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

## PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN	
A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?	Choose an item.
A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used <sup>3</sup>	
Click here to enter text.	
A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project	
I will conduct 2 focus group discussions with Welsh male rugby fans, using a Dictaphone to then transcribe every interview. Analyse interviews for common themes and organise answers. Interactions will take place in a suitable and neutral environment, lasting roughly thirty minutes. Inductive method shall be used to analyse results and answers given in the interviews. Seek participants' verification of content they shared/discussed before using it.	
A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?	No
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research	
Click here to enter text.	

B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE	
B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?	
None	
B2 Student project only What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?	
Click here to enter text.	

C POTENTIAL RISKS	
C1 What potential risks do you foresee?	
Individuals may be offended by the views of others	
C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?	
Be delicate and conscientious with my questions, not being too blunt or personal – strategic sampling should ensure all have common experiences and views.	

When submitting your application you **MUST** attach a copy of the following:

- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

Refer to the document ***Guidelines for obtaining ethics approval*** for further details on what format these documents should take.

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<sup>3</sup> An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here

## APPENDIX 2:

### INFORMED CONSENT AND PARTICIPANT FORMS.

UREC reference number:

**Title of Project: An Investigation Into the Social Complexity of Sporting Nationalisms during the British and Irish Lions tour of 2013.**

#### Participant Information Sheet

##### **Background and aims of the research:**

Sport is seen as a major agent that is used to create and maintain national identity; Wales and rugby are the example used in this study. Welsh identity seems to strive on being different to their neighbouring country, England. International sporting events such as the Six Nations is seen as visual representations of both countries battling against each other ('us' against 'them'). Welsh fans tend not to support the English national team, especially in rugby, but the overall feeling towards the British and Irish Lions is different. With Wales and Scotland making more and more political advances towards independence, I seek to investigate if this has any effect on British sporting teams' support, and how. The aim of the research is to investigate how British and Welsh identities interact with each other, using the British and Irish Lions tour as a platform to investigate the feelings of Welsh fans towards the Lions.

##### **Are there any risks?**

We do not think there are any risks in taking part in the study; there will only be a (roughly) thirty minute open ended focus group interview, using a Dictaphone to transcribe the interview after. Questions will be prepared beforehand, and personal/upsetting questions will be avoided.

##### **Your rights:**

Joining the study does not mean that you give up any legal rights. In the very unlikely event of something going wrong during the evaluation, UWIC fully indemnifies its staff, and participants are covered by its insurance.

##### **What happens to the results of the evaluation?**

The Dictaphone will be used to transcribe the interview, and will be kept securely and privately. No other person, other than possibly the study supervisor, will see the transcripts and narratives of the interview. Interview transcripts will be organised into key themes and answers will be coded, your identity shall not be disclosed in the study.

##### **Benefits of taking part:**

The data that will be collected in this study will provide an improved insight into how British and Welsh identities interact with sport as an influential agent. It will help discover if sporting events such as the British and Irish Lions reaffirm the British state identity in times when the Celtic nations seek more political autonomy.

##### **How we protect your privacy:**

As you can see, everyone working on the study will respect your privacy. We have taken very careful steps to make sure that you cannot be identified from any of the information that we have about you. All personal information will remain confidential, complying with the procedures of the Data Protection Act (1998).

##### **My role as the researcher:**

The project involves me (Evan Jones) who will be conducting the interview.

**Your role as a participant:**

When the interview is under way, your role as a participant is to answer all questions as honestly as possible.

**Contact information:**

If you have any questions about the research or how we intend to conduct the study, please contact us.

Evan Eben Pugh Jones

☐ 07817785842

☐ [st20003148@outlook.uwic.ac.uk](mailto:st20003148@outlook.uwic.ac.uk) or [ebenjones93@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ebenjones93@hotmail.co.uk)

# UWIC PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UREC Reference No:

Title of Project: An Investigation Into the Social Complexity of Sporting Nationalisms during the British and Irish Lions tour of 2013.

Name of Researcher: Evan Eben Pugh Jones

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Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this evaluation study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that it is possible for me to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

I also understand that if this happens, our relationship with UWIC, or our legal rights, will not be affected.

I understand that information that I have discussed or given, may be used for the study, but that myself will not be identified.

I agree to take part in this evaluation study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person taking consent

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person taking consent

## **APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE.**

My name is Evan Eben Pugh Jones, and I'm currently a third year student at Cardiff Metropolitan University. As part of my research for my dissertation, I invite you to take part in a group interview. I wish to explore your feelings towards your national identity and your perceptions towards the British identity. The investigation will also seek your feelings towards the British sporting teams in the Olympics and the British and Irish Lions tour.

National Identity relates to your feelings towards your nation, whilst State Identity relates your feeling towards your nation-state; Britain.

What do you think your national identity is?

- Why?
- Is there a difference between your national and state identity - British?

What, in your opinion, creates or fosters a sense of identity?

- What's important to identity?
- The notion of 'us'/'we'? A shared sense of belonging?
- Distinguish 'us' from 'them'?

Do you think sport has an effect?

- Do you feel that rugby is important to Welsh identity?
- How?

Would you agree that the Welsh identity strives to be different to the English identity?

- Why?
- Do you think sport plays a role in this?
- Examples, rugby?

It would appear that the Celtic nations, such as Scotland and Wales, are finally making political advances towards devolution of powers or independence. What effect do you think this has on British identity?

- Why do you think the Welsh/Scottish are seeking political autonomy?
- Has Sport affected this in any way? Negatively/Positively?

How would you define British identity?

- Do you think sport has a role?
- Why/How? Examples?

What are your feelings towards the British and Irish Lions?

- Do you view them solely as a British team?
- Have you always felt this way, i.e, every Lions tour?
- Does your feelings towards the Lions contrast how you feel about the Olympics?
- Why?

Do you think British teams work well?

- Why?

What would be your thoughts on a permanent British team?

- Rugby, join the tri nations?
- Would this work? Why?

Just to finish, how do you think the British identity survives with the Celtic nations trying to reaffirm their own national identities, and seek political autonomy?

- What effect do you think this would have on British Sporting teams if Scotland and Wales were to become politically independent?
- Is there a need for some cultural similarity for the British identity to survive?
- Do you think sport is an effective agent to reaffirm both national and state identity?