

**Advantage line: Contextualizing the transformation debate of rugby  
in South Africa**

MSocSci History (Coursework) Mini-Dissertation

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## **Introduction**

The South African government and South African rugby have introduced a policy of transformation in the sport. South Africa is the only rugby playing nation with a policy that basis selection on race. What is behind the introduction of transformation into South African rugby and why is it failing? In general, I argue that transformation policy fails due to its ineffective implementation and the fact that it imitates what it is trying to remedy, the advantage of one group over another. The inspiration of this research is the contemporary debate surrounding the transformation of South African rugby. The recent selection of the first black Springbok (the national rugby team) captain, Siyamthanda Kolisi, has sparked further debates on the transformation of South African rugby. In addition, debates surrounding the transformation of aspects of a society is a global phenomenon that goes beyond sports. Transformation does not have a singular definition, and most certainly varies from country to country because of their respective histories.<sup>1</sup> Transformation policy aims to address the legacy of discrimination, racism and encourage the process of deracialization.

The term advantage line is an imaginary line that is parallel to the halfway line. It is when there is a breakdown in play, in the form of a scrum, ruck or maul. When a team advances over this line, it is a gain in territory. South African rugby is not an equal playing field. Some individuals have an advantage over others. South African rugby through political intervention seeks to achieve the goal of transformation of the sport for the purpose of nation building and addressing the inequities of the past. The national government, through the South African Sports Ministry, put in place policy that requires the Springboks to field a certain amount of black players. In an effort to ensure the rugby federations took his policy seriously, the former Minister of Sports and Recreation, Fikile Mbalula (2010-2017), on April 2016, banned the South African Rugby Union (SARU) from bidding to host any major events.<sup>2</sup> The set targets were as follows: By 2018, at least 60% of the full time staff had to be black. By 2018, at least 45% of the national team had to be black. By 2018, 60% of the nationally accredited coaches had to be black.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C, Mwigiri, Transformation and Affirmative action in South Africa, p.12

<sup>2</sup>Anon, 9 May 2017, <https://citizen.co.za/sport/sport-other-sport/1507869/rugby-and-cricket-overturn-their-transformation-bans/>, access: 16/02/2018

<sup>3</sup>Anon, 2 March 2017, <<https://businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/161391/new-race-quotas-for-sa-rugby-cricket-and-netball-revealed/>>, access: 16/02/2018

The aforementioned figures are excluding the quota set for coloured players and coaches. The counter argument to the racial quotas is that merit should be the basis of selection. Afriforum<sup>4</sup> champions the aforementioned argument. It is an organisation that is part of the larger Solidarity trade union, its primary focus is the preservation of minority rights.<sup>5</sup> However, its central focus is the rights of Afrikaners and it believes that the quota system is political interference that violates international sporting regulations.<sup>6</sup> This argument stems from how transformation and its policies, in any context or country, is preferential treatment for particular groups. Transformation also refers to a process where there are immense and radical alterations to the nature and character of a system, towards an entirely different direction.<sup>7</sup> The South African government and rugby has the goal of replacing the apartheid system and its divisive and unequal consequences on the sport. This leads to two points that any side of the debate should consider. Firstly, the definition of transformation implies that there should be little or no resemblance with the past configuration or structure. Which is why there are contestations to policies that call for quota systems. The quota system varies from country to country, but it is essentially the reservation of vacancies in schools, jobs or sports for a set number of individuals from a certain group. Secondly, apartheid was in itself a policy of affirmative action, it was a system used to achieve the goal of transformation in favour of the Afrikaner population. In addition, political interference is not new to South African rugby. The apartheid government was protective over rugby and did not compromise apartheid values. Such historical comparisons can help to gain a greater understanding of the history of South African rugby and the impact of wider societal historical developments.

A consequence of South Africa's socio-political history is that most professional rugby players come from pools of players that have attended the best schools in South Africa. Some of the best schools in South Africa have a rich history in the development of South African society and rugby. Historically, rugby is a sport imported from Great Britain during colonial times. Its historical development in Great Britain forms the basis for understanding

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<sup>4</sup> Afriforum is a non-governmental organisation that aims to protect the rights of minorities in South Africa.

<sup>5</sup> P, Du Toit, 2 February 2018, [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/2017/02/02/9-things-you-most-likely-didnt-know-about-afriforum\\_a\\_21705488/](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/2017/02/02/9-things-you-most-likely-didnt-know-about-afriforum_a_21705488/) (last accessed: 13/11/2018)

<sup>6</sup>N, Venter, 2 May 2017, < <https://www.afriforum.co.za/afriforum-solidaritys-fight-sport-quotas-continues/>>, access: 16/02/2018

<sup>7</sup> D, L. Sheth. "Reservation Policy Revisited". *Economic and Political Weekly*. 22 (46), 1987, p. 1957

how it fits in society, how it gained that role in society and how it is perpetuated. Rugby is the product of numerous variations of football during Great Britain's Victorian era (1837-1901). The Cape colony adopted the same role for sport in their society as Great Britain, including rugby.

The schools with a rich rugby history are far better equipped than facilities from the less developed areas, townships or informal settlements. Thus implying an inherent inequality in rugby from even grassroots level. Albert Grundlingh and Alana Bolligello add to the debate on transformation of rugby, noting the effect the professionalization of the sport has had on achieving transformation. A large focus is placed on race as a hurdle for transformation due the country's history. There is pressure on the institution of rugby from its commercialisation, the media, politics and the like. However, the legacy of apartheid is still a reality. Sixty percent of the black population, which is about eighty percent of the total population of South Africa lives in poverty. Less than ten percent of the population dominates representation in South African rugby. Grundlingh does not address how exclusion (whether geographical or economical) based on policy from apartheid continues to impact transformation and representation in South African rugby. Joe Robinson argues that the systems for scouting talent prior to 1994 were meant to only find white players. The system may still give an advantage to white players.<sup>8</sup> In addition, it is more advantageous over and against black players with white players possessing greater social capital that affords the access to resources and opportunities. Therefore, the quota system is a means to correct the mentioned figures and inequality in the sport.

The quota system is also an attack on a formerly racist sport, as rugby at one point was virtually synonymous with Afrikaners and therefore was a symbol of apartheid. As evidenced by the comments made by the former Minister of Sport Mankhenkesi Stofile (2004 – 2010) who thinks of sport "...as an instrument to free our people from the inferiority complex instilled by apartheid."<sup>9</sup> The governments implemented both and both have had an ideological and political goal in mind. Since its introduction into South Africa, rugby has always been a political tool. When it first came in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British used

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<sup>8</sup> J, Robinson, N/d,<<http://diss.ltd/quota-system-south-african-sport-help-hindrance>>, access: 16/02/2018

<sup>9</sup> A, Grundlingh. 'Rands for Rugby: Ramifications of the professionalization of South African rugby, 1995-2007'. in G, Ryan (ed.). *The Union game and professionalization since 1995*, p. 67

rugby to connect the settlers, educate their youth and promote white supremacy. Additionally, it was only after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) that the Afrikaners appropriated rugby during the period of the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism. There has always been a link between South African Rugby and politics, the two are inseparable.<sup>10</sup> A critical look at the period under study, apartheid, points to the fact that government policies were the obstacles for black rugby players and not necessarily rugby clubs and federations. In the research, the aforementioned is evidenced by tracing the history of rugby in the black community. There is a long and rich history of rugby in the black community, however it has not been sufficiently recorded. The battle for transformed and truly inclusive rugby has been present for decades. The politics of the country remained an obstacle until apartheid laws were relaxed and eventually eradicated.

Transformation is the goal, transformation policies are how they aim to achieve it and neither have a singular definition. It varies from country to country because of their respective histories.<sup>11</sup> Transformation policy deals with the legacy of discrimination, racism and the process of deracialization. Transformation also refers to a process whereby there is immense and radical alterations to the nature and character of a system, towards an entirely different direction. However, this implies that there should be little or no resemblance with the past configuration or structure. This explains why there are always contestations to policies that call for a quota system. The quota system varies from country to country, but it is essentially when vacancies in schools, jobs or sport are reserved for a set number of individuals from a certain group. An example of the system is Reservation in India. They reserve seats in parliament, government jobs and even access to education, among other things to alleviate social inequality due to the country's history. The government of India selected historically depressed, disadvantaged and discriminated social classes and tribes as beneficiaries of the policy.<sup>12</sup>

The contestation arises with the implementation, because at times it begins to replicate the exact system that they were trying to get rid of and may come across as reverse discrimination. In addition, it may appear as favouritism and if it is the government that is

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<sup>10</sup> A, Bolligello, *Tracing the developments of professionalism in South African Rugby 1994-2004*, p.36

<sup>11</sup> C, Mwigiri, *Transformation and Affirmative action in South Africa*, p.12

<sup>12</sup> D, L. Sheth. "Reservation Policy Revisited". *Economic and Political Weekly*. 22 (46), 1987, p. 1957

implementing the policy all citizens should be entitled to equally benefit. For instance, in the case of South Africa, during apartheid the government showed bias towards white citizens, especially white Afrikaner-speaking citizens. The state implemented policies such as the Mines and Works Act (1956) or the Job Reservation Act (1957). Such policies reserved skilled work for white South Africans.<sup>13</sup> These policies marginalised the non-white South Africans. In modern South Africa, the current transformation policies and their implementation is compared to those of apartheid. The quota targets and racially selective policies set by the government are to empower non-whites and achieve equality for all.

Transformation policy is also often termed Affirmative action or Positive Action in the United Kingdom (and in other parts of Europe) and Employment Equity in South Africa. It is defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary as: “an active effort to improve the employment or educational opportunities of members of minority groups and women.”<sup>14</sup>

The *Economic Times* defines it as:

...a policy initiative in which a person's nationality, sex, religion, and caste are taken into account by a company or a government organisation to extend employment or education opportunities. By initiatives like these, the government plans to increase opportunities provided to underprivileged citizens.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, affirmative action is the government dealing with discrimination against groups in society. The government makes use of programmes, policies and even procedures. The aim of the concept is giving preference to the discriminated or previously discriminated groups as an effort to remedy the consequences of historical discrimination. It therefore became pertinent for there to be classification to have a scope, if you will, of the individuals applicable as beneficiaries.

In addition, one of the foremost academics in the field of social theory and economics, Thomas Sowell offers his own definition of affirmative action. Sowell's definition is the following: “group preferences and quotas, supposedly limited in time and scope, that aim either to benefit the least advantaged or to achieve a certain proportionality of benefits

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<sup>13</sup>South African History Online, n.d., <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/segregationist-legislation-timeline-1920-1929> (last accessed: 13/06/2018)

<sup>14</sup> Merriam-Webster, s.v. “Affirmative action”, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/affirmative%20action> (last access: 08/06/2018)

<sup>15</sup> Economic Times, s.v. “Affirmative action”, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/affirmative-action> (last access: 08/06/2018)

between the more advantaged and the less advantaged in society.”<sup>16</sup> However, as side note, he is a stern critic of the concept of affirmative action and its application anywhere in the globe. His definition is amiss of historical perspective, however, and as one reads his work, its basis is statistics. Therefore, in disapproval of the ‘incompleteness’ of the definition, James Sterba suggests an alternative definition, specifically for the case of the United States. Sterba defines it as “a policy of favouring qualified women and minority candidates over qualified men or nonminority candidates with the immediate goals of outreach, remedying discrimination, or achieving diversity, and the ultimate goals of attaining a colour-blind (racially just) and a gender-free (sexually just) society.”<sup>17</sup> Such a definition would not apply to South Africa with the majority having experienced discrimination and are in need of the assistance.

However, the universal aspects are to move away from colour or gender as a limitation. James Sterba also suggests two possible uses for affirmative action. Firstly, putting an end to discrimination to create an environment of equal opportunity. Secondly, restitution for a past of discrimination and the consequences thereof. What Sterba makes clear is that the concept is diverse.<sup>18</sup> Affirmative action is not only exclusive to race. In Germany, Positive Action deals with issues of equality regarding gender. Historically, females have experienced discrimination as well. Anke Stock is of the opinion that any form of equality is only achievable through the implementation of such policies.<sup>19</sup>

Transformation is not exclusive to sport. Sport is one aspect of a debate and phenomena in wider South African society. Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) or now Broad Based Black economic empowerment (BBBEE) was in part introduced to deracialise South African class hierarchy.<sup>20</sup> In the 2001 at the BEE commission, BEE was defined as the following:

It is an integrated and coherent socio-economic process. It is located within the context of the country’s national transformation programme, namely the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) It is aimed at redressing the

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<sup>16</sup> J, Sterba, Review: Completing Thomas Sowell's Study of Affirmative action and Then Drawing Different Conclusions, *Stanford Law Review* 57(2), 2004, p.659

<sup>17</sup> J, Sterba, Review: Completing Thomas Sowell's Study of Affirmative action and Then Drawing Different Conclusions, *Stanford Law Review* 57(2), 2004, p.659

<sup>18</sup> J, Sterba, Review: Completing Thomas Sowell's Study of Affirmative action and Then Drawing Different Conclusions, *Stanford Law Review* 57(2), 2004, pp.660-661

<sup>19</sup> Affirmative action: A German Perspective on the Promotion of Women's Rights with Regard to Employment, *Journal of Law and Society* 33(1), 2006, pp.60 & 73

<sup>20</sup> A, Desai. 2010. *The race to transform: Sport in Post-apartheid South Africa*, p.3



imbalances of the past by seeking to substantially and equitably transfer and confer the ownership, management and control of South Africa's financial and economic resources to the majority of the citizens. It seeks to ensure broader and meaningful participation in the economy by black people to achieve sustainable development and prosperity.<sup>21</sup>

BEE is critiqued by Christopher Merrett, Colin Tatz and Daryl Adair. Their argument is similar to that of Afriforum. It is not just and fair to all citizens. They argue that BEE is a result of a lack of depth in thinking about South African history. They evidence this by stating that is a coincidence that it emerged after the Truth and Reconciliation commission.<sup>22</sup> However, it has been the intention of the African National Congress (ANC) since they developed the freedom charter in 1955. The charter stated, amongst numerous objectives, "The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people." Part of the criticism of BEE is that it was government intervention to create economic equality that was not a result of natural market outcome.<sup>23</sup>

South Africa remains one the most unequal societies in the world, and these policies have proven to be corruptible, serving only a small percentage.<sup>24</sup> A majority of the constituents of the ruling party continue to face the problem of a lack of political representation and lack of access to fair participation in the economy.<sup>25</sup> There has been a mixed reception of the policies. Even amongst those that qualify to benefit. One side argues that merit based selection is better in order to set a precedence that can assist in dealing with some of the root problems of inequality. A root problem is the potential for the creation of a culture of complacency, ineptitude and mediocrity as a result of being handed things, therefore making this a contested issue. Doctor Mamphela Rhamphela is a stern critic of how it has created a culture of not benefitting all, including those that are most vulnerable. She further states that it does not reflect the values of the constitution that envisage the shared value of equality for all. In essence the engrained legacy of colonialism is perpetuated with the fact that not all South African benefit. In addition, Doctor Rhamphela asserts that it is more

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<sup>21</sup> Black Economic Empowerment Commission, *BEE Commission report*, 2001, p.2

<sup>22</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a court-like restorative justice body assembled in South Africa after the end of apartheid.

<sup>23</sup> C, Merrett, C, Tatz & D, Adair, 'History and its racial legacies: quotas in South African rugby and cricket', *Sport in Society* 14 (6), 2011, p.769

<sup>24</sup> A, Kanya, The Politics of Redress: South African Style Affirmative action, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35 (2), 1997, pp.247-249

<sup>25</sup> A, Kanya, The Politics of Redress: South African Style Affirmative action, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35 (2), 1997, pp.240-242

effective for South African society when it does not exclude any individuals irrespective of the social background. The premise of the argument is the fact that it can source knowledge from all social backgrounds. Thus, increasing the pool of talent to tackle the complex problems faced in the country.

### **Research methods**

The thesis makes use of desktop research. It focuses on debates found in secondary literature and uses mainly published material. Because this is a mini-dissertation the scope is limited, therefore desktop research is appropriate. All the primary source material utilised is available in the public domain. The research will be taking a qualitative approach because its focus is around a debate. There are two main viewpoints to the transformation debate surrounding rugby. However new viewpoints emerged from 2004, mainly surrounding the professionalization of the game and how it influences transformation and representation in rugby. The research will have to gain an understanding of each of the viewpoints. In addition, the research makes use of the comparative method. The comparative method provides the debate with a more international perspective and in doing so identify common trends and debates.

The research will make use of the 'constructionist' theory pioneered by Alan Munslow. However, Richard Holt, who argued that it, was formerly for those not familiar with history methodology. Holt has more recently modified it specifically for sport historians. It refers to not merely recovering or retelling the facts, but to use sport as a lens through which to understand the development of the society under study. South Africa has a dark past and the developments in sport have had an impact on its socio-political plight over the decades.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, deeper insight into sport and its history can help to locate the origins of the entrenchment of the racialization of sport.

### **Literature review**

Allan Gutman once said of the history of South African sport: "Broadly speaking the history of South African sports remains underdeveloped, South African sports history is still in its

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<sup>26</sup> R, Holt., 'Historians and the history of sport'. *Sport in history* 34 (1), pp. 1-33

infancy, and there is undoubtedly a need for more studies to be conducted.”<sup>27</sup> There is an argument that South African sport history has vast potential and there is a lot of untapped history. South Africa’s complex racialized history makes it a unique case study. This is because there is a growing global collection on works on the history on various sports. In particular, there is a growing interest in the role of sport in society. *The Routledge Handbook of Sport, Race and Ethnicity* (2016), under the editorship of John Nauright and David K. Wiggins, is prime evidence. The handbook is the work of a collection of academics around the globe. It identifies the interest that the connection among race, ethnicity and sport attracts academically at a multidisciplinary level. In an increasingly interconnected world, it advocates more expansive, inclusive and global perspectives concerning the institution of sport.<sup>28</sup> It is the go-to book for researchers enquiring into historical sports studies. This literature review, however, focuses more on South African texts rather than the vast array of international works. It is a collection of general and sport specific texts in South Africa.

Concerning sport specific material, there is plenty of literature on the history of rugby in the country. Nonetheless, there is limited work on its social history and the connection it has with sport more broadly in South Africa. There is even less of this type of work on rugby. The majority of the sources deal with the history of white rugby and the sports boycotts during apartheid, given the history of how racialized the game has been. Colin Du Plessis, in his Master’s dissertation “Divided We Stand: The Origins of Separation in South African Rugby”, attributes this to a fixation on the extraordinary and not the everyday lived experiences.<sup>29</sup> In 1933, Ivor Dillford published *The History of South African Rugby Football 1875-1932*. Dillford provided a general history of rugby in the country, during his era and is as a primary source. Sport historians such as Albert Grundlingh and Andre Odendaal have cited it. It includes access to information of clubs, unions and key figures in the history of the sport. All of which were politically affiliated in that era. It provides insight into understanding the entrenchment of racialized institutions and attitudes, to name one aspect.

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<sup>27</sup>Quoted in Dean Allen, N.d,<<https://www.ohio.edu/sportsafrica/journal/volume6/allen.htm>>. Access:29/11/2017

<sup>28</sup> J. Nauright and D.K Wiggins.2016. *The Routledge Handbook of Sport, Race and Ethnicity*.

<sup>29</sup> C. Du Plessis, ‘Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899’, p.16

The rise of social history in the 1960s introduced a new angle to the history of sport and leisure. Andre Odendaal was one of the first to look at the development of black sport. His works include *Cricket in Isolation: The Politics of Race and Cricket in South Africa* (1977).<sup>30</sup> In addition, he produced “South Africa's black Victorians, sport, race and class in South Africa before union” in the 1990 *Institute of Common Wealth Journal* (1990). His work adds to the social literature on rugby, but it also poses questions on how politicised the game was.<sup>31</sup> The aforementioned can assist in the comparison of political intervention during apartheid and in post-apartheid South Africa. Odendaal’s work also identifies the effect that colonisation and sport had on the black community. Of particular interest is the formation of black middle classes that separated themselves by assimilating for upward social mobility and that included sport. Black rugby was popularised by this class and has a history that is longer than what is popularly recognised. The black middle class was the group that became politically conscious and active. Odendaal provides foundational knowledge to understand the connection blackshave with the sport and the social, political and economic factors within the black community that surround it.<sup>33</sup>

Robert Archer and Antoine Bouillon produced *The South African Game: Sport and Racism* (1982). Its primary focus is South Africa’s divided society and the effect it had on the country’s sport. The text emphasises the relationship between politics and sport. Political developments in South Africa’s history entrenched ideas of discrimination and played a big role in fostering inequality. They also analyse the social developments of South Africa, such as the affiliation rugby has had with white South Africa and its emergence.<sup>34</sup> In 1989, Paul Dobson published a comprehensive history of rugby in *Rugby in South Africa, A History 1861-1988*.<sup>35</sup> He makes use of an exhaustive amount of sources ranging from newspapers, school magazines and even texts from legendary rugby administrators such as Dr. Danie Craven. Dobson also uncovers in more detail than Odendaal, the history of black rugby, from the very first clubs and unions. Odendaal and other sport historians later cited Dobson.

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<sup>30</sup> A, Odendaal. 2003. *Story Of An African Game: Black Cricketers and the Unmasking of Cricket’s greatest myths, 1850-2003*.

<sup>31</sup> A, Grundlingh., A, Odendaal. & B, Spies.1995. *Beyond the tryline:rugby and South African society*.

<sup>33</sup> The term black includes the Indian and Coloured community that also faced discrimination and limitations in South African sport. This term is used for historical accuracy, but it is not a claim to them being unchanging.

<sup>34</sup> R, Archer & A, Buouillon. 1982. *The South African Game: Sport and Racism*.

<sup>35</sup> P, Dobson.1989. *Rugby in South Africa: A history, 1861-1988*.

Dobson set the precedent for other authors such as Abdurahman Booley in his work titled *Forgotten heroes: History of black rugby 1882-1992* (1998). His book provides a unique perspective on South African rugby, and he uncovered what was an otherwise neglected aspect of rugby history.<sup>36</sup> He makes use of various sources and covers black clubs, unions, movements and players. He provides insight into the tone of the attitudes in various periods of the history of South African rugby. Additionally, unsuccessful endeavours aimed at change. He chronicles the various attempts, during apartheid, of initiating negotiations between black organisation, the government and the South African Rugby Board.

Additionally, Philani Nongogo deals with the deracialization of the game of rugby, historically separated along racial lines.<sup>37</sup> The majority of his work is on the political obstacles that stood in the way of multiracial rugby and the internal and external forces that pressured the South African government to drop the colour bar.<sup>38</sup> The colour bar dropped in school and club rugby in the early 1980s, as a sort of trial. Implementation in National rugby took place in the early 1990s. Furthermore, he traced the origins of black rugby along the coastal regions and its popularity. Not only does he add to otherwise lesser-known history, but he also adds an element to the transformation debate about how the game has historically sport popular amongst black communities.<sup>39</sup> His work then raises the question of why the professional game is still dominated by white players?

Albert Grundlingh gives answers to the question of ethnic dominance. In one of his earliest works, he hypothesised and traced the origins of how and when the game became prominent in the Afrikaner community, furthermore he links the game to the formation of identity in South Africa. His work is crucial as it provides context to why the game remains dominated by one ethnic group in South Africa, as well as their social link to the game.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, he provides an in-depth history of the game backed by more evidence than

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<sup>36</sup> A, Booley. 1998. *Forgotten heroes: history of black rugby 1882-1992*. Manie Booley.

<sup>37</sup> P, Nongogo. 2004. *Origins of development of black rugby in East London since the late nineteenth and its response to South African sport unification: a study of selected clubs*, Unpublished [MA Thesis](#), University of Fort Hare

<sup>38</sup> P, Nongogo. 2015. *The struggles to deracialise South African sport: a historical overview*. [Doctoral thesis](#), University of Pretoria.

<sup>39</sup> P, Nongogo. 2004. *Origins of the development of black rugby in East London since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its response to the South African sports unification: a study of selected clubs*. MA thesis, University of Fort Hare.

<sup>40</sup> A, Grundlingh., A, Odendaal., & B, Spies. *Behind the tryline: Rugby and South African society*, 1995.

prior attempts tracing the Afrikaner connection to the game could.<sup>41</sup> Grundlingh elaborates more on this topic in a book dedicated specifically to Afrikaner history in sport and leisure. Grundlingh's 2014, *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner History*<sup>42</sup> explores Afrikaner cultural history and strengthens the link between sports and social identity. He delves into issues of class and culture and their relationship to sport and leisure in Afrikaner society. Isabelle Huys expands on social identity and sport with a case study of Stellenbosch University, in her Master's thesis "A History Of "Koshuisrugby" At Stellenbosch".<sup>43</sup> Stellenbosch Rugby Football Club is rich in Afrikaner cultural, social and rugby history and is one the largest clubs in the world.

More recently, Grundlingh added his weight to the transformation debate. He argues that white dominance in the sport is not solely a product of the racialized political history of South Africa, but additionally stresses how its professionalization has drastically affected the game.<sup>44</sup> He adds to the work done by Allana Bolligelo who has critically explored the effects of the professionalization of South African rugby.<sup>45</sup> These two studies provide an alternative perspective to the debate. However, what I feel is missing is more critical analysis on the less advantaged and how they are still excluded. It is not sufficient to place the blame on the professionalization of the sport as that does not address the structures of finding talent, as well as apartheid spatial planning and the consequences thereof even in contemporary South Africa. Is the blame on the national rugby administration and pressure from their sources of capital or is the failure of the government to address social issues of inequality to blame? The work of Albert Grundlingh also touches on the formation of South African society. Colonisation, Western education and industrialisation were among the factors that shaped the social dynamic of the country, which reflected in South African rugby.

Christopher Merrett, Colin Tatz and Daryl Adair make similar arguments to Grundlingh and Bolligelo. In their journal article they make mention to the importance of the racialized past to present South African broader society and sport. They do this by providing why and how

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<sup>41</sup> J, Nauright. *Sports cultures and identities in South Africa*, 1997.

<sup>42</sup> A, Grundlingh. 2014. *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner History*.

<sup>43</sup> I, Huys. 2008. A History Of "Koshuisrugby" At Stellenbosch, MA Thesis, Stellenbosch University

<sup>44</sup> A, Grundlingh. 'Rands for Rugby: Ramifications of the professionalization of South African rugby, 1995-2007'. in G, Ryan. The Union game and professionalization since 1995, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> A, Bolligelo, 2006, Tracing the development of professionalism in South African rugby: 1996- 2004, MA Thesis, University of Stellenbosch

racism and discrimination displayed themselves in society and consequently in sport. This background was a foundation to a later argument in the paper. The post-apartheid South African government wants to eradicate the legacy of the past and move towards an idealistic non-racial South Africa. However, this process, through the quota system or affirmative action, is a continuation of the racialized past. In the sense that race still remains relevant, but instead, certain races are favoured. The authors appreciate the intentions behind the system. The underlying tone is questioning the implementation of the system, as well as its fairness.<sup>46</sup>

The more recent shift by sport historians writing about South African rugby places the sport in a wider socio-political context.<sup>47</sup> Douglas Booth published *The Race Game: Sport Politics in South Africa* (1998). The book examines the effects of race and politics in South African sport.<sup>48</sup> It includes the complexities of the developments of colonialism, but more extensively apartheid, on sport. Booth conducted extensive research that includes interviews with key sport and political figures, parliamentary records and minutes from meetings. It explores key events in the maintenance of racialization in sport, along with its earlier attempts of deracialization.

John Naughton, in *Sports cultures and identities in South Africa*, also looks at rugby in a socio-political and cultural context.<sup>49</sup> He delves into the development of various cultures and their link to sport in South Africa from the colonial era to post-apartheid. It explores Black affiliation with sport and mirrors Odendaal's observations. Naughton stresses that sport was associated with status for blacks and shows how they used it in hopes of acquiring a similar social status to white South Africans. Furthermore, he explores issues of identity and their attachment to sport, specifically how sport nurtures cultural identity. Naughton does not include the exhaustive historical detail of Odendaal and Grundlingh, but nonetheless raises issues critical to understanding divisions within sport. John Hargreaves also provides an historical and social analysis of sport in society. His text mainly focuses on the Victorian era but does provide a background into better understanding British culture

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<sup>46</sup> C, Merrett, C, Tatz & D, Adair. 2011. 'History and its racial legacies: quotas in South African rugby and cricket'. *Sport in Society* 14 (6), pp. 754-777

<sup>47</sup> R, Holt. 2014. 'Historians and the history of sport'. *Sport in history* 34 (1), pp. 1-33

<sup>48</sup> D, Booth. 1998. *The race game: sport and politics in South Africa*. Frank Cass, London.

<sup>49</sup> J, Naughton. 1997. *Sports cultures and identities in South Africa*. David Phillip

and their fixation on class. This proves an essential factor in the process of importing sports and their developments in the colonies. Sport was a tool of promoting British cultural dominance, and elements of class or economic agency are still relevant issues of inequality in rugby that transformation ventures to correct.

B. Mcpherson, J. Curtis and J. Loy provide a critical sociological examination of the connection of sport and shaping society. It explores mainly American and European society, with brief mention of South Africa during apartheid and the sports boycott. The book is a multidisciplinary work, with little historical detail. However, it emphasises just how impactful sport is in societies, the various levels of society it presents itself in and the development of society.<sup>50</sup>

The autobiography of Louis Luyt provides insight into the experiences of a former entrepreneur and national rugby administrator on the transformation and professionalization of rugby, both during and after apartheid.<sup>51</sup> Most relevant to the thesis, the book provides a timeline of the events of South African rugby from the perspective of Luyt, the South African Rugby Board (SARB)<sup>52</sup> and the government. Luyt provides an account of the boycott, the negotiations with the liberation movement, the government's endeavours and a whole host of events surrounding rugby in this era. Luyt, however, omits certain details and provides a sympathetic view of the government and the rugby administration, which he was part of, in light of the fact of their pro-segregationist attitudes. In addition, a biography of Doctor Danie Craven provides insight on the racialized attitudes that have endured in rugby.<sup>53</sup> Craven was a key figure in popularising South African rugby nationally and internationally. He maintained his view on separation of rugby along racial lines for the majority of his life and contributed to forming the non-racial, unified, South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU). His primary objective was to save South African rugby through reintroduction into international rugby.

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<sup>50</sup> B. Mcpherson, J. Curtis & J. Loy. 1969. *The social significance of sport: an introduction to the sociology of sport*

<sup>51</sup> L, Luyt. 2003. *Walking Proud: The Louis Luyt autobiography*

<sup>52</sup> The South African Rugby Board was the rugby union governing body of white South Africans between 1889 and 1992.

<sup>53</sup> D, Craven, 1980. *Die Groot Rugby gesin van die Maties uitgegee ter viering van die 100- jarige bestaan van die rugby voetbalklub*



Transformation is a worldwide phenomenon, which has a lot of available literature. Professor Willie Esterhuyse indicates that it is not unique to South Africa and takes place globally.<sup>54</sup> In the South African context, Prozesky proposes that it is unconstitutional for the government to set racialized sport quotas.<sup>55</sup> In addition, Dr. Mamphela Ramphele added to the debate that transformation should be all-inclusive to allow for an overall change in sport and society.<sup>56</sup> The research also makes use of other unpublished dissertations and theses, journal articles and newspaper articles.

### **Chapter outlines**

The first chapter explores the history of sport in South Africa. It specifically focuses on Victorian sports and how they developed in the country. This chapter does this in order to contextualise the transformation debate of sport and broader society in South Africa. The development of sports is related to the socio-political changes that occurred in South Africa, which in turn entrenched themselves in the sports.

The second chapter explores the history of rugby in South Africa. Identity, nationalism, culture, boycotts and racism are some of the topics covered. The chapter includes a brief history of black rugby. Although poorly recorded, rugby has been present in the black community since colonial times. The aim of the chapter is to discern the reasons behind the need to transform South African rugby.

The conclusion identifies further areas of study and places the debate of transformation of rugby in South Africa into broader historical and theoretical context outlined in the preceding chapters.

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<sup>54</sup> W.P, Esterhuyse. 2003. The challenge of transformation: Breaking the barriers. *Business Management* 34(3):2-8.

<sup>55</sup> M, Prozesky. 2008. Transform sport ethically. **The Witness**, 29 May.

<sup>56</sup> M, Ramphele. 2009. S.A. is alive with promise. Three futures: Race and transformation. **The Star**, 9 November, p. 2.

## **Chapter 1:**

### **Exploring the history of sport in South Africa: From divisive Colonial sport to unifying post-apartheid sport**

The objective of this chapter is to explore the history of sport in South Africa. In particular, its development from a British export to a racially exclusive institution, which continues to be a reality of South African sport in various ways. This chapter bases its premise on sport being largely a by-product of the politics of a society, but simultaneously a reflection of it. In other words, sport is affected by and is a microcosm of wider society. Exploring the history of sport in South Africa requires an understanding of the social aspects that shaped society.

British sport arrived at the Cape with a culture of British supremacy and class separation that developed into racial separation. Sport in South Africa as an institution divided its members of society by class, culture and race. Prior to post-apartheid South Africa, sportsman and sportswomen, South African lawmakers and sport administrators entrenched the divisive nature of sport simultaneously as they began to popularise it in the country. In contrast, the post-apartheid government has attempted to use sport as a tool to promote their state narrative as a 'Rainbow Nation' and to unify all citizens of South Africa.

Our focus is the introduction of Victorian sports in South Africa as a part of British colonial politics and British cultural power. For simplicity, when the chapter speaks of sport, it is referring to the three most popular modern team sports in South Africa as case studies: cricket, rugby and soccer. The chapter aims to achieve its objective of tracing the historical developments in South African sport that rooted racialized elements, through dividing the history of sport in South Africa into three periods. Each period has its own socio-political characteristics, which in turn influenced sport in the country. The periods are the British colonisation of South Africa (1814-1867), the industrial period in South Africa (1867-1945) and apartheid South Africa (1945-1994).

#### **a. Sport in the British Cape colony (1814-1867)**

The history of sport in South Africa began long before the arrival of Europeans. As noted in chapter one, sport has no singular definition. It is obscured and remains contested, but there are similarities and consensus on the characteristics of what is entailed by 'sport'. I

noted that sociologists and sport historians suggest that sport is as fluid as society, it makes up a society and it is etched in every fibre of society. John Hargreaves purports that it adjusts itself to society as it develops. What we know as sport and of sport in one period of history will be different to another.<sup>156</sup>

I support the notion of sport in the region with a comparative methodology. The comparison is 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain with the Pre-colonial Southern African region and its African inhabitants. Before Great Britain institutionalised modern sports, they developed from practical activities and social practices. Practical activities that included archery for example, which provided protection or food from hunting, among various other uses. In addition, popular culture, political, cultural, socio-economic and even religious factors became a part of the activities, and their developments into sports.<sup>157</sup> We saw in chapter one how coupled with power dynamics (i.e. the social structure), the elite classes had a greater influence over the developments of sports, by imposing the why, how, when and what of sport. As noted, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Industrialization became widespread, to maintain social order the elite classes began to introduce values into sports that differentiated the different classes, based on the type of sports they participated in.<sup>158</sup>

By that assumption, any practical activity practiced by native inhabitants in the southern African region that helped shape the cultural, political and social dynamics of a society is a 'sport'. The *San* and the *Khoikhoi* (translated as 'men of men' or 'the real people') are some of the first inhabitants of the Southern African region.<sup>159</sup> The Khoikhoi had their own ways of socialisation. Although not in a competitive nature, such as modern sport, I argue that if a boy was taught how to wield a spear to hunt and that determined a part of his role in his society, that can be referred to as a sport.<sup>160</sup> Along with being pastoralists, the Khoikhoi were hunter-gatherers with a vast array of tools. In addition, the Nguni (Swazi, Ndebele, Xhosa and Zulu) settled across the southern-eastern seaboard of the region. The Nguni

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<sup>156</sup> J, Hargreaves, *Sport, Power, and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular sports in Britain*, p.3

<sup>157</sup> Alistair Dugall, July 26 2012., <<https://www.historyextra.com/period/stuart/bad-sports-puritan-attempts-to-ban-games-in-17th-century-england/>> (Accessed: 28/08/2018)

<sup>158</sup> J, Hargreaves, *Sport, Power, and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular sports in Britain*, p.21

<sup>159</sup> Afronerd, n.d., <https://www.afronerd.co.za/differences-similarities-khoi-san-people/> (last accessed: 15/08/2018)

<sup>160</sup> J, Smiles, *Transformation and democratization of South Africa sport in the new constitutional dispensation, with special reference to rugby as a sport code*, p.22

community took part in the pre-colonial tradition of stick fighting. Stick fighting was not only a tool for socialization. A physical activity developed and instilled the knowledge of combat. It encouraged a competitive spirit and was a showcase of one's mastery of the skill of stick fighting.<sup>161</sup> These are characteristics present in modern day sports played in South Africa.

The first European to set foot in the region was the Portuguese sailor, Vasco da Gama, during his voyage of discovery. Da Gama found himself and his crew in current day Saint Helena Bay on 4 November 1497, where he first encountered the inhabitants of the region.<sup>162</sup> European imperialism and the beginning of European settlement only began more than 150 years later in the Cape in April 1652.<sup>163</sup> The Dutch East India Company, under the leadership of Jan Van Riebeeck, arrived in the Cape to establish a victualing station on the trade routes to the Dutch Spice Islands in the East. However, they experienced a strain in the labour required to provide the services to the passing ships due to the *Khoisan* community's displeasure with the kind of treatment they received and they had very little knowledge of the required skills for slave jobs. Furthermore, an executive decision was made to move in a group of settlers into farms that were rent and tax-free for the first three years. They situated the farms in the Cape of Good Hope and the settlers of Dutch or German descent, also known as the *Vrye Burghers* (free citizens). *Vrye Burghers* eventually preferred to identify as Afrikaners. It is proposed by Hermann Giliomee that people began to identify themselves as Afrikaners after 1707 when Hendrik Biebouw declared "*Ik ben een Africaander*" (I am an African person).<sup>164</sup> Settlers had imported horses for work, but for entertainment, horse races also took place.<sup>165</sup> In 1743, as a part of what would become known as Boeresport, Afrikaner transport riders that rode in Ox wagons developed *Jukskei*. It is essentially wooden pins thrown at a stick in the ground.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> P, Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, pp.10-11 & 14

<sup>162</sup> South African History Online, 2017, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/vasco-da-gamas-expedition-reaches-st-helena-bay> (last accessed: 16/08/2018)

<sup>163</sup> South African History Online, 2012, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/arrival-jan-van-riebeeck-cape-6-april-1652> (last accessed : 13/8/2018)

<sup>164</sup> Cited in JP. Van Der Merwe, *Afrikaner values in Post-apartheid South Africa: an anthropological perspective*, p.61

<sup>165</sup> J, Smiles, *Transformation and democratization of South African sport in the new constitutional dispensation, with special reference to rugby as a sport code*, p.68

<sup>166</sup> Jukskei SA, 2017, <https://www.jukskei.co.za/van-jukskei-about-jukskei/kort-geskiedenis-short-history/> (last accessed: 13/8/2018)

The British first sent their naval forces to False Bay in June 1795 for temporary and strategic reasons, as they wanted to prevent the potentially important territory falling into the hands of the French, their enemy at the time. The British occupied the Cape until 1803 and made no real lasting influence in the Cape. However, the British returned in 1814, after the Napoleonic Wars and took permanent occupation of the Cape colony.<sup>167</sup> The Cape became part of the British Empire. It was their entry point into southern African region and the beginning of the British influence and cultural dominance in the region. Brian Stoddart stresses that cultural dominance was important in maintaining control – in light of the fact that colonial administrators and people of European descent were far less in numbers than the black population.<sup>168</sup>

#### **b. Colonial education and the formal spread of sport in South Africa**

In mid-nineteenth century Britain, schools formed an important part of the growth of sport, its popularity and its propagation. Bourgeois values and the concept of betterment gripped sport. Sport developed to serve the purpose of being complimentary to work or making a citizen more wholesome. This introduced a concentration on the spirit of the game, with an emphasis on manners, discipline, morals and fair play.<sup>169</sup>

The concept of the spirit of the game gave educators and the educated elite the idea to groom a 'civilized' population. Public-schools incorporated sports as a part of the educational experience. Public-school sports allowed sport variations to become more similar, as schools would travel to compete with one another. For instance, there was the Cambridge (1848), Sheffield (1857) and the Uppingham (1862) rules of football and/or rugby football.<sup>170</sup> Schools competing against each other assisted sporting bodies, growing the popularity of sport and made the spread of sport across the country easier. Public-school graduates also spread sports into the universities they attended.<sup>171</sup>

The English public-school model helped to establish class identities in British society. English public-schools in the Cape colony served the role of entrenching English class culture,

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<sup>167</sup> C, Du Plessis, 'Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899', p.66

<sup>168</sup> B, Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 32 (4), 1988, pp.660-662

<sup>169</sup> J, Hargreaves, *Sport, Power, and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular sports in Britain*, p.34

<sup>170</sup> P, Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, p.15

<sup>171</sup> J, Hargreaves, *Sport, Power, and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular sports in Britain*, p.39

Anglicization and British cultural power. Lord Charles Somerset first established British public-schools in the Cape colony in 1814. The elite schools in South Africa resembled some of the best schools in Britain, like Eton and Winchester. The schools included The Diocesan College (Bishops), Wynberg Boys High School, Maritzburg College in Natal and Saint Andrews College in Grahamstown, to name a few. These schools developed to be part of representing English class culture in the region. Developments in Britain influenced developments in the Cape colony. Sport became part of the curriculum of English schools in the developing society in the Colony. The British public-school model affected divisions within sport.<sup>172</sup>

From the 1850s, Charles Darwin's theories on evolution and natural selection, and their sociological adaption by Herbert Spencer, informed the decisions of colonial administrators. Class, gender and racial lines informed the separation within schools. The schools that began to sprout around the colony (Cape, Eastern Cape and Natal), not yet in the interior, adhered to the three-tiered separation policy. These decisions affected the social structure of the society in the Colony. Sports culture and traditions developed in the schools. Brotherhood, initiation, songs, team colours and badges – symbols would be distinct and exclusive to the respective teams. The products of these schools, as intended by the colonial architects, became citizens of the colony that perpetuated British cultural power: They both joined and established sports clubs, and thus created and strengthened sports club culture, spread sport and popularized it. Bishops has the credit of introducing and promoting rugby in the colony. In 1861, as the headmaster of the school George Ogilvie introduced a variation of rugby football that he played at his old school, the Winchester School. A year later, the South African College School adopted it and the two schools began to compete regularly.<sup>173</sup> As other schools adopted it, its popularity spread around the colony.

### **c. Missionary schools**

The British expanded the colony by moving into black territories. The populations had British administration systems imposed onto them. The Xhosa community in the Eastern Cape was the first black community to encounter British influence. British troops were sent

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<sup>172</sup> C, Du Plessis, 'Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899', pp.70, 73-74

<sup>173</sup> C, Du Plessis, 'Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899', pp.82-84,86

to squash a longstanding struggle over grazing land between the 'Trek Boere' and the Xhosa. The English then settled in the area and brought in farmers, merchants, teachers and missionaries.<sup>174</sup>

Missionaries were a part of the spread of British cultural power in the Cape colony. Wesleyan missionaries established their first mission station in 1830, in Pondoland (Eastern Cape).<sup>175</sup> The role of the missionaries is ambiguous, as it is argued that there were malevolent intentions in their actions.<sup>176</sup> However, it can be said that they introduced material and social ways to improve the lives of the communities. The missionaries introduced education into the black communities. From the mid-nineteenth century, they established educational institutions, such as Adams College (1853), Healdtown (1855), Zonnebloem College (1858) and the famous Lovedale (1841).<sup>177</sup> Lovedale educated some of the most prominent figures in South African history, such as Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of the country.

The black communities did not show interest to convert at first, but sport enticed young men and boys. The British educational model with sports in its curriculum was introduced into mission schools in the mid-nineteenth century. Black South Africans were introduced to sport both informally and formally, with schools the site of most formal introductions. Sport became part of the missionary's strategy to get black Africans to convert to Christianity. Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti suggest that missionaries were trying to establish a Tom Brown in Africa. An old literary work that became influential in the Victorian era, as we saw in chapter one, the book emphasized the importance of sports in benefitting the educational experience of a student.<sup>178</sup>

Missionaries had a disruptive impact on traditional black culture. Missionaries had introduced the idea of 'civility' and the supremacy of Western culture, through for instance making Africans wear Western clothes. Education and sport as a medium for British cultural

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<sup>174</sup> A, Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport, race and class in South Africa before Union', *Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 38 ,pp.14-15

<sup>175</sup> South African History Online, March 2017, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/pondoland-revolts>, (last access: 17/08/2018)

<sup>176</sup>S. Du Rand, *From mission school to Bantu Education: A history of Adams College*, p.6

<sup>177</sup> T, Tucker, *Africanisation of Soccer: An examination of the relationship between faith and football in Africa*, p.5

<sup>178</sup>G, Landow, June 2006, <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/hughes/sports.html> (last access: 17/08/2018)

dominance, created a new black consciousness and a black class structure. The communities developed an educated group that had ambitions to separate themselves from other members of the black community. The group helped to spread and popularize sport in the black communities. Some pupils attended mission schools outside their communities and when they would return to their homes they would help popularize the sports that they had learnt. In addition, this developing class began to distinguish themselves in the social order, and this included the fact that they played sport and importantly the types of sports they played. Particularly in the Eastern Cape, rugby rivalled soccer in popularity in the black community. The first black rugby teams developed from educational institutions, such as Lovedale and Healdtown, around the 1870s. This played a major role in its spread in the region. Rugby and cricket gained ascendancy sooner than soccer because 'Association Football' only codified its laws in 1863. Prior to codification, the football that they played was a lot closer in rules, style, physicality to rugby. Furthermore, the American Board Mission helped to spread soccer in Natal. They preferred to promote a safer variation of football. The British mission in the Eastern Cape emphasized the more physical variation of football. This is why rugby remains more popular in the Xhosa community.<sup>179</sup>

The developing black elite class focused less on the traditional subsistence life. They assimilated themselves for greater overall social mobility, political and economic influence in the developing society. As they formed their sports associations, clubs and federations, they assimilated models to their formation and functioning. The black community also appropriated sport and made it their own, in effect 'Africanizing' it.<sup>180</sup> For instance, a tradition developed of playing sports after church, an event the whole family and the community could attend. The tradition has persisted to this day.

#### **d. Colonial sports and the Industrialisation of South Africa (1867-1945)**

Evidence indicates foot and horse racing events taking place as early as before the 1820s. Blacks were spectators, but sometimes they participated, mostly for the amusement of Europeans. It served as their informal introduction to European sports. Cricket represented

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<sup>179</sup> P, Alegi, *Laduma: Soccer Politics and Society in South Africa*, p.19

<sup>180</sup> A, Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport, race and class in South Africa before Union', *Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 38 ,pp.14-15



the 'perfect system of ethics and morals'.<sup>181</sup> In the early 1800s one of the first formal cricket matches took place between military officials from the Artillery and military officials from the colony. The first recorded mixed race cricket match took place in 1854. They labelled the cricket match as the 'Hottentot-Boer' match, but Douglas Booth highlights that the informal assimilation did not equate to racial equality. The first recorded rugby match took place on 23 August 1862. The rugby match was between the military and civilians, and took place in Green Point Common in the Cape colony.

The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly in 1867 and then gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 sparked the industrialization of South Africa.<sup>182</sup> This era established the popularization of sports in the interior. The industrialization of South Africa also created urbanization and modernization. However, the developments were rooted in the legacy of colonialism and slavery. The black population were pushed into labour, and political and social discrimination were a part of the developments in the country's sports.<sup>183</sup>

The black population surrendered into the labour market partly because of hut taxes introduced by the administration and enforced by the Chieftaincy system. In addition, the implementation of racialized and restrictive policies played a role too, such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 that established reserves for migrant labourers.<sup>184</sup> The end of the 1800s was shrouded with racism, fuelled by the need for cheap labour and reasons to justify actions. Social Darwinism and eugenics informed racial debate and segregation. The social changes were apparent in sport. The country's main sports underwent institutionalization around the same period. The country formed national and international sport federations. In recognition of its growing status, South Africa was one of the founding members of the International Rugby Board (IRB)<sup>185</sup> in 1890 and the International Cricket Council (ICC)<sup>186</sup> in 1908. The South African bodies and their members declared that their values and beliefs would not allow them to participate in mixed race sports, even from international teams.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, p.13

<sup>182</sup> P.Alegi, *Laduma: Soccer Politics and Society in South Africa*, p.17

<sup>183</sup> Anon, April 2016, <https://hist276group2.academic.wlu.edu/industrialization-in-south-africa/> (last access: 17/08/2018)

<sup>184</sup> D, Glaser, *Politics and Society in South Africa: A critical introduction*, pp.31 & 114

<sup>185</sup> The international governing body of rugby union

<sup>186</sup> The international governing body of cricket

<sup>187</sup> P.Alegi, *Laduma: Soccer Politics and Society in South Africa*, pp.17, 88 & 109-110

Industrial South Africa was challenged ideas of British class exclusivity. In the early 1900s, society considered the Afrikaner population as the lower class. Lower class whites were encouraged to play cricket and rugby with their 'social superiors'. Rugby was used to help unify the white South African population after the conflict of the South African War (1899-1902) and rising Afrikaner-English tension caused by Sir Alfred Milner's policy of Anglicization. In 1927, Colonel P. A Silburn declared his hopes that "It will be on the sports field that [ethnicity] will eventually expire and be decently buried."<sup>188</sup>

Soccer had become too plebeian and was rather embraced by blacks.<sup>189</sup> The sentiment of unity in sport did not extend itself along racial lines. Municipalities entrenched segregation in sport by barring blacks from sports facilities.<sup>190</sup> This did not stop blacks from taking part in sport, but it proved to be another hurdle preventing them from achieving their full potential. It also served as an example of the growing social trend and social structure. The developments of sport during this period reinforced hierarchies on race and class in sport. The chapter has described sport as a part of society and not existing in isolation. Social attitudes towards race in the form of racial stereotypes or racial misconceptions reflected themselves in sport.

Of particular importance, Social Darwinism advocated ideas of regression and progression, how it was incumbent on the races that occupied higher positions on his evolutionary scale to ensure progression.<sup>191</sup> This was the same period of national and international institutionalization of sport. The founding members of the institutions informed their views by the racialized social attitudes of broader society. The national cricket and rugby teams were hesitant to play teams that had black players because of these views and the supposed danger of racial regression.<sup>192</sup> For these reasons, we can say that racial hierarchy, stereotypes and misconceptions rooted themselves in South African sport. At the same time, despite discrimination, black communities developed their own affinity with sports. Through their own administrators, athletes, federations, facilities and popular culture.

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<sup>188</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, p.31

<sup>189</sup> P. Alegi, *Laduma: Soccer Politics and Society in South Africa*, p.16

<sup>190</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, pp.18-19

<sup>191</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, p.18

<sup>192</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, p.23

e. **Apartheid South Africa: Segregation, isolation and sport (1945-1994)**

Apartheid South Africa had its own social and political developments that presented themselves in South African sport. In the 1930's, Afrikaner intellectuals and prominent figures in the secretive *Broederbond*<sup>193</sup> adopted segregationist ideals. They served the purpose of exclusive Afrikaner nationalism as a response to British cultural dominance. Afrikaner nationalism assisted in getting the National Party into power in 1948 and establishing apartheid. Concerning sport, the *Broederbond* sought to control all sports, attempting to put its members in leadership positions of associations and federations.

<sup>194</sup>Furthermore, the Afrikaner movement used rugby's popularity to mobilize support and as a symbol to shape and represent their identity. Rugby's values and characteristics matched those of Afrikaner nationalism, and appropriating and becoming successful at it literally meant beating the English at their own game. On 8 August 1938, at the Great Trek centenary celebration, they placed rugby alongside *Boeresport* and *Volk musiek*.<sup>195</sup> This association of Afrikaner nationalism with rugby would prove problematic to later ensuring the eradication of racism in the sport and achieving greater social integration.

The apartheid government intervened in sport so much that clubs, federations or facilities did not have to be explicit in their prohibition of blacks. Apart from disenfranchising blacks, racist legislation made mixed sport almost impossible.<sup>196</sup> These policies included the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 (amended in 1945) and the 1950 Group Areas Act. These laws essentially geographically segregated populations and limited access to the urban areas. This limited the opportunities for blacks to attend the best schools and limited job opportunities. The 1953 Reservation of Separate Amenities Act prohibited black citizens from public facilities.<sup>197</sup> To access public sports facilities non-racial associations had to apply for permits. These policies created lasting negative legacies in sport and society. Apartheid geography still affects levels of poverty, black sport development and participation. This of course is also a legacy of the failure of the post-apartheid regime to adequately deal with

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<sup>193</sup> This group was ever increasing in size and influence in virtually sectors of society. The group's essential purpose was to unite, promote the welfare and all things Afrikaner.

<sup>194</sup> D. Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, pp.24,27 & 35

<sup>195</sup> A. Grundlingh, 'Playing for Power? Rugby, AfrikanerNationalism and Masculinity in South Africa, c.1900-c.1970', in J. Nauright. & T. Chandler (eds.), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*,p.184

<sup>196</sup> B. Mcpherson et al., *The social significance of sport: An introduction to the sociology of sport*,p.107

<sup>197</sup> P. Alegi,*Laduma: Soccer Politics and Society in South Africa*,p.16

the issue. Furthermore, class and race still prove to be determinates in achieving success in sport. Middleclass blacks do far better in fitting into sports structures and gaining access to opportunities than those who come from poorer backgrounds.

Apartheid heightened just as the rest of the world was embracing non-racialism in sport during the 1960s. A government that did not hesitate to resort to violence suppressed the advocates of non-racialism in sport, within South Africa. Activists that formed non-racial associations, such as Denis Brutus found themselves in exile where they were able to play a part in initiating the global Anti-Apartheid Movement. In 1969, Halt All Racist Tours emerged in response to the Springbok tour of New Zealand and in 1970 an Anti-Apartheid Movement campaign emerged in response to the Springbok tour of Great Britain. The movement wanted to end discrimination and political intervention in South African sport.<sup>198</sup> The protests attracted the attention of the United Nations and the Common wealth.<sup>199</sup> The Common wealth passed policies such as the Gleneagles Agreement and Lusaka Agreement, which began the isolation of South African sport in the international sport arena, not by governments but by sports federations.<sup>200</sup>

The apartheid government desperately sought to get back into the international sports arena, however, did not want to implement the social change that was necessary. Instead, they accommodated international mixed-race teams for the first time since the establishment of national sport federations. They implemented the policy of so-called 'multinational sport' domestically. Apart from multinational sport not equating to mixed race sport in South Africa, the apartheid policies were still a reality that affected the country's sport. It displayed arrogance on the part of the apartheid government, which was more apparent with the rebel tours. The rebel tours of South Africa were unofficial, and ensured South African national teams received game time. The invitational teams received money and tax rebates from South Africa.<sup>201</sup> One of many rebel tours included the 1983 West Indies rebel cricket tour and the 1986 Australian rebel cricket tour. Prominent sports administrators, such as Doctor Danie Craven, invited international media and organised sport clinics to gain the sympathy of the international community. The government

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<sup>198</sup> J. Hargreaves, *Sport, Power, and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular sports in Britain*, p.113

<sup>199</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, pp.72 & 78

<sup>200</sup> B, Mcpherson et al., *The social significance of sport: An introduction to the sociology of sport*, p.107

<sup>201</sup> J, Davies, 'Politics, Sport and Education in South Africa'. *African Affairs* 85 (340), pp. 359-360

attempted to convince the international community that they were working towards integration. They also tried to make the black administrators seem as uncooperative and violent.<sup>202</sup> However, the only real solution was to eradicate apartheid ideology, racism, politicization of sport and to introduce social integration.

The country underwent economic and political uncertainty, and international pressure and global politics, heightened the impact as the Cold War ended.<sup>203</sup> In October 1990, the National Party took steps towards lasting social reform and approached the African National Congress for negotiations. The National Party had to balance both eradicating racial hierarchy in sport, while protecting minority representation and values.<sup>204</sup> The negotiations spanned over four years. Sports administrators, including Doctor Craven and Louis Luyt, at times represented the government in negotiations and facilitated them. Sport was a bargaining tool during the negotiations, but they were also negotiating unifying various existing sports associations to get back in the international sports arena.

The sports boycott ended in 1991 after the government abolished the legislative foundations of apartheid.<sup>205</sup> That sparked a collaborative movement to deracialize and democratize sport with the formation of non-racial sport administrations. The road to agreements had complications and at times compromise proved difficult to achieve. Cricket came to an agreement sooner than rugby and soccer. Cricket administrators realised black participation was healthy for the longevity of the sport.<sup>206</sup> The ANC advocated for the readmission of South African sports, because they wanted to reassure white citizens of their commitment to non-racialism and gain their trust. The international sports committees readmitted South African sport in 1992. Multiracial sport came before the end of apartheid, as the various sports administrators agreed that sport would be an important part of forming a unified post-apartheid society.<sup>207</sup>

Leading up to the 1994 democratic elections, sports had to confront the racial tensions within the country. Conservatives and purists showed no interest in integration, especially in

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<sup>202</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, pp.71 & 136

<sup>203</sup> D, Glaser, *Politics and Society in South Africa: A critical introduction*, p.202

<sup>204</sup> D, Glaser, *Politics and Society in South Africa: A critical introduction*, p.204

<sup>205</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, p.181

<sup>206</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, p.184

<sup>207</sup> D, Glaser, *Politics and Society in South Africa: A critical introduction*, pp.204-205

cricket and rugby. Selection of teams caused controversy with allegations of racism and disapproval towards suggestions of selecting players based on anything besides merit. Readmission did not suffice in changing social relations within sport. In 1994, the country welcomed democracy, greater consensus and cooperation in sport. In addition, the South African Primary School's Sports Association obtained agreements between previously white schools to share their facilities with neighbouring black schools nationwide.<sup>208</sup> This served the purpose of introducing black kids to sports, providing them with resources and a good opportunity to integrate into the future of the post-apartheid South Africa through the universal language of sport.

f. **Conclusion**

Given South Africa's history of discrimination, segregation and racism, race is a reoccurring topic in the chapter. The legacy of colonialism and, although officially dismantled, apartheid in sport are still a reality. The objective of this chapter was to explore the history of South African sports, and how racism became an enduring part of it. The chapter aimed to achieve its objective by dividing the chapter into three periods of the country's history, because each period had its own unique social condition that reflected itself in sport. The periods include the arrival of the British and the Cape colony. The industrialization of the region and the formation of the South African Union, and finally, apartheid South Africa. The chapter serves to emphasise the reality and pervasiveness of racial inequality, as a step towards understanding calls for the need for transformation policies to be applied to South African rugby.

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<sup>208</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, pp.186, 190-191 & 198

## **Chapter 2:**

### **The history of South African rugby**

How has the history of rugby in South Africa shaped its social association with class and race? This is related to the issue of transformation that South African rugby has been grappling with since the early 1960s. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the international community placed pressure on the apartheid government to dismantle racist policies and laws that prevented the multi-racial environment in sport that the rest of the world had embraced. The apartheid government then acted with various integrative policies and initiatives in order to alleviate international pressure without compromising apartheid values.

It was a collaborative effort between the South African government and the South African Rugby Board (SARB) to get the national rugby team out of isolation. Thus, I suggest that this was the beginning of the transformation of South African rugby. In the larger picture, rugby is virtually a religion to some. Groups of people have an intimate connection with it since its arrival in the late 1800s with imperialists and settlers. It helped to shape social and cultural identity. The issue of racial separation in South African society predates the introduction of rugby into South Africa as we have seen. The developments of South African society directly impacted rugby and it became a microcosm of wider society. However, rugby also directly influenced wider society and its development.<sup>209</sup>

The chapter begins by tracing the origins of rugby in South Africa. It identifies important events, organisations and individuals. The second part of the chapter explores the issue of identity in rugby, in order to understand why rugby has a strong affiliation with the Afrikaner community. This is to understand the reasons for sport's resistance to change. The post-apartheid political endeavours have been to shape a new identity for the sport that is both representative of the population and its narrative of unity and non-racialism. The third chapter explores rugby during the apartheid era. The final chapter explores contemporary South Africa and some of the debates surrounding the transformation of rugby, in light of

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<sup>209</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sports and Politics in South Africa*, pp.160-162

the past of the sport. In addition, it explores some the events, organisations and individuals involved in transforming South African rugby.

**a. The origins of rugby in South Africa**

As we saw, the history of rugby in South Africa dates back to the 1800s. Rugby first arrived as football, as there was no clear distinction between the various codes at the time. The influx of British imperialists, administrators, soldiers and settlers brought the sport with them when they officially occupied the Cape colony from 1806. The arrival of the British and the effect that their arrival had on the development of the society of Cape colony was covered in chapter three. Their arrival brought with them ideas of exclusivity and separation, a direct import of the British traditional fixation on class culture.<sup>210</sup> The impact of these ideas and values set a course of divisions in South African sport and wider society.

In Great Britain there were various versions of football played across different regions. The British in the Cape colony all brought and played their various versions.<sup>211</sup> The variations of football that would gain popularity in the Cape colony and be played across the colony, came from individuals that were fortunate enough to be members of the middleclass and who had attended public-schools in Great Britain and those that would establish it in the colony. The Cape colony adopted the public-school model. Public-schools were important to the introduction of English culture and sports into the developing society of the Cape colony. After adopting football, public-schools separated it from its crowded form and refined it, so to speak. Public-schools were the first to differentiate between kicking and carrying of the ball. Products of the public-schools transferred their skills and knowledge of their football variations to surrounding universities and football clubs. No central body existed or uniformity in the variations played across the country.<sup>212</sup>

Winchester football, was a rough variation with very few rules, a demarcated pitch and the objective was to get the ball from one end of the pitch to the other. The amount of players ranged from six to fifteen, they had a 'half-back', a 'full-back' and a scrum which they referred to as a 'hot', consisting of a minimum of three 'hot' players. Players used their

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<sup>210</sup> Alistair Dugall, July 26 2012., <<https://www.historyextra.com/period/stuart/bad-sports-puritan-attempts-to-ban-games-in-17th-century-england/>> (Accessed: 20/11/2018)

<sup>211</sup> P, Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, pp.15-16

<sup>212</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, pp.55-56



hands at certain points of the game. Winchester football has many similarities to the game of rugby. In fact, Winchester football gave birth to and popularised rugby in the Cape colony.<sup>213</sup> In contrast, Harrow football was played between eleven players, mostly using their feet with a similar objective to Winchester football. The Cambridge University Football Club had their own laws of the sport that the Football Association (FA) adopted in 1863, when they were founded.<sup>214</sup> The association appreciated the simplicity of their variation and their grasp of the 'essence' of the game. Most notably the game disallowed the use of hands, but included throw-ins and goal kicks. This was important in the emergence of the rugby union to be played in England and in the colonies. On 4 December 1871, over twenty rugby-type football clubs met in London to discuss forming rules that all clubs would adopt in order to make playing each other possible. In light of the formation of a football governing body, the objective was to formalise rugby football and establishing a central body to organize it. The meeting resulted in the formation of the Rugby Football Union (RFU).<sup>215</sup> In March of 1871, they drew up their laws and established the code of rugby in England.<sup>216</sup>

Rugby had been played informally for decades before the emergence of the RFU in England. A distinction had been made between the kicking and carrying of the ball. As already mentioned, the first formal recorded rugby football (*voetbal*) game took place in Cape Town at the Green point on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1862, between the Military and Civilian teams.<sup>217</sup> The *Cape Argus* newspaper reported that "this is the first within our recollection that so large a party of gentlemen have made a public appearance at Cape Town in this manly English school game"<sup>218</sup>. The second recorded formal match took place in 1864 when Diocesan College (Bishops) hosted fifteen players from the surrounding area. Again, the *Cape Argus*<sup>219</sup> reported on the game.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> C, Du Plessis, 'Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899', p.92

<sup>214</sup> The Football Association organized and governed the game of football in England.

<sup>215</sup> The rugby Football Union is the governing body of rugby union in England

<sup>216</sup> P, Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, p.17

<sup>217</sup> C, Du Plessis, 'Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899', p.92

<sup>218</sup> I, Huys, *A history of "Koshuisrugby" at Stellenbosch university*, p7

<sup>219</sup> The *Cape Argus* is a daily newspaper from Cape Town that was founded in 1857.

<sup>220</sup> I, Huys, *A history of "Koshuisrugby" at Stellenbosch university*, p7

The following officially reported game by the *Cape Argus* on 7 June 1873 served an important role for the direction of the game in the Cape colony. Representatives of the Civilians, the Civil Service, the Bishops and the South African College School (SACS) met and drew up 15 rules. The 15 rules were applied onwards. The meeting facilitated the uniformity of the game (mostly the Winchester variation) in the Cape colony. On 18 July 1876 the *Cape Times*<sup>221</sup> reported that “there is a well-known game which has grown up in the colony, has its own peculiarities, and has been called football: its principles are generally understood by young South Africa”.<sup>222</sup> Public-schools served an important purpose for firmly establishing rugby, spreading it and ensuring uniformity.<sup>223</sup> Furthermore, they played a role in forming central organising bodies of the sport as it developed. The Bishop’s representatives and SACS being present at the formation of rules evidence this. Furthermore, in 1861, Canon Ogilvie, the former headmaster of Bishops, introduced what would become the popular variation of rugby football. Ogilvie was a product of the Victorian education, having attended Winchester and Wadham College, Oxford. His selection was based, amongst other things, on his upbringing, class, educational ability and as a result of these he was deemed capable of emulating the British educational system and entrenching the desired values into the youth of the colony (those of the right class). He introduced the Winchester College variation, which was considered the most primal and rawest variation of the game. They referred to it as ‘Gogball’. SACS adopted the Winchester game in 1862. Although not formally documented, apparently Bishops pupils introduced it to their friends that attended the neighbouring schools. It is possible that an unofficial inter collegiate match was arranged in 1862 between Bishops and SACS, but the first official recorded match was in 1873. They played regular fixtures, their rugby derby is one of the oldest in the country. Competition between middle class schools helped to promote and popularise the game of rugby football, in its numerous variations in South Africa.<sup>224</sup>

The English public-school model not only served an integral role in the introduction of rugby football, but of entrenching British cultural dominance. Rugby was a medium for promoting British values and ideas of superiority. The colonial attitudes of the time facilitated

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<sup>221</sup> The Cape Times is a Cape Town based English language newspaper founded in 1876.

<sup>222</sup> I, Huys, *A history of “Koshuisrugby” at Stellenbosch university*, p8

<sup>223</sup> D, Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, p.4

<sup>224</sup> Bishops Diocesan College, N.d, <https://www.bishops.org.za/aboutus/history.aspx> (last access: 20/11/2018)

separation on the basis of class and race.<sup>225</sup> This is what I believe is the foundation of separation in sport in South Africa that became heavily racialized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Racial separation was amplified with the introduction of Afrikaner nationalism. Collin Du Plessis proposes that it was the English public-school model that had a “profound effect on South African sport and issues of division within sport.”<sup>226</sup> The purpose of transformation is to dismantle this hierarchical perception in rugby. Furthermore, the purpose of this chapter is to understand why there is a failure in the transformation of rugby and the public-school model is an integral part of what entrenched the class and racialized element in sport. These ideas have been expanded on in chapter three.

The first rugby club in South African history is the Hamilton’s football club in Green Point, Cape Town. The club was established in March 1875. They may have been influenced by Bishops as they played the Winchester variation. The second oldest rugby club is the Villagers Football Club. It was founded in 1876 and served as competition the Hamilton’s Club. The Villagers club made a significant step in 1879 for South African rugby. Mr. William Milton, a former England full back from 1874-1875, and a close associate of colonial politicians, capitalists and imperialists arrived in 1878. He convinced the club to switch to Rugby Union rules. To convince individuals to play under the ‘less-violent’ Rugby rules, in 1878 Milton organised a match as an exhibition of the rules. The outcome of the match was a general meeting held at the club to review the idea of adopting Rugby rules.<sup>227</sup> The *Cape Times* reported the following on the results of the meeting:

At a meeting held in connection with the Hamilton Football Club to decide whether the old rules as heretofore played, or the Rugby Union should be the standing rules of the club, we were glad to find that the new rules were unanimously adopted.<sup>228</sup>

This is the first documented club to play rugby in the country. Other clubs followed suit, including Bishops. The growing popularity of rugby, notably in the educated middle class, sparked the need to formalise the game and its rules. The Western Province Rugby Football

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<sup>225</sup> D, Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, p.4

<sup>226</sup> C, Du Plessis, *Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899*, p.74

<sup>227</sup> P, Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, p.21

<sup>228</sup> *Cape Times*, 21 August 1878, quoted in R.T Winch, “Sir William Milton: a leading figure in Public School Games, Colonial Politics and Imperial Expansion, 1877 – 1914.” PhD- Thesis , Stellenbosch University, p.44

Union (WPRU) was formed in 1883. Its primary objective was the standardisation and the organisation of the game.<sup>229</sup>

Once rugby gained popularity in the Cape, it spread to other parts of the colony in the 1870s. Rugby spread into frontier towns of the Eastern Cape and it moved with the colonial influence into the interior. The primary mediums of the transference of rugby were colonial officials, settlers, military officials and private schools. Prominent schools in the Eastern Cape included Grey High School and St. Andrews, while in Natal, Maritzburg College and Michael House are noteworthy.<sup>230</sup> In the interior in the Orange Free State Republic, which established education before the Transvaal Republic, the more famous rugby school was Grey College. Not only was rugby officially played in the public-school system, but it can be assumed that games took place in military bases and colonial outposts. This is evidenced by late rugby historian Braber Ngozi. According to records that he collected, some of the first informal contact that black South Africans made with rugby was as 'kitchen boys'. He was referring to the founders of the Port-Elizabeth based Union Rugby Football Club in 1887. It was the first adult club in the region.<sup>231</sup>

Colonial expansion in the country came with a rapid influx of European settlers.

Furthermore, the public-school system having gradually established itself was producing graduates. Amongst others, these two factors were integral to rugby's expansion into the interior.<sup>232</sup> The establishment of rugby unions in the Eastern Cape and Natal evidences this. Colonial influence spread into the Eastern Cape via British regiments in Frontier towns, such as King William's Town. Established rugby clubs were formed by and favoured the white middle-class, in the former Frontier towns. Albert Rugby Football Club of King William's Town, Buffalo Rugby Club Football Club of East London and Union Rugby Club of Uitenhage are examples. These clubs were responsible for the formalisation of rugby in the region when they came together and founded the Eastern Province Rugby Football Union (EPRFU) in 1888.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> P, Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, p.17

<sup>230</sup> P, Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, p.17

<sup>231</sup> A, Odendaal, 'The Thing that is not round' in A. Grundlingh, et. al., *Beyond The Tryline*, p.26

<sup>232</sup> A, Grundlingh, et. al., *Beyond The Tryline*, p.67

<sup>233</sup> P, Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, p.21

## **b. Black rugby and colonial attitudes**

Class based and race based separation in society and in sport facilitated the kind of relationship communities had with rugby. Furthermore, the colonial social structure and colonial attitudes had a divisive impact within the black communities across cultural, class and religious lines, and this displayed itself within rugby. For the black community, more so the black community, rugby served a greater role than recreation and entertainment. According to Philani Nongogo “rugby served as a vehicle of popular culture and as an outlet for personal achievement.”<sup>234</sup> It was more likely to be played in the urban areas and played by mission educated black citizens, such as black intellectuals and civic leaders. They associated rugby with assimilation, for social upward mobility, but also, to achieve mobilisation to solve central concerns of the communities.<sup>235</sup>

The WPRFU organised rugby according to the colonial attitudes, mostly in favour of the European middle class. Competitions and matches were organised according to race and played separately. This was indicative of the wider politics and social reality of the colony and not so much legislative politics.<sup>236</sup> Rugby played an important role for the coloured community in the Cape. By the time of the formation of the WPRFU, there was already a handful of coloured rugby clubs and a burgeoning rugby culture. The coloured community in the Cape colony established some of the oldest rugby clubs in the country. It is recorded that Roslyns was founded around 1881. Arabian College has photographic records dating back to 1883. In 1886, the rugby fraternity in the coloured community formed the Western Province Coloured Rugby Union (WPCRUC). Arabian College, Good Hopes and Roslyns came together to form the first black rugby union. The WPCRUC was formed due to the exclusionary nature of the WPRFU, division presented itself as soon as rugby was beginning to establish itself in the Cape colony.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> P, Nongogo, “Xhosa people and the rugby game: Diffusion of the sport in the Eastern Cape of South Africa under the colonial and apartheid era”, *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, Volume 20 (3) (September 2014), p.1295

<sup>235</sup> P, Nongogo, “Xhosa people and the rugby game: Diffusion of the sport in the Eastern Cape of South Africa under the colonial and apartheid era”, *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, Volume 20 (3) (September 2014), p.1295

<sup>236</sup> P, Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, p.17

<sup>237</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Culture and Identities in South Africa*, pp.64-65

The South African Mineral Revolution, as mentioned in chapter three facilitated the spread and development of sport into the interior. Outside of the public-school system, rugby was popularised by the growing British influence, which included ideas of social and sporting clubs. In October 1871, Griqualand West officially became a part of the Colony. Records of the first game in the area date back to 1873. The West End Football Club challenged surrounding camps to a game, which was most likely a blend of Rugby rules and Winchester rules. Winchester rules was reported to have been popular before the Griqualand West Rugby Football Union was formed in 1886. The rugby teams in Kimberley challenged teams in surrounding areas, such as Bloemfontein, thus increasing the game's popularity. The Orange Free State Rugby Football Union only formalised rugby from 1895. However, school level rugby took place many years before that.<sup>238</sup>

Kimberley served a sizeable role in paving the way for rugby in general and laying the foundation for separation within the history of the development of the country's rugby. This is attributed to two reasons. Firstly, the formation of separate rugby unions along racial lines in the region. Secondly, the exclusively white South African Rugby Board (SARB) was formed in 1889, in Kimberley. The all-white national rugby board would eventually be admitted into the international rugby governing body (formed in 1886) and the Commonwealth coordinating body. A significant factor in the organisation of the body is that it aimed to lessen the racial tension within the white community (namely the Afrikaners and the English). The British had promoted ideas of superiority, but incorporated the Afrikaners in their way of life by utilising the growing ideas of Eugenics and social Darwinism. It excluded other race groups, even those that may have been perceived as enjoying more privileges than others. The formation of the SARB was followed by the introduction of the first inter-provincial competition in the country. From 1892, it was known as the Currie Cup competition, after Sir Donald Currie, a very successful mining magnate and entrepreneur. He gifted a trophy (the Currie Cup) to the Griqualand West team after their performance against the first British side to tour the country in 1891. International touring sides became a common occurrence after the formation of the SARB.<sup>239</sup> They served a crucial role in proving that South African rugby was more than

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<sup>238</sup> P, Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, p.23

<sup>239</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Culture and Identities in South Africa*, pp.40-41

capable of holding their own on the international sporting stage. Furthermore, it was a demonstration of the growing might and development of a unique identity of a team that showed its independence from the British Empire.

The Griqualand West Colonial Rugby Football Union (GWCRFU) was founded in 1894. The Union consisted of and formalised black and coloured rugby clubs. In 1896, a national black governing body, the South African Colonial Rugby Football Board (SACRFB), was established. Furthermore, Isiah Bud Mbelle, a product of the Healdtown mission school and one of the founders of the GWCRFU, approached John Cecil Rhodes with a proposition to be involved in black rugby. Rhodes sponsored the Rhodes Cup, which became a black interprovincial competition. Governing bodies, capitalist interest and hierarchical racial stereotypes are some of the sources of racial division that began to root itself within South African rugby emanated from Kimberley.<sup>240</sup>

The Eastern province that was formerly known as a frontier region from the 19th century was home to predominantly the AmaXhosa. Andre Odendaal proposes that the first black rugby teams were most likely institutions. Institutions like Lovedale, Healdtown and Kaffir Institution in Grahams-town. The first adult black rugby club in the region was the Union Rugby Football Club of Port Elizabeth, established in 1887. The popularity of the game in the black community led to the formation of the Eastern Province Native Rugby Board (EPNRB). The EPNRB was the first black rugby governing body in the region.<sup>241</sup> Black rugby has a long history in South Africa. However, more crucial is their role during apartheid and the sport boycott, when they endeavoured to transform the game and society.

### **c. Afrikaner nationalism and rugby**

Albert Grundlingh argues that the University of Stellenbosch was the beginning of the Afrikaner connection with rugby, as not only a game, but also a cultural identity for the Afrikaner community. There is no definitive moment that can be identified and said to be responsible for rugby becoming a part of Afrikaner identity. However, there are theories among researchers, such as Grundlingh, that vary widely. For instance, it was asserted by

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<sup>240</sup> C, Du Plessis, *Divided we stand: The origins of separation in South African rugby 1861-1899*, pp.98-99

<sup>241</sup> A, Odendaal. 1990. 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport, race and class in South Africa before Union'. *Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies 38*, pp.13,18-20

Archer and Bouillon in 1982, that the scrum represented a shape similar to that of the *laager*. It was the defensive formation that the Afrikaners arranged their wagons with and used it to defend themselves during the Great Trek. Therefore, Archer and Bouillon surmise, the Afrikaners felt attachment to the game for this reason.<sup>242</sup> In addition to Grundlingh, Nauright believes that a strong link between rugby and Afrikaner masculinity could have developed during the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902). Some Afrikaner males were first introduced to the game in the prisoner of war camps. After the war they took the game back to their home towns and farms.<sup>243</sup>

As mentioned in previous chapters, the Dutch arrived in 1652. They first settled in the Stellenbosch area in 1679, when the former Governor of the Cape Colony, Simon van der Stel named it after himself (van der Stel's bush).<sup>244</sup> From then onwards Stellenbosch developed as an Afrikaner/Dutch community, with key institutions such as Victoria College which became the University of Stellenbosch. The University of Stellenbosch was the top Afrikaans university in South Africa, from 1918 when it was given its full university status. From its inception it tried to differentiate itself from all the other English-speaking universities of the Cape. The University of Stellenbosch was essentially based on the need to uplift the status of the Afrikaner, and establish an identity for them in South Africa.

In a similar fashion to the English elite schools, Stellenbosch University was an elite Afrikaner school with an elite Afrikaner male student population that formed their own brotherhood and traditions. The racist and national identity attached to rugby, is not inherent in the sport, but rather a learned behaviour that has been perpetuated. The traditions and practices in rugby further consolidated the sport's exclusionary nature.<sup>245</sup> These traditions included the treatment of players like town heroes, who donned specific clothing and when they would enter a bar the rest of the patrons would make way for them. In most cases they were given their own exclusive area where they could drink. Rugby teams developed their own songs, forms of initiation and unique ways of celebrating or punishing players. These traditions became exclusive to the club, and unified the club and perpetuated its sense of pride while also helping to consolidate club identity. If the

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<sup>242</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*, p.6

<sup>243</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*, p.102

<sup>244</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*, p.6

<sup>245</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*, pp20-21



traditions were racist in nature, whether consciously or unconsciously, they are etched in the history of that club. For the male students that attended Stellenbosch, rugby developed into something that became part of student culture.<sup>246</sup> Additionally, Grundlingh posits that the Afrikaner male fervour for the game developed its exclusive subculture. It formed part of patriotism and escapism from the “perhaps more threatening...”<sup>247</sup> and less conservative world-views they were exposed to at university. The process of strengthening the reputation of Stellenbosch and its rugby developed the aforementioned ‘sub-culture’. Doctor Danie Craven considered it the duty of the Stellenbosch rugby club to provide players for the province and the national rugby team.<sup>248</sup>

The game of rugby exudes masculinity. The game is fast, hands on (quite literally), violent in nature as blood and bruises are a common occurrence and it is played in almost any weather condition. Those who played the game considered themselves as being superior to rest of the population<sup>249</sup> and their traditions attached to generating an identity. In 1919, the students established the Stellenbosch Rugby Club, which helped to promote the game of rugby in the Afrikaans community.<sup>250</sup> A.F. Markoeter, a former coach of Stellenbosch Rugby Club, took student teams on tours to the *platteland* (country side), to immerse the people that he believed were deprived of the privilege that the students had of witnessing student rugby. In the 1920s rugby was beginning to flourish, and those who were graduates of Stellenbosch and learned their rugby there moved to other parts of South Africa, where they further propagated the sport. As a gentlemen’s game, rugby was even introduced into the rural Afrikaans public-schools where it was used as a tool to discipline, shape young boys and promote self-confidence, in a way that evoked the rationale of British Victorian sports.<sup>251</sup> According to Nauright as the numbers of Afrikaner players rose, rugby shed its imperial context and focus, and moved to a more ‘African nationalist’ focus.<sup>252</sup> An aspect they began to shed from the beginning of beating touring teams and slowly shaping their identity. A large amount of the graduates that came from Stellenbosch, either graduated in

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<sup>246</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*, p.108

<sup>247</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*, p.108

<sup>248</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, p.56

<sup>249</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*, p.76

<sup>250</sup> P, Alegi, *Laduma: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, p.17

<sup>251</sup> D, Allen, ‘Mother of the nation’: rugby, nationalism and the role of women in South Africa's Afrikaner society, *Sport in Society* 17(4), 2014, p. 473.

<sup>252</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*, pp.41-42

religious studies or education. These professions were influential and integral to the Afrikaner community. In addition, they spread and popularised an ideology and a great love for the game of rugby.<sup>253</sup>

The transmission of rugby into the Afrikaner community in the Transvaal was different to the Cape. From 1910, after the unification of the colonies the Transvaal attracted working professionals with less time for leisure activities. Rugby took longer to pick up, but there were open rugby clubs for those that had a desire to play. From 1920, Pretoria saw an increase in interest in rugby. The increase is attributed to the efforts of former local rugby administrators and an influx of Stellenbosch graduates. Johannesburg was more English-speaking than Pretoria. Afrikaner players excelled, however, there was limited appeal by the Afrikaner population until the 1930s.<sup>254</sup>

The Afrikaner history of striving for independence from British hegemony in South Africa was even experienced on the sports field. The Afrikaner community gradually gained ascendancy and dominance in the sport, making it an underhand way to beat the British at their own game, so to speak. The game had long been used as a means to cement English and Afrikaner relations in the country.<sup>255</sup> In 1921, an Australian rugby commentator, G.V. Portus, had this to say about the Afrikaners in Rugby:

“an essentially winter game can flourish in a hot country, and how it can attract men who have not long heritage of British sport behind them... For the Dutch [Afrikaans] South Africans have taken to the rugby game as keenly as their English compatriots. In fact, they seem to outshine their English compatriots.”<sup>256</sup>

Sport played an important role in Afrikaner nationalism flourishing in South Africa. Dean Allen suggests that nationalism is built on a desire for “... a sense of security, safety, happiness, tranquillity, peace, freedom and hope for the future.”<sup>257</sup> Rugby was appropriated

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<sup>253</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pasttimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, p.56

<sup>254</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pasttimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, pp.59-61

<sup>255</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pasttimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, p.61

<sup>256</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*, p.110

<sup>257</sup> D, Allen, ‘Mother of the nation’: rugby, nationalism and the role of women in South Africa's Afrikaner society, *Sport in Society* 17(4),2014,p.467

and was used to consolidate Afrikaner unity (as well as a goal of forming an independent patriarchal state) through its ability to form feelings of achievement, pride and identity. People rallied support behind a single team, thus becoming a collective. Rugby afforded the recognition the Afrikaner community required.<sup>258</sup> It came with recognition in the sense that, from the early 1900s South African rugby had successfully cemented itself as a genuine global force in the game. They were known not only for their skill but their sheer physicality and size.

It was in the 1930s that Afrikaner nationalism made large strides. On a grand scale this movement was a response to the effects of capitalism on Afrikaners, which left many of them impoverished. To garner unity and support, economic and cultural progress, organisations were established, to stand up against the British organisations.<sup>259</sup>

The *Federasie van Afrikanse Kultuurvereniginge* (Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Organisations) which sought to construct a unique and authentic Afrikaner culture was the official face of the Afrikaner nationalist movement. The clandestine *Afrikaner Broederbond* (fellowship of the brothers), however secretive, led it.<sup>260</sup> From its inception in 1918, the Afrikaner Broederbond's main aim was to advance Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa. It was a countervailing response to British cultural and economic dominance.<sup>261</sup> They aimed to achieve parity through preserving Afrikaner culture, developing an Afrikaner economy and winning government election. In 1938, the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek served as an important moment for rugby in the Afrikaner community. It was during this celebration that rugby was likened to Afrikaner *volk* music, sport and general history. Although rugby was British in its origins, the Afrikaners appropriated and excelled in it, thereby making it theirs. Symbolically, the sport represented their nationalism well, as it was robust and coming into South Africa aggressively. It was indicative of the Afrikaner qualities we have come to know as South Africans, including ruggedness, force and determination.<sup>262</sup> A slogan emerged in 1939, that is *Volkeenheid* (National Unity), and by

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<sup>258</sup> D, Allen, 'Mother of the nation': rugby, nationalism and the role of women in South Africa's Afrikaner society, *Sport in Society* 17(4),2014,pp.466-467 & 473

<sup>259</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*,p.112

<sup>260</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*,pp.78-79

<sup>261</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, p.61

<sup>262</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*,pp.112-113

1948 such a slogan had helped to garner the support Afrikaner nationalism required to elect the National Party (NP).<sup>263</sup>

Separation and segregation in sport had developed into a norm in South Africa. Particularly rugby, was a very difficult sport for blacks to penetrate, in terms of representing South Africa. It had become South African custom that rugby was a white sport. Apartheid ideology had become so entrenched in society that racial domination was viewed as natural. During apartheid, the general view of the white population of blacks and rugby was as follows:

“it is only comparatively recently that black peoples have shown a marked increase in what they may be called modern sporting activities. For centuries they found their recreation in traditional activities, such as hunting and tribal dances. It was the White Nation, with its European background and tradition, which participated in recognised sports...”<sup>264</sup>

The above quote was cited from the 1977 official South African year book. It gives an idea of the type of apartheid justifications for exclusion of blacks from rugby, even though as we have seen, black involvement in rugby coincided or even predated Afrikaner participation. Other than customary societal practices which were attached to the history of rugby in South Africa, blacks were viewed as not having the necessary ability to play rugby. Some nationalists justified segregation using the principles of eugenics. The physiques and diets of blacks were criticised and viewed as being insufficient for playing rugby. They maintained that because rugby is very physical and demanding on the body, the diet of a rugby player had to contain large amounts of protein, it was not easily accessible for a black player of whom a majority lived in disadvantaged conditions. It is also a high impact sport and it raised anxieties about the effects of the mixing of bodily fluids, in the form of blood or sweat. Furthermore, they believed blacks did not have the mental capacity to be efficient rugby players.

The comments on mental capacity of black players were predicated on white supremacist ideologies and assumptions of the standard of rugby they played, bolstered by a belief

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<sup>263</sup> J, Nauright, *Sport ,Cultures and Identities in South Africa*,p.79

<sup>264</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*,p.24

whites played a higher standard of rugby. These kind of white supremacist views in rugby were largely shaped by the Afrikaner elites of the SARB. Additionally, the clandestine Broederbond with its finances, influence and prestige had a very significant role.<sup>265</sup> The Broederbond were known to even meddle in the selection of Springbok captains. They were often not concerned with merit, but rather the selection of what they believed would be the poster-child of the Afrikaners. For instance, a young blonde Naas Botha, the former Springbok fly half, was rumoured to have been approached by the Broederbond and was selected specifically by them. However, Botha has never really confirmed this.<sup>266</sup>

The connection of sport and identity is not unique to South Africa. The two have become inextricably linked over the last century, and are now being further affected by globalisation.<sup>267</sup> Sports is a representation of the country. It is a reflection of wealth, demographics, and culture. By the 1940s the Afrikaner population had successfully obtained political power and began to endeavour to impose racist policies and effectively dominate the South African political space. The Afrikaner elites and the government, were specific in who they selected to represent the country. International sport can be alternatively viewed as a 'battle field' and the players as proxy soldiers. A victory on the field is a diplomatic and symbolic victory signifying the efficiency of how well the state is doing.<sup>268</sup> However, what is unique to South Africa is how sport was located in the process of achieving political power and cultural and racial dominance. What this section aimed to highlight was the intimate connection rugby has had with the Afrikaner population.<sup>269</sup> The next section will explore how the connection impacted apartheid, when their defiance to dismantle racism sparked an international sports boycott.

#### **d. From a sport's boycott to transformed South African rugby (1969- 1990s)**

In retrospect, the emergence of the sports boycott is the start of a process of transforming South African rugby and sport. Rugby for a long time maintained an identity that represented the socio-political and economic power dynamics of South Africa. White

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<sup>265</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, p.25

<sup>266</sup> W, Claasen, *More than Just Rugby*, p.65

<sup>267</sup> D, Black & J, Nauright, 'Sport at the Centre of Power: Rugby in South Africa During Apartheid. *Sport history review* 29, p.193

<sup>268</sup> R, Nixon, *Apartheid on the Run: The South African Sports Boycott*. Duke University press, pp.70-71

<sup>269</sup> D, Black & J, Nauright, 'Sport at the Centre of Power: Rugby in South Africa During Apartheid. *Sport history review* 29, p.193

nationalism, supremacist ideology and culture had also entrenched itself in the sport. In addition, apartheid did not allow racial mixing in sport and in society. Apartheid legally established racial discrimination and unequal access and distribution of facilities and resources. The black population experienced numerous hurdles preventing them from reaching their full potential and participating in international rugby.

Challenges to racial segregation in sport date back as far as the 1940s. Prior to that, international competitions in various sports had taken place. However, a racial bar was implemented in the 1940s. Archer and Bouillon state that in response to racial segregation, in the “early 1950s, spectators were beginning systematically to applaud visiting sides and boo the Springboks or local white teams.” This was coupled by the frustration with the lack of interest and action of South African rugby organisations and the government. The situation in South African sport, prompted international outcry for action to be taken.<sup>270</sup>

The Springbok tour of Great Britain in 1969-1970 was the first time that South African rugby felt the impact of the sports boycott. Rob Nixon describes the events that occurred during the tour as the “most successful mass action in post Second World War British history.”<sup>271</sup> The South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) was anti-apartheid organisation started by Denis Brutus, which used sport as their primary tool.<sup>272</sup> Stop The Seventies Tour (STST) was established by Peter Hain, who was South African born. SANROC, STST and numerous other anti-apartheid organisations came together and organised a radical mass demonstration. Hundreds of protestors were arrested throughout the tour. The protest rattled the springboks and South Africans. They also set a precedent and sparked further global mass action against South Africa and South African rugby.<sup>273</sup>

Following the mass action in Great Britain, South African rugby was essentially isolated and no longer received invites to play rugby abroad. In 1970, four South African rugby bodies met at Newlands in Cape Town. These four bodies were the South African Rugby Board (SARB), the South African Rugby Union (SARU), the South African Rugby Football Federation (SARFF) and the South African Rugby Football Board (SARFB).<sup>274</sup> Besides the SARB, the other

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<sup>270</sup> A, Buillon and R. Archer, *The South African game: sport and racism*, pp.331,332-333

<sup>271</sup> R, Nixon, *Apartheid on the Run: The South African Sports Boycott*,p.68

<sup>272</sup> C, De Broglio, *The SANROC Story*,p.1

<sup>273</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*,pp.90,92

<sup>274</sup> A, Booley, *Forgotten Heroes: the History of Black rugby 1882-1992*, pp.24-25

organisations were black. From this meeting they selected delegates to travel to Great Britain to meet with other delegates from other rugby playing nations. This was the first time black rugby was officially acknowledged and given exposure to sports abroad. This would prove to be a great boost for black rugby as they were invited to play overseas. Numerous black rugby teams would go on to tour abroad from the 1970s. However, the SARU only accepted the invitation to play abroad after long deliberations. They were against the idea of an all black team touring, as it was against their objective of non-racialism.<sup>275</sup> These meetings were a step towards transforming rugby for black rugby, but for SARB it was to alleviate international pressure. However, it would be years before further meaningful actual action took place.

The next blow to South African rugby was the 1981 tour of New Zealand. New Zealanders experienced their own challenges of racism. Mixed rugby was outlawed in New Zealand from the 1920s until about the late 1960s. Their fight against racism in New Zealand birthed protest groups such as Halt All Racist Tours (HART) that was established in 1969. The initial objective of HART was to protest against the New Zealand rugby team touring South Africa, as South Africa did not allow mixed race teams to play. Eventually, South Africa allowed mixed race teams to tour the country in 1970. Danie Craven justified the move by declaring that the Maori were substantially more advanced than the 'Bantus' (Black South Africans), as apparently proved by anthropological studies. The movement then shifted their attention to eradicating apartheid in sport. They worked to maintain the global sports boycott on South Africa. Additionally, they wanted to end the support that New Zealand rugby was offering to South African rugby. HART eventually merged with the New Zealand Anti-Apartheid Movement (NZAAM) in order to expand their efforts. The merged organisation called for an outright boycott of all things South African, from their economy to culture.<sup>276</sup> New Zealand was viewed as a supporter of apartheid due to their failure to end their association with South African sport.

In July 1981, the Springboks embarked on a tour of New Zealand, contested by HART, who had managed to prevent a tour in 1972, and had anticipated the cancelation of this tour too.

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<sup>275</sup> A, Booley, *Forgotten Heroes: the History of Black rugby 1882-1992*, pp.24-25

<sup>276</sup> African Activist Archive, N.d <http://africanactivist.msu.edu/organization.php?name=Halt+All+Racist+Tours>  
Access: 28/10/2017

However, HART was opposed by a group called Stop Politics In Rugby (SPIR), which was a group that wanted to ensure the tour took place smoothly. Additionally, the government, under the leadership of Robert Muldoon approved the tour, and shared the views of SPIR; about keeping politics out of sport.<sup>277</sup> The Springboks were thrown a curveball on their way to New Zealand when the Australian government refused them entry into the country to refuel. They had to travel via the United States. From the day of their arrival the Springboks were given a hard time by the protestors in New Zealand. They had to be hidden from demonstrators by switching planes, taking back routes with their bus and travelling under police escort.<sup>278</sup> The protestors and the atmosphere as described by the former Springbok captain, Wynand Claasen, were reminiscent of the 1969/70 tour of Great Britain: “My mind and I believe the thoughts of the other players, went back to the 1969/70 tour of Britain ... Would the disruptions follow the same pattern or would they be more intense?”<sup>279</sup>

The events that took place were far more intense than the previous tour. The protestors from HART were adamant on their stance against apartheid and were willing to do whatever it took to disrupt the tour. One wonders if it was no coincidence that the violent nature of the protests in New Zealand took place in a period when the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa had become violent too. Black South Africans, specifically the black population had become defiant to apartheid laws and had become more violent in the struggle to end apartheid. Anti-Springbok demonstrators employed tactics such as invading the pitches in attempts to disrupt the matches. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1981, in Hamilton New Zealand, despite the heavy police presence, the demonstrators made their presence known by invading the pitch mid-game, thus effectively cancelling the second game in a row. The significance of this game was that the violence that took place was broadcast live all around the world. The frustrated pro-rugby fans pelted the demonstrators with various objects. However, this did not deter the demonstrators.<sup>280</sup>

HART distanced themselves from the violence, and made it known that they were a non-violent movement and opportunists had perpetrated the violence. After that tour there was

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<sup>277</sup> African Activist Archive, N.d <http://africanactivist.msu.edu/organization.php?name=Halt+All+Racist+Tours>  
Access: 28/10/2017

<sup>278</sup> W, Claasen, *More than Just Rugby*, pp.114-115

<sup>279</sup> W, Claasen, *More than Just Rugby*, p.115

<sup>280</sup> K, Schoolmeester, 14 February 2010, < <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/new-zealanders-protest-against-springbok-rugby-tour-1981>> ,access: 05/11/2017



no official contact between the sides until the boycott was dropped in the 1990s.<sup>281</sup> After the tour, as a member of the commonwealth, New Zealand agreed to comply to the Gleneagles decision of 1977. The Gleneagles decision prohibited any of its members from participating in any sport with South Africa. Any violation of this agreement risked challenges in court, so the NZRU abided to it.<sup>282</sup>

**e. South African response to isolation and boycotts**

The apartheid government was pressured to acknowledge that racialized sport was an integral part of the apartheid system. This poked holes in their argument of sports and politics not being connected, among other conservative arguments they maintained. White rugby supporters regarded the advocates of the boycotts as ill informed. In 1977, they were making real progress towards racially mixed rugby. The SARB approached all-white organisations, such as the *Broederbond*, to form a unified rugby board. The apartheid government began to devise a strategy to attempt to change the perception the world had of them. In May 1977, the then Minister of Sport, Piet Koornof stated:

we want to compete internationally and we are going to compete internationally... let us admit here this afternoon that they [sportsmen] are strong enough to cause political and economic relations to flourish or collapse... we are not holding on to it just because we fear expulsion, but also and because of the value of sport on the international level.<sup>283</sup>

This gave an impression that South Africa was making genuine attempts to make changes to the relations in sport. They had come to the realization of how crucial sport was in international relations.<sup>284</sup> During the 1970s, the boycott forced the apartheid government to rethink the policies they had in place. Balthazar Johannes Vorster, the then Prime Minister, proposed numerous reforms of which all were approved with unanimity by the National Party, except for one, mixed sport. The member of the National Party that was the most vocal about his disapproval was Albert Hertzog. Hertzog was expelled from the party for his

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<sup>281</sup> K, Schoolmeester, 14 February 2010, < <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/new-zealanders-protest-against-springbok-rugby-tour-1981>> ,access: 05/11/2017

<sup>282</sup> K, Schoolmeester, 14 February 2010, < <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/new-zealanders-protest-against-springbok-rugby-tour-1981>> ,access: 05/11/2017

<sup>283</sup> S, Ramsamy, *Apartheid, the real hurdle: Sport in South Africa and the International Boycott*, p.36

<sup>284</sup> S, Ramsamy, *Apartheid, the real hurdle: Sport in South Africa and the International Boycott*, p.6

views along with other members, who were labelled as *verkrampes*. Hertzog and his supporters would go on to establish the *Hersigetige Nasionale Party* (Restored National Party) where they continued to advocate their conservative views.<sup>285</sup> Vorster enlisted the help of the *Broederbond* to help draw up a new sports policy to alleviate the pressure from the international sporting community while also remaining true to the apartheid ideology. The final outcome was 'multi-national sport' or 'multi-racialism'. Rugby players of colour were not permitted to join white clubs. Moreover, white clubs had their constitutions that forbade blacks from joining ratified. The policy only meant that clubs of different races could play against each other.<sup>286</sup>

The plan meant that the different races would be responsible for the organisation, control and management of their own rugby clubs.<sup>287</sup> It was essentially inter-racial sport, for instance black rugby teams were allowed to play against white teams. But everything was still organized around race. Blacks were forbidden from representing South Africa through Springbok colours, as that exclusivity remained intact. The black teams were referred to as the Leopards and the Proteas for blacks and coloured respectively. They were permitted to go on separate overseas trips. The Proteas went on a six-match tour of Britain and Holland on December 1971. They were the first coloured teams to tour abroad and the tours however were heavily monitored and controlled by the apartheid government. They prevented the Leopards or the Proteas from getting too close to liberal Europeans, for example.<sup>288</sup> They also played a few games on South African soil against, although infrequently, international touring sides, such as New Zealand and France. This was after Danie Craven was coerced by members of the IRB to consider change.<sup>289</sup>

According to Albert Grundlingh the 1976 Soweto uprisings was the start of the end of apartheid. Black political demands gained momentum and the transformation process was taken more seriously. Danie Craven, as the President of the SARB, determined by his love for rugby and returning the Springboks to international glory, embarked on a mission to

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<sup>285</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, p.99

<sup>286</sup> D, Booth, *The race game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, p.99

<sup>287</sup> S, Ramsamy, *Apartheid, the real hurdle: Sport in South Africa and the International Boycott*, p.37

<sup>288</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*, p.92

<sup>289</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, p.101

transform rugby. However, he maintained conservative views with regards to the society we find ourselves today.<sup>290</sup>

From 1982 to 1991, Craven actively arranged over 300 multiracial rugby clinics. The clinics were also an attempt to garner international sympathy. This is evidenced by numerous invitations extended to international media. The clinics had little impact on social realities of the black rugby players. Inequality and lack of resources plagued black rugby players. Integrated sport and dismantling apartheid were key. From the 1980s, the government began to dabble in integrated sport at grass roots level. Certain schools, universities and rugby clubs were permitted to field mixed race teams.<sup>291</sup> During this same period, Craven, with the assistance of government funding, organised rebel tours.<sup>292</sup> International players were essentially invited to play against the Springboks. However, they were unofficial tours, for instance the New Zealand team played under the name the Cavaliers. In addition, the players were lured to South Africa through financial incentives.<sup>293</sup>

A last-ditch effort by Craven was to negotiate with the African National Congress (ANC). The SARB did not take kindly to Craven deciding to conduct meetings with the ANC. Craven and Louis Luyt appreciated the influence that the ANC had in the international sports boycott. Craven realised he had to take a different approach, because he was losing support from his friends in the IRB, a case in point being- exclusion from the first Rugby Union World Cup.<sup>294</sup> Even with his friends, he would not achieve the goal of readmission into international rugby through the board. The meetings were a turning point for the readmission of South African rugby to international rugby and the transformation of the country's rugby.

Approaching the ANC cast South Africa in a positive light in international rugby. A series of meetings were conducted over a period of time, most taking place in African countries such as Zambia and Zimbabwe. On the weekend of 14 October 1988, after meeting Harare, it was agreed upon to establish a unified non-racial rugby union. The apartheid government was not pleased with the agreement, due to their relations with the ANC. In 1988, with

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<sup>290</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, pp.102-104

<sup>291</sup> A, Grundlingh, A. Odendaal & B. Spies, *Beyond the Tryline*, p.94

<sup>292</sup> F.W, De Klerk, *The last Trek- A New Beginning*, p.55

<sup>293</sup> A. J, Smiles, *Transformation and Democratization Of South African sport in the new constitutional dispensation, with special reference to rugby as a Sport Code*, p.117

<sup>294</sup>The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, 5 September 2013, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/table/40038/rugby-world-cup-winners> (last access: 28/11/2018)

resounding support from Craven, the SARB agreed to put an end to racism in rugby and transform the sport. Following President F.W De Klerk's unbanning of the ANC, in 1990, he opened avenues for government to be involved in the process of transformation. Effectively, it also put an end to government intervention in rugby, an obstacle that prevented mixed rugby. This was after mounting domestic and international pressure, socio-politically and economically, placed on South Africa to change.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the aim of this chapter was to explore rugby's history in South Africa. In particular, the chapter aimed to display how rugby gained its role in South African society, including its association with class and race. As the first chapter identified, sports are a microcosm of wider society. The developments in South African rugby have represented a microcosm of wider society. The chapter began by tracing the origins of rugby in South Africa, from the 1800s. Rugby arrived as a part of British culture in the Cape colony. Rugby has always been a part of the upper classes. The chapter expands on this by showing how the upper classes were responsible for spreading and popularizing the sport. The chapter makes brief mention to the history of black rugby for two reasons. Firstly, contrary to the information available in the public domain, the history of black rugby is immense, it is just not sufficiently recorded. Secondly, the endeavours to transform South African rugby have been present for decades. Black rugby organisations have sought for transformation for decades. Finally, the chapter noted the origin of transformation in rugby in the end 1970s in opposition to apartheid and attempts by the regime to regain legitimacy.

### **Conclusion**

President F.W De Klerk ushered in the end of apartheid. For rugby it was a boon to return into the international sports arena. It was not an easy process to achieve unity, in consideration of the fact that various political actors and rugby administrators had conflicting views and reservations. However, the underlying mutual feeling was establishing a unified non-racial rugby body. All discrimination had to be eliminated, and all parties had to be ensured of their security in the future of rugby. In 1992, the unified South African

Rugby Football Union (SARFU) was launched. The board too had an inclusive interest in the opinions of all South Africans. The formation of the board ensured transformation structures were established, however, player representation was a larger task.<sup>295</sup>

Racial tensions and social realities made the envisioned image of transformed rugby a difficult road. SARFU invested large sums of money from 1993 onwards into improving the skills of black rugby players from grass roots level, through clinics. Eduard Coetzee emphasizes the importance of funding and early development for truly inclusive and transformed rugby.<sup>296</sup> However, the clinics were shrouded in corruption, conflict and ill management, and did not have as large of an impact as intended. Furthermore, they could not have had a large impact in light of the inequalities in society that had to be addressed in order to have rugby truly representative the country's population.

In 1993, the IRB gave South Africa the opportunity to host the 1995 Rugby World Cup. In the 1995 Rugby World Cup, Chester Williams' inclusion in the Springbok team was a step towards inclusion in rugby. Furthermore, Nelson Mandela realised the value of rugby to unify the nation and his appearance to hand over the World Cup to the victorious Springboks was symbolic of a transforming image of the country's rugby.<sup>297</sup>

Following the high point of the 1994 World Cup, the democratic government, led by the ANC, introduced the National Sport and Recreation Act (1998). The act outlined the commitment of the government towards transformation. In addition, this act introduced affirmative action in sport for greater representation of the population in sport. The government proposed quotas for the selection of players in the various structures of representative rugby. This act essentially entails a perpetuation of government intervention into rugby. Although not discriminatory in practice, parallels can be drawn between this endeavour and apartheid government intervention in rugby, which is consistent with arguments against policies of affirmative action, that describe it in part as a means to secure positions in political power. However, in opposition to that argument, issues of race and politics in rugby are an issue that the government inherited. Placing quotas in rugby are as old as the national team itself, at one point quotas were set as 100% white. The

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<sup>295</sup> E, Cupido, *A case-based analysis of the implementation of transformation in Western Cape rugby*, pp.51-53

<sup>296</sup> E, Coetzee, *Transformation in South African Rugby: ensuring financial sustainability*, p.26

<sup>297</sup> E, Cupido, *A case-based analysis of the implementation of transformation in Western Cape rugby*, pp.51-53

government's actions in rugby have been aimed at eradicating the prevailing racial composition and dominant white culture in the sport. The government expressed their dissatisfaction with the pace of transformation of rugby since the formation of the unified body. In 2005, in parliament the former Minister of Sport, Makhenkesi Stofile, went as far as saying representation should be placed above winning for the greater good of the country. The Minister's statement was in response to, among other issues, the issues of merit selection<sup>298</sup>. However, the view of the government was that the victory of teams that consist of an all-white team is not a victory for the country. In the first ten years of unification (1992-2002) there were only 22 black players capped for the Springboks out of a total of 184 caps that were awarded.<sup>299</sup>

In May 2000, a South African *Conference against Racism, Prejudice and Discrimination* was held. South African rugby stakeholders came together to adopt the Rugby Charter. The charter laid out the primary ideas of the process of transformation in rugby. In 2003, SARFU adopted Vision 2003. The initiative promoted transformation, growth, winning and financial stability. SARFU committed itself to broad based transformation at provincial and national level. From 2003, unpopularly, SARFU adopted the quota system. To ensure black talent that was identified was maintained, a minimum number of black players had to be selected. The quota system was scrapped after being swathed in criticism from its inception. In 2005, the South African Rugby Union (SARU) formerly known as SARFU, released the draft of the Transformation charter. The charter was finalised in 2006. The charter aimed to create an environment in rugby that was inclusive of all individuals, including amateur ranks, females and disadvantaged communities. It also aimed to increase participation outside of only just players, including the audience. SARU also introduced initiatives of talent-hubs, if you will, for black rugby players. During this same period, provincial and national representation of black players had not increased substantially, with regards to the objectives that were set.<sup>300</sup>

In 2012, SARU unveiled the Strategic Transformation Plan (STP). The STP laid out a five-year plan for transformation of South African rugby. The plan involved all stakeholders of South

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<sup>298</sup> A, Grundlingh, *Potent Pastimes: Sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*, pp.159-160,163

<sup>299</sup> E, Cupido, *A case-based analysis of the implementation of transformation in Western Cape rugby*, p.23

<sup>300</sup> E, Cupido, *A case-based analysis of the implementation of transformation in Western Cape rugby*, pp.18-19

African rugby and its aim was geared towards the grassroots level and beyond.<sup>301</sup>

Transformation has remained a contentious issue in South African rugby. Targets set out by SARU and government have not been reached. Furthermore, contestations against transformation have increased. In an open letter to Supersport<sup>302</sup>, Afriforum CEO, Kallie Kriel, wrote the following:

... although racially-motivated transformation in the form of representativeness and race quotas is the current politically-correct viewpoint in South Africa, it is important to note that this viewpoint is not only immoral, but also that the emphasis on race quotas to the detriment of merit destroys performance. The policy also comes down to a violation of international law regarding equality in sport.<sup>303</sup>

Targets set out by SARU and government have not been reached. Inequality, access to infrastructure and equipment are among the issues not addressed adequately. The government is to blame too, as they have failed to address the social ills that influence the country's rugby. Additionally, the transformation process has increased the number of South African rugby players leaving the country. Their reasons are the racial policies, but equally the financial possibilities are enticing. Similarly, policies such as BBBEE have increased the amount of South Africans leaving to work in other countries. This is due to their frustrations in not finding work and what they feel is an unfair policy.

The objective of this research was to explore the reasons behind the introduction of the policy of transformation into South African rugby. Furthermore, to explore the reasons behind its failure. South Africa is the only rugby playing nation that has implemented a racialized policy into their sport. It is mainly due to its complex racialized past that has remained deeply entrenched in the society. However, transformation is a global phenomenon. It generally seeks to aid the minority of the population. In contrast, South Africa seeks to aid the majority of its population. The common trend with transformation is its opposition from those that are not candidates and its propensity to failure.

Transformation in South African rugby and society has not achieved the intended outcome,

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<sup>301</sup> Anon, 25 January 2008, <https://mg.co.za/article/2008-01-25-january-18-to-24-2008>, (last accessed: 02/12/2018)

<sup>302</sup> A group of sports channels that are aired courtesy of dish satellite television (DSTV)

<sup>303</sup> Anon, 15 August 2017, <https://www.sport24.co.za/Rugby/afriforum-posts-open-quota-letter-to-supersport-20170815> (last access: 28/11/2018)

such as greater overall racial inclusivity and unity within the sport. The research asserts that the complex racialized past is behind the introduction of transformation. In addition, the deeply entrenched racialized past is not only to blame. The post-apartheid regime has perpetuated racialism and have failed to eradicate the social ills that are a root of the problem.

The first chapter explored the history of sport in South Africa. It focused on Victorian sports and how they developed in the country. The development of sports is related to the socio-political changes that occurred in South Africa, which in turn entrenched themselves in the sports. The second chapter explores the history of rugby in South Africa. Identity, nationalism, culture, boycotts and racism are some of the topics covered. The aim of the chapter was to discern the reasons behind the need to transform South African rugby. In addition, it includes the debates surrounding the topic in South Africa. Failures in transformation of rugby are as much of a responsibility of the current government as they are a history of country. Social ills must be alleviated in order to assist in achieving the grand objectives that have been set.



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