A GAME OF TWO SIDES: THE FORMAL DIVISION OF RUGBY IN THE TRANSVAAL, 1889-1899

Colin du Plessis
University of Pretoria
c.duplessis@cornwallhill.org

The importance of sport in the revision of the past has gained much recognition in recent times and the genre of sport history has become ever more popular as a result. This article locates and traces the historically binary relationship of sport with concepts such as unification and division, inclusion and exclusion, while focussing on historical division in rugby in the Transvaal Republic. While it is true that sport creates community and unites people, it is also true that sport often serves as a stage for division and social exclusion. This is well illustrated in the development of rugby in the Transvaal Republic. Various theories have been developed to analyse division within societies which may shed more light on the effectiveness of sport as a social divider in the nineteenth century. Relevant concepts and theories include: B Bernstein, HL Elvin and RS Peters's ideas on rituals and symbols; Eric Hobsbawm's "Invented Traditions"; Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities"; as well as Antonio Gramsci's "Cultural Hegemony". By applying these theories, within strong British cultural imperialism, to the establishment of exclusive rugby clubs and unions, one can explain how the rugby community in the Transvaal came to be racially stratified. It is thus the aim of this article to discern the link between the establishment of exclusive clubs and unions and the racial stratification of Transvaal rugby during the period 1889-1899.

Keywords: Class; division; exclusion; formalisation; hegemony; inclusion; race; rugby; sport; Transvaal

Die belangrikheid van sport in die hersiening van die verlede het die afgelope tyd heelwat erkenning ontvang en die genre van sportgeskiedenis het meer en meer gewild geraak as 'n gevolg daarvan. Hierdie artikel verken die histories binêre natuur van sport in verband met konsepte soos eenwording en verdeeldheid, insluiting en uitsluiting, en volg dit na deur te verwys na die historiese verdeeldheid van rugby in die Transvaalse Republiek. Alhoewel dit waar is dat sport 'n gevoel van gemeenskap skep en mense bymekaar bring, is dit ook waar dat dit dikwels 'n platform bied vir verdeling en sosiale uitsluiting. Dit word goed geïllustreer in die ontwikkeling van rugby in die Transvaalse Republiek. Verskeie teorieë om

verdeeldheid in gemeenskappe te ondersoek, is reeds ontwikkel, en dit kan meer lig werp op die effektiwiteit van sport as 'n sosiale verdeler in die negentiende eeu. Relevante konsepte en teorieë sluit in: B Bernstein, HL Elvin en RS Peters se idees oor rituele en simbole; Eric Hobsbawm se "Geskepte Tradisisies" ("Invented Traditions"); Benedict Anderson se "Verbeelde Gemeenskappe" ("Imagined Communities"); sowel as Antonio Gramsci se "Kulturele Hegemonie" ("Cultural Hegemony"). Deur hierdie teorieë binne die raamwerk van sterk Britse kulturele imperialisme op die stigting van eksklusiewe rugbyklubs en unies toe te pas, kan daar verduidelik word hoe die rugbygemeenskap in die Transvaal in rasseterme verdeel was. Dit is dus die doel van hierdie artikel om die verband tussen die stigting van eksklusiewe klubs en unies en die rassestratifikasie van Transvaalse rugby gedurende die tydperk 1889-1899 uit te lig.

Sleutelwoorde: Klas; verdeeldheid; uitsluiting; formalisering; hegemonie; insluiting; ras; rugby; sport; Transvaal

Introduction: Two sides to the game

The development of sport as a field of historical inquiry has grown significantly in the latter part of the twentieth century and has continued into the twenty-first. In line with the emergence of social history, many previously ignored sections of society have come under the spotlight and our understanding of different societies in history has benefited immensely. The significance of leisure time studies has received increasing attention, bringing with it a fuller picture of a community and its possessive past. In what historians describe as a "post-modern globalising world", it has become apparent that while studies tend to be more thematic, focusing on specific topics, there is also a tendency to focus more on previously "ignored histories" of the marginalized or suppressed groups. It has been argued that there is a need to write "new kinds of history making [such as] the histories of families, of sport...".[1] Thus the importance of sport in the revision of the past has gained much recognition in recent times and has become ever more popular under the burgeoning field of social history.

Historically, sport has been seen as an important shaper of the social landscape as have wars, revolutions and elections. It only makes sense that sport should be considered within the realm of social history as it offers the historian glimpses of ways in which social groups interacted outside the traditional confines of historical study such as work, political organisations and the immediate family,

1 M Morris, *Every step of the way. The journey to freedom in South Africa* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2004), p 321, *in* AM Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes: A history of ballroom dancing in South Africa (1600-1940s)" (MA Thesis, University of Pretoria), 2008, p 11.

providing another facet or viewpoint to social history and the study of past societies. Sport can thus be a very influential force within society and can be quite versatile in its influence. Yet it has been contested that sport is not easy to study as a historical theme.[2] Sport is quite difficult to pin down and even though many boundaries have been set in an attempt to describe what sport is and what it is not, an accurate, single definition that encompasses all the characteristics and all activities that one might call sport is yet to be formulated. Despite attempts at critical analysis, sport "remains socio-culturally and historically opaque".[3] It has the tendency to change with society and alongside culture over time. As society develops, so does the concept of sport, in that sport has mostly been studied as a contextual example of something else. Sport is often described and treated as representing a part of society. This is why sport as a theme is mostly described alongside other concepts i.e. sport and religion, sport and violence, sport and class, sport and gender, amongst others.[4] In this dualistic manner sport has become more and more valuable and visible as a source of historical inquiry.

The dual nature of sport within society has been ignored to a degree and has almost exclusively been praised for its ability to bring together disparate peoples, especially in the historically divided social landscapes of countries such as South Africa. In 1995, a year into a new fledgling democracy, South Africa successfully hosted (and won) the IRB[5] Rugby World Cup and this is often cited as an example of how sport served to unite South Africans who were previously subjected to enforced, legislative divide.[6] In 2010 South Africa hosted the FIFA[7] World Cup which was perceived as another example of how sport was presented as a grand unifying force. This coincidentally brought with it a re-appreciation of sport, especially association football, as a source of historical knowledge, especially within South Africa.[8] International pressure on the first African host of this prestigious event subtly coerced contemporary opinion and writing to be overtly positive and view sport, in this instance soccer, as a magnificent, single-purpose unifying machine that was capable of roping communities together

2 R McKibbin, Can historians write the history of sport, podcast, 2014-05-27, http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/can-historians-write-history-sport, viewed 2014-06-17.

3 J Hargreaves, *Sport, power and culture: A social and historical analysis of sports in Britain* (Cambridge, 1986), p 1.

4 R McKibbin, Can historians write the history of sport, podcast, 2014-05-27, http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/can-historians-write-history-sport, viewed 2014-06-17.

5 This refers to the International Rugby Board, currently known as World Rugby.

6 T Marjoribanks & K Farquharson, *Sport and society in the Global Age* (Basingstoke, 2012) p 1.

7 This refers to the world football governing body, Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

8 P Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, politics, and society in South Africa, from its origin to 2010* (Scottsville, 2010) p 152-154.

and banding whole populations of diverse people under a single flag.[9] For the purposes of an event like the FIFA World Cup, this seems very logical, yet sport is not that simple.

Like most things, there are two sides to the game. It must be noted that sport can serve the purposes of uniting as well as creating divides between different communities, as well as within communities. A broader view of sport shows a binary world of comparison and exclusion, and sport is just as guilty of division and exclusion as it is of unification and camaraderie. When looking at a united group, it is almost outrageous to ignore the fact that there must be at best some form of exclusion of other individuals or another group, and at worst a vilification of these individuals or groups. The same characteristics that make it possible for sport to foster inclusion also simultaneously and inevitably create exclusion. The emergence of inclusionary relationships in sport rests heavily on the presence of in-group solidarity, which tends to illuminate the differentiation between members of the group and non-members. Sport often also depends on or promotes closure within a group, which is most often paired with exclusion.[10] The power of sport to unite and connect people within a society has been argued incessantly, yet the divisionary nature, bred from exclusionary unification of one group of individuals at the expense of others, is often ignored.

At an international level many key figures have embraced this notion of sport as unifier, for example, former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has even said that "[s]port is a universal language that can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status".[11] Yet he makes no mention of the ability of sport to isolate people. In his preface to Chuck Korr and Marvin Close's *More Than Just A Game: Soccer v Apartheid*, former FIFA President Sepp Blatter asserts that "[soccer] is more than just a game, since it unites us in a world that is becoming increasingly divided".[12] But he does not ask what share soccer, or sport in general, has had in this division. Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela also stressed that "[s]port

9 Nelson Mandela Foundation, Nelson Mandela on South Africa hosting the World Cup: Transcript of Nelson Mandela's message at the FIFA World Cup draw in Cape Town, https://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/nelson-mandela-on-south-africa-hosting-the-world-cup, n.a., viewed 2015-03-09; Interview: A Koch with Willi Lemke: A huge sense of unity, *FIFA World*, June/July 2010, pp 32-33.

10 P Christesen, *Sport and democracy in the ancient and modern worlds* (Cambridge, 2012) pp 102-103.

11 K Annan, United Nations Secretary General, New York, NY. The Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Sport for the Development of Peace, Press Release 2005-11-02, http://www.un.org/sport2005/newsroom, viewed 2014-06-03.

12 C Korr & M Close, *More than just a game: Soccer v apartheid: The most important soccer story ever told* (New York, 2010), p ix.

has the power to inspire and unite people".[13] In all three cases, it is assumed that sharing a sports field or simply a sporting code would inevitably bring camaraderie and unity. However, the inverse is more often than not true, and very often rigid, competitive lines are drawn. Sport often asks for distinctions to be made between "us" and "them"; between represented communities; and sometimes even between who is allowed to play, and who is not.

In the context of South Africa, division and the solidification of the racially divided social order is distinctly evident and decidedly visible within sport. Sport has been segregated for most of the country's history with whites sharing the field with whites and non-whites[14] sharing the field with non-whites. This should not be ignored within the larger framework of South African society. Grant Jarvie states that, "sport must not be understood abstractly or simply in the context of ideas about racial prejudice, but rather in the context of the ensemble of social relations characterizing the South African social formation".[15] Thus the history of division of sport in South Africa, be it by class or race, must be considered within and as part of broader social and political interactions in the country and must be evaluated with one eye on existing social relationships. Social division does not merely happen and must be built on a previously existing relationship of collaboration or at the very least exchange, even if on the smallest of scales. Charles van Onselen captures this sentiment well when he explains modern race relations in South Africa in his work, *The seed is mine...*,:[16]

> *Currents of anger, betrayal, hatred and humiliation surge through many accounts of modern South Africa's race relations, but what analysts sometimes fail to understand is that without prior compassion, dignity, love or feeling of trust – no matter how small, poorly, or unevenly developed – there could have been no anger, betrayal, hatred and humiliation. The troubled relationship between black and white South Africans cannot be fully understood by focussing on what tore them apart and ignoring what held them together. The history of marriage, even an unhappy one, is inscribed in the wedding banns as well as the divorce notice.*

This is also very much the case with sport in South Africa from its very beginnings. The separate diffusion of sporting codes like rugby, soccer and

13 Nelson Mandela Foundation, Nelson Mandela on South Africa hosting the World Cup: Transcript of Nelson Mandela's message at the FIFA World Cup draw in Cape Town, https://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/nelson-mandela-on-south-africa-hosting-the-world-cup, viewed 2015-03-09.

14 The term "non-white" is used within the colonial context to emphasize the contemporary custom of inclusion of one race and the general exclusion of all other races.

15 J Nauright, *Sport, cultures and identities in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1997), p 25.

16 C Van Onselen, *The seed is mine: The life of Kas Maine, a South African sharecropper, 1894-1985* (Cape Town, 1996), p 4.

cricket must flow from some form of integrated development of the specific code. Archer & Bouillon refer to a cricket match played between "the Hottentots and the Boers Afrikanders (sic)" as early as 1854, as well as John Sheddon Dobi's experience of a "farmer [who] had been amusing himself by playing cricket with Kaffirs".[17] And rugby historian Braber Ngozi speaks of "kitchen boys who learnt their rugby from whites", referring to the founders of the Port Elizabeth-based Union Rugby Football Club.[18] It is inconceivable that the same sport would develop in complete isolation within separate communities in a single region. So the question is not whether the different communities played together, but rather when did they stop playing together and why? Why is South African sport in the twentieth century characterised by limitation and segregation; by who gets to play; or at best, who gets to play with whom?

These questions have been rather difficult to answer as relevant source material has been hard to come by. In one of the earliest accounts of sport in the Transvaal entitled *Sport and Pastime in the Transvaal, Including Biographical Sketches of Transvaal Sportsmen* by EJL Platnauer, the author already makes mention of the difficulty in obtaining primary source material concerning sport and leisure activities.[19] It is unfortunately the burden sport bears, as chroniclers are most often interested in the exceptional and extraordinary. The everyday happenings and social historical meaning of sport are more often than not ignored. These problems continue to plague research today.

Traditionally, sport has very rarely been segregated when played in a casual, non-official capacity. Only when a game becomes formalised and organised (even in the slightest sense) does it show elements of exclusion. This is very much true for modern colonial team sports, such as rugby, especially in South Africa. Rugby, as most modern sports in South Africa, s originated in the former Cape Colony. When the British permanently took control of the Cape in 1806 after the Napoleonic wars, they brought with them all the social and cultural customs inherent to Britain – some of which were by then serving to reinforce social differences. These included games and sport which had already come to represent class division in early Victorian England.[20] As William Baker notes: "While organized sports in late-Victorian England both reflected and affected social relationships and ideological assumptions, sports in Britain were scarcely "integrated and integrating activities". On the contrary, they resulted

17 R Archer & A Bouillon, *The South African game, sport and racism* (Cambridge, 1986), p 79.

18 A Odendaal, The thing that is not round, *in* A Grundlingh *et al*, *Beyond the tryline* (Johannesburg, 1995), p 34.

19 EJL Platnauer, *Sport and pastime in the Transvaal, including biographical sketches of Transvaal sportsmen* (Johannesburg, 1908), p 7.

20 T Mason, *Sport in Britain* (Cambridge, 1989), p 37.

from a class-divided society and tended to accentuate rather than to heal those divisions".[21] British soldiers and settlers brought with them games like horse racing, cricket and later rugby and association football. Clubs were formed and served to display a certain sense of British exclusivity and social and political dominance outside Britain. Andre Odendaal refers to Jan Morris when discussing the establishment of British social and sports clubs:[22]

> [The club] *was developed as an enclave of power and privilege in an alien setting, its members patently different from the unadmitted millions not only in colour and in status but also in place. More than anywhere else it was the place where imperialists celebrated their Britishness, authority and imperial lifestyle.*

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, as soldiers, students, missionaries and fortune seekers spread into the interior,[23] they took with them British social customs and, subsequently, imperialist expression in the form of the social or sports club. Rugby clubs (as well as the union) in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) or Transvaal[24] were thus built on or were an extension of British traditions of class privilege and separation, played out within the burgeoning, cosmopolitan Transvaal society. This tended to function alongside and enforce the dichotomy of white and non-white. The Transvaal, with its substantial British immigrant society, drew a distinction between ruling and ruled races,[25] which impacted on the development of social interaction immensely. The Transvaal community, of course, was not a slave to British colonial dictation. Formal Transvaal legislation might have borrowed from British tradition, but also enforced its own constitutional rule regarding race separation. In article 9 of the 1858 constitution of the newly founded Transvaal Republic/South African Republic it was made clear that there would be no equality between whites and coloured people "neither in church, nor in state".[26] Racial collaboration in formal settings was constitutionally restricted from the word go.

21 WJ Baker, The making of a working-class football culture in Victorian England, *Journal of Social History*, 13, 2, 1979, p 242.

22 A Odendaal, The thing that is not round, *in* A Grundlingh *et al*, *Beyond the tryline*, p 26.

23 With the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1867 and gold in 1886 on the Witwatersrand, the interior of South Africa, especially the young South African Republic (ZAR/Transvaal), saw a great influx of prospectors seeking riches.

24 The ZAR or Transvaal was an independent Boer (Afrikaner) republic in the interior of Southern Africa established in 1852. The discovery of rich gold deposits in the Witwatersrand area of the Transvaal in 1886 saw a huge influx of foreign prospectors into the republic. Thus Transvaal society became very cosmopolitan with social interaction and social position becoming somewhat contested areas.

25 M Lake & H Reynolds, *Drawing the colour line: White men's country and the international challenge of racial equality* (Melbourne, 2008), p 9.

26 *Grondwet van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, 1858, Artikel 9.

Division in Transvaal sport thus had an early start and the beacon of difference within a sport, the exclusive club, was present from the inception. Though most sporting clubs and unions were established on exclusionary grounds, they had no need for constitutional racial restrictions as social custom, according to formal British colonial tradition, already dictated separation.[27] However, this does not mean that sport was to elude the rest of Transvaal society as these clubs and unions did not monopolise sport or block any external exposure. Transvaal rugby clubs, such as Wanderers, Pretoria and Pirates were established by socially likeminded individuals, but never with the intention of having sole rights to the game. The game soon spread to communities outside the European settler fold and these communities took to it quite vigorously.

Questions then arise as to how exactly rugby functions within the abstract realm of societal forces and how this in effect influenced Transvaal society. As an integral part of the fabric of society it does beg the question as to what influence sport has, and in this case, how exactly rugby generated and fostered social exclusion within the Transvaal society. Various theories have been developed to analyse the role of formalised sport which may shed more light on the effectiveness of sport as a social divider in the nineteenth century. The concepts and theories include B Bernstein, HL Elvin and RS Peters's ideas on rituals and symbols; Eric Hobsbawm's "Invented Traditions"; Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities"; as well as Antonio Gramsci's "Cultural Hegemony". The formalisation of rugby union in the Transvaal serves as a case study of how these theories play out. Together, these theories might be employed within a strong legacy of British cultural imperialism to explain how the rugby community of the Transvaal came to be racially stratified.

Rituals and symbols: Inclusive and exclusive

Richard Mandell leads us into the symbolic or ritualistic nature of sport when he posits that the natural progression in human civilization resulted in newly developed class-specific recreational activities or theatrical contests that symbolically confirmed the validity of the social order from which they were born.[28] John Nauright elaborates when he says that all forms of identity, even if they entail racial or class bias, are learned and perpetuated within society through the use of ceremonies, rituals or bodily performances, such as sport, which often also serve as a method of hereditary transmission of existing social classification.[29] This argument of class-specific identification can easily

27 J Nauright, *Sport, cultures and identities in South Africa*, p 25.
28 RD Mandell, *Sport: A cultural history* (Bloomington, 1999), p 15.
29 J Nauright, *Sport, cultures and identities in South Africa*, pp 20-21.

be compared or even transferred to race-specific identities, as division and exclusion on racial lines can be said, according to popular Marxist theory, to relate to and overlap with established class divisions.

In South Africa, specifically, theorists such as Harold Wolpe suggested that the divisions in Apartheid South Africa could be explained better through economics and class rather than purely through race. But he himself admitted that this might be an oversimplification and that class and race are very much intertwined.[30] In this way sport can be seen to have played a key role in the learning and perpetuation of different social and racial identities the world over. As society is divided, sport, as part of society, serves as one of the dividing aspects of human interaction. These divides often find expression in the establishment of exclusive clubs or unions. The creation of club rituals and symbols within a sport then serve to promote a sense of solidarity among members of a club or group which, as mentioned, tends to encourage exclusion of non-members. This most often comes in the form of a badge, crest, uniform or even official documentation showing membership of an exclusive club or sporting union of clubs. These tangible symbols, representing belonging from within the group also serve as physical symbols of exclusion, rejection or constraint from outside the group. As John Goodger puts it: "...the wearing of badges and uniform dress may . . . serve to remind group members of their common, specific identity and values, and of the boundary between themselves and outsiders".[31] The formalisation of a sport also includes the promotion of ritual. Ritual then serves to relate the individual through ritualistic acts to a social order and heighten respect for that order. It confirms and invigorates that order within the individual and deepens acceptance of the procedures through which continuity, order and boundaries are maintained within the created social hierarchy.[32]

This is very much the case in the development of rugby in the Transvaal, with the establishment of the racially exclusive Transvaal Rugby Football Union in 1889 (TRFU).[33] The establishment of the TRFU was in itself a continuation of inherent racial exclusivity of its founding clubs,[34] and served to solidify this racial exclusivity through the creation of symbols of exclusion. These symbols included a crest, a charter and documented club affiliation to the TRFU. The

30 S Friedman, *Race, class and power: Harold Wolpe and the radical critique of apartheid*, p 56.

31 J Goodger, Ritual solidarity in sport, *Acta Sociologica*, 29(3), 1986, p 220.

32 B Bernstein, HL Elvin & RS Peters, Ritual in education, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B, Biological Sciences*, 251(772), 1966, p 429. A discussion on ritualization of behaviour in animals and man.

33 EJL Platnauer, *Sport and pastime in the Transvaal*, p 61.

34 The founding members of the TRFU were Potchefstroom, Wanderers, Pretoria, Pirates and Kaffrarians.

Union itself would become a symbol of formal exclusivity within the sporting community of the Transvaal. A formal club competition for member clubs of the Union was created early in its founding year where cup matches under the TRFU were already being played on the 7th of June, 1889 and the "Grand Cup Match" being contested on the 27th of July 1889 in the form of "Pirates vs Pretorians".[35] This can be seen as the establishment of a ritual whereby member clubs reinforced their solidarity and exclusivity on the field. By competing solely against other member clubs, they underpinned the restrictive nature of the TRFU and began a process whereby the separation of member- and non-member-participation became commonplace.

Although these rituals are not overtly differentiating they did serve to maintain the status, or racial, distinctions within the society of the time.[36] The end product of this ritual can be seen in the legacy of separate facilities in Transvaal rugby. In minutes from a meeting of the Pretoria Rugby Sub Union (later Northern Transvaal Rugby Union) of 1935 mention is made of: "...the construction of suitable rugby fields for coloured persons and natives", which was agreed upon.[37] This entry displays a certain normalcy or usualness of the separation of white and non-white within rugby at the time. In a way the divide has become natural, commonplace, a sort of run-of-the-mill practice that could be attributed to the early construction of ritual, which maintained and bolstered the social order of the day - rituals which came about with the formalisation of the sport in the 1880s.

Invented traditions and imagined communities

As these symbols and rituals took root within the rugby society of the Transvaal in the late nineteenth century, they became what Eric Hobsbawm refers to as "Invented Traditions" – invented traditions that give social and cultural meaning to the establishment of authority and submission.[38] Hobsbawm explains:[39]

> *Invented traditions are taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.*

35 Anon., Football, Gand Cup Match, *The Star*, 1889-07-25; Football, The Cup Match, *The Star*, 1889-07-29.

36 J Goodger, Ritual solidarity in sport, *Acta Sociologica*, 29(3), 1986, p 220.

37 Pretoria Rugby Sub Union, Grounds Communication Report, Noord Transvaal Rugby Unie Notules, Section 82/35b, 1935-04-08.

38 CM Badenhorst, "Mines, missionaries and the municipality: Organised African sport and recreation in Johannesburg, c1920-1950" (PhD thesis, Queen's University, Kingston), p 28.

39 E Hobsbawm & T Ranger (eds), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p 1.

These traditions become culturally relevant or influential as soon as the symbols and rituals take on social and cultural meanings beyond the symbols or rituals themselves. It is the production of social and cultural meaning that marks the invention of tradition.[40]

These invented traditions then become a characteristic of a newly formed, exclusive community, or what Benedict Anderson refers to as an "Imagined Community".[41] This relies on the concept of tradition, based on fictitious historicity, to legitimize their solidarity and exclusivity. A kind of "we've always done it this way"-argument. This community identity is restricted, with boundaries in place, beyond which lie other communities with different characteristics, from which the community often derive its own identity.

Members of the Transvaal rugby community gauged their identities as "rugby playing" and as "white", and set their boundaries where others are not those things. This community is constructed with reference to a dichotomy of member vs. non-member, symbolised in part by an "us" and "them" delineation.[42] "Us" and "them" in this case mostly meant white and non-white, as per colonial societal norms of the day. The rugby club, or by extension the union, came to offer a sense of identity where identification with the rugby club offered symbolic citizenship and affirmed a sense of place[43] or, what Peter Alegi refers to as a "...forge[d] collective identit[y]...".[44]

This collective identity was most probably craved in the newly developing Transvaal community especially with the steady influx of new members to society amidst the emerging mineral revolution. As Nauright suggests, identity is perpetuated within society through the use of ceremonies, rituals or bodily performances, like sport, which then also serve as a method of hereditary transmission of existing social classification.[45] This applies to the burgeoning community within the Transvaal in an interesting way. The generational growth

40 J Nagel, Review: The invention of tradition by Eric Hobsbawm; Terence Ranger, *American Journal of Sociology*, 90(5), 1985, p 1098.

41 B Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London, 1983), p 6.

42 J Harris, Cool Cymru, rugby union and an imagined community, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy,* 27(3/4), p 153.

43 J Harris, Cool Cymru, rugby union and an imagined community, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy,* 27(3/4) p 154.

44 P Alegi, Playing to the gallery? Sport, cultural performance, and social identity in South Africa, 1920s-1945, *International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 35(1), 2005, p 18. Although Alegi uses this term to describe the positive effects of a created sense of community and a focus on in-group solidarity, the "unwanted" consequence of exclusion and rejection is also present and also very influential.

45 J Nauright, *Sport, cultures and identities in South Africa*, pp 20-21.

of Transvaal society is supplemented by the steady influx of new members into the society. These high numbers of "immigrants" (*uitlanders* or foreigners) are then welcomed into a society desperately trying to create its own identity.

The imagined community created within late nineteenth century Transvaal rugby circles then took it upon itself to transfer the values and traditions of this rugby society onto newly arrived members. This can then be seen as a sort of accelerated method of Nauright's hereditary transmission of cultural identity and societal classification. The new members to society are then seen and treated as "new generations" who need to have the societal traditions, symbols and rituals instilled in them. The "new generation" must conform to the rules and traditions, norms and values, of the society if they wish to acquire personal identities that would allow them to be integrated into the structures of the society;[46] rules and traditions, which are, of course, invented and based on fictitious historical justifications. In this way, the invented traditions that served to legitimise the newly imagined racially exclusive community or collective identity of the Transvaal rugby playing society are imposed on and taught to a large number of new members of society much quicker than conventional hereditary transmission would. This is achieved through membership to social and sports clubs.

The creation of these imagined communities and collective identities, as represented by and expressed through club membership, was an extension of previously discussed British traditions of class privilege and separation, played out within Transvaal society. The game was played by many non-white Transvaal residents, who formed clubs and a union of their own. The excluded non-white rugby playing community thus emerged as a reactionary, imagined community itself. And so two distinct rugby communities emerged in the ZAR: One white and the other non-white.

The racial divide between these two communities was entrenched and solidified by the establishment of the Transvaal Coloured Rugby Football Union. The South African Colonial Rugby Football Board (SACRFB) was established in 1896 under the auspices of the Griqualand West Colonial Rugby Football Union (GWCRFU).[47] Among the founding members of the SACRFB were non-white representative rugby unions from the Western Province, Griqualand West, Eastern Province and Transvaal.[48] It is then safe to assume that the Transvaal Coloured Rugby Football Union was founded some time before 1896 and thus within six or seven years of the founding of the Transvaal Rugby Football Union. The founding of the TCRFU would strongly imply the racial exclusivity of the TRFU as well as the need for an official governing body to oversee the growth

46 J Hargreaves, *Sport, power and culture: A social and historical analysis of sports in Britain*, p 2.
47 R Archer & A Bouillon, *The South African game, sport and racism*, p 58.
48 A Booley, *Forgotten heroes: History of black rugby, 1882-1992* (Cape Town, 1988), p 13.

and expansion of rugby within the excluded non-white rugby community.

Cultural hegemony: White and non-white

The white/non-white divide which took place all around South Africa at the time, also implies a strong cultural hegemonic order within society, and by extension in the rugby playing community. The establishment of a racially separate governing body in some sense shows a tacit acceptance of the divisionary status quo. It is a form of consensual control where the non-white rugby playing community "willingly" or "voluntarily" assimilated to the worldview of the dominant group or hegemonic leadership - this acceptance of subordination allows the relationship to be hegemonic.[49] This assimilation was not really voluntary, though, as the non-white rugby playing community had very little choice but to establish a governing body of their own if they wanted to keep playing the game. Thus the "acceptance" of the status quo or submission to the established order can be seen as coerced rather than completely natural or voluntary. The establishment of a separate governing body for non-whites is also a form of reaction, or even active resistance, to the socially oppressive TRFU and the dominant hegemonic role it fulfilled. The white rugby playing community, including the TRFU administrators, neutralised this resistance by accepting the establishment of the new non-white rugby body. By accommodating certain needs of the subordinate group, the dominant group keeps the hegemony in place. This accommodation serves to promote and strengthen the hegemony.[50] The dominant group "allowed" this form of resistance without losing its grip on the overarching power structures that dictated how, or even where and by whom, the game was played; while the subordinate group views this act of breaking away and gaining a semblance of independence as a victory. In this way, neither group accomplishes its complete objective nor gains or retains complete control, yet in such a way to satisfy the hegemonic relationship and keep the social power structure in place. Thus the established dominant, white Transvaal Rugby Football Union reacted to resistance from the non-white Transvaal Coloured Rugby Football Union and through concession and compromise, accommodated the needs of the TCRFU, reinforcing the cultural hegemony in place at the time. In this way, the subordinate group was persuaded to have commit to the established order.[51] Hegemony is not static and reacts and continuously changes to accommodate the interactions and transformations within its existing social context.[52]

49 P Ransome, *Social theory for beginners* (Bristol, 2010), pp 198-199.

50 J Hargreaves, *Sport, power and culture: A social and historical analysis of sports in Britain* (Cambridge, 1986), p 7.

51 CM Badenhorst, "Mines, missionaries and the municipality...", p 19.

52 TJ Jackson Lears, The concept of cultural hegemony: Problems and possibilities, *The American Historical Review*, 90(3), June 1985, p 571.

The established cultural hegemony in the Transvaal rugby world (the white rugby playing community having established control over the non-white rugby playing community) was easy to perpetuate due to the constant influx of new members of society, especially with the constantly increasing numbers of social clubs and sport clubs to boost the cultural hegemony of the time. As mentioned the hereditary transmission of existing social classification was present in a hastened form – the large numbers of new societal members mimicking a new generation in some ways. This incoming "new generation" was then taught how this society functions and what hegemonic relationships existed into which they must assimilate. Of course this was not expressly articulated, but rather achieved through the transmission of rituals and traditions. It should be noted that this was merely one episode in the story of hegemonic relationships within rugby circles and does not apply to every era. This is because hegemony is fluid and is constantly renegotiated and reconstructed in accordance with the actions and reactions of the dominant and subordinate group.[53]

The hegemonic relationship between the white and non-white rugby playing communities was also not a conscious one. As has been mentioned, the dominant white rugby society had no intention of controlling non-white sport. The relationship developed from the established and re-appropriated divisionary norms of colonial society and the dominant-subordinate roles were reinforced and advanced by issues around playing fields, facilities and the dictation of playing rules all being under the control of the so-called dominant group. By managing where and how the non-white rugby community played, the white TRFU officials unwittingly created and promoted a hegemonic relationship that is strikingly similar to paternalism. The relationship was not merely one where a dominant group made an effort to subdue or control a subordinate group, but rather one where the dominant group "facilitated" the game for the subordinate group. Of course the TRFU was in a position of authority over the TCRFU but never with the intention of maintaining control over a population group. This form of paternalistic hegemony is illustrated by white governing bodies officially allocating playing fields and equipment to non-white clubs and players,[54] while still not allowing these teams to share the field with white players.

This unwitting paternalistic hegemony set the stage for more concerted efforts of social control through sport. Cecile Badenhorst captures the sentiment well in her study on white organisation of black sport on the Witwatersrand. Badenhorst

53 J Hargreaves, *Sport, power and culture...*, p 7.

54 In the 1912 Annual Report of the TRFU, published 1913-02-24, the TRFU is said to have provided goalposts and balls for the use on the Wolhulu grounds; Also refer back to the Pretoria Sub-Union example.

explores the impact of deliberate white involvement in organised black sport and illustrates how a determined effort was made to control the leisure time activities of the growing migrant labour force on the Witwatersrand mining scene. She shows that during the 1920s, white groups (mine managers, the local municipality, missionaries and philanthropists) saw their own activities in terms of a discourse of control over the increasing urban African population.[55] This effort to actively try and control the workforce through sport would not have been possible if a naturalised hegemonic system of control and consent had not existed on some level. It is this "original" paternalistic hegemony created during the formalisation of rugby in the late nineteenth century that would lead to twentieth century South African rugby being characterised by separation and limitation.

Conclusion

Stratification of the social landscape has been a commonplace practice throughout history and sport has served as a mirror as well as an active participant therein. Sport functions within a society as a means of interaction between members of that society. This interaction then creates and displays the relationships between what is perceived as different groupings within the society; a relationship that tends to be hierarchical. And as a ubiquitous part of human society, sport then had and has an integral role to play in the social division of communities. In the era of rapid industrial progress and the emergence of modern colonial team sports, the social landscape received an extra, stronger contributor to social division. The formalisation of modern team sports in the nineteenth century brought with it the politicisation of the games and thus the exercise of power and the control of social power structures. With newly established governing bodies came a strict measure of control over how the game was played in competitive terms as well as who was allowed to play with whom and where. The formalisation (and thus politicisation) of sports, gave established governing bodies a sort of legislative authority or power over the division of the sporting playing society.

The formalisation of a rugby union in the Transvaal or ZAR showcases how the establishment of governing bodies initiated the separation of social groups within the rugby playing community. This phenomenon of formal social stratification, the segregation of white and non-white, in the rugby playing community of Transvaal might be explained by employing theories on "symbols and rituals", leading to a theory of "invented traditions" often based on fictitious

55 CM Badenhorst, "Mines, missionaries and the municipality...", pp 31 & 49.

historical reasoning – traditions that seek to justify racially segregated practices (in this case, by an appropriation of British colonial norms and values). These traditions are then ascribed to a newly developed "collective identity" or an "imagined community" of white, rugby playing folk. Antonio Gramsci's theory on "culture hegemony" then comes in handy to describe how the white rugby playing community exerted their dominance over the emerging non-white rugby playing community and how this power structure was created and kept intact.

These theories attempt to explain how the formalisation of rugby tended to create and perpetuate social divisions within the rugby playing arena of the Transvaal at the turn of the previous century. It also shows why the politicisation of the game of rugby contributed to a broader segregated and racially stratified society.