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Abstract

This project examines the relationship between football, the media and the constitution and reconstitution of cultural identities within Glasgow and Liverpool. It explores the extent to which a range of contemporary religious, political and national identities can be understood by focusing on the role that football and the support for particular clubs, play in their formation.

Throughout, there is a concern with the relationship between supporters, the clubs, the media and identity-formation. There is also a realisation of the importance of placing this material within an historical framework, which emphasises how political, economic and social changes have all shaped the specific relationships in each city.

This is achieved through the use of a number of case studies. The geographical areas used for the studies are the west of Scotland and the north-west of England, with specific attention focused on the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool and the football supporters within these cities. There has long been a strong connection between football and a range of social identities in these two cities.

This study examines the theoretical debates regarding issues of the formation of identity in contemporary society, and argues for the need to have contextually grounded studies informing these broader theoretical discussions.

This project, focusing on religious, political and cultural expressions of collective identity, emphasises the continual need to be wary of unproblematically allocating a central role to the media in any process of identity-formation. It suggests that in the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool today a range of more socially and historically grounded factors are crucial in understanding the configurations of collective expression which football support provides for many in these cities.

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To many of you being a football supporter means more than simply attending matches. I hope that what follows does justice to the important part that the sport occupies in so many lives, and in so doing sheds some light on the reasons why it means so much to so many.

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'It is human nature to belong to a society, and to find value in belonging to it. We are born into relationships, and we live and grow through relationships. There is a whole range of such forms, variable in different places and times, but any actual forms are close and specific to those who are living in and through them.'

**Raymond Williams (1983) *Towards 2000*,
Penguin, London. Page 179.**

'I get a sense of history when I hear the old guys talking about sport. []
They've seen the Lisbon Lions, the Famous Five and Jim Baxter. [] When I meet new people I
usually end up judging them by how much they know about football.'

**Gordon Legge (1991) *Hillsborough*,
In Between Talking About The Football, Polygon Press, Edinburgh.
Page 75/76.**

Introduction

'Like Liverpudlians, Glaswegians pride themselves on their corporate sense of humour, their love of an eccentric, their ability to laugh loudly in the darkness. If this is the schizophrenic soul of Glasgow, then football is its beating heart.'

Jan Moir, A man of two halves, *The Observer Life Magazine*, 17 September 1995.

This thesis attempts to illustrate the complex nature of contemporary identities, specifically by focusing on the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool. An examination of the central position that football occupies in the cultural life of each city allows us to investigate the relationship between various religious, political and cultural identities. What is of central interest here is the extent to which football, as a cultural form, has become interconnected with specific collective identities in these cities.

By looking at the two cities, we can also investigate how accurate is the assumption often made that the cities are similar in character, both having experienced a substantial influx of Irish immigrants in the 19th century. Or, is it the case that there are fundamental differences between Glasgow and Liverpool, for example, in terms of the relationship between religious identity and particular political and cultural identities in the cities?

The work that follows is divided into two parts. In Part I, the first three chapters set out the theoretical, methodological and historical frameworks within which the latter chapters need to be located.

Part II, draws heavily upon interviews carried out in Glasgow and Liverpool and focuses on the contemporary situation in both cities. Chapter 4 examines the interplay between football and various narratives relating to history and tradition which centre on the clubs, the cities and their supporters. The following chapter investigates the role that religious identity and religious labelling play in the process of boundary-marking between communities in the cities. This line of analysis is further developed in Chapter 6 when attention is turned to the

relationship between political and cultural identities among the supporters. The role of the media in the process of identity-formation is highlighted in chapter 7 and scrutinised in the light of the conclusions which have been drawn from the previous chapters.

By comparing and contrasting the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool, it is hoped that new evidence is shed on the experiences and relationships that exist within and to some extent between the cities. While this work constitutes a specific case-study, it should also be viewed as a contribution to the growing literature which concerns itself with trying to understand the complex process of identity-formation in contemporary societies.

Part 1: Theory, methods and history

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Chapter 1:

Questions of theory: sport, media and culture.

‘Sport is at once both trivial and serious, inconsequential yet of symbolic significance. [] Sport in many cases informs and refuels the popular memory of communities, and offers a source of collective identification and community expression for those who follow teams and individuals.’

John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, *Soccer culture, national identity and the World Cup*, in Sugden and Tomlinson (eds.) (1994) page 3

‘...where *Il Sole* was available most of the prisoners, including politicals, read *La Gazzetta dello Sport*.’

Observations made while in prison in Milan by Antonio Gramsci, in David Forgacs (ed.) (1988) *A Gramsci Reader*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, page 376.

Introduction

What this chapter seeks to do is to review the previous work that engages with aspects of the relationship between sport, media and identity. Section one examines the treatment of sport in sociological and historical encounters, while the second section deals specifically with the writing concerned with media sport. The latter two sections review work concerned with the ethnography of popular culture and outline the frame of reference within which this work is located.

Section 1:

Sociological and historical encounters with sport

This section will examine the theoretical debates that have informed the study of sport in the social sciences. An excellent overview of the position of sport within social theory is provided by Jarvie and Maguire (1994). In their book they trace the influence that major sociological traditions have had on the sociology of sport and leisure. In the

context of this work, while sociological encounters with sport are discussed, specific attention here is paid to the position of sport within the particular field of media/cultural studies.

Until recently, sociology has been largely indifferent to suggestions that the position of sport, and indeed leisure, in modern society was worthy of serious and sustained investigation. Leisure was viewed as unimportant, or at its most simplistic, as the antithesis of work. Sport was perhaps one of the last major areas of human activity to be subjected to rigorous examination by sociologists.

The last ten to fifteen years has seen a sea-change in attitudes towards the sociological study of sport and leisure (see Critcher 1992). Accompanying the movement of sport from the periphery of sociological enquiry has been a debate between sociologists and those working within media/cultural studies regarding the most suitable theoretical paradigms within which this work should be located.

Chris Rojek (1992), in a recent overview of the position of theory within the field of sport and leisure studies highlighted how much of the writing in this area has been situated within either an *agency* or *structure* paradigm.

The former approach characterises society as a pluralistic system, in which individual choice is the key determining factor in the pattern of leisure development. While admitting that power is not equally distributed among all groups in this plural society, they view the relations of power as shifting unproblematically between groups and that ultimately it is the individual and the choices that he/she will make which shape the environment (Parker, 1981,1983).

In contrast those working from within the structure paradigm draw upon a Marxist analysis, which posits sport and leisure activities as being determined by the economic and political contours of society. In addition they cite the centrality of class and capital in shaping the choices open to individuals, and present the arena of sport and leisure as a terrain on which dominant and subordinate groups produce and reproduce power relations that exist elsewhere in a capitalist society. In short, sport and leisure became

vehicles of social control which both exploited workers and expanded the hold of capital on all areas of human activity (Brohm, 1978; Rigaur, 1981).

It is a far from monolithic theory, however, and feminists such as Hargreaves (1994), and Creedon (1994) have highlighted the importance of gender relations in shaping leisure patterns, while Cashmore (1982) emphasises the important role that race plays in determining the patterns of sporting behaviour among ethnic groups in Britain. The work of Hargreaves and Cashmore is closer to a *process* approach adopted by neo-marxists (also referred to as the 'cultural studies' approach). Horne *et al* (1987) sum up the strengths of this neo-marxist approach as being threefold:

it takes seriously the idea that sport and leisure practice must be understood as relations of power; it emphasises the role of the state and the economy in structuring sport and leisure activity in contemporary society; and it applies an open-ended approach to sport and leisure studies so that new developments can be examined in a non-dogmatic fashion. (Horne, Jay and Tomlinson, 1987: 188)

While Rojek (1992: 8) recognises that this 'cultural studies' approach is useful because of its recognition of leisure and sport as 'deeply rooted social processes', he also attacks this approach as being too deterministic and overtly concerned with class and capital. In addition, he quite rightly points out that all the case studies and fieldwork have, despite their location within British cultural studies, been centred on England and English society, negating the cultural differences that exist elsewhere, for example, within the UK (a point returned to in section 3 below).

Rojek places himself within another *process* paradigm, that of the 'figurational sociology' approach to the study of sport and leisure (Dunning and Rojek, 1992). Drawing heavily on the work of Norbert Elias (1978, 1982), the 'figurational' sociologists view society as a series of interlocking and dependent groups whose interplay is in a constant state of development and change. In other words they place the individual at the centre of a series of configurations which, as they move outwards, become more complex, with no one factor overtly determining the relationships between the individual and society, but a multiplicity of factors and social groups such as the family, schooling, housing and such like all influencing the individual.

Rojek argues that much of the difference between the cultural studies approach and

the figurational sociologists has been over-emphasised. He acknowledges that a fundamental difference between the two approaches centres on the figurational sociologists' assertion that all social science research should aspire to 'the conditions of detachment, a methodology of self-consciously distancing oneself from the object of study' (Rojek, 1992: 28), rather than what Rojek views as the politically motivated drive of cultural studies. (1) However he concludes that:

The common respect for history, the common emphasis on the historical and social dimensions of the 'natural' and the 'obvious', the common application of cultural diversity and richness - these are not insignificant common denominators. (Rojek, 1992: 28)

There is much of value in this assertion. However, the fundamental difference between the approaches as to the location of power in society remains. Cultural studies researchers are accused of over emphasising class as a determining factor in social relations, while figurational sociologists are accused of underplaying its centrality. In addition the subjectivity of the researcher in any research process, and his/her ability to 'detach' themselves from that work remains a point of disagreement. Perhaps the most significant agreement between the scholars is that the various patterns of sport and leisure development should be viewed as a continual *process*, although they may disagree on the determining influences that shape this development.

Much of this debate has moved the study of sport and leisure from the margins of sociology and sociological enquiry. In his concluding remarks in Dunning and Rojek (eds.) (1992), Eric Dunning notes how he hoped that the book would: 'persuade more sociologists that the sociology of sport is a field that is vibrant and alive' (Dunning and Rojek, 1992: 277). A point that is also emphasised in the work of Jarvie and Maguire (1994).

In addition to the body of work concerned with the sociology of sport, another area, that of social history, has also engaged with the study of sport. The need to place sport within a broader economic and political perspective has been recognised by social historians who have contributed much to the elevation of the study of sport within the

academy, viewing it as a legitimate and fruitful scholarly activity, which highlights the cultural, economic and political significance of sport to society. (Holt, 1990a; Mason, 1988; Mangan, 1981; Mangan and Park, 1986). As Jones argues:

sport in industrial societies is an important economic, social and political activity in its own right, able to provide the specialist with vital evidence about labour markets, capital investments, class, gender and even international relations. (Jones, 1992: 2)

The interchange between historians and sociologists working within the field of sport has been dogged by debates surrounding the role of theory in any investigation. Put at its most simple, historians claim that sociological encounters with sport suffer from the weight of ideological baggage that scholars carry to the subject. They argue that sociologists use sport to legitimise particular theoretical positions. In addition, they suggest that these positions are in fact untenable due to a neglect in adequately historicising the sporting and cultural context.

Sociologists claim that historians lack theoretical rigour and in addition that historical analysis is of limited use in understanding contemporary culture. (The 'figural' sociologists and those working within cultural studies are exempted from the latter criticism.)

Recently, those working within the cultural studies tradition outlined above, who in particular view the historicising of the sporting cultural context as of central importance, also claim that much historical analysis, important as it is, fails to place the work within a theoretical framework (Cricher and Clarke, 1985). As a result much of the work of social historians becomes simply descriptive analysis. (2) It is from within cultural/media studies, both multi- and inter-disciplinary subjects, that the most fruitful engagement with sport as a cultural form has taken place. It offers a commitment to understanding contemporary sporting culture by historicising sport as a cultural form, and also offers a serious theoretical engagement with the subject.

For all this academic growth remarkably little sociological work has focused directly on the relationship between the media and sport, or more complex still, the relationship between the media, sport and questions of identity formation. While the neo-marxist approaches have been more alert to the lacanae that have existed, it has only been

relatively recently that a sustained engagement with the sport/media/society nexus has taken place (Goldlust, 1987; Hargreaves, 1986; Whannel, 1992; Blain *et al*, 1993).

Much of this work has originated from within the emerging multi-disciplinary cultural/media studies field, and has quite rightly viewed sport as an area of study through which wider issues can be addressed and examined. These issues, all of which are central in the broader cultural/media studies field, are a concern with the role of media institutions in society, the production/consumption of culture and the ideological significance of popular culture in modern society.

1:1

Media Studies sport

A good deal of the sociological theorising on sport has focused on the particular dynamics and ideologies embedded in sporting culture and the societies in which they are played. However the media, television and the press in particular, are playing a central role in producing, reproducing and amplifying many of the discourses associated with sport in the modern world. It is this process and its ideological fallout that has been of particular interest to media/cultural scholars.

John B.Thompson argues that:

Pop music, sports and other activities are largely sustained by the media industries, which are not merely involved in the transmission and financial support of pre-existing cultural forms, but also in the active transformation of these forms. (Thompson, 1990: 163)

It is this process of transformation that much of the recent writing on media sport has centred on (Goldlust, 1987; Whannel, 1992). As in other areas of media/cultural studies the debates surrounding media sport and cultural production have tended to reflect the wider polarisation of research that exists within that academic field, resulting in a concern with either political economy or the process of cultural representation.

Barnett (1990) is a good example of an empirical strand of the former, providing a detailed account of the economic relationship that has developed between sport and television both in Britain and the United States during the last 30 years. Whannel (1992), not only has a concern with the political economy of media sport but also an

equal interest in text and ideology. Thus not only is there an examination of the increasingly complex relationship that exists between capital, television and sport (through sponsorship, advertising and international marketing), but a concern with the ideological implications that such a process has on the sporting representations. One of Whannel's objectives is to examine:

What are the cultural and economic relations between television and sport, and how, if at all, has television transformed sport? What relationship is there between the cultural and economic level in this particular instance? (Whannel, 1992: 4)

Both Goldlust (1987), Whannel (1992) and Blain *et al* (1993) examine the role that mediated sport plays as a form of symbolic ritual in many modern industrialised societies. They examine the transformation of sport in the televisual age and argue that the study of media sport provides a particularly incisive insight into the commodification of popular culture by capital. They also investigate the pleasures that television sport offers to its audience and the way that it constructs 'fields of representation' which comment on society and the position of groups (such as women) within that society. In addition Blain *et al* (1993) have stressed the relationship between the domains of sporting and political discourse, particularly as it relates to national characteristics and identities.

Whannel (1992) is keen not to take an overly deterministic view of the power of television over its audience, and ultimately argues that not only is the television/sport/sponsorship axis reshaping sport as a cultural form, but it is also reflecting deeper economic and cultural shifts in society.

Sports now stress the need to be businesslike and efficient, offer sites for the celebration of corporate capitalism, provide executive boxes and hospitality tents to serve the needs of commercial sponsors, and in general have become prime sites for the construction and reproduction of an entrepreneurial culture. Television has not itself produced this reshaping but, in enabling the rapid growth of sponsorship, it provided the key element in the process. (Whannel, 1992: 208)

While alert to the possibility of economic determinism, this work draws both on political economy and on the Gramscian concept of hegemony which has so informed much media/cultural studies work on popular culture during the last couple of decades.

(3)

Perhaps one of the most important books to draw on the Gramscian tradition in the study of sport has been *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (1986) by John Hargreaves. He places Gramsci's concept of hegemony at the centre of his study of the development of popular sports in Britain. The historicising of sporting culture, and its interplay with the economic and political development of the British state, is placed within the paradigm of the hegemonic struggle between dominant and subordinate groups within British society.

By hegemony we mean the achievement by a class, or by a class fraction or alliance, of leadership over the rest of society, in accordance with its perceived interests [] Power resides more in the ability of the hegemonic group to win consent to, and support for, its leadership [] Hegemony is achieved through a continuous process of work [] (groups) are *won over* to sports rather than forced into, or manipulated into, involvement in them. (Hargreaves, 1986: 7)

Hargreaves' prime concern is to show how the development of popular sports has been a site of struggle between groups in society the outcome of which has helped achieve and maintain a bourgeois hegemony in British society. He argues that sport was a key site in the fragmentation of the working class (and other subordinate groups), and their reconstitution under a bourgeois hegemony (Hargreaves 1986: 209). He is keen to point out that this was not achieved by one all powerful agency, but rather by a sometimes contradictory political process.

Interestingly, Hargreaves devotes just one chapter to media sport, and it remains an underdeveloped part of his thesis. The centrality of hegemony in Hargreaves' work has been criticised as being too limiting, given the diverse and complex activities encompassed in sporting culture. Harris (1992: 157) has claimed that: 'The diversity of meaning in sport requires a diversity of (sociological) methods, not the "ideological cage" of gramscianism.' He also attacks the lack of empirical evidence on the composition and attitudes of the audience/participants to sport and sporting culture (the question of the audience is examined in section 3 below).

However this scepticism of the applicability of hegemony to a study of sports and sporting culture is not shared by many working from within the political sciences.

Their primary concern has been to examine the relationship between sport and political culture, and while they must be criticised for their neglect of the role of the media in this relationship, it is worth briefly expanding on their arguments which provide an entry point into wider debates about the role of sport in the process of identity-formation.

1:2

Sport, politics and hegemony

Organised sport has been viewed by governments of all political persuasions as an important sphere in the forging of 'national character', with this project often serving specific political ends. This particular point is well made in the work of Houlihan (1994) which examines the relationship between sport, politics and international relations. He notes:

sport has always been a resource within the international system available primarily to governments, but also to other non-governmental political interests, and while it has, on occasion, been the primary tool of diplomacy and policy implementation, it has more often been an element of a broader and more comprehensive political strategy. (Houlihan, 1994: 209)

Examples of this process are not hard to find. Shaw (1985) documents the politicisation of football in Francoist Spain during the period between 1939 and 1975. Franco was not alone in attempting to align sport, and due to its universal popularity, football in particular, with specific political regimes (Hoberman, 1984). This process takes place most notably at the level of international sport, and world wide sporting competitions such as the Olympic Games or the football World Cup. (4)

In the past countries such as the former Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic have directly linked the health of the state to its ability to perform successfully on the international sporting arena (Riordan, 1977). This linkage of political discourse with that of sport is still evident throughout contemporary Europe and beyond (Blain *et al*, 1993)

A recent example of the overt linking of sporting activity to political rhetoric was evident with the re-entry of South Africa into the world sporting community, and in particular its successful staging of the 1995 Rugby World Cup. President Nelson

Mandela explicitly associated himself with the Springboks team, projecting it as a symbol of the 'new' multi-racial democratic South Africa (this despite the fact that there was only one black player in the team).

'One team, one country,' is the adopted motif of the Springboks' World Cup campaign. For once it seems to be more than just a PR gimmick. President Mandela spent three hours with the squad on the eve of the match and delayed his intended departure from the match yesterday so that he could be sure that 'his boys', as he calls the team, hung on for victory. 'Our loyalties have completely changed,' said the president. 'We have adopted these young men'.

(The Guardian, 26 May 1995)

Throughout the tournament, which South Africa would win, Mandela lost no opportunity to use the team's success both as an indicator of the positive and dynamic political changes taking place in that country and as a vehicle with which to project a positive image of the country to the world through the international media coverage of the event.

To view this use of sport as some form of simple political manipulation by powerful interest groups in society to which people readily succumb is both simplistic and patronising, and ignores the contradictions, tensions and struggles that exist within all supposedly national cultures (see section 2 below).

Donnelly (1988), has argued that sport can be an arena of cultural struggle, in which oppressed groups use it as a form of symbolic resistance. The turning of that most imperial of English games, cricket, by the West Indies (and other former British colonies) into an expression and celebration of indigenous culture is one such example (Searle, 1990).

Political scientists such as Hoberman (1984) argue that sporting activity in itself is not intrinsically ideological. However sport as a cultural form based on competition is uniquely open to political and ideological manipulation.

The recent work by Sugden and Bairner *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (1993) is an excellent example of a study of sport from within the political sciences. In this work they demonstrate how sporting culture in Ireland is closely shaped and informed by the political crisis that exists in Northern Ireland. They

argue that in the north of Ireland sectarianism becomes:

a symbolic labelling process through which community divisions are defined and maintained, and [] an ideological justification for discrimination, community conflict and political violence. (Sugden and Bairner, 1993: 15)

By tracing the symbolic linking of certain sports to specific political and cultural groupings, they show how sport, and the culture surrounding this activity, becomes an important part of this process of labelling and differentiating various groups in society.

Sugden and Bairner reject the criticism that Gramsci's concept of hegemony is too focused on class as the primary determining factor in social relations and argue that:

Gramsci's approach is admirably suited to explaining divisions which spring from non-economic sources such as national identity, ethnicity and religion. (Sugden and Bairner, 1993: 14)

However they do not play down the economic in their analysis, and demonstrate for example how the British state, for ideological reasons, has played a key role in the funding of the leisure/sports infrastructure of Northern Ireland (to an extent that is disproportionate to the size of its population within the UK). It appears that there is a belief that if young people are involved in sport they are less likely to get involved in political and paramilitary activity. (5)

One criticism which can perhaps be made of their work is the extent to which the role of the media in the process of identity formation is largely ignored. However, their material is characterised by a clear understanding of the integral relationship that exists between the domains of sport, politics and identity in Ireland. While it may appear obvious that in a crisis-ridden Northern Ireland the symbolic importance of sport will have a heightened political significance, it also draws attention to the extent to which many of the academic encounters with sport have been English-centred and have placed social class as the primary definer of different patterns of sporting behaviour.

Sugden and Bairner's work is a useful reminder of the theoretical difficulties that exist when social class is cut across by other factors such as ethnicity and national identity, something that is often missing in English society based accounts.

A recent addition to this body of work located outwith England has been the

collection of essays edited by Jarvie and Walker *Sport in the Making of the Scottish Nation: Ninety-minute patriots?* (1994), which examines the complex relationship between sport and identity in Scotland and emphasises how specific political, economic and cultural factors have all shaped the nature and position of sport in Scottish culture. Interestingly, one of the features of this work was the multi-disciplined approach taken by the editors in their drawing of contributions from a range of disciplines such as history, sociology and media studies.

Section 2:

Sport, media and national identity

It seems that there is no aspect of modern, mass society, other than war, or rumour of war, which does more than sport to arouse nationalism, racism, ethnocentrism and sectarianism. It may help to strengthen affection between friends, even build bridges between those who see mutual advantage in establishing lines of communication and trade, but between enemies, sport reinforces the basis of enmity and creates new sources of antagonism. Furthermore, we believe that because of its flexible capacity to mobilise popular sentiment, the culture surrounding sports is often terrain contested between competing elements of civil society and of the politically constituted state. (Sugden and Bairner, 1993: 136)

In modern societies much of our cultural experience is mediated in one form or the other. Thompson talks of this process and tendency as the 'mediation of modern culture' (Thompson, 1990: 3). Thus while acknowledging that sport has played an important role in the process of identity formation there is also a concern with the position of the media in any process of identity formation. As the 1990s witness the re-drawing of the political map of Europe after the upheavals of 1989, questions about the role of national identity and the nation-state in the future political and economic development of Europe have become central in academic and governmental discourses. Many of these issues are of course not new, and within the realm of media/cultural studies issues relating to the political importance of cultural representations and the role of the media in this process have long enjoyed a degree of prominence.

Much of this debate has been given a heightened political significance by recent events in Europe. In his recent overview of the current state of European scholarly

research into the media and national and cultural identity, Philip Schlesinger (1991a) stresses the need:

not to start with communication and its supposed effects on collective identity and culture, but rather to begin by posing the problem of collective identity itself, to ask how it might be analysed and what importance communicative practices might play in its constitution. (Schlesinger, 1991a: 150)

While much of the work that follows is concerned with cultural and national identities within the United Kingdom context, the same approach holds good.

Throughout this work there is a concern with the constitution and reconstitution of identities that are articulated in and around the football cultures of the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool. The placing of the media within the process of identity formation has been one of Schlesinger's concerns. He warns against dismissing the media's role as insignificant, but also is cautious about attributing too much power to their ability to define and shape collective identities.

Much of the limited writing about the media/sport/identity nexus appears at times to have fallen into this over-deterministic approach. Despite drawing on the flexible Gramscian approach to the study of sport in society, Hargreaves (1986) places great emphasis on the media's ability to construct the 'imaginary' nation through television coverage of sport. He notes how mediated international sporting events:

constitute conventional reference points signifying membership of a unique community, sharing a common, valued and specific way of life, which supersedes or takes precedence over all other loyalties and identities. (Hargreaves, 1986: 154)

Hargreaves is correct to highlight the key role that sport plays in modern society as a form of symbolic ritual (Whannel 1992). There is little doubt that international sport, with its attendant media coverage, can become ideologically loaded with political and cultural significance like few other areas of popular culture. (6) However, it is important to appreciate that even at global international events such as the Olympic Games or football's World Cup, it is how these events are made sense of at the local level that is important (in this instance the local may mean an entire country). It may be useful to treat with caution some of the claims being made about the role of the media in eroding distinctive cultural characteristics at some transnational level. As Blain *et al*

comment:

in fact sports journalism, albeit very unevenly, is as likely to produce a turning inward towards national concerns, and a buttressing of a sense of difference, as it is to operate ideologically on behalf of a harmonious world, even, as we have seen, at that mythic habitat of the familial, the Olympics. (Blain *et al*, 1993: 196)

As Schlesinger points out when discussing national culture:

It is more accurate (but less provocative) to suggest that it is a site of contestation and inherently an object of transformative practices. In any case, to assert that national cultures might, indeed, do, exist does not by any means exclude the reality of there being a transnational or global culture as well [] To insist upon 'either [] or' makes for good polemics or political sloganeering, but poor analysis. (Schlesinger, 1991a: 305)

To narrow the definition of the local even further to within the UK political and sporting environment, there exists the problem of mediating the complicated political and cultural relationship between the different component parts of the UK (for example Scotland and England). Due in part to the universality of sporting activity, sport has been an important cultural arena through which various collective identities have been articulated. Richard Holt (1990a) has documented how the political history and economic relationship of Scotland and Wales with England has been mediated through sporting occasions:

Sport acted as a vitally important channel for this sense of collective resentment [] Football gave the Scots a way of fighting the 'old enemy', whilst addiction to rugby came to be one of the major ways in which the English defined the Welsh and the Welsh came to see themselves. Cultural identity was a two way process. (Holt, 1990a: 237)

This viewing of cultural identity as a continuous process that is subject to political, economic and cultural constraints and pressures is important. It also emphasises how the concept of localism is relative. Within Scotland, for example, the national press can mean the Scottish, not the UK press, and the idea that the British media's coverage of sport unproblematically reproduces the British 'nation' is dependent on how that nation is defined and from what cultural and class position the viewer/reader is engaging with this discourse (a point returned to in section 3).

This is not to argue that television's transformation of sport as a cultural form does not have a role to play in cultural identity-formation. What is being suggested here is

that to view this process as uni-directional is to underestimate the other factors that shape collective identities and the degree of resistance that may exist among certain groups to any 'official' discourse. For example in later chapters there are accounts of Celtic and Liverpool fans who reject the notion of supporting the national teams of Scotland and England in favour of the Republic of Ireland, despite not being born or having lived in that country. In the case of Celtic supporters, many treat the Scottish media and 'official' Scottish national culture with suspicion and continually detect nuances of bias in the media against their club and its supporters based in part on the club's Catholic religion's affiliations.

While discourses of sporting national identity do differ across sports depending on whether they are individual or team games, what class connotations are attached to individual sports, and their profile within the media arena, the contradictions and tensions that exist in any 'national culture' are rarely articulated at the international sporting level. (For example Scottish Television's insistence that the whole country was supporting Rangers' efforts as Scottish champions to secure entry into the 1995/6 European Champions League was plainly not true, and was not simply confined to the supporters of the other half of the Glasgow Old Firm). As Schlesinger comments:

National cultures are not simple repositories of shared symbols to which the entire population stands in identical relation. Rather, they are to be approached as sites of contestation in which competition over definitions takes place [] It may also reproduce distinctions between 'us' and 'them' at the intra-national level, in line with the internal structure of social divisions and relations of power and domination. (Schlesinger, 1991a: 174)

Thus it appears useful to view the media as one important part of the process of identity formation, but not to start from a media-centred view of society.

Hargreaves (1986) rightly asserts that the televisual constructions of Englishness/Britishness through sport are important in legitimising particular articulations of such identities at the expense of alternative viewpoints. However we also need to be alert to the opposition that may exist among certain groups to these dominant discourses. Hargreaves acknowledges this problematic when he comments:

The paucity of firm, well-grounded conclusions in research on the effects of mass

communication so far dictates caution when interpreting the relation between media sport and working-class culture and the likely effects of media sport on the working-class audience. (Hargreaves, 1986: 160)

For example, the portrayal in both the Scottish and European media of the supporters of the Scottish national football who travel abroad as 'The Tartan Army' is not simply a media construct, but highlights the complex relationship between media discourses and audiences. The Scottish national team supporter who travels abroad constitutes part of perhaps the most image-conscious footballing group in Europe. Many of the images of the 'fun loving' internationalist Scottish supporter are juxtaposed by the media with the dour aggressive xenophobic English supporter. This is a point which is not lost when Scottish supporters travel abroad and are faced with reporters and television cameras and realise that by adopting particular dress codes (the kilt, tartan and such like) and cultivating a friendly attitude towards the local population, they clearly differentiate themselves in the eyes of the media as being Scottish and not English (Giulianotti, 1991, 1994).

While media coverage of sporting activity has always been keen to portray it as an apolitical arena, a space where people and countries come together in friendship, Whannel (1983) also notes how:

many people who laugh at the monarchy identify with their national football or cricket teams. Terms like English or British derive much of their significance from national sporting traditions. Sport provides us with a sense of belonging to a nation, however irrational that may be. (Whannel, 1983: 27)

Thus this research treats the position of the media as important in any process of identity formation, but not to the extent that it simply overshadows other cultural sites. Schlesinger (1991a: 174) talks of 'cultural institutions [] through which the chain of identity between past and present is forged.' Later chapters explore the football clubs of Liverpool and Glasgow as cultural institutions, that, for a range of political, economic and cultural reasons, fulfil this role for many supporters (the issue of the role of tradition is discussed in chapter 4). There is also an awareness in this study that it is important to place the position of the media, and related media discourses of the clubs and the cities, within the ongoing process of identity-formation which can be both

multi-faceted and contradictory.

Section 3: Cultural consumption, ethnography and youth culture

[] academics have held complacently to the view that they know best, that the meaning of a shopping mall is a matter of abstract semiotic analysis rather than empirically grounded ethnographic work. (Jackson, 1993: 223)

Ethnography and youth studies

The central concern of this work is focused on how people in both Glasgow and Liverpool make sense of their lives and come to understand their various identities partly through their engagement with popular culture, specifically footballing culture. It is thus useful to reflect and examine recent work that has investigated the 'consumption of culture' and the political and cultural ramifications of this process.

As always this is not an uncontested field of academic enquiry. From within British sociology and social anthropology there has been an ethnographic tradition concerned in particular with the study of youth culture. Within media/cultural studies there has been a concern with what is now called reception studies of the audience, which has emerged from a long historical concern with media effects. (7) What is of interest here is the extent to which the theoretical debates that have informed these studies are of interest in this project.

The study of youth culture, particularly those studies initiated within the cultural studies field, have drawn heavily on ethnographic methods (issues of methodology are discussed in chapter 2). There was a realisation among researchers that social surveys may take place in 'artificial' settings, and did not always place their results within a wider socio-economic context. There was a concern with the cultural environment within which social groups operated, and methods such as participant observation and unstructured interviewing seemed to allow researchers to document the rhythms and nuances of 'everyday life' through direct contact with the groups being studied.

The pioneering work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) based at Birmingham University, specifically through the publication of *Resistance Through Rituals* in 1976, has provided a framework for youth studies work within a British (essentially English) context. This concern with aspects of what is actually English working class cultural practice is often discussed as British cultural studies. In a call for the development of Scottish cultural studies, McArthur (1992) laments the dearth of such studies carried out in Scotland and notes how:

Hoggart (Richard), Thompson (E.P.) and Williams (Raymond) clearly thought that they were addressing the question of British culture but, as has been pointed out repeatedly, they were addressing the question of English culture.
(McArthur, 1992: 8)

Much of the ethnographic work within British cultural studies has been concerned with English working class youth. In addition Angela McRobbie (1991) has noted how much of the work in this area has focused on male subcultures and youth practices and argued for more research that examines female sensibilities and experiences. Recent work by Desmond Bell (1990) has pointed out some of the strengths and weaknesses of this body of work. He notes how many of the studies have situated class as the determining factor in shaping the experience of youth cultural activities, sometimes at the expense of issues such as gender and ethnicity. Bell (like other researchers working outwith England) is also aware that much of the published material in this strand of cultural studies concerns itself with English working class youth. His own work in Northern Ireland highlights the difficulties of transporting theoretical models to areas where social relations and institutional structures are shaped by a different set of cultural, economic and political impulses. For example, Bell notes that on returning to Northern Ireland that:

the body of social theory and set of political sensibilities I had acquired on the radicalized campuses of England were to be immediately subjected to the harsher realities of crisis-torn Northern Ireland. (Bell, 1990: 2)

Young working class people in Northern Ireland were growing up in an environment being shaped by sectarian conflict, where one's sense of ethnic identity was being both constituted and re-constituted by a range of factors quite different to those that were

being examined in English cultural studies. This is not to argue that class was not an important element in Northern Ireland. However the sectarian environment, informed as it is by specific patterns of historical and political development, meant that it was not necessarily as dominant a factor as elsewhere.

Within a west of Scotland context the specific historical cultural, political and economic development of the area is extremely important in shaping many of the cultural configurations that exist there today (these are discussed in chapter 3). This is not to suggest that ethnographers and researchers in England were not sensitive to regional variations in youth practices. However it is to suggest that the Scottish and Irish experiences are sufficiently different (in terms of the role of cultural and national identities in youth formations) to warrant specific attention of their own. One specific example might be the role of religious labelling in youth cultural practices associated in and around football culture. By and large the issue of having, or being given, a Catholic or Protestant identity does not occur in England, and where it does it will not carry the connotations that it has in, for example, Glasgow, where this process of labelling is informed by a specific set of political and historical narratives.

Ethnographic work, placed within a historical and political framework, has provided a valuable insight into how cultural and political identities are forged and reproduced. As Bell comments:

After all, ethnic identities emerge and become defined in response to political developments, which confront each generation anew. Youth cultures are one of the key resources through which young people explore, at the level of the symbolic, the life situation and collective experience in which they find themselves as group members. Accordingly youth cultural practices play a central role in the assertion of ethnic identity by minority groups. (Bell, 1990: 11/12)

The danger of some work in the ethnographic tradition is that the analysing of the process of cultural consumption and its role in the construction of various identities becomes an end in itself. What is provided is a 'slice of life', without there being an attempt to locate that work within a broader historical frame of reference that emphasises the political, economic or cultural significance of any such practices. Golding and Murdock (1991) have also noted the tendency in some ethnographic

studies to over-emphasise (even romanticise) the struggle and creative ability of groups to establish and construct their own identity and economic support system. They take issue with the celebratory (bottom-up) view of cultural struggle advocated by, for instance the work of Fiske (1987), Willis (1990) and McRobbie (1991), and like Bell (1990) emphasise the need to place this work within a historically specific frame of reference that does not negate the importance of politics and economics. They argue that:

People depend in large measure on the cultural industries for the images, symbols and vocabulary with which they interpret and respond to their social environment. (Golding and Murdock, 1991: 30)

In a recent overview of writing on youth cultural practices, McGuigan (1992) has pointed out the over celebratory nature of some of this ethnographic work and its lack of a materialist dimension. The ability of young people to turn what Willis (1990) calls 'symbolic creativity' into a sustainable economic system which can support them has, he argues, been overstated. Some researchers it appears have moved away from attempting to use ethnographic studies to inform any political and/or economic analysis of society and social movements.

Sivanandan (1990) has also attacked the celebratory nature of much writing on cultural consumption, dismissing it as reducing political action to the process of the consumption of cultural artefacts. He argues that the idea that people unproblematically construct their own identities through the signifying practice of consumption negates a political and economic analysis of the conditions of everyday experience.

What appears to have happened is that Hebdige's (1979) argument that young people appropriate and transform the cultural meaning of artefacts has been expanded to argue that any economic or political analysis of the relations of power in society is no longer necessary when studying youth culture, and that people have been liberated from these constraints by a process of 'creative consumption'. This position is evident in many of the accounts of youth cultural practice informed by postmodern theory. As McGuigan notes:

Willis aligns himself on the side of 'agency' as opposed to 'structure' in social and

cultural theory, somewhat disingenuously when one considers his faith in market capitalism's capacity to deliver the grounds for everyone's creative use. (McGuigan, 1992: 119)

The detaching of the groups studied from the economic, political and cultural factors that help shape their personal and collective identities makes little sense.

The work in the following chapters does acknowledge that individuals and groups are active and can be creative in their everyday lived practices. However it also argues that factors such as religion, education, family, class and gender can act as both liberating and constraining influences on the constitution and reconstitution of both personal and collective identities.

Fans and fandom

Another area of relevance has been the growing concern within cultural studies with studies of fans and fandom in popular culture. Drawing on a range of ethnographic practice much of the work has focused on popular music and popular film. Given their vast popularity surprisingly little work has been focused on the sports fan, and what has been done has tended to concentrate on football fandom and hooliganism (8).

Recent work by Jenson (1992) although not primarily concerned with sports fans, provides a useful frame of reference within which we need to conceptualise and think about fandom in modern society. She argues that traditionally fans have been characterised as pathologically irrational people. Fans, she argues, are categorised as either the obsessive loner, or as part of the frenzied, hysterical mob/crowd. She rejects these categories as culturally constructed by middle class commentators and cultural critics and informed by a distaste of popular culture in general. It is noted that the middle class 'fan' who engages with aspects of 'high culture' is viewed by society as an 'aficionado' rather than the culturally derogatory term of 'fan'. Jenson (1992:19) documents how both the 'objects of desire' and the 'modes of enactment' of fandom are culturally constructed by class and in many instances by gender.

She argues that fans should be allowed wherever possible to express themselves 'in their own terms' (1992:26), in other words not have assumptions made about them

without ethnographic research. She concludes by arguing that:

I believe what it means to be a fan should be explained in relation to the larger question of what it means to desire, cherish, seek, long, admire, envy, celebrate, protect, ally with others. Fandom is an aspect of how we make sense of the world in relation to mass media, and in relation to our historical, social and cultural location. Thinking well about fans and fandom can help us think more fully and respectfully about what it means today to be alive and to be human.

(Jenson, 1992: 27)

This essentially humanist approach to the study of fandom is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it emphasises the importance of narratives being articulated by the fans themselves in any attempt to understand everyday lived experiences. In addition it places these experiences within an historical and social frame of reference. In other words, any study of fandom is also a study of the cultural attitudes of a section of society at a specific historical moment.

In the light of these various developments in the media/cultural studies field, what are the underlying theoretical assumptions which underpin this work?

Section 4: Mapping the theoretical field

There is no one theoretical paradigm within which this work can be neatly located, neither is there a need to be uncomfortable with an eclectic theoretical approach. The primary focus of subsequent chapters examines the role that the football clubs (viewed as cultural institutions) of Glasgow and Liverpool play in the constitution of various personal and collective identities. Drawing on Schlesinger (1991a) this is viewed as a continuous process, which is subject to a variety of economic, social and cultural influences. Media representations are one important factor but not necessarily the most formative in personal and collective identity-formation.

This is certainly the position adopted in the work that follows. Indeed, as the fieldwork progressed it became increasingly clear that a variety of factors such as schooling, family socialisation, religion and traditional patterns of behaviour and belief were all central in the process of identity-formation among and within groups, as well as in the process of boundary-marking between groups. These aspects would vary in

their importance, so that for example religion and religious labelling were very important among the Glasgow groups, but deemed to be virtually non-existent as a force in contemporary Liverpool.

Of central interest, then, is the extent to which educational and religious patterns shape allegiances to various clubs in the cities which in turn become part of the process of identity demarcation. To follow or support a particular club becomes a badge of identity which connects with other cultural markers of identity such as religion and nationality.

In turn, support for clubs connects personal identity to collective identity, larger groups who enjoy a shared passion and sense of loyalty to a team or club, a city or even to a larger political or cultural entity such as Scotland, England or Ireland. In some instances they may also engender oppositional positions to larger political units such as countries, or indeed the dominant or official discourses associated with that country or political state.

As discussed earlier Schlesinger (1991a), Blain *et al* (1993) and Jarvie (1993) suggest that the erosion and replacement of local regional cultural identities by some monolithic global media driven culture is simply not happening in the manner some critics have predicted. As Jarvie argues:

Rather than increasing unity and integration on a global scale, it is quite possible that the rational reaction to modern internationalism and the demise of the nation-state in its original form, will be that local, regional and national communities will hold on even tighter to those symbols and traditions, including sporting tradition, which once gave various nations and peoples a sense of identity. (Jarvie, 1993:76)

There is also the suggestion that the promotion of the local can be driven as much by commercial and marketing considerations as by the more ideological remit of 'fostering national culture' evident in, say, public service broadcasting in Britain (Blain *et al*, 1993: 34).

There is no doubt that sporting activity often plays a key role in raising national consciousness among countries on the international stage (Blain *et al*, 1993: 37-54). However it is also important to appreciate that the raising of political and cultural

consciousness through sport can also be in direct opposition to 'official' national cultures (an issue developed in subsequent chapters).

In this work culture is viewed as inherently amorphous, subject to influences and change from a variety of sources. This viewing of culture as dynamic leads to the viewing of cultural mixing as inevitable. As Paul Gilroy (1993) argues, in the 1990's to view culture as having *always been* inherently promiscuous is to make some sort of political statement by rejecting the validity of the idea of a primordial ethnically or racially pure culture as not only undesirable, but based on a premise which simply does not stand up to historical scrutiny.

Throughout this work there is a concern with the various discourses of identity that circulate in and around the clubs in Glasgow and Liverpool and how these discourses interact with wider cultural and political structures and institutions in society. Graham Turner (1990) defined discourse in this context as referring to the:

socially produced groups of ideas or ways of thinking that can be tracked in individual texts or groups of texts, but that also demand to be located within wider historical and social structures or relations. (Turner, 1990: 32/33)

In particular there is an interest in how those specific discourses which centre around aspects of identity connect with or are driven by more media centred discourses. In other words, what are the factors that facilitate discourses of various ethnic, cultural, collective and political identities to be constituted, circulate and be reconstituted among these groups, and what role does the supporting of specific football clubs play in this process?

There is an awareness, as Turner notes above, of the importance of locating these discourses within historical and political parameters. In addition there is an acute awareness of the range of factors (social, economic and political) that exert an influence on the shaping of any one discourse and its interaction with others. For example, how do the differing social, economic and cultural backgrounds of cities such as Liverpool and Glasgow inform the various discourses of identity that circulate among supporters in each city?

Jarvie and Maguire (1994) have suggested that while there have been many changes

and shifts in the dominant traditions which have informed our thinking about sport and leisure, a return to the work of Raymond Williams may prove useful. They suggest that amid all the competing theories:

there is much in Williams' writings that is both relevant and worth holding on to. [] at an empirical and historical level there is much that could be done in terms of considering sport and leisure within local, regional and national cultures, or to use Williams' own terms, the cultural politics of location. (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994: 125)

A central concern of Williams (1983) was with the importance of locating identity formation in specific contexts. In other words, while general principles could be applied to the process of identity formation, the dynamics and implications of this process differed among groups and communities depending on the specific economic, political, geographical and cultural histories which informed the everyday lived experience. It is in this spirit that much of the work which follows is written.

In addition, what has been outlined above is a concern with the interaction between media discourses and those that circulate among supporters. This is not to suggest that the media simply deposit various ideas on an audience which in turn unproblematically absorbs them. Nor is it to suggest that the various media institutions are simply constructing or creating various discourses. They are of course themselves influenced by wider social, economic and political pressures. In other words, this is not a 'media-centred' view of society, where the media are the origins of all discourses that circulate within society at any given time. Rather they are part of a complex interrelationship between groups in a society who come to understand themselves in part through internal group dynamics, and in part by placing themselves against 'others'.

This approach is alert to the range of influences (social, economic and political) which continually construct aspects of personal identities and in turn connect these to wider patterns of collective experience. What the following chapter attempts to do is highlight some of the methodological issues involved in examining such a potentially complex process.

Notes

- (1) For a fuller discussion on the politics of British cultural studies see Tomlinson (1989) and the polemic from Harris (1992).
- (2) See Holt (1990a), appendix on, 'Some Observations on Social History and the Sociology of Sport' as an example of current social history writing on sport and also to emphasise how it increasingly pulls from academic areas outwith the field of history. Also see *The International Journal of Sports History*, Frank Cass, Manchester.
- (3) Whannel gives a detailed account of the influence of both textual analysis and political economy in shaping Media Studies during the 1970/80's (Whannel, 1992: 3-10).
- (4) With regard to the football World Cup the collection of essays edited by Sugden and Tomlinson (1994) examine the relationship between politics, football and national identity in a number of countries including Brasil, Germany, Italy and Sweden.
- (5) See chapter 6 'Local Government Sport and Leisure Provision: The Belfast Experiment', in Sugden and Bairner (1993)
- (6) For a detailed account of this process within an European context see Blain, N. *et al* (1993).
- (7) For some of the current debates in this field see Curran (1990), and Morley (1992).
- (8) For an excellent overview of sociological and anthropological studies of football fandom and hooliganism see Williams (1991). For more recent work that attempts to move away from the concern with fans and violence, see Redhead (ed.) (1993), Giulianotti and Williams (eds.) (1994). For recent work football fan culture and the fanzine movement see Haynes (1995) and the discussion in chapter 7.

Chapter 2: Issues of methodology

Introduction

This chapter will highlight and discuss the methods used to inform the work that follows in the subsequent chapters. The origins of this project are partly in the research undertaken while with the National Identity Research Unit (Glasgow Caledonian University) during 1991. This involved an extensive survey of Celtic supporters which gathered information relating to both their socio-economic background and their attitudes towards the club itself (Boyle, 1991).

What emerged from this project were the methodological limits of research based solely on quantitative methods, in this case questionnaire material. This became particularly acute when this present research project emerged, which attempted to investigate issues relating to the cultural identity of these supporters, and to compare and contrast them with supporters in another city. In short, when dealing with such a complex issue as the formation and expression of cultural, political and ethnic identities, more qualitative methods of research are required, which allow one to tease out the complexities of these individual and collective identities.

My own position as a football supporter allowed me, through various contacts, to facilitate the setting up of interview groups composed of supporters from both cities (details of which are given below). While this dual role of researcher and fan was potentially difficult, it allowed the interviews to be more focused, and given my knowledge and empathy with football fan culture, made it less likely that any misreading of the material generated would take place. I was also aware that as a researcher there was a requirement to maintain some sort of distance from the work, a problem often encountered in a range of more ethnographically inclined methodologies (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 80-123).

examination of previous questionnaires in the related topic area. The combining of this process with a number of hypotheses (or hunches) related to the topic can be useful in eradicating at an early stage questions which either can not be asked, or can not be answered.

Additionally there is the considerable time involved in identifying the target groups to be surveyed and the protracted period of small scale pilot studies, which can show up problems with the questionnaire and allow a degree of fine tuning before the major survey takes place. Thought must also be given to the process of the distribution and collection of the survey, and how the best returns can be achieved within the research budget.

The advantage of social surveys is that they offer a useful method of collecting data, which allows the researcher to draw out comparative analysis with previous or similar surveys in any particular area of study. Disadvantages include the problem that people may not answer truthfully, and that the more tightly structured the questionnaire, the less likely it is that respondents will have a space to articulate and develop their own feelings and attitudes on an issue which may have varying degrees of complexity attached to it and not be reducible to any single or particular category.

The focus of the research in Glasgow was on supporters of Celtic Football Club. The objectives of the questionnaire were to provide a data base with which to develop the group interviews which were conducted later. The survey was conducted under the auspices of the National Identity Research Unit based at Glasgow Polytechnic and was conducted during April and May 1991 (the results were published under Boyle, 1991).

This work proved to be a useful starting point in formulating ideas which I wanted to develop and expand in a larger project. This involved extending the study to examine the relationship between football and identity in both the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool.

A range of methodological approaches are involved in this study, and these broadly

fall into the categories of desk research and fieldwork, the latter being primarily ethnographic in nature, and in this instance using the method of group interviews with supporters in both cities. It was felt that while the investment of time and energy required to carry out group interviews was substantial when they were combined with other methods, such as desk research, and situated within a suitable cultural framework, that the results would be ultimately both revealing and incisive. (2)

The desk research entailed an extensive gathering of material related not just to issues of identity-formation, but also to the political and social development of the two cities. In addition, the expanding literature on football and football related culture helped provide a context in which aspects of social history and more sociologically orientated material could be placed side by side in the present study (see the following chapter). However this material did not really address my primary concern, which was to attempt to understand how football and its surrounding culture were used by some groups as part of their 'sense' of identity. The survey work provided empirical data related to the composition of the most committed Celtic supporters. However, there was a need to add to that method of research by actually allowing the supporters to articulate and express their own 'lived' experience of the symbolic role that the club played in their sense of individual and collective identity. (3)

Group Interviews and the role of the researcher

Bell (1990) points out that any form of ethnographic research involves the researcher in having to confront, and indeed sometimes question, his/her relationship with the subject matter being studied. With this in mind, it is perhaps useful at this point to provide a brief biographical note which in part explains my interest in, and relationship with, the present work.

I was born and brought up in Glasgow by Catholic-Irish parents. Like many others, they had emigrated to Scotland during the early sixties from Co. Donegal in the

Irish Republic. Supporting Celtic seemed to me then a 'natural' part of the process of growing up as a Catholic in the west of Scotland during the 1970s. While I was considered Irish by many friends, due to my parentage and religion, on visiting Ireland, my accent placed me as being Scottish. Nowadays, I consider myself as having a dual identity and view myself as an Irish-Scot, having links and affiliations with both countries. As a result of this, it was always more likely that it would be supporters of Celtic, rather than those of Rangers, to whom I would initially look in a study of the relationship between football and social identity.

As noted in the introduction above, as an academic researcher I feel at times both inside, while at other times outside, the cultural arena that is the subject of this study. As a fan, my knowledge allows me to gain access to supporters and provides me with an understanding of the codes and conventions which surround football fandom. As an academic, I am also aware that many of the issues being examined in this project involve a degree of self-exploration, while at the same time requiring approaches which will mean that the material will be able to stand up to academic scrutiny.

As a result of my contacts, the interview groups were assembled through supporters' clubs. In Glasgow the five groups that participated in the project each consisted of between 6-8 people. It was felt that groups larger than this would be too large to allow all members to participate fully. One group was made up of supporters between the ages of 16-22, the second of people over the age of 25, while the remainder were of mixed ages. Two groups had two females, which meant that female supporters constituted about 10% of the sample interviewed in Glasgow. The group discussions were held in a variety of locations including supporters' clubs and Glasgow Polytechnic and they were audio taped. Four of the Glasgow interviews took place during April - May 1991, while the fifth occurred in January 1992. A group interview also took place involving members of the oldest and largest Celtic supporters club in Northern Ireland (this was conducted in Belfast), and is drawn upon for comparative purposes where judged relevant in subsequent chapters.

The Liverpool interviews were initially organised through attending a meeting of the Merseyside branch of the Football Supporters' Association. As a result of help secured there, three interviews were held in September 1993, with an additional two in November of that year. All those interviewed regularly attended Liverpool or Everton matches in the city. The size of each group ranged from 5-7 and all the groups were mixed in terms of age. One group was all male, while the others had at least two females in each.

In all cases the names used throughout the work have been changed as requested by some members of the groups that took part in the discussions.

The issues discussed in the interviews included i) the perception and role that tradition and religion played in the support for teams; ii) the importance of particular channels of communication (press, broadcasting, fanzines, family, schools etc) in helping to sustain various aspects of group identities; and iii) the relationship between political identity and aspects of national identities, in particular the importance of images and perceptions of Ireland in that process. One of the characteristics of these interviews was the way that complex political and cultural arguments were articulated in the verbal outpouring (not always as tightly structured as the researcher might have liked) that occurred in the discussions.

While initially raising the issues mentioned above, the role of the interviewer tended to diminish as the discussions progressed. At times, I would pull the group back to directly talking about a specific issue, while in other instances, the discussion naturally progressed onto these topics. Occasionally it was necessary to prompt opinions from individuals within the group. However, more often than not what developed was an internal group debate about particular issues, which at times simply required to be re-focus, when they began to stray too far from the topic. The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and an hour (see Appendix 1).

In analysing the transcripts of the relatively structured discussions which took place

among and across the groups I could discern and trace particular discourses that related to the issues clustered around the media, and various aspects (such as religious and political) of personal and collective identities. This also allowed me to examine the comparative nature of these discourses and to ask to what extent they are determined by factors such as age, class and demography (both between Glasgow, Liverpool and Belfast, and within the cities themselves).

In this context the use of discourse analysis was useful. When discussing this form of analysis and its application to this project, it should be noted that it is not being used in the narrow sense that currently finds vogue in some social psychology literature. Its application here is the looser definition that finds itself being used as an analytical tool in the area of media/cultural studies analysis (see page 26).

What is of interest here is using discourse analysis as part of the way of tracing the way that particular discourses relating to the formation and reconstitution of cultural and political identities and aspects of history and tradition circulate among supporters (and across groups) and connect with, or are resistant to, the range of discourses that are carried in and through the various media. In particular there is an interest in how those specific discourses centred on aspects of identity connected with more media centred discourses.

As discussed in chapter 1, there is an awareness of the importance of locating these discourses of identity (which of course are never static, but are dynamic and continually being reconstituted) within specific historical and political contexts. A combination of empirical and interview work allows some of the dominant discourses that circulate among these groups to be highlighted and contrasted for comparative purposes. In addition there is an acute awareness of how specific social, economic and political factors exert an influence on the shaping of any one discourse and its interaction with others. For example the differing social and economic histories of the cities of Liverpool and Glasgow will in part result in some aspects of identity (for example religious identity) being viewed as more important than others among supporters in

each city.

Conclusion

There are both general strengths and weaknesses in the methods and modes of analysis discussed both here and in the previous chapter.

In the sociological study of the phenomenon of football hooliganism, some excellent ethnographic work has been carried out, which has been strengthened by its commitment to historicising the problem and placing it within a wider material frame of reference (Williams *et al*: 1989). However it is not an uncontested arena of scholarly activity, and some social anthropologists and sociologists have clashed over methodological approaches to the study and analysis of group violence involving football supporters. (4)

One problem involved in the extensive use of interview material and any close study involving groups is the need to strike a balance between academic distance from the subjects, and the need to possess the necessary 'cultural capital' that allows the researcher to gain the trust of the groups and to understand the specific codes and conventions of their environment. As noted earlier, Bell (1990) suggests that any ethnographic related work which places a researcher in a cultural setting that he/she is in some sense familiar with also involves a process of self-examination for that individual as they are confronted with situations which may have at one time seemed 'natural' to them. (5)

In addition, running throughout this work is an awareness that any mode of analysis must be sensitive to the importance of placing all such work within an historical and material context. Hargreaves and Tomlinson (1992: 217) argue that for ethnographic based work to be of use the subjects being studied must be 'systematically related to the social, cultural and historical contexts in which they are embedded'. Therefore before moving to Part II, and the chapters specifically drawn from the fieldwork, attention is turned initially to providing a historical frame of reference in which to locate the contemporary material.

Notes

- (1) As has been noted in chapter one this is slowly changing, see in particular Jarvie and Walker (eds.) (1994).
- (2) For a good example of this type of work see Schlesinger *et al* (1992).
- (3) I should emphasise that in the fieldwork I was interested in the views and opinions of the most committed supporter, i.e. the fan who goes almost every week and follows the club both home and away. As to the class, age, and gender composition of the supporters surveyed, the report compiled by the author (1991) on the Celtic supporters concluded that 'The majority of the most committed Celtic supporters are basically young, blue collar workers, from Catholic backgrounds (although not necessarily practising) and Labour voters' (Boyle, 1991: 9).
- (4) In particular, see John Williams' (1991), overview of the field of research in this area, where he highlights incidents where social anthropologists and sociologists have clashed over methodological approaches to the study and analysis of group violence involving football supporters.
- (5) This can be particularly acute when the work involves football culture with its attendant connotations of aggressive masculinity, a dilemma eloquently encapsulated in Hornby (1992) and Buford (1991).

Chapter 3: A socio-economic history of Glasgow and Liverpool

‘Liverpool is a city not unlike Glasgow. Ships, the smell of the sea and salt, unemployment, deprivation, grey, anonymous tenement blocks towering across scarred wastelands. In places even the colour of the stone looks familiar. Only the accents are different. Glasgow today may be slightly wealthier, more active and certainly grander but, a decade or two ago, you would have had trouble telling them apart.’

Stephen F. Kelly, (1992) *DalGLISH*, page 69.

Introduction

Glasgow and Liverpool are cities unique in Britain. Both have long been associated in popular consciousness with football, a strident working class culture, urban deprivation and sectarian violence. In addition they have strong connections with Ireland, both being subject to a massive wave of Irish immigrants in the 19th century. In a recent study examining the position of Irish Catholics in England, Steven Fielding suggests, rather contentiously, that:

Unfortunately, the two conurbations most associated with Irish immigration are Liverpool and Glasgow, places marginal to the cultural and political life of the nation. They are aberrant precisely because they contained so many Irish immigrants and supported a sectarian culture not seen elsewhere.

(Fielding, 1993: 5)

While Fielding turns his attention away from these cities, it is precisely because of the extent of Irish immigration and its impact in shaping the social character of Liverpool and Glasgow that these cities provide such rich areas for investigation.

Before focusing on the social origins of the major football clubs in both cities, and attempting to trace why football came to occupy the position it did in the cultural life of each city, it is necessary first to examine the economic and social evolution of both

areas. It was the ethnic and religious tensions that provided the impetus, specifically in Glasgow, for the development of a particular kind of footballing rivalry. As is discussed below, the linkage between football clubs and various ethnic, political and religious groupings is not an uncontested area of scholarly activity, and these debates about the role of tradition and history in the construction of collective memory are examined in the following chapter.

Initially, though, attention is turned to the historical development of Liverpool and Glasgow. What set these cities apart from the rest of Britain in the 19th century? To what extent did the cities differ from each other, and why did they offer such a fertile ground for a pattern of intergroup conflict and sectarian rivalry to emerge which would leave such a lasting imprint on the cultures of both cities?

Section 1: The Irish in 19th century Britain

Despite the attention which has been given to the impact on Britain of the influx of Irish fleeing from their famine-ridden country during the 1840s, it is important to note that migration within the British Isles predated this period, and that most of this population movement was into England and specifically London.

By the 17th century there was a sizable Irish community in London, and it was not just the Irish who contributed to the development and population expansion of the capital. Walvin (1984:23/4) notes that during the 1840s alone over 8000 Scots settled in London. In other words, both migration within Britain and immigration into Britain was well established before the massive influx of the 1840s. The growing commercial importance of London in particular offered opportunity for those leaving the 'celtic periphery' either by choice or, as was more often the case, through economic necessity.

By the mid 1850s the Irish were the largest immigrant group in Britain. They were despised and discriminated against by the host community, not least because of the Catholic religion that many carried with them to a Britain that was overwhelmingly Protestant. Despite the process of secularisation which was taking place in Britain

during the 19th century, the immigrant Catholic-Irish appeared resolute in their adherence to their Catholic faith, raising concerns among the Protestant community that a tide of Catholicism was about to sweep Britain.

Ironically, it was this rejection by the host population which helped to increase the importance of religious identity among the incoming community. Catholic identity was something that the newcomers had in common with each other. The process of rejection and a hostile environment helped to strengthen bonds based on religious identity among the Catholic-Irish.

The problematic political relationship that existed between the two countries added to the distrust felt towards the apparently potentially disloyal Irish (the effect of this on the politics of Glasgow and Liverpool are discussed on pages 47-50, and in chapter 6). Walvin views this movement of people as a legacy of British political involvement throughout the world:

It was the varied forms of British political control or domination over different parts of the world which were, in large measure, directly responsible for the movement of peoples to the imperial heartland [] If Ireland was plagued by apparently intractable issues - of land holding, alien land-ownership, a clash of religions and, after 1800, the virtual impossibility of Irish industries to compete against English rivals - it seemed both understandable and not unfair that the mainland should partly offset these difficulties by providing a home for Irish people uprooted from their homes. (Walvin, 1984: 53 and 57)

This latter view was not shared by many among the indigenous population and, as is evident below, their suspicion and mistrust would be aggravated and mobilised by both politicians and some Protestant church leaders in attempting to further their own ends.

Much of the debate about the impact of the Irish on British society in the 19th century focused upon the threat they posed to the culture and moral standards of the country. Walvin suggests that by the end of that century the Irish were being replaced in English demonology by the newly arriving Eastern European and Russian Jews (Walvin, 1984: 60). Despite this, and the enlightened claims by *The Times* newspaper in 1867 that:

there is hardly such a thing as a pure Englishman in this island. In place of the

rather vulgarised and very inaccurate phrase, Anglo-Saxon, our national denomination, to be strictly correct, would be a composite of a dozen national titles. (cited in Walvin, 1984: 19),

it was the Catholic-Irish who became associated with the inherent social ills as the country was transformed rapidly from an agrarian to an industrial society.

It would be the perceived threat that the newcomers and their descendants offered to traditional definitions of 'Scottishness', 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' that would help shape much of the Irish experience in Britain well into the 20th century.

Section 2: Glasgow, Liverpool and the Irish

Put at its simplest, without the Irish there would have been no industrialisation in Glasgow, or elsewhere in Scotland for that matter. (Damer, 1990: 52)

The roots of Liverpool's particularity and self-esteem lay in the Victorian age, when only London could top its turnover as a port. (Hill, 1989: 66)

Frank Neal (1988) has argued that the influx of Irish immigrants between 1845 and 1849 profoundly altered the social structure of many towns and cities in Britain, specifically Liverpool and Glasgow. While it is true that immigration from Ireland predated this period, the Irish famine created an exodus from that country of unprecedented numbers.

Between January and June 1847, 370,000 Irish people flooded into Liverpool docks, over one and a half times the city's population. While many moved on to either America or elsewhere in Britain, the poorest stayed and attempted to survive in the city. The 1851 census showed that 22.3% of the population of Liverpool were Irish born, in Glasgow it was 18.1%. The developed sea links between Ireland and both these cities made them natural ports of call in Britain, and those unable to move further afield stayed.

These people were largely unskilled and had fled from terrible social conditions to be confronted with cities which were unwelcoming and hostile, not least to the Catholic

religious identity that many of the immigrants carried with them. While the scale of the immigrant population was similar in both Liverpool and Glasgow, the social and economic conditions of the cities themselves were quite different.

Glasgow and Liverpool: cities of Empire

Unlike Liverpool, Glasgow's economic strength was not solely bound up with being a port, in addition to this important facility was the fact that the city was also a centre of heavy engineering and manufacturing. Damer (1990) suggests that three elements of the labour process helped shape the economic and social fabric of the city. One was the importance of heavy engineering and the tightly controlled and organised labour movements that surrounded that industry. Another factor was that much of the working class of the city originated from the Scottish Highlands and of course Ireland which 'resulted in a unique and explosive mixture in the broader working class movements which were not readily controllable by the labour aristocrats of the engineering trades' (Damer, 1990: 22). The final element that helped shaped the city's specific development was the vibrant culture created by its middle class entrepreneurs (Morgan 1990).

The new wave of Irish immigrants helped provide an inexhaustible pool of cheap labour which was required for the industrialisation of the city, which in turn depressed labour costs and provided a source of conflict with the indigenous workforce.

In economic terms Glasgow differed from Liverpool in two key areas during this period. Glasgow (and Scotland in general) was going through a period of rapid industrial expansion and thus had the capacity to absorb a vast pool of unskilled labour. In fact as Damer (1990: 52) noted above, it actually required such a vast influx into the labour market to sustain its manufacturing and industrial growth. Secondly, in Glasgow there did not exist the same degree of competition in the unskilled labour market as existed in Liverpool and much of the indigenous working class occupied either semi-skilled or skilled jobs. In Liverpool the competition for unskilled labour was such that

the wave of Irish immigration did much to distort an already competitive unskilled labour market.

The conditions of employment available to the incoming population also shaped the relationship they enjoyed with their hosts in another way. While many Irish-Catholic immigrants settled in the eastern part of Glasgow, rather than the more prosperous West End, it is important to note that the Irish-Catholic community in the city, unlike their counterparts in Liverpool, never became as geographically insulated from other workers in the city. In many ways this situation was dictated by the cramped housing conditions that existed in Glasgow, where as Gallagher (1985: 115) notes, 'by 1914, some 700,000 people lived in its three central square miles, the densest concentration of population in Europe.'

Significantly in Liverpool however there were clear demarcation lines drawn between Irish-Catholic and non-Catholic areas. Pooley suggests that:

The combination of acute poverty, cultural cohesion and institutionalised discrimination perpetuated both by the English hosts and by Protestant Irish forced poor and Catholic Irish into a high degree of insularity. They mixed mainly with their own countrymen and lack of contact between Irish and English allowed stereotypes of Irish behaviour and characteristics to become exaggerated and deeply ingrained upon English consciousness. (Pooley, 1992: 81)

It is important also to remember that many of the Catholic-Irish workers in Glasgow were excluded from the skilled trades in the city, particularly those jobs associated with the shipyards on the Clyde. In order to understand why, it is necessary to examine some of the anti-Catholic sentiments that existed throughout Scotland during this period and which did so much to shape the experience of the Irish in the country as a whole.

Scotland and religious identity

The Reformation had transformed the religious composition of Scotland, all but driving out Catholic culture and replacing it in part with a deep rooted anti-Catholic sentiment. Kelly (1992: 20) estimates that by the 1790s there were only 39 Catholics in the city of Glasgow. Throughout that century the Catholic population of the country was never

more than three per cent. The Penal Laws which had discriminated against the Catholic religion were not finally repealed until 1793 in Scotland, later than both England and Wales. By the 19th century it would have been true to say that Scotland was an overwhelmingly Protestant country.

The perception of Catholics as 'alien' was strengthened in the west of Scotland by the close proximity of Ulster. The 17th century plantation of Protestant Lowland Scots in Ulster increased the ties of religious kinship between that part of Ireland and Scotland.

Intense anti-Catholic/Irish feeling was not unique to Glasgow or indeed Scotland, but existed throughout Britain during this period. However Gallagher (1987: 9) has argued that anti-Catholic sentiment was particularly deeply embedded in Scottish popular culture during the 18/19th centuries. (1) In addition he notes how it was religious identity that became the key cultural determining factor for many of the immigrant population that would flee from the famine in Ireland. They were rejected by the indigenous Scottish population, uncomfortable with a British identity having fled a country under British colonial rule, yet after a short period of time began to find that while their children were now Scottish born, they were still not accepted as being in any way Scottish. Gallagher comments:

Among the immigrants the Protestant Irish were in a clear minority but they felt far more at home in Scotland than the more numerous Catholic Irish, since they were familiar with Scottish customs and institutions, shared the Protestant faith and were, in many cases, returning to the land of their forefathers. (Gallagher, 1987: 2)

In addition to the prejudice this community faced due to their country of origin and their religious faith, they also represented an economic threat providing a large pool of labour for the engineering, shipbuilding, textile and construction industries.

In the light of these tensions it was unsurprising that outbursts of sectarian violence occurred in Glasgow. However it should be noted that any sectarian civil disorder never reached the scale that it would in Liverpool. In part this was due to certain economic and political factors which are now discussed. Gallagher (1987) has argued

that while anti-Irish sentiment lingered longer in Glasgow than elsewhere in Britain (in part due to the closeness of Northern Ireland), it was in Liverpool that the sectarian clashes would be most violent. There is little doubt that this was related to the intense economic competition for work that existed between the unskilled Protestant and Catholic workers, which, due to the specific nature of the Liverpool economy and labour market, was more acute in that city than it ever would be in Glasgow.

Sectarian culture

During Victorian times such was the importance of the port of Liverpool that it was called the gateway of the British Empire (Lane, 1987). The city's character as well as its economic power was bound up with its position as a port. Hill (1989: 67) has suggested that the cyclical nature of dock work, with its uncertain work patterns and job insecurity helps to explain the city's 'volatility and endlessly shifting population'.

By 1851, the city contained the largest concentration of Irish immigrants anywhere in England (Neal, 1988: 4). The Irish that landed in Liverpool in such a tidal wave during the 1840s (by 1851 they constituted almost 23% of the city's population and 33% of the working class labour market), encountered prejudice and discrimination, but also a different city from Glasgow. That city was undergoing a period of rapid industrial expansion and in addition many of those who fled to Scotland had come from the northern counties of Ireland which were among some of the least affected by the famine. In Liverpool, however, the competition for jobs was intense, while the immigrants who settled in the city were among the poorest of the Irish.

Between 1847 - 1853 over one and a half million Irish people arrived in Liverpool, and while many moved on, the poor stayed. It was estimated that up to 586,000 who arrived in Liverpool were officially designated paupers (Neal, 1988: 33). As Gallagher points out:

Nineteenth century Liverpool was a mercantile and commercial port rather than an industrial centre. The occupational structure of the city included a far higher percentage of unskilled manual, and part-time jobs, for which the Irish *were* in a

position to compete. So, to a greater degree than in Glasgow, sectarian friction stemmed from economic competition and was of a more intense and unpleasant kind. (Gallagher, 1987: 14/15)

Pooley (1992) has argued that any social group moving into a new urban environment is subject to certain internal and external pressures. He suggests that an unskilled and impoverished group such as the Irish-Catholics in Liverpool suffered from a major external structural factor in the city's economy which helped define their social status: this was access to employment.

As late as 1871, almost 60% of the heads of Irish-Catholic families in the city were to be found in the semi-skilled or unskilled labour markets:

in socio-economic terms the total Irish-born population of Liverpool was not wholly cohesive [] (yet) They dominated the casual labour market in Liverpool and were thus more noticeable to urban government and social investigators than the rest of the population. (Pooley, 1992: 76)

This economic position also fuelled the flames of sectarian conflict in the city.

It should also be noted that in Liverpool sectarian clashes between Catholics and Protestants had pre-dated the massive influx of the 1840s. The first recorded clash occurred in 1819 at the annual Protestant celebration on the 12th of July which commemorates the victory of Prince William of Orange over the Catholic King James at the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland in 1690.

In Manchester there were clashes between Catholics and Protestants as early as 1807. Fielding (1993) suggests that the reason for the decline in sectarian violence in Manchester and its continued high profile in neighbouring Liverpool (right up until the 1950s) was the strength of the Orange Order in the latter city. In addition, during the 19th century, the Irish-Protestant community in Liverpool played an important role in sustaining anti-Catholic feeling already openly encouraged by the Anglican Church, the Monarchy and Parliament during this period.

In Glasgow, clashes were not as frequent or bitter due in part to a booming economy and the stronger, more confident position of the Scottish Protestant religious establishment:

Scottish Protestantism was less negative and defensive than the Established Church

in the large industrial cities of Lancashire, possibly because it had greater popular support and the religious environment was more secure. (Gallagher, 1985: 114)

In addition, the nature of political culture, and the role that religious affiliation played in this, was also different between the two cities.

Religion and politics

The relationship between religion and politics was a close one in Liverpool. The Orange Order forged close links with the Conservatives in that city, united in their defence of the union of Britain and Ireland. Neal argues that the mobilisation of religious prejudices was an important factor in establishing Tory popularity among the working class of the city who perceived their economic position being threatened by a flood of Catholic-Irish immigrants.

In trying to understand the attitudes of many Protestants in Liverpool towards Catholics, the precise number of Liverpool Irish is not the crucial factor. What mattered was what the numbers were *thought* to be, as is the analogous situation today with regard to immigration statistics. (Neal, 1988: 11)

Here was an example of what was sometimes called 'Tory Democracy': an appeal for political support to the Protestant British working class based on religious prejudice, their social concerns and a particularly virulent strand of patriotism.

Prejudices and anti-Catholic rhetoric were commonly used by Tory politicians and Anglican clergy who characterised the Irish as criminal, dirty, violent, disloyal, immoral and dangerous to society. These characteristics were viewed as a given of the 'Irish national character', although not applicable to the Protestant Irish, whose religious affiliation connected with a well established 'work ethic' tradition. (2) This process of 'criminalisation' also occurred in Glasgow and emanated from particularly respectable sources. As late as 1930 a Glasgow University academic, Andrew Dewar, could state that:

Wheresoever knives and razors are used, wheresoever sneak thefts and mean pilfering are easy and safe, wheresoever dirty acts of sexual baseness are committed there you will find the Irishman in Scotland with all but a monopoly of the business. (cited in Campbell and Woods, 1990: 61)

This recycling of prejudice is an issue that is returned to later. However, such was the

strength of this perception of the 'disloyal' Irish, that in Liverpool large sections of the Protestant working class remained loyal to the Conservative Party right up until the mid-1950s, when the party finally lost control of the city.

In addition to the playing of the 'Irish card' by the Conservatives in Liverpool, that city, more so than any other in England, also had a very strong and vibrant Orange Order. This was helped not only by the Protestant Irish who had settled in the city, but also by the creation of specific religious ghettos that occurred in the city's demographic layout. As mentioned earlier, areas within the city became clearly marked as either Catholic or Protestant in a much more clear cut-way than existed in Glasgow. Indeed, the divisions in Liverpool were more akin to those working class divisions that existed (and still do) in Belfast, where there are clearly defined areas of the city which are viewed as predominantly Protestant or Catholic. In Liverpool, as was the case in Glasgow, anti-Catholic attitudes were legitimised by politicians and the Church. Neal notes that:

Deference, however was not a feature of the Liverpool working-class; the almost total absence of the factory town left a gap which was filled by a popular Protestantism, reflecting the anti-Irish/Catholic resentment arising from Liverpool's peculiar position at the centre of Irish immigration. (Neal, 1988: 250)

This process also helps to explain why a particularly sectarian political culture was able to be sustained through the 19th century and up until the 1950s in the city.

Irish Home Rule politics

While the influx of Irish immigration, religious difference and an intense debate about the nature of Irish Home Rule all informed the political character of the cities, these issues manifested themselves in different ways and enjoyed varying degrees of influence.

Gallagher (1985: 115) suggests that in Liverpool the Tories were closely associated with the defence of local interests, while the Liberals suffered from their association with anti-slavery legislation which had had an adverse economic impact on the city's port.

As mentioned above, the Tories successfully played the 'Orange Card' in Liverpool to retain a position of political power within that city. In Glasgow the lack of Catholic-Irish ghettos helped to dissipate a unified block vote in any one specific area. Those among this community who did vote, and many were not on the electoral registrar, tended to support the Liberal Party. In this city it was as late as 1897 before an Irish-Catholic councillor, Patrick O'Hare, was elected. In Liverpool however Lawrence Connolly was elected in 1875 and ten years later T.P. O'Connor secured a parliamentary seat for the Irish Home Rule Party representing the wards of Scotland, Vauxhall and Exchange.

By 1912 the issue of Irish Home Rule had become a key factor in local Liverpool politics, more so than in Glasgow. It has been suggested that:

Liverpool responded emphatically to the Ulster drama because it mirrored its own municipal quarrels, and enabled the rival Tory and Irish machines to reinforce the communal allegiances that made Liverpool so different from those elsewhere in England. (Gallagher, 1985: 119)

In Glasgow the Irish-Catholic engagement with mainstream politics remained muted until the early part of the century. As we see below, there were links between those involved in Celtic Football Club and the Irish Home Rule movement, but a more significant political organisation was the founding in 1906 by John Wheatley of the Catholic Socialist Society. This represented an accommodation between socialist politics and Catholicism which was not, by and large, discouraged by the Catholic Church authorities (for more detail see chapter 6).

While in divided Liverpool it was the nationalistic Home Rule party which drew much of the Irish-Catholic support, in Glasgow allegiances were being formed between socialist movements and Catholicism that would have a profound effect on the future shape of politics in the west of Scotland and ultimately profit the shortly to emerge Labour Party.

It is interesting to note that the church attendance among both the Catholic and Protestant communities in Liverpool during this period of fierce political rivalries was relatively low, suggesting that religious labelling and perceptions of religious and

cultural difference played a key role in the forging of political identities, but did not necessarily represent a high degree of church-attending Christians in the city.

Glasgow and Liverpool: cities of change

Thus the twin impacts of the Industrial Revolution and the massive wave of Irish immigration profoundly shaped the character of both cities. With the exception of Belfast, no other cities in Britain experienced the degree of communal tension that would exist in Glasgow and Liverpool.

The interplay between the contrasting economic backgrounds of the cities, their differing religious environments and the composition of the immigrant Irish also made each city different. It would not be until after 1914 that the Catholic-Irish population in Glasgow would influence city politics to the extent that they did in Liverpool. They would align themselves to the Labour Party and as Gallagher (1985: 182) notes, 'the working class Catholics proved more consistently loyal to the parliamentary left than possibly any other element of the Scottish population.'

In Liverpool the mobilising of sectarian suspicions for political advantage would be used by the Tories to retain control of that city until the 1950s. While the Irish Question declined in importance in Liverpool politics after the setting up of the Irish Free State in 1922, in Glasgow it became more acute due to the geographical proximity of Northern Ireland, where the political settlement only served to highlight the insecurity of the Catholic minority.

Both the urban redevelopment of Liverpool which broke up many of the Catholic ghettos, and the continual advance of secularism helped to lessen the sectarian tension in the city. As is discussed in chapters 6 and 7, the increasing marginalisation of Liverpool within England during the last thirty years has also led to an inward defensive attitude among the population of the city, where internal differences are papered over in favour of a collective city identity.

In Glasgow by contrast the period from the 1920s-60s would see greater sectarian tension as the once booming economy slipped into a series of cyclical recessions and Catholics began to compete in all areas of the labour market. The closeness of Northern Ireland would always be a constant reminder of the influence of Ireland in Scottish affairs. It would be in Glasgow, not Liverpool, that the legacy of a sectarian culture would continue to exert a strong influence on the character of the city.

It is against this backdrop that both the rise of football and the specific clubs that the cities spawned must be placed. While both cities had similarities (the extent to which Irish immigration would shape the cultural character of each city), it has also been noted that in other ways they were quite different (not least in the structure of each city's economy).

Both cities would have large working class communities and it is this section of the population which has historically been central to professional football in Britain, providing the vast majority of players and paying spectators of the sport. The particular nature of the communities from which the major clubs, specifically in Glasgow, drew their support (Celtic, the Irish-Catholic community; Rangers, Protestant Scots) would be vital in establishing patterns of support and traditions associated with the clubs (for example Rangers' anti-Catholic signing policy, Celtic's flying of the Irish tricolour over Celtic Park, along with the Union Jack) which would influence generations of future fans.

Football would become an integral part of the popular culture and self-identity of both cities. However the origins of the major football clubs, and the political and cultural connotations attached to each club and their supporters, would be quite different, reflecting the environment in which they developed.

Crucial in this process was the nature of the origins of the clubs themselves. These origins laid the foundations for the nature of the different rivalries which grew up around the clubs in both cities. Thus while the clubs and their supporters were shaped by the environment from which they sprang, once established, the clubs became

important as tangible symbolic entities which could act as focal points for the expression and celebration of a variety of collective identities.

Through professional football, based on rivalry, competition and mass spectatorship, the clubs and the matches became the ideal vehicles onto which a community could project its identity and literally put it on public display week in week out. In Glasgow this would reflect the religious and ethnic cleavages in Scottish society; in Liverpool, more often than not, it represented friendly internal city rivalry and provided an important external image of a city seemingly united in its passion for football.

Section 3: The origins of the clubs

Glasgow can claim to have been the first and most fanatical footballing city in Britain. (Holt, 1990a: 170)

More than any other English city, Liverpool experiences its hope and its shame through its football. (Hopcraft, 1988: 191, originally published 1968)

The development and origins of football and football clubs both in England and Scotland are closely associated with various church organisations. While by the last quarter of the 19th century football had become synonymous with the urban male working class, initially churches viewed the sport as part of a wider programme of 'rational recreation' or 'muscular Christianity'. Sport was accepted as a healthy pursuit which could install both moral and spiritual values into the new urban working class and keep them away from other less respectable forms of popular culture. However, such was the popularity of the sport of football, and the financial rewards available within the professional game, that by the 1870/80s it had become an organised and institutionalised mass spectator sport on both sides of the border. James Walvin comments that:

Liverpool, which before the turn of the century was to establish itself as *the* footballing centre of England, was later than other cities in turning to the game, but

when in 1878, local teams began to form, they sprang in the first instance almost exclusively from churches headed by St. Domingo's, St. Peter's, Everton United Church and St. Mary's Kirkdale. As late as 1885, 25 of the 112 football clubs in Liverpool had religious connections. (Walvin, 1975: 56/7)

The origins of the major clubs in Liverpool (Liverpool and Everton) can be traced to the formation in 1878 of St. Domingo's. The club changed its name in order to attract a wider cross-section of players and called itself Everton after the local district of the city. The driving force behind the club was a one-time Lord Mayor of the city, local businessman and Tory politician, John Houlding. In 1892 he fell out with his fellow club members on the Everton Board, who promptly relocated with the team to Goodison Park. Houlding now had a ground at Anfield, but no football team. He recruited individual players from Scotland, put together a team drawn from players living in Scotland (many were in fact Irish Glaswegians), and formed Liverpool Football Club. As Hill puts it: 'Effectively, then, the same Orangeman went down in history as the founder of both the Merseyside giants' (Hill, 1989: 69).

There is little doubt that the origins of the two biggest clubs in Liverpool are important in understanding how neither club became closely associated with a specific community in the city. While the question as to what extent these two clubs became associated with particular ethnic or religious groupings can be contentious, Fielding points out that:

it was only in Glasgow that football took on a sectarian meaning, in Liverpool folklore mistakenly suggests that (it) also did there. In Manchester, in contrast, the rivalry between United and City was bitter, but it was not the reflection of religious or national differences. (Fielding, 1993: 27)

Campbell and Woods (1990) suggest that popular folk memory recalls the 1920/30s as a time when Everton was seen by some as the Catholic club on Merseyside. Hill argues that it was crucial that neither club imposed a religious ban on who could or could not play for the club, and that, as a result, the Merseyside rivalry was unlike that which existed in Glasgow between Celtic and Rangers, the latter operating at various times in their history a Protestant-only signing policy, marking the club out as clearly anti-

Catholic. He does note that during the 1950s Everton (partly due to the large number of Irishmen they had playing for them at the time) did become identified as the team supported by Catholics. He continues:

Many fans of both teams are aware of this unwritten tradition, whether they conform to it or not. Even as recently as November 1988, a piece of graffiti scrawled above a turnstile at the Anfield Road end read, 'No Fenian Twats.' A city's bigotry does not die overnight. (Hill, 1989: 69) (3)

Today it is difficult to attach religious or ethnic tags to any of the major clubs in England. Richard Holt (1990a:331) suggests that religion was never the force in determining support for football clubs in England that it was in Scotland, and specifically in Glasgow. In part this is explained by the fact that it was in Scotland with its smaller population, specific pattern of industrialisation, overtly Protestant religious character and its close links with Northern Ireland, that religious affiliation became a more central defining character of cultural life, and this in turn is reflected in the religious connotations attached to supporters of particular football clubs.

The 'Old Firm'

Any discussion of one of the major Glasgow teams is incomplete without reference to the other. Collectively Celtic and Rangers are known as the 'Old Firm', which refers to the mutually beneficial financial relationship that the clubs have enjoyed from the popularity of a keen local rivalry. However the 'Old Firm' is no ordinary big city football rivalry. Most major towns and cities in Britain produced rival teams, usually based on the geographical location of club grounds, but in Glasgow the boundaries that separated the supporters of Celtic and Rangers were more than spatial and represented wider divisions in Scottish society.

It is not to engage in media hyperbole to claim that the religious rivalry on which the clubs are based is unique to European football. While there are great footballing rivalries throughout the world, most are based on regional/national differences (Barcelona/Real Madrid) or particular intra-city rivalry (Inter Milan/Milan). In Glasgow

it is the identification with specific religious and ethnic groups that makes the Glasgow derby games between Rangers and Celtic different.

Perhaps what is ultimately unique about the 'Old Firm' rivalry is the extent to which, over a hundred years after the formation of the clubs, that rivalry is still so intense, and shows little sign of abating (as is evident from the interview material in Part II).

The unravelling of the origins of the 'Old Firm' and its links with the political and cultural history of Scotland are both complex and have become an increasingly contested area of scholarly activity. These debates surrounding the importance of history and tradition in understanding modern Scotland are detailed below and connect with the discussion among contemporary supporters that takes place in the following chapter.

Celtic were formed in 1887, playing their first match a year later. From the outset the club had close links with the immigrant Catholic-Irish community in Glasgow and drew their support from this section of the city's population. Gerry Finn has argued that the formation of Irish-Catholic clubs in Scotland (of which Celtic were one) 'signalled the willingness of that community to participate in Scottish sport' (Finn, 1991b: 370). Interestingly, in the light of recent portrayals of Celtic as an old fashioned club, and Rangers as the modernising club in the city, in the early years it was in fact the former who showed a greater degree of commercial acumen. (4)

While the club had been set up for charitable purposes, raising money for the Catholic-Irish poor who had tended to settle in the East End of the city, it was run by shrewd businessmen. It has been commented on how:

The club became noted within a very short time for its business acumen, consistently leaving rivals behind in providing attractions (at Celtic Park). (Campbell and Woods, 1990: 3).

These included visiting English football teams, athletics meetings, and the introduction for a short period in 1893 of evening football played under floodlights.

Rangers were formed in 1872, and according to Walker (1990) reacted to Celtic's

'Irish' symbolism by becoming the standard bearers for Protestant Scotland. We find differing opinions between scholars about the initial relationship between the two clubs. Both Walker (1990) and Murray (1986) claim that Celtic provoked a reaction from the indigenous population with their overt Irish symbolism. Finn (1991a &b), however, has shown that Rangers had close links with Unionist and anti-Catholic organisations which pre-dated the formation of Celtic. It seems likely that Rangers did not simply have a Protestant image, symbolically representing 'a powerful current of popular Protestantism' (Walker, 1990: 138), but were in fact anti-Catholic in a way which reflected the prejudicial views of much of Scottish society towards the Irish-Catholic community at that particular time.

The socio-economic background of the clubs' Boards of Directors illustrates the different social origins of the clubs. Murray documents how:

Celtic's first Board of Directors (1897) was made up of six publicans and one builder, the first Rangers Board (1899), by contrast, was made up of two wealthy employers.. some white collar workers... and one skilled tradesman. Celtic's earliest patrons were the Archbishop of Glasgow and a radical politician [Michael Davitt] ; Rangers, on the other hand, had Sir John Ure Primrose (who later became chairman), and he was succeeded by the millionaire grandson of the founder of Burmah Oil, Sir John Cargill. (Murray, 1984: 103)

What is beyond doubt is that the two clubs became hugely popular and the rivalry that developed between the clubs was financially beneficial to both institutions. (5) Celtic became a symbolic representation of what the immigrant Catholic-Irish could achieve in their new homeland. While clubs such as Hibernians (formed 1875) in Edinburgh and the Harp (formed 1880) in Dundee were Catholic clubs which predated Celtic, neither would retain such a clear Catholic identity as the club based in the East End of Glasgow.

So while opposing football clubs from the same locality were invested with symbolic importance all over Scotland (in particular Edinburgh and Dundee), the unique economic and cultural composition of the west of Scotland and the position of Glasgow within an expanding Scottish and British economy helped ensure that it would be the

members of the 'Old Firm' who would become the dominant force in Scottish football for the majority of the next hundred years, both on and off the field of play.

**Section 4:
Debates about the cultural role of the clubs in Scottish society.**

The Irish immigrant was in the almost impossible position of being unable to become Scottish. In the United States he might hope to start as an equal American in the making, but that was a remote prospect in Edinburgh or Glasgow. (Aspinwall and McCaffrey, 1985: 130)

(Irish) People who never witness a football match are attracted to the scene by the political aspect of the game, and not because they are possessed of any enthusiasm for football.

The *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 26 April 1887, commenting on football games in Glasgow and Dundee where three quarters of the supporters were Irish.

A closer examination of some of the debates surrounding the role that Celtic played in the cultural life of the west of Scotland allows the opening up of some of the broader issues and debates concerned with football and identity-formation that run throughout the following chapters in Part II.

Finn (1991a & b) has taken issue with the 'orthodox' histories of the 'Old Firm' phenomenon in Scotland, and specifically the work of Bill Murray (1986, 1988). Despite the fact that football has occupied a central position in Scottish popular culture, and been subject to extensive coverage in the print and broadcast media, Murray's book was the first serious academic study of the interrelationship between sectarianism, religion and football in Scottish society. As the social historian James Walvin has noted:

Football offers an outstanding example of the discrepancy between the historical role of a particular sport and its failure to find an adequate place in written history. (Walvin, 1975: 4)

By investigating the history of the Irish-Catholic football clubs in Scotland, Finn attempts to investigate the 'racism and prejudice experienced by Irish-Catholics in Scotland' (Finn, 1991a: 72), focusing on intergroup conflicts, football, and the recycling of prejudice by contemporary social commentators.

A central aspect of his argument is that Murray's work perpetuates the mythologised self-image of Scotland as 'democratic and egalitarian', and that writers have substantially underestimated the hostility faced by the immigrant community on its arrival in Scotland. At the core of this debate is the struggle by social historians and social commentators to define what is meant by 'Scottishness' and to highlight the unique characteristics of a 'Scottish identity' (a debate expanded upon in chapter 6). At this juncture, it is worth noting that Finn has argued that much of this writing has been underpinned by a narrow and limiting definition of a Scottish identity, one which excludes sections of the population who do not conform to its particular idea of a Scottishness that is inextricably, and exclusively, linked to Protestantism.

In addition to the above work, Walker's (1990) recent attempt to challenge the perception/image of Rangers as the sectarian club in Scottish society (due to their refusal, until recently, to sign a Catholic player) has added to this debate and is also discussed below.

Social identity and football

Few would take issue with the argument that Celtic were always more than a football club. Their political and cultural orientation meant that they became standard bearers for the Irish-Catholic community in Scotland. Murray argues that Rangers, with its attendant links with Orangeism and Protestantism, were a *reaction* to this assertion of Irish identity in Scotland. In other words, it was the immigrant who was the cause of sectarian rivalry in the west of Scotland, which expressed itself in the sphere of professional football and working class culture in general. Rangers were the 'home grown' defenders of 'Scottishness' against the alien 'Catholic Irishmen'.

This argument is also developed by Walker who states that: 'The Catholic community was culturally and politically vigorous with Irish concerns to the fore, but socially and economically disadvantaged' (Walker, 1990: 138).

Finn (1991a&b) has demonstrated that this argument fundamentally underestimates the psychology of immigrant groups who are faced by massive discrimination, in part based on their religious beliefs. He argues that the multi-faceted nature of intergroup identities is denied in contemporary interpretations of the role of the 'Old Firm' in Scottish society.

In contrast, Finn argues that the very fact that the immigrant community did not attempt to set up its own Gaelic games association (along the lines of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) which was established in Ireland in 1884), but instead wished to participate in *Scottish* sport, showed the willingness of the group to contribute to Scottish society. Of course it could be argued that refusing to withdraw into an ethnic sporting ghetto, meant to many in the host community that they represented an even greater threat to aspects of their 'Scottish' cultural traditions.

The Irish-Catholics did, however, have to set up their own clubs because this provided the only opportunity for them to play football in Scotland, due to the discrimination that players faced from Scottish clubs:

the setting up of the clubs (such as Celtic) reveals the complex collective social identity of a community which believed itself to be Scottish but wished to retain pride in its Irish ancestry; the football clubs reveal the dual social identity of the community as *Irish-Scots*. (Finn, 1991b: 371)

It is this idea of a more complex sense of identity which cuts against the narrow rigidly defined concept favoured by Murray. This conceptual tension also runs through much of the work in Part II.

The formation of the Irish-Catholic clubs, of whom Celtic by the turn of the century had become the most significant, was closely linked with the Catholic church. However, as noted earlier, most football clubs formed in the 19th century had links with various church-related organisations. While Finn does not refute the close links between the Catholic organisations and the formation of Celtic in Glasgow and Hibernians in Edinburgh, he points out that most of the clubs in Scotland had connections with Protestant religious social organisations. Many of the clubs had

strong Unionist and Protestant links before the formation of the Catholic-Irish clubs. Thus these Irish-Catholic clubs, far from being sectarian (as has been suggested), were simply reacting to the wider cultural pressures that the immigrant community found itself subjected to from the rest of the population.

Church, national and political associations are not only found in the histories of Irish Catholic football teams in Scotland; this false assumption can only be maintained by avoiding a systematic examination of the supposedly 'normal Scottish clubs.' (Finn, 1991a: 83)

There is an interesting point of comparison here with the situation as it developed in Liverpool. While, as mentioned above, the formation of Liverpool and Everton, in common with many English football clubs, was initially linked with religious organisations, these links quickly became much less significant than was the case in Glasgow.

Pooley (1992: 78) suggests that it was through indirect activity that the Catholic Church exercised an influence over the Catholic-Irish population of Liverpool and that the Church did not form a central part of the culture of the Catholic community in the way that it did in Glasgow. In Liverpool it was Irish nationalist politics which formed the focal point for an expression of Irish-Catholic identity rather than exclusive support for a specific football club. It is worth reiterating the importance that the similar origins of both Everton and Liverpool played in preventing their respective support from dividing along the religious and ethnic lines of those associated with the 'Old Firm' in Glasgow.

Politics and the 'Old Firm'

Much has been made of the prominence of Irish Home Rule supporters among the early Celtic board of directors. Walker (1990: 141) suggests that this 'may well have resulted in Rangers becoming a rallying point for Ulster Unionist sentiment'. In addition, Rangers drew much of their support from the skilled Protestant working class who enjoyed a monopoly of work in the Clyde shipyards (Ibrox Park, the home of the club is located in Govan close to the yards). The already existing job discrimination

against Catholics in the shipyards was intensified with the arrival in Govan in 1912 of the Irish shipbuilders Harland and Wolff and the accompanying influx of Protestant Irish workers. Rangers drew much of their local support from this section of the workforce. Both Moorhouse (1984) and Gallagher (1985) have suggested that this process helped to entrench sectarianism more deeply into the everyday cultural life of the west of Scotland.

These workers supported the local football team of Glasgow Rangers, located at nearby Ibrox, and within a decade Rangers had become exclusively Protestant and was locked in a furious rivalry with Glasgow Celtic, a team closely linked with the Catholic minority, although it signed on Protestant players. No doubt local conditions were already ripe for this contest, but it is significant that the movement of labour prepared the way for popular factionalism in the sphere of recreation, which long remained the chief legacy in Glasgow of more wide-ranging communal divisions. (Gallagher, 1985: 111)

There is no doubt that by the early part of the century both clubs had become firmly established with particular religious and cultural groupings. At a political level, the connections between Celtic and members of the Irish Home Rule movement were quite explicit. However it is a matter of interpretation as to the significance of this linkage in determining the club's alleged lack of 'Scottishness'. For example, the fact that Michael Davitt, the founder of the Irish Land League, laid the first grass sod at Celtic Park was construed by many as an example of the 'alien' and 'disloyal' culture that the club personified. Davitt, however, openly advocated the full participation of the immigrant community in Scottish life. He did not suggest for example that the playing of football was a 'foreign' sport (although he was closely associated with the GAA in Ireland, where participation in football or even attendance at matches was banned). Davitt, who toured the Scottish Highlands lecturing Catholics and Protestants on land reform, thus even broke the rules of the explicitly nationalist GAA rules by attending soccer matches in Glasgow.

The formation of the Irish Free State in 1922 defused much of the controversy surrounding the club's Home Rule links. Catholic political support in the west of

Scotland became increasingly intertwined with the emerging Labour party, which many working class Catholics viewed as one of the few organisations in which they had a real chance of advancing both themselves individually and their community collectively.

By contrast Finn has produced evidence which highlights the connections that existed between Rangers and the Conservative and Unionist Party and freemasonry.

The club came to embody a Unionist Scottish Protestant identity: a social identity within a British Imperialist framework which was antagonistic towards the Irish and Catholics. (Finn, 1991a: 87)

As was the case both in Liverpool and Belfast, the link between Protestantism and Unionism would be used and mobilised by the Conservative Party to help secure Protestant working class votes.

Perhaps the best insight into the cultural and ideological position occupied by Rangers in Scottish society is offered through the personality of their manager Bill Struth (who was in charge from 1920-1954). Kelly is in no doubt that there was a connection between the ultra-Protestant image cultivated by the club under Struth and wider social trends in Scottish society:

During that period (1920-54), the antagonism and sectarianism were never more bigoted and rampant, and never closer to the Church of Scotland's own views, unashamedly spelled out in a pamphlet published in 1923 under the ominous title 'The Menace of the Irish Race to our Scottish Nationality'. Sectarianism had at last achieved respectability. (Kelly, 1992: 22)

This was an important moment in the club's history that saw many of Scottish society's prejudices become institutionalised at the club, their attitude vindicated by their success on the football pitch while fielding a Protestant only team.

While Walker and Murray claim that Rangers were simply at the intersection of religious and cultural identity in Scotland, and, through popular cultural activity were articulating the Protestant strand of Scottish culture (and Celtic the Catholic), others including Finn view the club as being anti-Catholic, and attempt to claim that they (Rangers) represented the *authentic* cultural face of a Scottish identity. This was a particular discourse of identity that positioned non-Protestants as alien, disloyal and in some sense not *true* Scots.

While the 1918 Education Act had set up state aided Catholic schools (segregated schools were, and still are, an important site for the reproducing of specific religious identities, see chapter 5), there still remained discrimination in housing and employment. Gallagher (1987: 251) shows that job discrimination was still evident in the 1960s, particularly in the banking sector. In the light of this it becomes easier to understand why a successful Celtic F.C. became a rallying point for people who drew strength from their ethnic origins as symbolised by the club.

Football and sectarian violence

There is no doubt that 'Old Firm' matches have provided an outlet for much of the sectarian motivated violence in the city throughout the years. (6) In the case of Rangers, some of the links between club supporters and gang violence in the past have been quite explicit. Probably the most notorious gang were the 'Billy Boys' led by Billy Fullerton during the inter-war period. They were an 'Orange' gang who engaged in fights with Catholics particularly in the East End of the city. They were also Rangers supporters, and Walker (1990: 143) suggests they were the originators of the 'Billy Boys' song which was sung on the Ibrox terracing and remains today the most popular Rangers song among supporters.

Hello, Hello, we are the Billy Boys,
Hello, Hello, you'll know us by our noise,
We're up to our neck in Fenian blood,
Surrender or you'll die,
For we are the Bridgeton Billy Boys.

Bridgeton refers to the gang's home in that part of the East End of the city. (7)

To what extent the violence in and around 'Old Firm' matches acted as a safety valve (explaining in part the lower level of sectarian clashes than existed in Liverpool for instance) is open to debate. In Liverpool the Liverpool/Everton derby, while highly competitive, has none of the sectarian overtones so overtly obvious in Glasgow, with its attendant rigid segregation of supporters and its atmosphere of intense hatred

between Glasgow fans, in stark contrast to the shared terraces of the Merseyside derby.

Neither of the Merseyside clubs had the explicit Catholic-Irish club origins of Celtic. Why the immigrant population did not create their own club in Liverpool may be put down to a number of reasons. Firstly, the Catholic-Irish of Liverpool were the poorest of the immigrants who fled to Britain, while those who settled in Glasgow and eventually helped create Celtic Football Club included people from a relatively more affluent background. Also another factor may have been the ability of Catholic immigrant players to play for various clubs in Liverpool, a difficulty experienced by those in Glasgow who were discriminated against because of their religious background. Whatever the reasons, and despite the periodic linking of Everton with Catholic support, the extreme polarisation between Celtic/Rangers supporters (which was reproduced through segregated schooling, church affiliations, a sense of discrimination among the Catholic population and the sectarian signing policy pursued by Rangers), never took root in Merseyside football culture to any great degree.

After 1945, a period of domination of Scottish football by Rangers, Walker sums up the position that the club occupied within Scottish popular culture and highlights its position at the intersection of Scottish political, religious and cultural identity:

Rangers, especially in the post-war era, were thus part of a celebration of Scottishness which was underpinned by a strong Unionism or loyalism. It can be argued that the Unionism was viewed as essentially an expression of Protestantism, following the traditional Orangeist rhetoric of loyalty to the crown and constitution and the defence of civil and religious liberties. (Walker, 1990: 146)

This opens up the wider debate about the constitution and re-constitution of various identities. For this definition of Scottishness was one that excluded being, for example, Catholic, or worse, Catholic and of Irish ancestry. In the process of defining an ingroup there is immediately constructed a number of outgroups who can not conform to such a rigid and closed definition of Scottish identity. (8)

This process connects with current debates and concerns about the defining of cultural and national identities and the positioning of groups within this process. Part II of this work initially examines some of the issues relating to the role of tradition and

historical interpretation in footballing culture. These are developed in the subsequent chapters (which draw heavily on the interview material collected in both cities) and address issues relating to the formation of various religious, political and cultural identities among contemporary supporters in the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool.

Notes

- (1) Gallagher notes that anti-Irish feeling was quite openly expressed by the Scottish press right up until the first World War. For a description of the conditions of the Irish in Scotland see Handley (1947).
- (2) For a discussion of the reproduction of the 'natural' Irish character in British popular culture, see John Hill's section Images of Violence, in Gibbons, L., Hill, J. and Rockett, K. (1988) *Cinema and Ireland*, Routledge, London.
- (3) This debate is developed in chapter 6 focused on the modern day supporter of the club.
- (4) Interestingly this cuts against the dominant representation of the Catholic business community as being in some sense less dynamic than their Protestant counterparts.
- (5) Even today with all the talk of European Super Leagues, all the major European clubs view their local derbies as vitally important financially.
- (6) There has been a recent decline in violence in and around 'Old Firm' matches since the shocking violence between rival fans at the 1980 Scottish Cup Final. This pitched battle at Hampden Park resulted in legislation banning alcohol from Scottish football grounds.
- (7) Kelly (1992) notes how Glasgow is the only city outside Northern Ireland where 'Fenian bastard' is used as a term of abuse and routinely heard at football matches.
- (8) The question of how other immigrant groups in Scotland position themselves with regard to the 'Old Firm' is difficult to answer. With the exception of the Italian-Scots, who with their Catholic religious identity are more likely to gravitate towards supporting Celtic, no particular community (Pakistani, Jewish etc) has become collectively associated with either club.

One example of the complexities of loyalty was highlighted by a recent story in the Glasgow *Evening Times* which featured a Catholic priest who was a Rangers fanatic. This apparent anomaly, which it appeared made the story newsworthy (a full page was given over to it in the paper), was dealt with by pointing out 'Bob's passion for Rangers can be easily explained - he's an Englishman. Born in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, half his classmates chose Celtic as their favourite Scottish side - the others backed the Gers' (Halo, Halo. *Evening Times*, 31 May 1995).

Part II: Football and Identity in contemporary Glasgow and Liverpool

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Chapter 4: History and tradition

'We see the city stratified [] A chronology, a sequence. Whereas the city itself, of course, is without such constrictions. It streams away into the past; it is now, then, and tomorrow. It is as anarchic as the eye of the child, without expectation or assumption. It is we who are tethered to circumstance, not the world we inhabit.'

Penelope Lively, (1991) *City of the Mind*, Penguin, London. page 76.

'There is a considerable difference between living in a city with a past, and residing in a New Town.'

Alan Massie, (1990) *Glasgow - A Moving Portrait*, *History Today*, Vol. 40, May, page 5.

Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first sets out to examine the role that tradition and history play in the constitution and reconstitution of collective memory. Tradition and its relationship with a particular selective interpretation of past events are a key element in the process through which groups come to understand themselves and also to place and locate others.

Section 1 looks at the debates that have surrounded the position of tradition in shaping the modern images of Glasgow and Liverpool and have helped inform the environment within which the football clubs and their supporters operate.

These themes are then developed by drawing upon interview material with supporters in both cities and by examining the central role that particular traditions and histories have played in shaping fan cultures. In part this is done by reinforcing their perceptions of their own identities and those of others. Also of interest is the extent to which individual identities are subsumed within a wider collective feeling which is in part derived from the perceived position that the football clubs have within the cultural life of the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool.

Section One: Tradition, identity and city images

Tradition, as Stuart Hall argues:

is a vital element in culture, but it has little to do with the persistence of old forms. It has much more to do with the way elements have been linked together or articulated. These arrangements in a national-popular culture have no fixed or inscribed position, and certainly no meaning that is carried along, so to speak, in the stream of historical tradition, unchanged. (Hall, 1981: 236)

Thus, how particular traditions are articulated and what they constitute can differ widely, depending, in part, on the interests served by the dominance of any one 'version'. As was noted in chapter 1, sporting activity, and football in particular, has often been used symbolically to serve political purposes. Football's emphasis on competition and rivalry at local, regional and national levels, allied with its close association with urban working class culture and its attendant concern with the demarcation of territory, makes it a potent cultural form for the expression of individual and collective identities.

Embedded in this cultural form is the centrality of tradition in informing how supporters come to think about their team, themselves and other supporters. As in the 'imagined community' of the nation, football culture celebrates its heroes and triumphs by weaving them into a powerful narrative which connects the past with the present. This draws not only on myths that exist within club histories, but also connects with deeper myths that circulate beyond the parameters of football and are embedded in wider society. (1) This process is mediated through a number of institutions, including the media, family, school, supporters clubs and so forth.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the histories of the clubs are not uncontested areas of scholarly activity. Many official club histories (and indeed much history writing in general) attempt to map out and impose a narrative structure on past events. In so doing they also help to make sense of (or legitimise) aspects of the present. John Thompson has commented on how 'narrativization' is an important element in this

process of legitimation:

claims are embedded in stories which recount the past and treat the present as part of a timeless and cherished tradition. Indeed traditions are sometimes invented in order to create a sense of belonging to a community and to a history which transcends the experience of conflict, difference and division.

(Thompson, 1990: 61/62)

History is a process of forgetting, as well as remembering, of legitimising the present through one particular version of the past. This process helps sustain the collective group identity among supporters and their allegiance to a particular club. The linkage between tradition and the selective interpretation of history is important, as it sustains particular discourses and allows them an ahistorical position: they become 'given' and 'natural'.

Many of the discourses relating to national or cultural characteristics are represented through various forms of narrative as 'given' or 'fixed'. For example, many of the discourses relating to Irish immigration in 19th century Liverpool and Glasgow are very similar to those which exist in certain social and political circles with regard to the position of the immigrant population in Britain in the 1990s. It is 'our' traditions, 'our' jobs, 'our' heritage that is threatened by the new 'wave' of immigrants. In this instance, aspects of 'tradition' are mobilised to legitimise current thinking and political actions.

In addition, traditional aspects of culture are perceived to belong to an earlier, more innocent time. They become symbolic events that connect us with the past and hark back to a more secure, less complex society. In part this stems from a dissatisfaction with the modern world, allowing particularly comforting views of the past to function as nostalgia: a sense of longing for a more secure 'golden' era, which of course in reality may never have existed. As Chase and Shaw note with regard to modern human life experience:

The only certainty is uncertainty, so that in this view nostalgia is the attempt to cling to the alleged certainties of the past, ignoring the fact that, like it or not, the only constant in our lives is change. (Chase and Shaw, 1989: 8)

Popular culture, and football in particular in the cities examined, becomes a site for this social process. It is not simply a case of one version of history versus another, but of how the clubs come to symbolise a *sense* of history, place and belonging to supporters who often view *themselves* as an integral part of the club and its historical narrative. This is a position which clearly emerges from the interviews with groups of supporters which are discussed in Section 2 below.

Re-inventing the city

‘Tell me something amusing about your country,’ said the Indian I stood beside. ‘The place that built this ship has vanished,’ I said. ‘Nothing there but weeds. Glasgow doesn’t build ships and Manchester doesn’t make cotton and we import a lot of cars from Japan.’ He sucked his teeth in commiseration. ‘Interesting but not amusing,’ he said. ‘What do the people do?’
Conversation on a Ganges ferry, (Jack, 1987: 204).

While it is not the aim here to provide an exhaustive overview of the recent debates that have taken place regarding the changing images of Glasgow and Liverpool, it is nevertheless important that the central role that football plays in the popular images of these cities is placed against these debates. In the light of the decline of traditional heavy industry in Britain, many of these debates have centred around the mobilisation of ‘tradition’ by commercial interests in the development of what have become known as the heritage and cultural industries, and a concern with the economic and cultural implications of such a development. (2) While both Glasgow and Liverpool have suffered a steep decline in their traditional economies they have reacted quite differently to this crisis.

The deindustrialisation of Britain hit Glasgow particularly hard during the 1970s. Between 1971-84 jobs in shipbuilding and related marine engineering industries declined by up to 40%. In other sectors job losses were just as dramatic, constituting up to 80% in metal manufacturing and 48% in electrical engineering (Jack, 1987: 204).

The west-facing port of Liverpool was badly hit as the post-war shift in Britain’s trading patterns resulted in the American and African trade routes declining in

importance as attention was switched towards mainland Europe. In addition much of the manufacturing industry which did exist in Liverpool was closely linked with the once busy docks and also rapidly declined. Unemployment in the city had reached over 25% by the mid 1980s, while in some areas such as Croxteth the rate was as high as 96% (SNCCFR, 1987: 8).

All this has been accompanied by a burgeoning hidden economy in the city. As one commentator notes:

(this involves) a considerable moral flexibility about the handling of stolen goods, and the management and circumvention of the measly benefit system. After all, for too many people if you don't live by your wits, you don't live much at all. But if getting by means conjuring all manner of scally capers round the edge of the crumbling economy, there is still - always - the saving grace and pride of Liverpool Football Club. (Davies, 1990: 64)

Glasgow's response to the decline in its traditional heavy industries was to look towards the regeneration programmes of North America as a role model for the city. Part of this process involved combating the negative image of Glasgow as a dirty, dangerous and drunken city and presenting itself instead an attractive environment for inward investment. Through a combination of public and private capital, and with extensive use of both marketing and public relations, the city re-invented itself as a modern, European city which embraced the service industries as well as those centred around the arts and media. This culminated in Glasgow becoming the European Cultural Capital during 1990. The extent to which all the citizens of the city have benefited from the New Glasgow has been the subject of much debate (See Jack 1987, Spring, 1990 and Schlesinger, 1991). However what is beyond dispute is that both the internal and external image of Glasgow in the 1990s are for many quite different to those which existed less than twenty years ago.

Despite the opening of the Tate Gallery in the city in 1988 and the regeneration of the Albert Dock, it is Manchester (with its high profile Olympic and Commonwealth Games bids) rather than Liverpool, which has learned from the marketing of Glasgow and is busily projecting itself as the premier city in the north west of England. In

contrast Liverpool became synonymous with poverty, decline, crime and militant politics during the mid to late 1980s and has found the image hard to shake off. Ironically it was during this period that the football clubs in the city were enjoying unrivalled success both in England and in Europe. Ian Jack has argued:

The city seems to have seized on football as its last living totem of greatness. Football is what Liverpool is now famous for, because the real functions of Liverpool have largely disappeared [] local politicians, the media and the football clubs themselves form a nexus which perpetuates Liverpool's exclusive idea of itself as resilient, male, white and working class. (Jack, 1987: 239)

Interestingly, this is an image which was often associated with Glasgow (in some instances it still is). However it also emphasises the way that certain aspects of Liverpool's history have been downplayed at the expense of others.

For example the success of the football clubs has been a relatively recent phenomenon dating from the mid 1960s, a period associated with a strident city at the forefront of British popular culture through its comedians and music (in particular the world wide fame of The Beatles). In addition, this white male working class image of the city allows no space for the experience of the large black community that resides there, especially in and around Liverpool 8 (the city also has one of the oldest Chinese communities in Britain). The histories and experience of black Liverpudlians in shaping their contemporary city are missing from the media images and profile of Liverpool, only appearing, it appears, at times of crisis such as the Toxteth riots of 1981. As has been noted:

Few Liverpool blacks have effective access to the football terraces in a city whose collective cultural experience is more dominated by watching, talking about and celebrating football than any other city in England. (SNCCFR, 1987:7)

Despite the arrival in 1987 of John Barnes at Liverpool FC, it would be 1994 before Everton would sign a black player and in so doing become the last club in the English FA Premiership to include such a player as a first team regular. (3)

Both cities then have public images that have similarities but also differences. The external and internal images of the cities emphasise the resilience, character and humour

of the working class cultures of both cities. At times this is romanticised (by both working class and middle class commentators), but there is little doubt that a history of working class struggle has been an important factor in shaping the contemporary character of each city. (4)

Of course it is impossible to talk of a city, any city, as having only one identity. The experience of living in a city can differ depending on a range of factors, among them your income, housing and employment status. In turn your class, gender, religion, sexuality and ethnicity and the attitudes that may exist towards any of these aspects of identity contribute to either a positive or negative perception of a city.

Yet while cities exist through tangible institutions they also exist in part in the imagined and the imaged. The novelist Alastair Gray writing in *Lanark* about the 'old' Glasgow has argued that for a great city to exist it has to have been imagined:

Glasgow is a magnificent city. Why do we hardly ever notice that? Because nobody imagines living there [] Think of Florence, Paris London, New York. Nobody visiting them is a stranger because he has already visited them in paintings, novels, history books and films. But if a city hasn't been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively [] Imaginatively Glasgow exists as a music hall song and a few bad novels. That's all we've given to the world outside. It's all we've given to ourselves. (Alastair Gray, *Lanark*, cited in Massie, 1990:9)

One part of the recent project to regenerate cities through the arts has been the rediscovery (in some instances the discovery) of 'lost' aspects of a city's past or hidden artistic tradition. (5) While Glasgow has certainly changed from the one described above by Gray, that most working class of cultural forms, football, remains an important part of the city's unique self-image (no other city has a footballing rivalry quite like the one which exists between Celtic and Rangers, though whether this is in fact something to be proud of is another matter). However it is *one* cultural arena that sets the city apart. In Liverpool the success of the football teams is often cited as the *only* aspect of cultural life in which the city can be proud.

While Glasgow enjoys the uniqueness that the 'Old Firm' rivalry bestows on the the city, some (although perhaps not as many as one would expect) would rather that the more unpleasant overtones associated with that rivalry, namely sectarianism, could

be consigned to the past. In reality the two go hand in hand, giving Glasgow a much vaunted distinctiveness that re-invented cities today crave, while at the same time reminding publics of the history of division and ethnic and religious struggle that has shaped the contemporary cultural landscape of much of the west of Scotland.

While the city of Liverpool declined during the 1970s and 1980s, their premier football clubs Liverpool and Everton enjoyed unrivalled domestic and European success. However this success was tarnished by the Heysel Stadium disaster in 1985 where 39 Juventus supporters were crushed to death after a wall collapsed as they were chased by Liverpool supporters across the terraces at the European Cup Final. (6) More recent events such as the Hillsborough disaster of 1989, which resulted in the deaths of 96 Liverpool supporters (discussed in the next chapter) and the death of Jamie Bulger (both subject to extensive national media coverage), which resulted in two young boys being found guilty in 1993 of the murder of a Liverpool toddler, have all fuelled the image of Liverpool as a beleaguered city.

What exists in the city is a feeling of resentment towards what Liverpudlians regard as the way that their city has been left to crumble by a hostile southern government and is continually run down by biased London national media and Manchester based northern media. (7)

Like all modern cities both Liverpool and Glasgow are in a constant state of change. Elements of their past are clung to either officially, through promotional/business enterprise literature about the city, or unofficially through, for example, support for particular football clubs. The historical memory of a city is selective; some stories get forgotten, or may indeed never get told at all. What is of interest here is the extent to which football and its attendant culture sustain and develop elements of each city's identity in contemporary Britain.

In Liverpool it may act as a collective expression of resistance to the perceived indifference of the outside world, enjoying an exaggerated position of importance in

people's lives because of social and economic deprivation. While in Glasgow football gives sustenance to the continuation of older rivalries whose continued existence, either real or imaginary, is part of a collective experience that refuses to be swept away with the overhaul of the city's image.

Section 2:

Tradition and history among the fans

There is a marked sense of tradition and history attached to Scottish football that is rarely apparent south of the border [] And nowhere is this more so than at Celtic Park. (Kelly, 1992: 41)

[] and if you know you're history,
It's enough to make your heart go oh, oh,
The Celtic Song

[] there's plenty of history and tradition about today.

BBC commentator, John Motson, Sheffield United v Manchester Utd, 14/3/93

Much of the recent debate regarding the future of football in Britain (and Europe) has centred around the perceived tension between the 'traditionalists' and the 'modernisers'. The first group are usually portrayed as supporters who invest the club with a symbolic significance, with the latter encompassing the business and commercial community who view football as part of a wider media/leisure economy in which supporters are considered consumers. (8)

In Britain this process of commercialisation has been driven in part by the requirement of football clubs to implement the recommendations of the Lord Justice Taylor Report (1990) into the Hillsborough disaster, of which one outcome has been the move toward all-seater stadia. Ian Bell views the recent (March 1994) change of power at Celtic F.C. as symptomatic of a wider cultural and economic shift in the symbolic significance of football, while also articulating that sense of loss which pervades many discussions of the past:

The uneasy transition from the tired, corrupt traditions of football - a supine working class in thrall to mercantile families - has not been easy. At Celtic, as at Spurs or Everton, tribalism has come face to face with business suits. But

something has gone in the process. [] The club's new managers will bring it into the multi-media age, where sporting concerns are the vehicle for larger ambitions, for TV and sponsorship and debentures and executive boxes, where 'modernisation' is its own justification. If Celtic is lucky, money will be made and fans will sit when they worship.

(Time Blown on a Faded Myth, *The Observer*, 6 March 1994)

While these debates are not of direct concern here, discussions of the role of tradition in the identities of contemporary supporters are informed in part by this wider process; that is, the perceived threat to traditions held dear by the supporters from the process of modernisation. These concerns include what is felt to be the marginalisation of the sports traditional backbone of support, the working class fan, who, it is feared, is being priced out of the game. Attempts to attract a more affluent spectatorship are being driven by a more commercially orientated football business, which in turn is being shaped by television and sponsorship interests.

In his examination of football culture in over twenty different countries, Simon Kuper noted that in his experience it was only in British fan culture that history and tradition were deemed to be so important:

British fans are historians. When two British sides play each other, their histories play each other too. This is especially true in Glasgow. (Kuper, 1994: 216)

He argues that while this fixation with tradition is mirrored in British political culture, with continual debates about the dangers to British life of losing specific traditions (usually imposed by Europe), in Glasgow this concern is driven by specific ethnic and religious concerns unique to that city.

In both Glasgow and Liverpool the role of the clubs and their positioning within ethnic and city identities is different and is reflected by the supporters' concerns with their club and what they understand to be that club's tradition.

The Celtic tradition(s)

(football fans) do not simply select a 'product' depending on what the competitive market has to offer [] choices are constrained by and dependent on a number of more traditional considerations. (Curran and Redmond, 1991: 28)

In the questionnaire work carried out among Celtic supporters based in Scotland and Northern Ireland (Boyle, 1991), supporters were asked: How strongly do you identify with each of the following elements of Celtic F.C? They were then given a list including such things as the club stadium, tradition, players and asked if they identified with each 'very strongly', 'quite strongly', or 'not at all strongly'. The item on the list which polled heaviest in the category of 'very strongly' was that of Club History/Tradition (85% Scottish based supporters, 92% Northern Ireland based supporters). The least identification was reserved for the then Board (71% Scotland, 84% N. Ireland). It was clear then that the history/tradition associated with the club in the eyes of the supporters was an important factor in generating a sense of loyalty to the club among fans. (9)

What then constitute elements of this tradition? Drawing from the interviews with supporters, what is of interest here is how the supporters talked about and understood some of the important elements in the Celtic tradition. What becomes clear is that there are a number of differing interpretations of what that tradition is and what it represents. A central element is the importance of Celtic playing 'good football'; that is attacking, skilful, flowing football, which they contrast with the traditional 'physical (unskilful)' playing style of Rangers. Interestingly, many fans viewed this difference in playing style between the two clubs as being linked to the origins and supporters of the clubs:

Group 2, Stephen: Celtic play with a spirit and passion, it's celtic or Irish. It's about playing with style, putting on a show. Most Rangers teams are very fit, a bit dour and lack flair, they reflect a more Protestant establishment attitude. Celtic were always the cocky underdog.

What quickly emerges is the extent to which differing traditions are defined against some 'other'. In the case of Celtic supporters this 'other' is always represented by Rangers F.C. and their supporters.

For the majority the initial act of following Celtic was something that was part of a wider socialising process passed on through family influence. The younger supporters (under 25) seemed acutely aware of the role that family and schooling played in their decision to follow the club.

Group 3, Brian, 18: Very few people choose a team that's different from their family [] you are obviously dominated, especially in the Catholic schools.

Group 3, Anthony, 19: I think in particular with Celtic and Rangers it would be that way [] I think in Liverpool you might get a father following Liverpool and a son following Everton, in Glasgow it's more polarised.

This in fact proved to be the case among supporters in Liverpool, where, although you did find 'Liverpool' or 'Everton families', it was also common to find rival supporters in the same family. The role of schooling in identity formation and its interplay with religion is discussed in more detail in the following chapter. However, at this point it should be noted that the school environment is an important arena in which ideas about the clubs and their traditions gain currency, particularly among groups of young boys.

When asked to discuss what they thought constituted part of the Celtic tradition elements included: the attacking style of play, the never-say-die attitude of the team which fought to the very last minute of the match, and great emphasis was placed on the historical origins of the club and its links with Ireland. The use of Rangers F.C. as an oppositional force, against which 'our' tradition could be sketched was also important.

Group 4, Paul: Well politically I think the Celtic tradition has always been a working class tradition. Playing the underdog thing [] I don't know about the football but I'm identifying with the crowd much more. Celtic have always had sort of working class traditions with its supporters, so have Rangers, although not so much. Rangers have always had a rich element, Rangers have always had rich people support them.

This identifies another important aspect of tradition raised among Celtic fans and this centres around the working class nature of their support (see Boyle 1991), which many link to the low social status of many Catholics in Scotland.

However fans were also aware of how tradition could be mobilised for a negative purpose, as well as being something that was important because it gave the Celtic supporter that 'sense of difference'.

Group 3, Brian: The Board misuse that tradition, they use it to try and cover our eyes by saying we shouldn't do this because we don't want to

break with tradition.

Another example was the then Board's failure to invest in improving the 'traditional' (i.e. poor) facilities for supporters at Celtic Park because, they argued, these were the conditions that the fans preferred.

There were also significant, if understandable, differences between the discourses of tradition that existed among the Scottish and Irish-based supporters. For example, the latter placed a heightened significance on the importance of particular symbols as part of the Celtic tradition.

The importance of the Celtic jersey with its green and white hoops and the flying of the Irish tricolour flag above Celtic Park were recurring elements when tradition was discussed among Irish based supporters. The role that symbols play in the building and reinforcing of identity has of course a heightened cultural and political significance within Northern Ireland. The importance of these concrete symbols of the Celtic tradition was also given as one of the reasons in explaining why the popularity of following Celtic among young Catholics in Belfast seems to be increasing. (10)

Group 1, Peter: You come out of Celtic Park and there is thousands and thousands of people in green and white. There are tricolours everywhere which you never see here, kids can't get over that, that they can get that over in Scotland, but you can't get it here.

Group 1, Tom: I think it's the jersey. Celtic are unique in the green and white hoops.

There is little doubt that the ritual and symbolic displays (singing, flag waving, etc.) associated with attending football matches involving a big club such as Celtic (which can enjoy some of the largest crowds in Britain) and being part of a crowd which expresses (openly and legally) an unproblematic Irish identity is particularly appealing to a segment of the population of Northern Ireland.

This is also the case for many Rangers supporters who travel over from Northern Ireland to Scotland for matches. As Simon Kuper found out in his discussion with an Ulster Unionist, it also has other benefits for supporters:

'This', he said, indicating a scar around his eye, 'is, as a matter of fact, a souvenir

of Glasgow. But in Glasgow, 99% of the time you can be as bigoted as you want and the worst you'll get is punched. All that stuff you've bottled up for months in Ulster, you can let go there for 90 minutes. Things get very intense over there, but you won't get shot.' (Kuper, 1994: 212)

Among Celtic supporters, there was also a strong collective sense of the significance of the Catholic religion to the club, both in terms of its supporters' attitudes and also in how it has shaped the way that the club has conducted itself in the past.

Group 1, John: It's the Catholic ethos, where you've got the parish priest asking you every week for money, the Board are asking for money, and you never see it. It's this Catholic thing of having nothing and playing for nothing, playing for the jersey, its definitely a Catholic thing.

To these supporters in particular the Irish connection with the club and the maintenance of this linkage are of central importance. They invest a great deal both financially and emotionally in following the club, and it is an important part of their cultural life, another element which helps sustain a sense of a particular identity in Northern Ireland.

Interestingly, among Scottish-based supporters this perceived Catholic identity was often talked about as being Irish, and bound up with the importance of the history and origins of the club in shaping its identity.

Group 4, Jim: Celtic were formed for the Irish community, as a charity, because they were being treated so badly, it gave them something to be proud in.

This idea of Celtic as the club set up to provide food and shelter for the Catholic-Irish poor of the East End of Glasgow is unproblematically reproduced by historians as part of the Celtic 'tradition'; it has become an unquestioned component in the mythologised history of the club that each generation of supporter takes on board when they support the club. (11) It is part of the 'narrativization of culture' that Thompson (1990: 61) talks of and part of a process that Edward Said comments on when he notes:

Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty that the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps. (Said, 1994: 1)

Football, while subject to changes brought about by contemporary society, also

represents for many supporters a tangible link with the past. In the act of supporting they become part of that club, as well as a member of a group of supporters with whom they share a collective sense of club history and tradition.

Tradition as commodity

Moorhouse has suggested that Celtic and its supporters:

cling to a conventional view of what football 'is about' in Scotland, a posture which seems to block any initiative and to stultify any sensible response to the big changes which European developments seem likely to forge.

(Moorhouse, 1991: 209)

It is important to emphasize the way that media discourses surrounding football tend to present a more coherent view of the club than may actually exist among supporters who are in a constant process of negotiation with media texts. In the drive towards modernisation, for example, Rangers have cleverly linked this shift with a 'traditional' folk culture that allows them to connect one version of tradition with commercial acumen. As journalist and writer Kevin McCarra suggests:

In a way as well as going forwards they have also gone backwards. They have revived the Bill Struth era of the 1940/50s when they were the dominant force in Scotland and expected to win. I think they have struck a chord, almost a folk memory with Rangers' supporters, by creating this imposing edifice at Ibrox, and these (commercial) developments link well with Rangers' past.

(Interview with author, 28/1/92)

This linkage between past and present is not lost on Celtic supporters, many of whom are aware of the potential clash between the need to attract capital to the club and its traditional links with Ireland. The discussions are worth quoting at length because they emphasise the importance of the history of the club to the identities of the supporters:

Group 5, Chris: Multi-national companies are not going to put money into Celtic when there are people on the terraces singing Oh Ah up the Ra (IRA), because they can't get involved in that political stuff.

As in many discussions among the supporters, comparisons were drawn with Rangers:

Group 4, Pat: Rangers have been a very clever football club in the marketing of its image, simply because they have managed to market themselves as a traditional Scottish club [] They've divorced sectarianism from the club now that they've turned around and signed a Catholic. They've divorced sectarianism from the club in the eyes of

the media, but the fans haven't changed a bit, and the fans aren't getting hassled for singing the Sash.

Later when the point was made that some 'traditional' songs might scare off potential sponsors from the club, this was countered with:

Group 4, John: People are proud of their team, of their religion, you're talking about the fans not the club, you're talking about how the business is affected by what the fans sing. Aye, 'We're up to our knees in Fenian blood' what's all that about then, eh? I can't see Scottish and Newcastle pointing the finger at the Rangers fans and saying, come on guys pack in singing the Sash, that happened four centuries ago, what are you still singing it for.

Many supporters felt that the traditional elements of Celtic F. C. (however you wished to define them), could be better exploited for commercial gain, and saw little tension between commercial development and adherence to the symbolic aspects of the club. They felt the club should be marketed on its sense of difference, its uniqueness, rather than as another bland football club (examples cited by supporters included Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal). They emphasised the need to harness Celtic's traditions, not to reject them for apparent short term financial gain.

In my Liverpool home: football, tradition and identity

Identities are often bound up with a sense of place. This can take the form of a physical entity or an imagined space that evokes a feeling of belonging. In the footballing culture of both cities, the importance of the football stadium to supporters is crucial in embodying their sense of tradition and history. (12) Part of the appeal of football supporting is its sense of ritual and shared identity among supporters, many of whom will regularly return to the same part of the ground for every home match.

The symbolic importance of Celtic Park to their supporters has been noted above. In this section, which examines the role that tradition plays in the formation of identities among supporters based in Liverpool, the role of the football stadium as a cultural focal point for these fans will be foregrounded.

The transformation of the Kop terracing of Liverpool F.C.'s Anfield stadium by

supporters into a shrine after the Hillsborough disaster of 1989 is testimony to the importance of territory and place in working class culture in the city. The fact that in the first week over half a million people had filed past the terracing, which was bedecked with scarfs and floral tributes highlighted both the centrality of football in the city and the sense of collective grief felt in the aftermath of the tragedy (points which are expanded on in more detail in the following chapter).

The decision to install seats on the Kop terracing at Anfield in the light of the Justice Taylor Report (1990) marks for many the end of an era at the club and has generated much debate about the role of the club in the city's culture. It is aspects of these issues which are of interest here, touching as they do on the role of tradition and versions of history in contributing to the sense of a contemporary identity in the city among those who live there.

Among the supporters of both Liverpool and Everton the centrality of football to the popular culture of the city is undisputed. Even among non-football fans there is an acute awareness of how the city's image (both internal and external) is bound up with football culture.

There is also a realisation among many supporters, in particular those over the age of twenty-five, that part of the importance of football is in fact linked to the decline of the city in terms of its economic and political importance. A selection of comments across the groups provides a sense of this perception.

Group 3, Gill: I think that it has a lot to do with the city having a hard time financially and then perceiving itself as having an even harder time, a sort of chip on the shoulder, and then latching onto the success of the football which elevates the city.

Group 3, Jim: The clubs were most successful at a time, the mid 1980s, when the city was suffering its biggest recession. Football gave you something to cheer about, there was very little to be proud of in the city.

Group 2, Nancy: There was a time it was trendy to be from Liverpool, the 1960s, and then it wasn't. At least we can shout about the football.

Group 2, Pete: It (football) was a substitute identity, the city's decline has been huge.

Group 2, Jane: The football has grown as the city has lost its identity, when I was growing up it was a very important port. This has declined and in seeking an identity we've grasped onto football because we haven't got a sea port any more.

Group 4, Mike: In terms of its position within England it's well down the economic table, but in football terms it has mattered over the last twenty years and been at the very top in England and in Europe. It's at that level that people in this city can stand proud, not for economic reasons.

The importance of football to the city's sense of self worth during the last twenty-five years appears to have resulted in women occupying a more prominent position in the football culture of the city than is the case in many other places associated with such a male dominated sport.

Group 3, Eileen: I started to go about 15 years ago and you can see how more women have got involved. I think women have changed rather than football.

Group 1, Ann: I still think that there are far more women in this city who go to matches than elsewhere, it could be about 20% for both Everton and Liverpool.

In contrast to the Celtic supporters, whose sense of history stretches back to the origins of the club over one hundred years ago as a charity to help the Catholic-Irish poor of the city of Glasgow, in Liverpool historical issues tend to be based around events of the last thirty years.

This is partly explained by the huge success that both Liverpool clubs have enjoyed over this period, the sectarian-free origins of these clubs, and the extent to which football has become central to the collective identity of the city in the light of its decline in other spheres. In other words, in such a proud working class city, the success of the clubs on the football pitch over the last thirty years or so has carried with it a symbolic significance that has increased in importance as the city has suffered economic and

political marginalisation.

A key factor in the differing importance of tradition between the two cities is the extent to which the rivalry between the main clubs in each city differs. In Liverpool, the collective sense of a city identity informs the friendly local rivalry between the clubs. In Glasgow, however, there are perceptions of clear difference between two traditions, one which is viewed as Catholic-Irish, and the other perceived as being Protestant-Scottish.

Mersey culture

Group 3, John: Manchester is more a Lancashire city, I suppose we're really in Lancashire as well, but really this is a Mersey culture.

As noted above the sense of football being central to a Mersey culture is important. Much of this sense of a distinct Mersey culture can be traced back to the 1960s when for a short period the city was the cultural focal point of the new media-saturated popular culture. Stan Kelly (writing in Stephen Kelly's book which pays tribute to the Kop) notes these influences on the 25,000 who stood on that terrace at Liverpool's Anfield stadium, which during this period became associated with styles of organised football singing/chanting which would be copied throughout the football world. (13)

As well as the long tradition of Merseyside comedians, from Billy Matchett via Tommy Handly, Ted Ray, along to Ken Dodd and Jimmy Tarbuck [] other patterns can be seen in the Kop tapestry. The post-war folk-song revival in Britain was nowhere more lively than on Merseyside with its natural treasury of shanties, fo'c'sle songs, music-hall ditties and, of course, a direct pipeline to the Irish tradition. While the Beatles, Cilla Black, The Scaffold and Frankie Vaughan were each in their own way putting Liverpool on the international pop scene, folk artists such as the Spinners, Jackie and Bridie, Glyn Hughes and Tony Murphy, poets such as Adrian Henri and Roger McGough were all spreading the traditional Scouse idiom. (Kelly, 1993: 63)

What this emphasises is the close interplay between popular music and football that became firmly established on Merseyside during the 1960s, the legacy of which is still visible today in the various youth subcultures that flourish in and around Liverpool, with many being specific to the city and connected with football. (14)

Football and music offered both an identity to the city and an avenue of social mobility for a lucky few. Perhaps the strongest impact on the city's football culture of this period is in the adoption by Liverpool F.C. of the 1963 version of the song *You'll Never Walk Alone*. (The title is engraved on the Shankly gates at Anfield, the symbolic linking of two aspects of Liverpool tradition which represent the importance of the man who built the modern club and the anthem associated with the city).

The identification of the song, not just with the followers of the club, but with the city as a whole, was part of a process by which a tradition can cut across various divisions and provide a shared collective sense of identity, in this instance, among those who identified with the city. The irreverent wit and songs of Liverpool F.C.'s supporters who stood at the famous Kop end at Anfield, the association of the club with 'their' anthem *You'll Never Walk Alone* (which has become even more deeply embedded in the city's collective sense of identity since the 1989 Hillsborough disaster which resulted in the death of 96 Liverpool supporters), are examples of the construction of a wider collective sense of identity. This process was accelerated in Liverpool by economic decline and a collective sense of injustice among people who felt they have been neglected by government and unfairly treated in national media coverage.

Raymond Williams (1976: 269) argued that the process of establishing a tradition could take as little as two generations. The Liverpool anthem, dating from the 1960s, yet evoking a longer ahistorical sense of club identity, can be seen as such a tradition. Certainly among younger supporters its relatively recent origins are unimportant:

Group 4, Steve: It feels that it has always been part of the club.

Group 4, Gerry: You don't really think about it, it's just part of our identity.

In this process of identification, younger supporters enter into a relationship with the club (and other supporters) which allows them to feel part of an experience which, while connecting them with previous teams and supporters, also makes them an

important part of the current identity of the club.

A sense of belonging

Many supporters view the move towards all-seater stadia as yet another attack on the traditions of the football fan. However, in the light of the Heysel Stadium disaster in 1985 and the Hillsborough tragedy many fans feel that this change was inevitable. This concern again highlights the importance of place and the role of the stadium as a collective focal point for supporters and, in some instances, the wider community.

In Liverpool, as much of the city's population was relocated to the new towns around the city, the clubs became important symbolic links with older communities.

John Williams comments that:

the Kop is desperately important to many people who no longer live in the centre of the city. As the city has changed, new towns such as Kirby and Netherly have sprung up, and there are now more exiled Scousers working and living away from home than ever. For them, the Kop is the place where they come to re-establish themselves, to regather and to celebrate the fact that they come from Liverpool. It's very important to them. It's a kind of coming home, back to their grassroots. (John Williams cited in Kelly, 1993: 31)

This theme was also evident among the supporters:

Group 2, Pat: We moved to Cheshire, and going to the games (Everton) was my dad's way of hanging on to being a scouser.

Group 3, Brian: The sense of going home was important when you go to Liverpool matches, and I haven't lived in the city for years, but that feeling never changes.

Group 1, Mike: We moved away from Birkenhead when I was 6, but at school I was a Liverpool supporter, no one else was. But then I've always had this thing about going back, and when I could leave home and live in Liverpool I did.

What is clear is that the clubs act as symbolic links between the past and the present to many in each city. In addition, the physical act of actually attending matches and speaking to other supporters (many of whom you only see at games) provide an important social dimension and network to many fans who increasingly find the stability and security of regular employment becoming less and less prevalent. This is

particularly true in the city of Liverpool, where the religious and ethnic connotations of the clubs are less important than they are in Glasgow.

History today?

Versions of tradition and history associated with football clubs and their cities provide a tangible link between the past and present for many supporters. Football teams are always changing (players, managers and the like all come and go), yet the club exists in a space that is in part untouched by these changes (it is often remarked at Liverpool and Celtic that no one player is bigger than the club). To supporters the club offers a projection of a community which signifies, among other things, stability and continuity.

In the recent battle to secure control of Celtic F.C. (March 1994), much of the debate centred on which competing group was best equipped to both move the club forward financially and retain its traditions (which, as noted above, of course mean different things to different people). The success of millionaire and life-long supporter Fergus McCann in securing the majority of the shares, and investing up to £12 million of his own money in the club, seems to suggest that these twin aims may be achieved.

(15)

In the case of Celtic this community is identified as the Glasgow Catholic population of Irish origin. It has a perceived tradition of representing the underdog in society and is not exclusively supported by Catholics. As *Scotland On Sunday* has noted:

Celtic have always been a hip club to support. A tradition of exciting football has won the team admirers such as Sean Connery, Rod Stewart, Mickey Rourke, Billy Connolly. (Memories of a green and happy band, *Scotland On Sunday*, 6 March 1994)

If in Glasgow the centrality of the importance of religious and ethnic identities has been evident in the continuing rivalry that surrounds the position of Celtic and Rangers in the culture of the west of Scotland, by contrast in Liverpool it appears that football occupies a less divisive position in the cultural life of that city; instead it provides a specific city identity which is placed in opposition to other regional and English national identities

(see chapter 6).

In both cities there is another element of symbolic significance in the attachment and devotion of the supporters to their clubs. The crisis in British football in one respect personifies a deeper concern about the future relationship of the individual to the wider collective in society.

Among many supporters there exists a sense that yet another area of popular culture is being subjected to commercial pressures and interests which misunderstand the symbolic importance which football carries for many people. This is particularly true for those groups to whom football is interwoven with a range of other identities and experiences, and is not viewed as some optional extra which can be purchased as another part of the leisure economy. Before moving on to examine in particular the role of religious labelling in the social identity of the cities, it is worth emphasising this point.

Stan Hey, talking about the seating of the Kop at Liverpool F.C., encompasses this clash of tradition and change, and how this process is bound up with a sense of a specific place, identity and moment in history coming to an end. While aware of the danger of lapsing into an uncritical account of contemporary society fuelled by nostalgia, it is worth quoting at length, touching as it does on a number of issues keenly felt among the supporters interviewed:

As the factories die and their docks become shopping malls or art galleries, and the sea-faring, music-making past becomes part of the heritage industry, Liverpudlians, like most of the country, are bemused and wounded by the feeling of having lost a sense of community. The paradox of progress losing us more than we gain, of advancement for some, but not for all, may not be restricted to the streets if the Kop does indeed go. 'People have had some of the biggest moments of their lives there,' says Rogan Taylor. 'Moments they'll put in the big box, the one you take down to your death. The Kop has been the site of all this.' (Hey, 1993)

The next chapter builds on some of the issues of tradition and history examined here, by focusing on the role that religious labelling plays in the collective identities of supporters in both cities.

Notes

- (1) The death in February 1993 of the England 1966 World Cup winning captain Bobby Moore prompted an outflowing of media speculation about not simply his reputation within world football and the nature of the decline of English football over the last 25 years, but also of the causes associated with the perceived falling standards of morality and decency in English society. As *The Guardian* editorial stated 'Detectable within [the tributes to Bobby] is another kind of mourning: for a world, as it seems looking back, when things used to sometimes go right' (cited in Bill Brewster, 'England's Dreaming', *WSC*, No. 74, April 1993).
- (2) With regard to the development and marketing of Glasgow as a European Cultural Capital in 1990 see Spring (1990) and the review of this book by Schlesinger (1991). Issues relating to the image of Liverpool during the 1980s are discussed in Jack (1987) and the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research report (1987), while Mellor (1991) discusses recent attempts to regenerate the city through the 'heritage' industry.

For a more general overview of the debates relating to the cultural and economic significance of the growth of the heritage industries in Britain see Corner and Harvey (eds.) (1991).
- (3) For an account of black experience in Liverpool and its relationship with the city's most popular sport football see Hill (1989). For a history of racism in the city see Fryer (1984).
- (4) See Ian Jack's (1987) portrait of the cities of Liverpool and Turin and the contrasting experience of the working class in these cities.
- (5) For example, in Glasgow the celebration of the work of the Edwardian architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh has been viewed as part of a re-examination of Glasgow's past and attempts to place it within a broader European cultural and artistic frame of reference.
- (6) As a result all English club sides were banned from European football competition for five years, with Liverpool being subject to an additional twelve months exclusion.
- (7) The rivalry between the cities is intense. A number of those interviewed in Liverpool commented on how they hoped that Manchester would not succeed in their bid to attract the year 2000 Olympic Games. They predicted that if it did, then the international media would arrive in Manchester and be sent up the motorway to Liverpool to report on all the 'bad' news stories that existed in that city.

A local Liverpool police officer described the relationship between Liverpool and Manchester Utd supporters, 'There is a hatred of Manchester Utd. You sense

it in the ground [] Fellows of 50 years of age who sit there every week shouting and cheering are suddenly effing and blinding when Utd play there *because* its Manchester. The Manchester-based press and the publicity and the fact that Merseyside has won everything. They all contribute' (SNCCFR, 1987: 34).

- (8) For a fuller account of this process in a Scottish context see Boyle (1994), and within a European context see the section 'Tradition and Modernity in European Football' in Giulianotti, R. and Williams, J. (eds.) (1994). Also see the analysis of the new commercial age of football in Flynn, A. (1995) *Out of Time?*, Mandarin, London.
- (9) The dislike of the Board among supporters of the club helped to change the ownership of the club in March 1994.
- (10) See Bell (1990) for an account of the role of symbols in youth culture in Northern Ireland.
- (11) This element of the club has been recently (1995) revived by the new management at the club. They have set up a Celtic Charity Fund to which fans can make contributions. In particular it targets donations at deprived children (of all religions) living in the east end of the city.
- (12) In particular see Bale (1991, 1994) for a discussion of the central role that the football stadium plays in community culture.
- (13) BBC Television's *Match of the Day* which began in the early 1960s helped to publicise and promote the fame of the Kop terracing during this period.
- (14) For a more detailed account see, Steve Redhead (1991).
- (15) There followed in 1994/1995 a share issue option to the club's supporters. Despite dire warnings of potential failure from the media, the share option was both oversubscribed and the most successful ever in British football, with over 10,000 new shareholders raising up to £14 million for the club. The majority of these were fans who bought units at the cost of £640. This was organised through a loan scheme with the Co-Operative Bank which cost supporters about £31 a month, thus allowing the less well-off fan to buy into the club. In May 1995 Celtic won the Scottish Cup, their first major trophy in six years.

Chapter 5: Religion, religious labelling and education

‘Indeed, to state that sport is a modern, secular form of religion is something of a cliché.’
John Bale, (1994) *Landscapes of Modern Sport*, page 134.

‘Most people in Glasgow allow their religion to decide their choice of football team. I have always been proud of the fact that I chose both of them myself.’
Don Watson, (1994) *Dancing in the Streets: tales from the World Cup city*,
page 43.

Introduction

This chapter seeks to investigate the importance of religious affiliation in the process of boundary-marking within and among groups in the west of Scotland and the north west of England. What is of particular interest is the extent to which religious identity and support for particular football teams both reinforce and perpetuate a sense of difference between various social groups in society.

Previous chapters have emphasised the role of religion in shaping the experience of the Irish in Britain (in particular the Catholic-Irish) during the 19th century. Attention in this chapter is focused on the contemporary experiences of supporters in the two cities, examining the extent to which religion and religious labelling are still important markers of identity in urban Britain.

Allied with this is an interest in the role that educational institutions play in helping to sustain and encourage a particular religious identity which may become focused through support for a specific football team.

This chapter is not primarily concerned with debates surrounding religion and religious belief per se, but with the use of religious labels to mark out and distinguish social groups as ‘different’. This labelling may be an external and/or internal process, but what is argued is that football support provides an important public arena through which this boundary-marking can take place, and allows individual identities to be given a collective symbolic expression.

Religion and society

Despite claims that as societies develop politically and economically, the importance of religious belief would diminish, in certain circumstances religious affiliation remains strong, even in urban industrialised societies. Brown argues that one of the situations in which religion remains of central importance is when it is linked with a specific ethnic identity that is supposedly under threat. This refers to:

ethnic groups within countries or regions of countries, where ethnic identity against internal or external political domination has been held in check by popular identification with a strong religiosity. (Brown, 1993: 39)

While Brown cites examples such as the centrality of Catholicism in Ireland (under British rule) and Poland between 1945-89 under Soviet domination, this form of ethnic defence also helps to explain the importance of religion to the Catholic-Irish community in a predominantly Protestant Scotland. The role of religious identity is also central in the process of national and cultural identity formation for people of Catholic-Irish descent living in Scotland and is examined in particular detail in the following chapter. As Raphael Samuel notes in his study of Irish/Catholic experience in 19th century Britain:

The Irish stood in a hereditary relationship to their religion. Faith and nationality, hallowed by persecution, reciprocated one another's claims, and in the harsh conditions of his (sic) exile, stigmatised alike by religion and by race, the partnership was persistently renewed. (Samuel, 1989: 95)

As is argued throughout this work identities are not 'fixed' or 'given' but continually being acted upon (Schlesinger, 1991a). This actionist perspective is important in trying to unpack the relationship that exists between religion, collective identity and the role of cultural institutions such as football clubs in the process of identity formation.

The first section attempts to open up some of the debates surrounding the role of religious labelling in both the construction of internal and external group identities and the centrality of this process in intergroup conflicts. For the purposes of this chapter, the interest is in examining the position of sectarianism within contemporary popular culture and in particular its association with sport in general and football in particular.

The second section in this chapter examines the role of religion in the identities of the

supporters of the Glasgow clubs Celtic and Rangers. It builds on the arguments made in the previous chapter about the historical origins of the intergroup conflict between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Scotland.

The third section turns attention to Liverpool and the quite different role that religiosity plays in the identity of the supporters of football in that city. Here religion no longer acts as a focal point of division in the community, but, as the outpouring of collective grief in the aftermath of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster demonstrated, particular forms of quasi-religious practices inform the character of the city in a way that is quite specific to Liverpool.

Section 1: Sectarianism and popular culture

One of the seemingly common features shared by the two cities being studied is the importance, at various historical moments, of sectarianism in shaping their cultural and social environments.

John Brewer (1992) has noted the parallels and differences between sectarianism and racism. He argues that unlike racism, sectarianism remains a relatively undertheorised area of study, partly because of the supposedly declining importance of religion in western societies.

Instances where religion remains a potent social marker are usually marginalised by being seen as a third world problem (India) or as an aberration of modernity (the Lebanon, Northern Ireland). (Brewer, 1992: 353)

He goes on to argue that sectarianism, like racism, operates at three interrelated levels: in the domain of ideas, in individual behaviour and when its values becomes embedded in the social structure of any society. There is obviously a linkage between these levels. For example, in a country where there are discriminatory laws this is liable to both reinforce and legitimise individual personal prejudices.

It could be suggested that in the contemporary case of the west of Scotland we are primarily interested in the first two of these areas for the purpose of this study. However, this is not to ignore the potential existence of the latter. The extent to which job discrimination *against Catholics still exists is hard to substantiate*. However there is no doubt that among many in the Catholic community there is a perception that discrimination is still around, although much of the evidence of this exists at the level of anecdote. From outwith this

community, Colin Glass, a prominent Protestant insurance agent working in Glasgow, was recently quoted as saying:

There is discrimination (against Catholics) in jobs, by a lot of businesses in Western Scotland. [] take a look at the number of Masonic handshakes at places like the Chamber of Commerce. The police too. I remember once, at a police retirement do, the Chief Inspector talking about Catholics. He said, 'I promoted two of them, and you know, one of them turned out not bad'. [] But it works on both sides: the Labour council of Glasgow is totally dominated by Catholics. (Kuper, 1994: 210)

The symbolic and material support for either Rangers and Celtic offers the possibility of sectarianism operating at all three levels described by Brewer above (the domain of ideas, behaviour, and a set of values which have become naturalised in social structures).

Brewer goes on to give his working definition of sectarianism as :

the determination of actions, attitudes and practices by beliefs about religious difference, which results in their being invoked as the boundary marker to represent social stratification and conflict. (Brewer, 1992: 358/9)

Sectarianism then can be viewed as a system of beliefs through which a social group differentiates itself from a perceived other, primarily through religious difference. In their study of the role of sport in a divided Ireland, Sugden and Bairner argue that:

sectarianism can be best understood in two overlapping ways: first as symbolic labelling process through which community divisions are defined and maintained, and second, as an ideological justification for discrimination, community conflict and political violence. (Sugden and Bairner, 1993: 15)

They argue persuasively that religious labelling becomes part of a wider semiotic system through which, in revealing one's sporting preferences, at the same moment one marks out a position for oneself on the complex terrain of political/cultural/religious affiliation in Northern Ireland. Being labelled Catholic or Protestant also identifies one with a range of political and cultural positions which are triggered by having a religious label attached to oneself or one's support for a particular sport or football club highlighted. For example, for someone from Northern Ireland to show support for the games of the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association), immediately identifies them as having nationalist and possibly republican sympathies. To play cricket in Northern Ireland would place one as a middle class Unionist, to support Linfield F.C., a working class loyalist and so on and so forth.

Bell (1990) develops this further by suggesting that religious labelling actually helps to

mask, rather than illuminate, the central political problem lying at the heart of the Northern Ireland situation. He notes how the religious Catholic/Protestant divide is represented as being *the* problem in Northern Ireland:

Sectarianism in turn is treated as an aberrant mentality based on outmoded religious prejudices. Yet the reality in Northern Ireland is that the civil conflict is *not* in essence a religious one. [] However, in Northern Ireland religious identifications serve fundamentally as ethnic markers for communities with conflicting *political* aspirations. These aspirations are the product of a specific colonial situation. (Bell, 1990: 64)

It is important to note that the extent to which religious identification then becomes a marker of a political identity is of course historically specific. In the west of Scotland, while differing political aspirations may not differentiate the communities, there is enough evidence to suggest that the Catholic population tend to collectively support the Labour Party in disproportionately higher numbers than the Protestant community (Lynch, 1994: Bradley, 1994). In addition, the centrality of religious labelling in collective identity formation, and its attendant connection with support for either Celtic and Rangers, is still very much a part of everyday experience for many people. To know which team (Celtic or Rangers) a person supports becomes 'an oblique mechanism for determining a person's religious persuasion' (Sugden and Bairner, 1993: 16).

Brewer (1992: 360) suggests that in Northern Ireland your religious persuasion is also triggered by, among other things, the name of the school you have attended, your place of residence, and even your name. (1) In the west of Scotland, the state-funded Catholic schooling system (discussed below), determining where someone went to school, can suggest both their religion (Catholic/Protestant) and which team (Celtic/Rangers) they support.

Bradley (1994: 432) has argued that: 'Many Catholics in Scotland have an identity in relation to both Ireland and Scotland which varies in intensity and emphasis depending on circumstance and environment.' He suggests that the close interplay between a religious identity (Catholic) and a cultural identity (Irish) mark out this group as being a distinct ethnic community in Scotland. It could be argued that this ethnicity finds one arena of public expression in its support of Celtic F.C. In this sense the linkage between football support, religion and identity differs from the situation in Liverpool. As we have noted in chapter 3, there is no clear religious or ethnic identity attached to any specific club in that city despite the

existence of a strong city-wide identity heavily influenced by 19th century Irish immigration.

Support for a football club, with its emphasis on collective symbolic displays of loyalty and ritual, lends itself to being a very public marker of identity among groups. Bale (1991) has argued that many football supporters view their football stadium as a 'sacred space', which carries with it quasi-religious connotations of communal experience, a point which is developed in the Hillsborough section below.

That sectarianism has shaped the culture of Scottish society is not disputed by social commentators (although there is a marked dearth of material on the subject). However there is disagreement as to the extent of this influence, and its presence in contemporary Scottish society. Chapter 3 demonstrated how the sectarian culture that predominated in 19th century Liverpool and remained well into this century, had, in the last twenty years or so ceased to be a major force in the city. However in Scotland, and in a particular in the west of the country, the continued influence of sectarianism in contemporary society is disputed. It appears that if the issue of sectarianism is not spoken about, in some sense it is a phenomenon which no longer exerts any influence on patterns of social and cultural behaviour in sections of contemporary Scottish society.

However, some commentators do comment on the issue. The Irish writer Colm Toibin visited Scotland in 1993 while researching a book about the influence of Catholicism in contemporary Europe (Toibin, 1994). He arrived from Northern Ireland, where he was warned that Scotland was 'a deeply sectarian and divided society.' In his review of the book Ian Bell comments:

Toibin ferrets out facts that Scotland prefers to ignore. Name me, he asks of several people, A Scottish Catholic writer. When a 'distinguished poet' remarks that these are the wrong questions and Scotland isn't as it seems. Toibin replies that the country reminds him of Alabama in 1954, and wonders how the poet would reply if there were in 'another society where blacks represented 30 per cent of the population (as Catholics do in Scotland), no black writers.' (*The Herald*, 22 October 1994)

While Calum Brown, commenting on the close proximity of Northern Ireland to Scotland, states that in his opinion:

Sectarianism still does not have anything like the relevance it has in Ulster or in parts of Europe, but the links with the Irish troubles ensure that the issue remains on the

agenda of Scottish popular culture. (Brown, 1993: 37)

He notes that Scotland in the 1990s has 80,000 members of the avidly anti-Catholic Orange Order. It can also be noted that nowhere outside of Northern Ireland are Orange parades and marches more frequent and prominent than in Glasgow during the summer months.

Purdie (1991) also suggests that too little attention has been devoted to the influence of sectarianism in shaping the political culture of Scotland, and strongly argues that decades of deeply embedded suspicions do not disappear easily:

Sectarianism is a more powerful source than it appears on the surface; for generations it has been part of the culture of some of the most heavily industrialised and densely populated areas of Scotland. (Purdie, 1991: 78)

Certainly the issues regarding sectarianism raised by the Monklands by-election of 1994, which are discussed in the following chapter, appear to bear out this statement.

This is also a theme which comes through in the recent work of Alan Bairner (1994) which examines the interplay between Scottish football and Scottish national identity. Bairner is aware of the extent to which football can reinforce social divisions as well as acting as a focal point for collective identities. He views religious difference and sectarianism as still powerful social forces in modern Scotland, and argues that both find an expression through fans actively supporting particular football teams. He notes:

sectarianism continues to influence football support in Scotland. Supporters do not leave the small towns, far less the cities, to watch the Old Firm simply because they want to associate themselves with success, although this is a partial explanation. The choice of club is what really matters. That choice is directly related to the histories of Celtic and Rangers and to the persistence of religious division in Scotland to which those histories are part. (Bairner, 1994:18)

It appears that religious labelling or affiliations associated with these clubs play a key role in attracting a specific kind of support, while at the same time this process reinforces a distinctive identity between supporters and their club. While the specific relationship between football support and Scottish national identity is examined in more detail in the following chapter, it is important to note the role which religious identity can play in this wider collective identity. With this in mind, attention is now turned to the interplay between religion, education and collective identities in the west of Scotland (see AppendixII).

Religion and education in Scotland

There is a theory - and it is a fairly plausible one - that it is impossible to understand Scotland without understanding Scotland's religious history. (Rosie, 1992: 78)

Despite the fact that only 10% of the Scottish population attend Church regularly (this is still high compared with the figure of 2% in England and Wales) there is little doubt that religion plays an important part in shaping aspects of Scottish identity. While the centrality of religion in everyday Scottish life (as elsewhere) has declined, it has exerted an overarching historical importance in shaping Scottish political and social history. In this regard Calum Brown has noted that:

For a people whose sense of nationhood was removed early in the 18th century, religion remained one of the few facets of Scottish civil life in which a collective identity could survive. (Brown, 1987: 6)

Due to Scotland's relative political impotence within the wider UK political arena, this has resulted in Scottish institutions such as its educational system and the Protestant Church of Scotland being viewed as important markers of a Scottish identity which lacks both the symbolic and political expression of a Scottish parliament.

Today the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church have a membership of 770,217 and 774,550 respectively. (2) Interestingly, despite the perception that Scotland is a Protestant country, it is Catholicism that is the older religion in the country. However, as noted in chapter 3, it would take the massive influx of Catholic-Irish in the mid 19th century to resuscitate the Catholic Church in Scotland following the Reformation.

It is worth noting that an indigenous Catholic community existed in Scotland before the 19th century wave of Catholic-Irish immigration took place. Brown documents a degree of tension between the Scottish laity and incoming Irish priests during the 19th century. However he continues that:

the equation of Catholic with Irish grew as the 19th century progressed. But the Irish were not all Catholics, and the Catholics were not all Irish. (Brown, 1993: 36)

In recognition of this Walker (1991) has investigated the experience of the Protestant-Irish who came to Scotland during this period. However their experience was qualitatively different from that of the Catholic-Irish, with one of the primary defining characteristics of difference between

the two groups being their religion. The sense of rejection by the host community felt among the Catholic-Irish incomers, and the impact it had on shaping the experience of this group in Scotland, and the west of Scotland in particular, is often overlooked by contemporary commentators. Ian Spring (1990) has talked about the nostalgia that Glasgow Catholics have for their ancestral homeland, and claims:

Their homeland, however distant or reconstructed is part of a national mythology - the Irish club, Ceoltas piping competitions, the shamrock ceilidhs in the James Elliot Centre, Celtic Football Club, St. Patrick's day, etc. (Spring, 1990: 87)

He wonders why the Irish Protestants who also emigrated to Scotland around the same period do not maintain, or appear to exhibit this same affection for a 'mythical' homeland. One reason for this is the fact that with their religious and historical background, they were more readily accepted by the dominant community, while the Irish-Catholics were not, and in part responded to this rejection with the setting up of their own cultural support apparatus. In addition, for Irish Protestants, many of them descendants of the Scots settled in Ulster during the Plantation, being back in Scotland was for them a form of returning to their own 'mythical homeland'.

A key arena in the creating of this sense of identity among the minority Catholic community is the separate schooling system, funded and recognised by the State. The 1918 Education (Scotland) Act gave the Catholic Church control over the appointment of teachers at what were to be state-funded Catholic schools. (3) This system was vital in maintaining a strong religious identity among the immigrant population, and while it was widely criticised by Protestants, with the Orange Order calling it 'Rome on the Rates' (Brown, 1993: 37), it was also a recognition by the State of the validity of some form of religious pluralism.

Presently 75% of all Catholic state-funded schools in Scotland are in the Greater Glasgow area and they constitute a powerful force within the educational system. While the segregated schools system is often cited as a social and institutional arena which reproduces religious bigotry, the continual multi-cultural development of Glasgow means that issues related to the relationship between religion and education do not simply divide along Catholic and Protestant lines. Jones notes that Catholic schools:

are particularly appealing to Asian parents. In 1990, 40 per cent of the pupils at St Albert's Primary in Pollokshaws were Asian Scottish. This presents an argument for

pluralism in Scottish education. (Jones, 1992: 105)

It is against this backdrop that religious identity and football are interwoven in Glasgow in a way that, as we shall see later, is not replicated in Liverpool. As is argued below, religiosity and football also constitute an important part of that city's character, but manifest themselves in quite different ways to those which exist in Glasgow. In this city, the football clubs of Celtic (Catholic/Irish-Scottish) and Rangers (Protestant/Scottish) have become important symbols of particular cultural configurations which are bound up with ethnic, religious and even political identities (the issue of politics is specifically addressed in the following chapter).

Section 2: Religion, education and football in Glasgow

In Glasgow it is the religious labelling associated with the clubs Celtic and Rangers and their supporters which make it a rivalry unique in world football. In an increasingly secular society the importance of religious affiliation with the clubs remains remarkably resilient. Graham Walker, writing in 1990, comments that:

The significance of religious labels - however nominal - shows no sign of waning in large parts of Scotland. The roots of people's need for such an identification lie deeper than football [] the fusion of religion and football is a remarkable social force, both divisive and cohesive, in itself. (Walker, 1990: 156)

Both Walker (1990) and Finn (1991, 1994) have documented the historical origins of this rivalry and while they differ on which club introduced sectarianism into football in the west of Scotland, they agree that both clubs became closely identified with specific Catholic (Celtic) and Protestant (Rangers) identities, and that this religious divide was reflected in the support they attracted.

Despite the fact that Rangers appeared to end their unofficial sectarian policy of not knowingly signing Catholic players when, in 1989, they signed Maurice Johnston, the club has continued to be viewed by many supporters as a Protestant club. As one Rangers' supporters, fanzine *Follow Follow* put it, 'The club has remained a Protestant one because the supporters wanted it. No-one else' (*Follow Follow*, No. 8, 1989). Danny Houston, Deputy Grand Master of the Orange Lodge in Glasgow had boycotted the club when they signed Johnston but

insisted that Rangers could sign foreign Catholics:

(however) Roman Catholicism in the West of Scotland is synonymous with Irish Republicanism. Why does Scotland have this hang-up about Rangers being a Protestant team? There's not a Scottish Protestant in the current Celtic team. Does anyone ever say that? (Kuper, 1994: 208)

While Celtic are equally closely identified with a religious identity, the club has never operated a Catholics-only signing policy, with its greatest ever manager Jock Stein and most famous modern-day player Kenny Dalglish both being Protestants.

There is little doubt that the hostility which greeted the Catholic-Irish on their arrival in Scotland helped shape a strong religious identity within this community. Brown (1993) notes how ethnic identity can, in particular historical circumstances, become interchangeable with a specific religious identity, particularly when this community finds itself under threat from a larger community.

That sense of a shared religious/ethnic identity remains strong today among many Celtic supporters. In the survey of Celtic's most committed supporters carried out in 1991, 60% of those surveyed in Scotland were practising Catholics, while 35% said that they were lapsed (Boyle, 1991:9). There is no doubt that supporters view the Catholic education system as being a key institution in reproducing this sense of identity.

Group 3, Paul: At the Catholic schools it sort of re-affirms your sense of identity and support for Celtic.

Group 3, Brian: It was accepted at the school that the teachers would be Celtic supporters. There were no Rangers fans at our school, none you would know anyway.

While for many supporters following Celtic began in the home as they supported the club of their parents, their Catholic schooling reinforced this loyalty.

Group 4, Jim: I started going with my father. I mean you don't pick a team like, you are born into it, it's not a matter for rational debate.

Group 4, Pat: At the Catholic schools you are brought together as supporters. If you haven't been a Celtic fan, you are pushed in that direction. It gives you something to talk about, a way to have friends.

This also highlights the central role that football plays in the socialisation of many young males as they forge friendships in and around support for football teams. (4) In addition this clear religious affiliation with Catholicism among Celtic supporters is in marked contrast to the

situation in Liverpool, a point noted across all the groups interviewed in Liverpool:

Group 3, Dave: I mean you do have Everton or Liverpool families, but its also common to find supporters of both clubs under one roof, don't expect you find that in Glasgow.

Group 4, Helen: I was never aware that there were separate Catholic schools like there are in Glasgow.

Group 2, Pete: I think there was a big sectarian divide in the Liverpool from the generation before, my parents told me about it, similar to Glasgow. But it seemed to fade away in the 1960s, you had separate Catholic schools in the city, but it was never a big thing. There is still a Protestant/Catholic divide in the city, but not like Glasgow, and it's never, as far as I am able to see, affected the football. So you can't say one was a Catholic team or one was a Protestant team

Group 1, Mike: I get young people in my taxi cab and they don't know who the Catholic team was. Some of the older people do, but a lot of the younger ones don't. A lot of it's to do with success, and following success and wanting to be associated with success, you've had success at Liverpool for almost 25 years.

Group 4, Helen: Everton, who were supposed to be Catholic, had a lot of support from North Wales, which doesn't tie in because that part of the country isn't Catholic.

Among contemporary supporters in Liverpool the issue of sectarianism was not viewed as being an issue, whereas race and racism were deemed important in modern Liverpool. (5)

Group 2, Pete: Yeah it's strange really, I think that race is the bigger problem than religion in Liverpool. Because let's face it the founder member of both clubs was an Orangeman (see chapter 3).

Among younger fans there was a broad consensus that attaching a religious dimension to football support was in fact a problem, or a potential problem. Not surprisingly this view was rarely expressed in the Glasgow interviews.

Celtic: The Catholic club

Many Celtic fans viewed the Catholic aspect of their support for the club as going beyond religion, and influencing the whole structure, ethos and style of the club. This view was most

vigorously put by supporters based in Belfast who quite regularly would return to drawing similarities between the club and the Catholic Church. These comparisons were not always positive:

Group 1, Michael: There is a Catholic ethos at the club. The whole of idea of playing for pride, not for money, that's Catholic, although nowadays football is big business, but the club still try to get by paying peanuts. It can't work, the world has changed, but we do love someone who is a fan and plays for the club, they are special players.

Group 1, Alex: It used to be that you would play for nothing. It was an honour to play for Celtic, like becoming a priest. But those days have gone, but the fans still recognise a player who loves the club and understands it, I think it could be hard not to have had some Catholic upbringing to understand what this club means to us fans.

The idea of 'playing for the jersey' is viewed by some as an anachronism left over from less commercial/business orientated days. However, most Celtic supporters view the passion that a player feels for the club as being central to being a Celtic player. When former player Tommy Burns was appointed manager in July 1994, he stated that he wanted to instill some of the passion and 'pride in the Celtic jersey' back into the current team.

But other supporters also perceive the club as being a personification of a wider 'Celtic/Irish/Catholic' identity which is juxtaposed with the more traditional dour 'Scottish/Presbyterian' image of Rangers and its supporters.

This contrast is drawn upon not only by supporters, but also by sections of the media (in particular the quality press) in some of its reporting of the clubs. An article by Amanda Mitchison, entitled 'Battle for the Celtic Soul' in *The Independent Magazine* reminded its readers that during the 1960/70s:

the personae of Celtic and their traditional rivals tended to conform to ethnic stereotypes Rangers, the Protestant team, played a more solid defensive game. They had the toughest supporters and tended to win the off-the-field battles. Celtic, the team of the Glasgow Catholic Irish community, were 'Celts' in every way - small, fiery, idiosyncratic players with a high profile, risk-taking, attacking style of football.

(*The Independent Magazine*, 20 November, 1993)

It appears that among many supporters and also some journalists this image, with slight modifications is still very much part of the modern day Celtic/Rangers rivalry. Writer and

journalist Kevin McCarra views the connotations of 'celticness' as something that the club should draw upon and indeed exploit for commercial purposes:

Celtic should cultivate the identity of a free spirited, exuberant, out-going club. To me that's what is natural to them and what distinguishes them from clubs like Rangers who are organised, proper, go about their business, but don't have that care-free spirit about them. (Interview with author, 28/1/92)

It is interesting to note how religious imagery has become associated with supporters of both clubs and becomes interwoven with other national(ist) symbolism. For example, Celtic's 'rebel' Irish/Catholic spirit can be contrasted with the more establishment authority of Rangers:

All around the stadium fans were revelling in the Rangers' culture, a culture of Protestant dominance and defiance, of dim-though-firm notions of loyalty to Queen and country, aye ready, the red, white and blue, flute bands and bowler hats, and the cry of no surrender, King Billy, 1690, the sash my father wore. From the outside there seem to be only two reasons for supporting Rangers: a hatred of losing and a loathing of catholics. (*The Sunday Times*, 25 April, 1994)

Among Celtic supporters, the religious identity of the club was viewed as important, but not, in their eyes, to the extent that it was an identity that excluded others.

Group 2, Dave: Celtic could play 11 Protestants for all I care, as long as they're good and want to play for the club, that is not an issue here, unlike at Rangers.

Group 2, Stephen: You've got to remember this club is bound up with religion. Whether you're religious or not, to a lot of people that element is important, and why not?

As always, comparisons were drawn with Rangers, and the media perception that that club had been transformed from being a backward-looking, Protestant and anti-Catholic club into a forward-looking, modern, European institution was called into question.

Group 3, James: Rangers claim to be a modern club, but you've got men in business suits sitting in executive boxes calling so-and-so a Fenian bastard, and singing the Sash. Just because you're middle class and in business doesn't mean you're not a bigot. Rangers have 'gone respectable' but scratch the surface and, well, how much has changed. It's pretty scary really.

This was viewed as the real difference among supporters of both clubs, in that while Celtic were a Catholic club, this did not make them anti-Protestant. In contrast Rangers were viewed as fundamentally anti-Catholic in nature.

Group 5, Andy: You've got to remember that Scotland is a Protestant country. That sense of difference is still there. I mean it's getting better every year, but you can't deny the fact that in some eyes you need to be Protestant to be truly Scottish.

Among many supporters the importance of religious labelling is central to their support of Celtic. Much of this identity is of course played off against a large successful rival club whose identity and culture is closely identified with Protestantism, but to view this as the sole reason for the perpetuation of a Catholic identity with Celtic and many of their supporters is to deny the centrality of religion in the social experience of many young people who have grown up in the west of Scotland. The combination of schooling, parental experience of perceived or actual discrimination and the symbolic power offered to them by following a successful high profile football club, creates a powerful sense of a community identity.

In addition, the overwhelmingly working class nature of the Celtic support has been an important factor in the character of both the club and its supporters. Writer and broadcaster Richard Jobson touches on these factors as he writes about his early experience of following Celtic in the 1960s:

I was playing for my school, St. Columba, the area's only Catholic school, which for some reason held a great tradition of football teams. This could be explained sociologically (Catholics were the poorest members of society). [] We were out there playing football, talking football, watching football, living football. Football held a great symbol of what a young Catholic could achieve in this country. Its name was *Celtic*. (Jobson, 1990: 117)

The interplay between religion, football and identity occupies a different, but equally powerful cultural space in Liverpool.

Section 3: Liverpool, religion and football

The focus of this section is on the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster of 1989. What is of interest is the extent to which religion, religious ritual and football all played a key role in shaping the manner in which Liverpool mourned the supporters who died at the FA Cup semi-final match. Moreover, it offers a striking insight into the central position that ritual occupies in the life and culture of the city of Liverpool. This sense of ritual is directly informed by the

city's past (the influx of Irish immigrants in the 19th century) and its present economic and political isolation within contemporary Britain. It also presents a contrasting view of the position of religion and religious ritual in public life to that which exists in Glasgow. As we see below, far from viewing the link between religion and football as a problem, as is sometimes the case in Glasgow, in post-Hillsborough Liverpool it was the closeness of this link which offered a sense of collective identity as well as the public rituals which allowed the city to engage in a process of collective mourning.

Hillsborough ritual and religion

The 1989 FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield on the 15 April turned into a massive tragedy which would result in 96 Liverpool supporters losing their lives. Crowd mismanagement by the police and a failure to respond to a developing situation resulted in fans being killed in a crush at the Leppings Lane end of the stadium. The match was abandoned at 3.06pm, six minutes after it had started.

While there had been disasters at football matches in Britain before (1971, Ibrox, Glasgow; Bradford, 1985), this involved the greatest loss of life at any football match ever seen in this country. (6) How the city of Liverpool coped with this tragedy offers an insight into the extent to which religion and football are intertwined in that city.

Walter (1991) has argued that the mourning which took place in Liverpool after Hillsborough offers a rebuttal to the conventional wisdom that people in late 20th century Britain are unable to deal as publicly with death and bereavement as they have in times past. He argues:

Though there are major class, ethnic, gender and regional variations, British people have in the twentieth century become less expressive about their grief in public; lengthy periods of mourning that were expected in Victorian days collapsed in the 1914-18 war, and by mid-century people expected to get back to normal as soon as possible. (Walter, 1991: 606)

The outpouring of public grief in the city of Liverpool in the days and weeks that followed Hillsborough were, it could be argued, unique to that city and are explained in part by the influence of the traditions and rituals of its Irish-Catholic descendant working class, and both the centrality that football occupies in the city's sense of identity and the marginal position of

the city in the political and cultural life of English society (issues specifically addressed in the following chapter).

One of the dominant characteristics of the mourning which took place in the city was that it was public, much of it spontaneously organised and centred around both traditional places of mourning (the Catholic and Anglican Cathedrals) and Anfield, the home of Liverpool F.C. It was here on the morning after the disaster that fans gathered to pay their respects to those who had died and to seek solace among supporters going through similar pain.

Group 1: Jane: I woke up on Sunday the 16th, didn't really sleep. And I just had to go down to Anfield. I really thought that there would maybe be a few people there, but that was all. I'm not really religious but it seemed right to go to the Shankly Gates at Anfield. When I got there there was hundreds of people, all with the same idea. The club opened the gates and we walked around the ground and laid flowers at the Kop end of the ground, and cried openly in public among friends. (7)

The football ground became what Taylor (1989) called part of 'a mass popular religious rite'. The ground became a shrine, with the Kop end of the ground bedecked with flowers, scarves and other football memorabilia. Over a million people would file past the Kop over the next two weeks (many queuing for up to six hours just to get in). Bale notes:

Mourners filed slowly past as they would at a cemetery. The stadium, not a church, was selected for this rite, making it a sure site for topophilic sentiments. (Bale, 1991: 132)

While there are quasi-religious overtones to much football supporting, the ritual of regular attendance at games, collective chanting and singing and a particular devotion to a club and its ground it was never more pronounced than in Liverpool in the days and weeks after Hillsborough. Ian Taylor notes:

The reconstruction of the ground as a shrine is a natural extension of existing relationships of the club to the fan: football grounds across the country have always had an almost religious hold on football fans and, indeed, on the families and kin on whom these, mainly male, fans have imposed their weekend and midweek-evening obsessions. (Taylor, 1991: 5)

In addition, the spontaneous nature of the public collective outpouring of grief was commented upon not only by those directly involved. For example, a photographer, Steve Shakeshaft, sent by his newspaper to cover the story, arrived at Anfield only to find:

I felt I was imposing. I had to take photographs, and yet I didn't want to. I felt as if I was exploiting the situation [] A Salvation Army band followed us into the ground, and they grouped around in a circle inside the penalty area and then began playing 'Abide With Me'. It was so spontaneous. We were all in tears. Suddenly, I had a different perspective on the Kop and all those who stand on it. It had become a shrine, their shrine. (Kelly, 1993: 182)

In general the coverage of the Hillsborough disaster in the national media, and the press in particular, generated a great deal of resentment among many people in the city. (8) The portrayal of Liverpool fans as drunken louts, who looted the dead and abused the police as they attempted to offer assistance, was not only carried in the many national newspapers, but reproduced in papers throughout Europe. *The Sun* in particular suffered a drop in its Merseyside circulation of up to 150,000 as a result of its untrue stories, although it was not the only paper to upset people in the city. *The Daily Mirror* was the first to be criticised for its use of explicit colour photographs of fans being crushed to death against the fences at the Hillsborough stadium.

Four years on and the negative coverage of the city in the national press continues to fuel the self-identity of a beleaguered city:

Group 1: Ann: The coverage of the city during Hillsborough was terrible in the press. We were all sentimental Scousers, it was all our fault.

Group 3: Gill: Look at the coverage of the Jamie Bulger story, it was all the same old nonsense, 'a city on its knees etc'. Liverpool is an easy story for sloppy journalists [] they've written the story before they arrive.

While this sense of misrepresentation of the city by the national media is discussed in more detail in chapter 7, it is worth noting here that Hillsborough, with its national and international coverage, once again centred the media spotlight on the city and in particular its relationship with football.

Tony Walters offers this explanation of much of the hostile reaction among other parts of England to the public communal outpouring of grief after Hillsborough. It is worth quoting at length because it raises a number of central themes in this work.

In white UK culture, there are (apart from class differences) two cultures: and English reserve and a Celtic expressiveness. These are seen dramatically in the different feel of Manchester versus Liverpool, or even Edinburgh versus Glasgow. Celtic expressiveness offends English reserve (though it may be enjoyed by the English on holiday in Southern Ireland). To the English, Celts are dangerously unpredictable,

and a crowd of Celts even more so - hence the stereotype of Liverpoolian football supporters as always liable to get into trouble, despite their generally good humour and unusually good police relations. Hence perhaps also the stereotype of the Liverpool worker as likely to take unofficial strike action at the drop of a hat. (Walter, 1991: 607/8)

He argues that the expressive nature of the public mourning was in part a reflection of this Celtic cultural influence on the city of Liverpool, in turn fuelled by the sense of 'non-Englishness' felt by many in the city (an issue developed in the next chapter).

The contrast, however, with Manchester (itself a city with a large community of Catholic/Irish descent) seems misplaced. Differences between these two cities (both economic rivals in the north west of England) are best understood by their differing patterns of economic development, decline and regeneration, rather than being purely cultural (although there can be a link between the two). There is no doubt, however, that the enormous influx of Irish into Liverpool has left a residual stamp on the character of the city, and its own self-identity.

Samuel notes:

The Irish brought with them into the country a complex of popular devotional practices, whose warmth and externality were often contrasted with the more reserved tradition of worship which prevailed among the English. (Samuel, 1989: 101)

However accurate Walter's analysis, and its gross generalisations leave it open to criticism, there is no doubt that this view reflects the self image held by many in the city as to its relationship with the rest of England. This perception of difference is reinforced by the position and character of the city in various aspects of popular culture, of which the tradition of supporting football is one of the most high profile.

It should be noted that not all reaction was hostile to the city. Many football fans, (including those of Liverpool's bitter rivals Manchester United) shared in the grief felt by the city. Over a million people passed through Anfield to pay their respects, well over double the population of the entire city. The first match to be played by the club was at the invitation of Celtic F.C. and took place in Glasgow before an emotional crowd of over 60,000, with all proceeds going to the Hillsborough Disaster Fund.

The role of official religion

In addition to the spontaneous organisation of communal mourning there were also the formal religious rituals. The Catholic Cathedral in the city attracted twice its capacity to a Requiem

Mass on the Sunday after Hillsborough. Memorial services were held in many local churches and in the Anglican Cathedral on the 29th of the month. However, something else occurred in Liverpool that emphasised the blurring of the religious lines of division that were once evident in the city and that still inform much of the public life of Glasgow. This involved the coming together of the Anglican and Catholic Churches in the city. Their leaders, Bishop David Sheppard and Archbishop Derek Worlock, spoke out together, defending the city against attack and ridicule from outside. In addition, they also argued for solutions to its economic and social problems, while all the time projecting a more positive image of the city to the outside world.

Walter (1991: 621) notes that perhaps more so than any other city in the UK 'Durkheimian religion - in which religious or neo-religious totems represent the entire community - operates in Liverpool.' He argues that this situation has become more acute with the collapse of traditional local politics in the 1980s (see next chapter). While it has to be asked to what extent the large black community in the city feel represented by either the predominantly white Catholic or Anglican clergy, it is true to say that this coming together of the Churches, speaking on behalf of the city, does not occur in Glasgow. While in that city in particular the Catholic Church frequently speaks out on a range of social and political issues relating to the Scottish situation (Cardinal Winning in particular), it makes no pretence that it is doing anything other than defending the interests of the Catholic community and certainly not speaking for the city as a whole.

The overwhelming post-Hillsborough sense in Liverpool was of a city pulling together to grieve for its own: Protestants and Catholics attending services together, with the unique sight of professional football players and fans helping and supporting each other at services and funerals. While one can sentimentalise the collective nature of the grieving after Hillsborough, there is no doubt that it represented a unique moment in the history of the city, and, it could be argued, produced a city-wide solidarity the like of which is rarely seen in contemporary urban Britain.

Group 2: Nancy: It was a truly weird time to live in the city. They say that Liverpool is small and that everyone knows everyone's business. But at that time it felt like a small village. Actually at times it was suffocating, and I know a lot of people needed to get away for a while.

Group 2: Pete: Yeah I mean you don't want to get sentimental about it, but there was a sense of togetherness, I don't know if it's the Irish thing or

what, but I can't see that public grief being displayed elsewhere in England.

Group 4: Mike: It sounds cliched but everyone did feel a sense of loss and grief. It engulfed the city. I couldn't have coped without the public rituals. I mean there was the private grief as well, but the thought that you could see people and they were feeling the way you were was very important. I'm not religious, but that sense that you are not alone is very important. It was like an extended family in the city, it sounds daft to say it, but that was how it felt. I mean football means more than it should to this city and for that to happen at a match, well..

Walter sums up the aftermath of Hillsborough as:

A city retaining an unusual blend of Celtic and working class mourning patterns, which it enacted in highly dramatic form due to the unique circumstances surrounding Hillsborough, was on view to the whole nation. Middle-class people throughout the country saw on Merseyside a model for the handling of grief to which they aspired, yet lacked the communal identity to achieve. (Walter, 1991: 623)

It could also be argued that in part the survival of that communal model (or aspects of it) in Liverpool is in part a result of the economic and political isolation felt by the city, particularly in the 1980s. This isolation involved a turning inward for community strength and an outward articulation of that identity through its high profile, and until recently, highly successful football teams. What, then, does this tell us about the relationship between football and religion in the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool?

Section 4:

Religion and football, some observations

What clearly emerges from this chapter is the fact that religion and displays of religiosity occupy different social roles in both cities. In Glasgow, religious labelling (and this usually is limited to being either Catholic and Protestant despite the multitude of faiths evident in contemporary Glasgow) is still an important boundary-marker of difference between social groups in certain circumstances. In other words, in specific situations affiliation to either Celtic or Rangers football club or whether the name of the school you attended began with a Saint's name, mark you as either a Catholic or Protestant (and of course this can often be untrue).

Being earmarked as a Catholic also carries with it connotations of Irishness and support for things Irish, and as is examined in the following chapter, this in turn can be held by some

as an indication of that person's lack of loyalty to all things supposedly Scottish. To a few the fact that a person is Catholic means that they can never be truly Scottish.

Of course much of this operates at the level of generalisation. All Rangers fans for example do not hold bigoted attitudes towards Catholics, and all Celtic supporters do not necessarily feel that they are Irish. However, to play down the role of religious labelling in the west of Scotland is to be guilty of not only denying its influence (both historical and contemporary), but also of presenting Scottish culture as some sort of homogeneous entity not subject to the internal contradictions and tensions that all national cultures experience. More importantly, it denies the importance of confronting issues of division and, in this instance, specifically the issue of sectarianism. Identifying that a problem exists is the first step towards finding a solution to it.

This point was recently made by novelist Andrew O'Hagen in a polemical article entitled 'Scotland's Fine Mess'. He commented on his experience of an Orange Walk in the town of Alloa during the summer of 1994:

The first of 130 buses roared into West End Park [] The Bannockburn True Blues adjusted their gear. They began to flute and drum and march out of the park [] There was wildness in every direction: you felt anything could go off. I felt very Catholic, very open to assault. [] England, for all that's said, is not really a target of everyday Scottish venom. We save most of that up for ourselves; we spend it recklessly on each other. (*The Guardian Weekend*, 23 June, 1994)

Interestingly, the issue of a Catholic/Protestant divide does not exist to any great extent in modern Liverpool. If religious discrimination is viewed as a problem in Glasgow (and some of the interviewees in Liverpool certainly viewed it as a problem in the Scottish city), then it is not seen as such in Liverpool. Historically, sectarianism had an important influence on the political and economic development of the city, yet with the city's economic and political decline, internal city divisions have, to a large extent, been replaced by a more common city-wide identity. Perhaps the major internal issue to threaten this cosy city image is that of race and racism. The invisibility of the city's black community from dominant images of the city is as striking as it is worrying.

Again, it is worth emphasising that while much of the discussion in this chapter has been on the issue of religion, it is true to say that the population of both cities is

overwhelmingly secular in nature. However, this does not negate the importance of religious labelling or aspects of religiosity in the culture and identity of both cities. Glasgow is not the warring sectarian battleplace of some media representations, yet sectarianism does exist and is not confined to the working class population of the city. Some commentators suggest that the 'Old Firm' rivalry simply continues:

because the fans enjoy it so much. They are not about to give up their ancient traditions just because they no longer believe in God. (Kuper, 1994: 218)

To what extent this rivalry could be sustained without it having any connection with the contemporary social and economic reality of life in Glasgow is hard to believe. However complex this connection may have become over the years, for many this rivalry (as evident in the interview material) is fuelled by more than rhetoric.

In Glasgow, the position of a separate state-funded Catholic system of education is vital in sustaining a specific identity among the Catholic population of the west of Scotland. In addition, the Catholic Church takes an active part in the public issues of the day affecting its laity in this part of Scotland. By contrast, the situation in Liverpool sees both the Anglican and Catholic Church occupying a central position as representatives and spokespeople for the city in a way that neither the Catholic Church nor Church of Scotland do in Glasgow. Ironically, in terms of profile, the situation in Liverpool is more akin to the position of Church spokespeople in Northern Ireland, where media time is often given to Church leaders calling for consensus between the separate communities which they claim to represent.

In Liverpool, as the reaction to Hillsborough demonstrated, quasi-religious links between football and organised religion take on a heightened cultural significance in this particular city, partly due to its historical character and its contemporary position within English culture.

There are links between football and aspects of religiosity in Glasgow and Liverpool. The continued interest and popularity of football in these cities, while a testimony in part to the resilience of working class culture in the cities, is also an indicator of the importance of ritual and spectacle in urban life. What you find in both cities is an interweaving of public and private culture, of religion and sport, the configuration of which is informed by the specific

characteristics of the cities. In common they play a central role in the identity of many people in both these cities, yet in many ways, as shown above, they manifest themselves differently and tell us how, for all their similarities, Glasgow and Liverpool are very different cities.

To what extent these differences are reflected by differing political cultures, is one of the issues to which our attention is now turned.

Notes

- (1) There are numerous anecdotes about players not being signed by Rangers because they thought that the player was a Catholic. One such story concerns Daniel Fergus McGrain, who went on to have a long and distinguished career with both Celtic and Scotland. Rangers scouts lost interest in the player (a Protestant) because they assumed with such a name he must be a Catholic. The only other place I know where similar stories circulate is in Northern Ireland and concern the mainly Protestant Belfast team Linfield and their lack of Catholic players.
- (2) It should be noted that the two Churches use different methods of counting membership, with the Catholic membership including all those baptised, and not necessarily practising their faith, while the Church of Scotland record Church attendance.
- (3) For a detailed account of the impact of the 1918 Act on Catholic education in Scotland see T.A. Fitzpatrick (1986) *Catholic Secondary Education in South West Scotland before 1972*, Aberdeen University Press.
- (4) For an excellent account of the role of football in this process of socialisation, particularly among young boys at school see Hornby (1992).
- (5) For a discussion of the issue of race and racism in Liverpool see Hill (1989), SNCCFR (1989) and Liverpool Black Caucus (1986) *The Racial Politics of Militant Liverpool*, published by Merseyside Area profile Group and Runnymede Trust.
- (6) For an account of the impact of the Hillsborough disaster on British football see Taylor (1991).
- (7) Among supporters who were interviewed there were a number who had directly lost close friends at Hillsborough.
- (8) For a detailed account of media coverage of Hillsborough see in particular, 'The Media's role in the Hillsborough disaster,' in Coleman *et al* (1990). For an explanation of the *The Sun's* infamous THE TRUTH front page story which accused Liverpool fans of looting dead fans and attacking the police (both stories which the Lord Justice Taylor (1990) inquiry completely rejected as false), see Chippendale and Horrie (1990).

Chapter 6: Political, cultural and national identities

‘That Celtic team was like the old Labour Party. All the diverse opinions and attitudes and points of view all worked in a common aim. That’s what made them successful and that’s what made us successful.’

Billy McNeill, former captain and manager of Celtic, on the club’s nine league titles in a row era,
Only A Game?, BBC TV, 1985.

‘You could go round any pub in Liverpool in the 1980s and they used to be talking about what was going on politically. Now they just talk about football.’

Derek Hatton, former Deputy leader of Liverpool City Council, *The Observer*,
20 August, 1995.

Introduction

This chapter aims to extend the examination of religious identity and labelling discussed in the previous chapter and to focus specifically on the interplay between aspects of religious identity and the political and cultural configurations of collective identities which exist in Glasgow and Liverpool.

Throughout there is an interest in the extent to which political and cultural identities interlink with each other. Thus, not only is there a concern with the relationship between the support of particular football clubs and the political allegiance of those supporters, but also with the interconnection between the clubs, the supporters and wider expressions of collective identity.

In addition, there is an awareness that broad political identities can not be simply ascertained by identifying particular voting patterns among people. For many people part of their political identity may be expressed in other aspects of their lives beyond the ‘orthodox’ political arena. Bradley (1994) has suggested:

the powerlessness experienced by many people in the political arena, often crucially shaped by the media, may be reflected by holding and expressing social and political attitudes, which not only fail to translate into party political expression, but also become focused on areas which are outside the ‘higher’ political processes. Politics for many people can become privatised and translated into spheres of culture and identity.
(Bradley, 1994: 437)

The relationship between these spheres of culture and orthodox political positions can also be complex. This is not to negate the importance that party political allegiance holds for many of the people in the groups studied, simply to alert us to the nuances that characterise the broad nature of political identities.

In other words, we enter into a broader debate which takes us beyond simply a concern with political allegiance and into the arena of cultural and national identity-formation. To what extent do the clubs and the support of them by fans act as boundary-markers which help to define what it means to be Scottish, Irish, English and/or British?

The first part of the chapter focuses on Glasgow. As was evident from the previous chapter, religious labelling as a boundary-marker of identity is important in the west of Scotland. What this section attempts to do is to examine the linkages between this process and wider political and cultural affiliations. Drawing on interviews and survey work carried out with Celtic supporters it highlights the complex interplay between politics, religion and cultural identity in contemporary Scotland.

The latter part of the chapter turns attention to the situation in Liverpool and again draws on interviews with supporters in that city. While it is argued that in Liverpool, unlike Glasgow, football clubs and their supporters are not closely identified with specific political or cultural collectives, the clubs and the support for football in that city do operate as important markers of collective identity which are concerned with politics and place, although in a different context from that which exists in Glasgow.

Section 1: Scottish politics and identity

Religious bigotry and Catholic fears of independence are to be tackled head-on by the Scottish National Party in an open admission that sectarianism is a problem in Scottish politics. (*The Scotsman*, 24 September 1994)

The patterns of political allegiance in the west of Scotland have unsurprisingly been shaped by the economic and cultural history of the city of Glasgow. Earlier chapters noted the centrality of Catholic-Irish immigration in this process, and how the hostile reaction of the host

community to that immigration has helped define the character of the city. The immigrants both engaged with the existing community as best as they were allowed, and also created their own support networks in the face of prejudice and hostility.

Given the overwhelmingly Protestant nature of 19th century Scottish society it was not surprising that it was the Catholic religious identity of this immigrant group which became their overriding marker of identity, used both to define and sustain people displaced in an alien country. Gallagher (1991) argues that the hostility of Protestant Scotland resulted in a Catholic support system that shaped, and has continued to shape, the Catholic-Irish community's engagement with, and relationship to, Scottish politics and society.

In the political sphere, support for Irish Home Rule had up until 1922 tended to draw the Catholic-Irish in Scotland (and indeed Britain as a whole) towards the Liberal Party. The settlement of 1922 led many within this community in the west of Scotland to turn their attention inwards towards their own position in their new homeland. The main beneficiary of this shift would be the Labour Party (Marr, 1992: 53). (1)

The Catholic-Labour alliance was, and is, still strong in the west of Scotland. Initially, it derived from the hostile overtones towards the Catholic community which were articulated by the other main political parties. In Protestant Scotland, the Catholic religion marked this outgroup as alien and, more importantly, supposedly unable and unwilling to assimilate into Scottish society. Gallagher notes that:

In 1932 the Conservative MP for Perth (Lord Scone) may only have been expressing widely held sentiments when he told Parliament that: 'Culturally the Irish population [] has not been assimilated into the Scottish population. It is not my purpose to discuss now whether the Irish culture is good or bad, but merely to state the definite fact that there is in the west of Scotland a completely separate race of alien origin, practically homogeneous, whose presence there is bitterly resented by tens of thousands of the Scottish working-class.' (Gallagher, 1991: 23)

During this same period (the 1930s) Andrew Marr claims that the Scottish National Party was: 'essentially anti-Catholic and anti-Irish' (Marr, 1992: 78).

It should be noted that while the Labour Party offered the best opportunity for the Catholic-Irish to advance themselves and their community within Scotland, the Catholic-Labour Alliance owed much to the accommodation reached between figures in the Labour Party in the

west of Scotland and the Catholic Church (a church not renowned for its support of the political left in Britain). As Christopher Harvie points out:

(Labour's impact) owed more to the organisational gifts of Catholic Labour politicians like John Wheatley and Patrick Dollan than to any mass conversion to socialism, as the government of Glasgow has demonstrated down to the present day. (Harvie, 1994: 75)

As was also the case in Liverpool, at certain moments religious prejudices could be mobilised for political ends. By playing on Protestant fears about the economic and cultural threat posed to them by the Catholic-Irish, the Conservatives helped secure a large proportion of the Protestant working class vote in cities like Glasgow.

Catholicism and Irishness

The link with the Labour party was important for the Catholic-Irish community not least because, as Gallagher argues:

In time identification with Labour helped reconcile them to their place in the British state and the horizons of many would widen to the extent that loyalty to their class, union, or occupation would become more important than loyalty to their parish or their ancestral home. (Gallagher, 1991: 27)

However, it would be wrong to suggest that the links this community had with Ireland did not remain central to their sense of identity. It could be argued that the prevailing assumption among many in the host community that to be a Catholic was by association to be viewed as Irish, continually reminded this group of their historic links with Ireland. This labelling process clearly positioned this group as being unable to have a Scottish political identity.

The close geographical proximity of Northern Ireland, in which a large section of the Catholic community were explicitly opposed to the British State, helped heighten the sense of 'otherness' many in the Catholic-Irish community felt within Scottish society. These links with Ireland were in part maintained through the continual flow of people back and forth between the Republic of Ireland (County Donegal in particular) and Glasgow. (2)

While the previous chapters illustrated how support for Celtic F.C. was drawn from the immigrant community and their descendants, they also demonstrated how this support symbolised a willingness on the part of this community to participate in the sports of the host country. In so doing it also offered an outlet through which the community could put its collective identity on display and in turn have that identity, with its attendant links with Ireland,

reinforced through the symbolic ritual of supporting a high profile and successful football team.

It is not being suggested here that as a matter of policy the clubs presented themselves as having close links with specific political parties, although individuals at Rangers F.C. have openly expressed their support for the Conservative Party (such as manager Walter Smith and Chairman David Murray), and Finn (1994a) documents the historical links between that club and the Conservatives in Scotland. What is being argued is that the supporters of both clubs, and the clubs themselves through that support, became associated with symbolic groupings which carry specific connotations associated with differing religious and political traditions and allegiances within Scottish society. At the centre of this is the historical and ultimately political issue regarding attitudes towards incoming groups by the host community, and how the relationship between groups in society is in part determined by the merging of a political will with institutional structures which seek to reconcile and respect differing traditions.

Scottish boundaries

The great problem is that Scotland has too many ninety-minute patriots whose nationalistic outpourings are expressed only at major sporting events.

Jim Sillars, ex-MP, Scottish National Party, (*The Herald*, 24 April 1992)

In Glasgow we have noted that football support can act as a boundary-marker of difference, yet in Scotland as a whole support for international teams representing the country appear to enjoy widespread national support. This support has often been explained in part by the link between politics and culture. In a stateless nation such as Scotland sport is always invested with a political significance that outweighs its importance as simply codified play. (3) As Moorhouse comments:

Scotland is characteristic of 'submerged nations' in that sport, soccer in particular, has an over-determined significance. (Moorhouse, 1991: 201)

However, the extent to which support for national teams overrides other internal divisions in society is very much open to question. Certainly the idea that 'the country/nation is behind the team' is one that is often promoted in media coverage of international sport (Blain et al: 1993). As is noted and discussed in more detail below, many Celtic fans do not necessarily give their

unbridled support to the Scottish national football team. In Scotland, the nationalistic support that is displayed at sporting events fails to translate into direct political support for the only party committed to an independent Scotland, the Scottish National Party, suggesting again the complex and multi-faceted nature of identity.

For while sport is one of the few arenas in which a distinctive Scottish identity is put on public display, both nationally and internationally, the relationship between the domains of culture and politics remains problematic.

Bairner (1994) argues that all national cultures are characterised by internal divisions and problems which need to be addressed publicly and collectively. He argues that in the Scottish situation the idea that football is one of the cornerstones of a unified Scottish national identity is simply untrue. Divisions of region, class, gender and religion in Scottish society are all reproduced through sport, and in particular the issue of sectarianism, which he claims:

arguably does more than anything else to undermine Scottish football's capacity to forge a unified national consciousness. (Bairner, 1994: 16/17)

He develops this point and continues:

Certainly sectarianism continues to influence football support in Scotland. Supporters do not leave the small towns, far less the cities, to watch the Old Firm simply because they wish to associate themselves with success, although that is a partial explanation. The choice of club is really what matters. That choice is directly related to the histories of Celtic and Rangers and to the persistence of religious divisions in Scotland of which those histories are part. (Bairner, 1994: 18)

It is these tensions and their relevance to contemporary supporters which are now examined by drawing on the interview material with supporters. Later in this chapter we examine aspects of the political identity of the modern Celtic supporter, and discuss it against the backdrop of political debates currently prominent in Scotland.

Glasgow and the Irish question

Gerry Finn (1991a & b) has argued that much of the debate surrounding the cultural role of Celtic F. C. in Scottish life has used as its premise an exclusive and narrow definition of 'Scottishness'. It has been argued above that for many Irish-Scots the football club was important because it gave them an entry point into Scottish cultural life that was denied elsewhere. (4)

Football and supporting Celtic F.C. represented a concrete part of a cultural way of life that they could both actively participate in, and at the same time be proud of. As Tom Gallagher has noted:

working class Catholics in particular find it difficult to relate to the symbols of Scottish nationhood. The custodians of Scottish national identity have tended to be bourgeois institutions like the law, the Presbyterian religion and education and these are alien entities to many working class Catholics. (Gallagher, 1987: 352/3)

In part they responded by showing loyalty to other institutions such as Celtic F. C. and the Catholic church. What was clear was that many facets of what constituted the official cultural apparatus of Scottish culture excluded particular groups from its rituals, and as a result these groups would establish their own networks of communication and identity.

What is of interest here are the ways which people view or think about their own sense of national identity. It becomes clear that the multi-faceted nature of identity-formation is very much in evidence when the supporters talk about themselves in the discussion groups. The following are typical of responses from supporters in the groups, and are worth quoting at length.

Group 2, Bill: I'm Scottish, I'm thinking about it in two senses. If I go abroad and meet someone, they'll ask me where I'm from, and I'll say Scotland and I'm Scottish because that's where I've been born and brought up, but there is always in your mind that most of your characteristics are portrayed through the Irish way of feeling, you've got that.

Group 5, Alan: The Scottish thing is the fact that you were born here, that's a tangible thing, you can't hide where you were born. But I'm talking about it in terms of what you feel and where you feel you belong, who you've got an identity with. I've got to be Scottish because I'm integrated, I speak the same and look the same as the Scots.

What is made clear here is a perceived difference between your place of birth or even the location where you live, and the more abstract emotional points of identification which help constitute a sense of individual and group identity. Many of the supporters expressed their sense of identity through this 'feeling of belonging'. It was noted by three members of one interview group who had recently visited Ireland that during a night out, when they were asked to sing a Scottish song they realised that the only songs they knew were in fact Irish.

What was of particular interest was that this linkage with 'Irishness' appeared to be more pronounced among younger supporters (under 25). Indeed, among the older groups there was a feeling that many of the younger supporters were 'more Irish' than Celtic supporters have ever been. There is little doubt that this partly relates to the high profile international success that the Republic of Ireland football team has enjoyed since 1988. This has been a successful period unparalleled in its history, which has attracted massive media coverage both in Ireland and Britain and created new footballing heroes particularly among younger supporters. In turn, support for the team provides another symbolic reference point around which fans can express aspects of an Irish identity.

This process of allegiance is an interesting example of how football and its attendant culture can provide an important arena for the expression or articulating of various strands of identity. Firstly, 43% of the supporters in the survey work carried out (Boyle, 1991) expressed a greater commitment to the Republic of Ireland football team than the Scottish national team. This degree of support can be attributed to a number of factors, including: the recent success of the Republic football team at international level mentioned above, the perception of ill treatment of Celtic players playing for Scotland by sections of the Scottish support, and the positive identification of a number of Celtic players with the Republic of Ireland national team.

There is little doubt that the success of the Republic of Ireland international football team at the European and World level over the last eight years or so has had a profound effect on the sense of identity of many people of Irish descent living in Britain. Fintan O'Toole writing in *The Irish Times*, views this process of the rediscovery of Irishness among second, third and fourth generation descendants as being linked with the hybrid nature of the team itself, consisting as it does of people born in Britain of Irish descent as well as Irish-born players.

Being in the World Cup finals doesn't solve cultural, political or economic problems. But it does make people feel good about their collective self. For good or ill, sport has become a crucial means of self definition for countries, and soccer, as the greatest international team sport, is the most important of them all. In a country like Ireland, which has particular problems in defining itself, the effect is even greater than in countries with more cause for confidence [] The mongrel nature of the team which has

come from Glasgow, London and Manchester, as well as from Irish towns and cities, is the best representation of what it actually means to be Irish now. And for a substantial part of the team's following which is made up of emigrants, major championships offer the possibility of belonging for a few weeks to an Ireland conjured up on foreign soil. (cited in Rowan, 1994: 187/8) (5)

What is interesting is that the existence in Glasgow of a team such as Celtic, which is unique in Britain in that it is so closely associated and linked with Ireland and the Irish, has allowed a space for the expression of this identity in the west of Scotland. The success and profile of the international team appears to be acting as a focal point for many Irish descendants, particularly those living in England, who have suppressed this part of their identity, in part due to the lack of a cultural space in which they could openly and collectively celebrate their sense of Irishness.

Another reason for this feeling of Irishness among younger supporters can be attributed to youth culture. (6) Commenting on the linkage between football, youth culture and Irishness among Celtic supporters, writer and journalist Kevin McCarra noted how he thought that some fans:

see some sort of radical chic in playing up their Irish heritage. This has become a fashion accessory. This political identity, following Ireland during the World Cup (1990), I find it related to style rather than substance. (Interview with author 28/1/92)

However, what is clear from the interviews is that this 'Irishness' is important both in defining who they are, and is equally as important in defining who they are not. It provides an oppositional point of reference to perceptions of Rangers F.C. and their supporters. As one supporter commented:

Group 2, Dave: They sell Rangers with all this 'Aye Ready' [the motto on the club badge] shite, they've always sold on the Protestant work ethic Calvinist bit of working hard and tough, and playing hard and tough, and having fans who were hard and tough.

Every perception of difference reinforces the internal sense of group identity, and acts, as Cohen argues: '(as) a resource and repository of meaning and a referent of their identity' (Cohen, 1985: 118).

Another factor which contributes to this process of boundary-marking, particularly in the case of football supporters, can be the success (or lack of it) of the football team itself.

Celtic's recent lack of success has been contrasted with a number of successful years for Rangers F. C. The temptation to occupy a position that substitutes a colourful identity for footballing success can be very strong, however short-lived. Allied to this can be a retreat or withdrawal into a particular ethnic history or to a time when the club was more successful.

This argument is developed by Gallagher, who suggests that:

Among some of the descendants of the Irish ill-at-ease in the Scottish environment, [an] attempt has been made to reject reality by enlisting as rebels in the service of the sporting institution which keeps an Irish identity of sorts alive in Scotland. (Gallagher, 1991: 35)

He seems to suggest that this community has to some extent stood outside mainstream Scottish life, and that the time is now right for them to step into a 'new' more secular Scottish identity.

This raises the important issue of the extent to which 'assimilation' is necessary, or indeed desirable, in a modern pluralistic democratic country. It could be argued that central to this issue is the need for institutional and political structures which both reflect and enable all sections of the population to feel part of the wider civic community. Difference, be it political, religious or otherwise, and a country's ability to accommodate and respect these differences can be viewed as positive signifiers of a healthy and dynamic culture. The initial starting point may be not to ask all to assimilate to an 'official' culture but to examine why some groups feel uncomfortable with aspects of this culture, and to explore the possibility of the creation of structures and institutions which can facilitate the co-existence of differing traditions in any society. This is ultimately a political question, and it will be useful to turn our attention to the political affiliation of the modern-day Celtic and Rangers supporter below (see page 129).

However before we do this, it is worth expanding some of the points raised above by focusing on the apparent lack of support for the Scottish national team which exists among Celtic supporters. This is important because it fuels accusations of a disloyalty (usually from Rangers supporters and sections of the media) among these supporters to all things Scottish, and reinforces older, deeply embedded beliefs among sections of the population about the role of the Irish-Scot in the socio-economic historical development of modern Scotland. At the same time, it emphasises both the complex nature of political identities in contemporary Britain, and specifically sets up an examination of the current patterns of political allegiance that exist in

Scotland.

Scotland: the national question

I have not been picked for ages, and I don't expect to be picked. I am quite happy with that position. I would play for Scotland if I were asked, as I'm sure any player would. We shouldn't kid each other on, there are not a great deal of Celtic supporters who follow Scotland.

Charlie Nicholas, Celtic and former Scottish International football player,
Interview in *Once a Tim, Always a Tim*, Number 10, 1992.

It has been noted elsewhere that international sport provides an attractive arena for the expression of various shades of nationalistic sympathies, be this the symbolic representation of 'official' or 'unofficial' nationalisms. (7) The linkage between national identity and international sport often appears clear and unambiguous. Loyalty to national sporting teams finds itself being mobilised in populist rhetoric by some politicians as an indicator of civic loyalty to a country.(8) In reality the linkage between support for national teams and the expression of a sense of national identity is often quite a complex process. This point is well made in Don Watson's personal account of following the 1994 World Cup in the USA in the company of Irish supporters. Watson, a Scottish Celtic supporter, notes how football support allows the contradictory and multi-faceted nature of identities to come to the fore:

I see myself as Scottish, but part of New Year for me has always been to stand on a terrace, waving a tricolour and singing 'We're Going To Dublin In the Green' opposite a bank of Union Jack-waving edjits, singing 'God Save the Queen'. Nationality is a complex business. Sylvie knows exactly what I mean. He's wearing a rare Celtic away shirt. Born in England of Irish parents, he makes the trip to Glasgow regularly to see the Bhoys. 'My friends that I work with,' he says, 'really can't understand why *someone who isn't Scottish and has no Scottish ancestry really hates Rangers.*' (Watson, 1994: 19)

Throughout the book he notes how the Irish team made up of many players not born in Ireland, has given a profile and prominence to many people who have previously felt coy about expressing their sense of Irishness in the country in which they have been born and brought up.

Finn has argued that historically Celtic players were discriminated against when the Scottish national team was selected (a suggestion that most Celtic supporters of all age groups agreed with). He contends that this was important in the wider social context of Scottish life

because:

sport, relying on open competition, is usually one of the first social arenas in which minority communities can break through to demonstrate their equal competence. (Finn, 1991b: 375)

This perception of discrimination against Celtic from various sources, in particular sections of the media, is still strongly felt among many supporters today. (9)

Some of these issues were again raised by comments made regarding the location of Scotland's home internationals. When Hampden Park (the National Stadium) was being re-developed in the early 1990s, Ibrox Park, the home of Rangers F.C., became the venue for Scottish international matches accompanied by claims from David Murray, the owner of the club, that most Scotland supporters were in fact Rangers supporters and thus that club was the natural home for Scottish international matches. By implication, Celtic supporters were viewed as being less than loyal in their commitment to the national team.

Graham Walker, in an article discussing the link between Rangers and religious identity in Scotland, states that:

Celtic supporters were largely indifferent to the national team till the 1970s, they viewed the Scottish football authorities as biased towards Rangers.
(Walker, 1990: 146)

The point is not made that a lot of Celtic supporters felt excluded and alienated when they did go to matches supporting Scotland.

Many older supporters (over 35) claimed that in the past they had regularly attended Scotland matches, but stopped due to the abuse given to Celtic players from sections of the Scottish support. The importance of specific fan cultures in the dissemination of ideas and attitudes can be seen in the universal reference made by supporters of all ages to the abuse received by Celtic winger Jimmy Johnstone while playing for his country in the late 1960/70s.

Group 5, Jim: There are guys on the park playing for their country, these supporters are supposed to be there to support their country. There's a guy down there playing every Saturday in green and white hoops and now he's playing in a blue shirt, and they're standing there abusing him.

Group 2, Paul: Look at all the players who got hassled for not playing as well for their country as they did for their club, Kenny Dalglish, Paul McStay, Nicol and Hansen at Liverpool, I can't think of one Rangers player who gets it in the neck.

Group 3, Brian: Why don't I follow Scotland? A number of reasons, they're dross, they reflect Scottish football, also there are all the other reasons, namely the bigotry on the terraces.

It appears that as the suspicion of prejudice in team selection has receded, the perception, reinforced through commonly circulated personal experiences, of being made unwelcome on the terraces has increased.

While no comprehensive survey of the club allegiances of the Scotland supporter exists, it is probable that many of the travelling supporters are not 'Old Firm' fans. To many supporters of smaller clubs in Scotland following their country (particularly abroad) gives them the opportunity to experience the big match football atmosphere, and the excitement of following a football team abroad, that they do not get at a domestic level. (10) Also, many Celtic supporters stated that while they may no longer go to Scotland matches, they did follow and support the team through television coverage of the games.

What becomes clear is that any simplistic association of a national sporting team with some homogeneous support masks a number of tensions and contradictions that can exist within that culture. Of course, as we see in Section 2 when attention is focused on Liverpool, this is not unique to Scotland or football, and simply emphasises the internal diversity of all supposedly national cultures.

Political football: political identity and the 'Old Firm'

Had Labour won the 1992 elections, it would have created a Scottish Assembly. Soon, truly Scottish parties would probably have replaced the Labour and Tory Parties. How to know what kind of new parties these would have been? By using the Old Firm rivalry as a guide to feeling, in the West of Scotland at least. By this guide, it would appear that in an independent Scotland, a left wing, Republican, Catholic party would oppose a centre-left, Unionist Protestant party. Kuper (1994: 217)

When attention is turned to the relationship between 'Old Firm' supporters and the aspects of political identity a number of introductory comments are required.

To reduce the majority of Rangers and Celtic supporters to specific political voting patterns is of course to generalise. However, in examining aspects of the political identities

articulated by Celtic supporters, this also requires us to make reference to some general assumptions that circulate regarding the political composition of the Rangers support. This is of particular interest in the light of current debates surrounding the political future of Scotland, which are discussed below. In turn, this opens up issues relating to the wider aspects of cultural and national identity in modern Scotland. Initially, let us examine the political composition of Celtic supporters vis-a-vis support for political parties.

The results of the survey of supporters (Boyle, 1991) seemed to emphasise the strong historical link between Catholics and the Labour Party in the west of Scotland, with 88% of the survey voting for that party. A survey carried out among football supporters of the ten teams in the Scottish Premier League by Bradley (1994: 430) placed support for the Labour Party among Celtic supporters at 85%. The nearest to this figure among the rival supporters surveyed was the 58% support for Labour associated with Kilmarnock fans. What emerged from the group interviews that took place, was the strong perception of the SNP as being a party with links with Orangeism and Protestantism. This perception was particularly strong among the younger (under 25) fans.

Group 4, Pat: They (the SNP) are a Protestant party, Catholics aren't welcome.

Another supporter commented how he had heard that there was a stall outside an SNP conference that was selling 'Keep Scotland Protestant' pens. While he felt that this may have been an unofficial stall, he also felt that it must reflect the attitude of some of the people in the conference hall.

Group 5, Graham: Maybe we're being accused of paranoia which has been flung in our faces. I definitely think the identity of Scotland is to be Protestant and that is what they (the SNP) are trying to achieve. [] I couldn't vote for them.

While recent shifts in the SNP support suggest that some Labour voters are switching their allegiance, what emerged among the Scottish-based Celtic supporters was a strong linking of the SNP with negative religious connotations. In the Bradley (1994: 430) survey, support for the SNP among Celtic supporters was only 4%, easily the lowest among all the groups of supporters surveyed. This suggests that unless these perceptions of the party are changed sections of the working class vote in the west of Scotland will be difficult to secure. This has

also been noted by academic writers Tom Gallagher comments:

The synthesising of Hibernian and Scottish traditions has been most noticeable in the cultural vein and has contributed to the renaissance of Glasgow as a cultural and tourist mecca. Only a glimmer is apparent in politics, perhaps in part because the body language of the otherwise blameless SNP contains a whiff of the Presbyterian superiority that was often to be found in some of the worst detractors of the Catholic community before the war. (Gallagher, 1991: 39)

While Peter Lynch has noted:

Before 1994, the SNP had made few explicit connections with the Catholic community, a rather curious situation given that Catholics are a large component of the Scottish population, existing as a reasonably distinct sub-group within the cities and towns of Central Scotland, and are overwhelmingly Labour in their political affiliation. (Lynch, 1995: 12)

Lynch goes on to argue that this issue is starting to be addressed by the leadership of the SNP.

Alex Salmond's (1995) recent attack on sectarianism in Scottish politics, and his attempt to allay fears among Catholics about their position in an independent Scotland by praising their contribution to Scottish life, are both revealing and worthy of note in the light of the controversy surrounding the by-election held in the constituency of Monklands, just outside Glasgow, during the summer of 1994 (see Lynch, 1995). The ill-tempered by-election campaign to capture the seat held by the late Labour Party leader John Smith seemed to bring the religious/political affiliation aspect of Scottish politics to the fore. Claims by the Conservative candidate Susan Bell that the Monklands Labour-run Council discriminated against the predominant Protestant town of Airdrie in favour of the overwhelmingly Catholic Coatbridge led to the national spotlight being turned on the relationship between religion and politics in the west of Scotland. While the Council, with 17 Labour councillors (all Catholic) and 3 SNP councillors (all Protestant) denied any misconduct, charges of religious prejudice (interestingly in this case brought by Protestants against Catholics) and political bias served to remind people of how older suspicions continue to influence contemporary Scottish society. (11)

As in other areas of identity formation, the use of groups as external reference points which confirm an internal 'sense of difference' is also evident when Celtic supporters talk about their perception of the political affiliations held by Rangers supporters. Many view the latter as either Tory or SNP voters, and find this assumption reinforced by the symbols displayed by Rangers supporters at matches, such as the Union Jack and the singing of the

British national anthem.

Group 2, Tom: They sing *God Save The Queen*, and then they go home to Bridgeton and they've got an outside toilet, haven't got hot water and they're living in slums. They're singing, but they obviously haven't thought this through [] there's no logic in it.

What was also implicit in this statement, and repeated in many of the interview groups, was an assumption that many Rangers fans appeared to lack the political awareness of their Celtic counterparts. This awareness among Celtic fans was attributed by supporters to their historical position as a predominant working class Catholic minority in Scotland. However, if large sections of the Rangers support were not voting Labour, the political map of Scotland would be of a significantly different complexion. The editor of the Rangers fanzine *Follow Follow* has stated that he feels the majority of supporters are 'right-wing Labour' (Walker, 1990: 152). A recent survey by Bradley (1994: 430) suggested that support among Rangers fans divided approximately 33%, 32% between Labour and Conservative, with 14 % support for the SNP (14% claimed to support no political party).

As Rangers are a rich club with traditionally close links with a Protestant Scottish identity and attract a substantial degree of support from the middle classes, it is not unreasonable to presume that it is likely that there are more Conservative and SNP voters among its supporters than exist among the Celtic support. In contrast, the Catholic middle class continue to support the Labour Party in the west of Scotland for the historical reasons discussed at the beginning of this chapter (Lynch, 1995: 3).

Graham Walker has noted how he feels an 'ideologically sound' cult has been created around the Celtic supporter (in part mediated through the Celtic fanzine *Not The View*), which may not stand up to closer scrutiny. While this may be true, his own attempt to portray Rangers club officials in a progressive political light also has a hollow ring to it, particularly when he fails to mention some of the extreme right-wing groups such as the British National Party that are connected with elements, however small, of the Rangers support. His view is contradicted by the likes of the following comments printed in the Rangers fanzine *Follow Follow*, and signed by their correspondent Tartan Tory:

Real Scots are proud to be British. Bogus nationalists hate post-reformation Scotland and its symbols of Union (the Crown, the Kirk and the Scottish Regiments). What has

all this got to do with Rangers? Everything. Because our club is a popular symbol of explicit Unionism [] The English are not the enemy, they are friendly rivals in support. Ulstermen are not the enemy, they are Scots by descent and loyal by instinct. No, the enemy is republicanism, be it the terrorism of the Provos or the scum in the media. (*Follow Follow*, 24, 1992) (12)

Gerry Finn has documented the historical link between Rangers personnel and Unionist politics in Scotland. He notes that:

Rangers represents a Unionist identity for the very simple reason that for over a century prominent Rangers figures have publicly identified themselves with Unionism. Moreover, Unionist Rangers have been the only club to express in a clear and consistent manner the anti-Catholic dimensions that have often accompanied that political credo. (Finn, 1994b: 54/55)

With regard to the political allegiance of Rangers supporters we need to be aware of the degree to which symbols displayed at matches may represent loyalty to the club, and not to any specific political configuration. Among football fans of all persuasions there is an awareness of the uniqueness of the setting of the football stadium which allows often bizarre ritualistic displays of support for players and the club. For example in season 1994-5 supporters of Manchester City took to wearing German international football shirts to demonstrate their support for their German-born striker Uwe Rossler. It is also common for supporters of teams playing Celtic to carry Union Jacks to matches specifically to rile Celtic fans.

While David Murray, owner of Rangers, and Walter Smith manager of the club, have both recently stated their support for the maintenance of the Union between Scotland and England, a letter to the *Scotland on Sunday* newspaper noted how at a recent Premier League football match Hearts supporters, when confronted with Union Jack waving Rangers supporters, had sung the Scottish national anthem, Flower of Scotland. The letter writer concluded by stating it was 'a "time to choose" for Rangers supporters. Is it to be the Union flag or the Saltire?' (*Scotland on Sunday*, 9 February 1992) A letter the following week noted:

If a poll was conducted among Rangers fans on the issue of which flag they would want between the U.J. and the Saltire, I firmly believe the Saltire would win and contrary to a lot of folk's belief most of the fans are either Labour or SNP supporters. (*Scotland on Sunday*, 16 February 1992)

Thus, while significant political differences do exist between the majority of supporters of

Celtic and Rangers, related to religious and historical factors (an assertion also made by Bradley, 1994), there can be no simplistic linkage between symbolic sporting displays of allegiance and collective political orientation.

It should also be recognised that both clubs attract a substantial degree of support from Northern Ireland. For Protestants, support for Rangers symbolically reinforces their historical links with Scotland through a football club which itself has strong associations with both Protestantism and support for the Union. While for Northern Irish Catholics, support for Celtic allows them to publicly display and express their commitment using flags, colours, etc. which in Northern Ireland are viewed by Unionists as signifiers of a different political state.

While Liverpool F.C. also draws support from Northern Ireland, that support cuts across political divisions, emphasising the different contemporary relationship that exists between football, religion and political identity in that city.

Section 2:

Liverpool: politics and identity

Liverpool politics have never been less than puzzling and exasperating to outsiders and insiders alike. It was certainly a strange English city that could return an Irish Nationalist MP for one of its constituencies, from 1885 until 1929. It was no less strange for having a Protestant Party which even until 1971 had four councillors in the Town Hall. (Lane, 1987: 125)

Given the historical development of the city, it was inevitable that religion and politics should become so closely intertwined in Liverpool. As was the case in Glasgow, the inter-group conflict between Catholic and Protestant, when set against the growth of the port in the city during the 19th century, would generate a political landscape which divided not simply along class lines, but also those of ethnicity and religion.

Irish-Catholic support in the city up until the 1920s would centre on the Irish Nationalist Party. With its decline after 1922, much of that support in the Catholic wards of the city would move to the Labour Party, which in many instances simply took over the old political machinery of the Irish Nationalist Party. The Conservative and Unionist party would draw cross-class support from the Protestant community in the city, a class alliance which would allow it to exercise a considerable degree of influence in the city right up until the 1960s.

Interestingly, the football clubs of Liverpool and Everton never became focal points for what was a sectarian political culture. As explained earlier, both clubs were formed by the same Tory businessman, and it was in the political arena that the Catholic-Irish of Liverpool attempted to air their grievances rather than through popular sporting activity, as was the case in Glasgow. In addition, and of crucial importance, was the fact that no club adopted the anti-Catholic recruitment policy of Rangers, which exacerbated the image of that club as strictly Protestant.

In Liverpool there was actually a Protestant Party (largely representing the Protestant-Irish in the city) which sided with the Conservative Party in the city but had its own councillors elected to the City Council. When this was allied with the nature of union and labour politics in the city dominated by the port, it becomes clear that politics in Liverpool has always been complex and sectarian in nature.

Commenting on the political situation in the city during the 1980/90s Sarah Baxter notes that:

Old style religious sectarianism has all but died out: postwar planners largely succeeded in breaking up the former Catholic and Protestant housing ghettos; trade unions helped - in the end - to unite working class people; and the two archbishops, David Sheppard and Derek Worlock, have tirelessly promoted ecumenical values. (Baxter, 1991: 12)

However, she also notes how the legacy of sectarian politics has influenced contemporary political styles in the city:

In Liverpool's tightly knit, Irish immigrant communities, standing by your own has always been an essential survival tactic. A Tory 'magic circle' of merchants and businessmen ran the city to suit themselves until the mid-1950s, propped up by the working class Orange vote. Liverpool's first Labour administration, led by Jack Braddock, was no different. He used to threaten people who got in his way [] committees were packed [there were] 'jobs for the boys'. It was corrupt. (Baxter, 1991: 13)

She argues that the domination by the Militant Tendency of the city during the 1980s was simply an extension of the tradition of how politics had always been organised in the city.

Tony Lane also comments on the close links between the Labour Party and the Catholic community in the city and argues that their particular style of politics facilitated the take-over of the party by the Militant Tendency in the 1980s.

combination of a strong sense of civic identity (which in turn has been driven by the perceived political and economic injustices inflicted on Liverpool by an uncaring southern government) and the influence that Irish immigration has had on the cultural character of the city have helped create an ambiguity among many in the city towards the traditional symbols and institutions of Englishness.

In part this is related to the position of Catholicism within English society. As Colm Toibin has pointed out:

Catholics, like Muslims or atheists, had a right to feel strange about official England. The Church of England, viewed from Ireland, seemed like the English class system, or the House of Lords, or the monarchy itself: part of a dream of England [] And distant from a world where people brought up in poverty prayed to favoured saints, statues and relics for material things, and accepted the authority not of the Bible but of the local priest, and used the sanction they received from Rome and from heaven to justify violent rebellion and treachery against the civil power and the monarch. (Toibin, 1994: 250)

Thus for some, being Catholic and living in England immediately call into question their loyalty to that country. This becomes more acute in areas where there is automatically a close association between being Catholic and having connections with Ireland.

It is true that there is a large non-Catholic population in Liverpool, and large Catholic populations elsewhere in the North West of England, notably in Manchester. Yet it is in Liverpool where the Catholic-Irish identity has been strongest in shaping civic identity. For example, as we saw in the previous chapter the collective outpouring of grief after Hillsborough displayed characteristic aspects of Catholic-Irish ritual even among those in the city not from the Catholic community.

It is also true to say that across the North of England there is a strong sense of a regional identity which rejects many of the trappings of southern England as being the only signifiers of Englishness. Yet few places have such an ambiguous attitude to these as Liverpool. In addition, the city has a problematic relationship with its Manchester neighbour, a point that came over clearly throughout the groups interviewed.

Pete, Group 3: I mean Manchester is much more part of Lancashire culture, in one way it's more integrated than Liverpool that's for sure. Sounds strange, but it's more English, if that makes sense. Liverpool does feel more detached, more insular.

Jane, Group 1: It has partly to be economic. I mean it appears that investment in the North West centres on Manchester. It's only 30 miles up the motorway, but it is very different, a different feel, it actually feels more affluent.

Many in the groups argued that the footballing rivalry had really brought much of the resentment and tension between the cities into a public arena. All agreed that the situation had been much worse before the Hillsborough disaster, but noted that the shift of footballing power away from Liverpool towards Manchester United that has occurred during the early 1990s was reactivating the rivalry between supporters of the clubs.

The defining of the city through its support (or lack of it) for the English national football team was also a constant and opened up debates about definitions of Englishness and Irishness

Group 1, Mike: You follow your own teams, then maybe England.

Group 3, Jim: There is almost no support for England in this city. It's associated with southern England and this city has been treated badly by this government.

Group 2, Nancy: We're not very patriotic up here.

Group 4, Stephen: You support your team and local players on the England team, but really it's a different country up here.

Group 1, Dave: It's the Irish thing in this city, no question. The number of people in this city who support Ireland against England in the same competition is amazing. Both in 1988 and 1990, just going round the office, people were wanting Ireland to beat England. They said it was because they had Irish connections. People will quite openly admit that they are not committed to England.

Group 3, Brian: I mean I'm English, yet I feel distant from it, so many things that are English are things I don't identify with. Yeah I'd support Ireland, they're more emotional, open, friendly. It's a cliché, I know, but that what I feel like in Liverpool, it's not English reserve that's for sure.

This linking of the city to characteristics defined as Irish was common across the groups. (14)

It also appears that the success of the Irish national team, with many players born outside of the country, has heightened the sense of identity for many in England. Liam

Greenslade of the Institute of Irish Studies in Liverpool has noted:

As the children of Irish migrants you have very little public validation for your Irishness, unless you are in a major conurbation of Irish people. You find that lots of Irish people grow up with the absence of public validation. The last World Cup (1994) team were catalytic in bringing about a public validation for being Irish. (Rowan, 1994: 186/7)

While in Glasgow, the clear identification of this group with Celtic F.C. allows supporters to express that identity in public spaces on a regular basis, there is less opportunity for others, particularly in England, where no football team is closely identified as being either Irish or Catholic.

Geography (both physical and mental) was also an important aspect in discussions of loyalty to the English national football team.

Gill, Group 3: As Northerners, England is somewhere in the South. I would rather support Scotland or Wales.

Jim, Group 3: [I've] seen Scotland and Wales play, never England, it doesn't do anything for me.

Pete, Group 2: I think there has always been a sneaking admiration for the underdog in this city. Official England represents the topdog, and we like to knock them down, I suppose it's a mixture of class and history. We're a different city, a celtic city really, we're at the edge of England that's for sure.

This mixture of regional, ethnic and religious identity have all acted as boundary-markers of difference for the city, and have been heightened by political marginalisation and economic neglect over the last twenty years. Dave (Group 1) summed it up as follows:

Liverpool is a friendly city, yeah I know all the romantic cliches, and I reject them, and yet the city has a different feel. I mean I'm not Catholic, and most of my friends are not religious, but aspects of that particular form of Catholic-Irishness have seeped into the city. It's not a religious thing now, it's now part of the fabric, religion is secondary, but 'cos of external attitudes, it's now a Liverpool identity. Football is an emotional sport, it's based on love, hate and passion [] That is why it matters, it's just part of this city.

It is worth emphasising a crucial difference between Liverpool and Glasgow. As the former city has been buffeted by external political and economic forces there has been a downgrading in importance of religious labelling in the former, a process that is still deemed of central importance by supporters in Glasgow.

Of course, as has been noted, within this supposedly 'coherent city identity' contradictions are present. It is worth reiterating how earlier chapters have identified race as an important issue in the city and in particular the extent to which many Black Liverpoolians feel excluded from the football culture of the city. (15) This exclusion exists not simply at the local level, but also at the national (English) level. This point was made recently in a documentary about Black identity in the city which emphasised that many in these communities looked to sporting icons that transcended national identity (in particular an English/British identity which treated them with suspicion and prejudice) and looked elsewhere. Many talked about their support for the boxer Muhammed Ali during his career, remembering that it was Ali, not the Englishman Henry Cooper, whom they supported when both men fought for the Heavyweight Championship of the World during the 1960s. (16)

Section 3: Conclusion

What emerges from this examination of the relationship between politics and identity in both cities is its complexity and the extent to which this relationship is informed by specific historical configurations.

In Glasgow, the existence of two clubs so closely allied to different communities in the city, whose political outlook has been shaped by the economic and social experience of these groups both reinforces this sense of identity and highlights the extent to which none of these identities are static. Of course the simple equating of the political symbols carried by football supporters at a specific social event with their political voting patterns can be misleading. However, it does point to aspects of a wider political identity which draws attention to the internal tensions within Scottish society. Whether prejudice and discrimination exists or not, the perception of their existence is strong among certain communities in the country. Ultimately these fears can only be addressed in the political arena through open and frank discussion.

These debates are brought into focus by the developing peace settlement in Northern Ireland and the continuing debate regarding constitutional change in Scotland, and indeed

throughout the whole of the UK. Notions of how Scottishness is defined and the tensions between civic and more ethnic definitions are ultimately political questions. Finn argues that the time is right for a more open, flexible definition of Scottishness, one which recognises at least the dual nature of national identities.

A new Scottish identity will necessarily accommodate the variety of social minority groups that contribute to present-day Scotland. That Scottish identity will allow for some expression of a more complex and rounded identity, one that recognises the validity of retaining a sense of ancestry, whether that be Italian, Jewish, Polish, Pakistani or Irish. A more catholic Scottish identity needs to be adopted if Scotland is to adapt to the true reality of a culturally pluralist society. (Finn, 1991b: 393)

In Liverpool the nature of its political identity is greatly shaped by its relationship with Whitehall. Years of economic decline have forged a strong internal sense of identity, of which football has been central (in no small part due to the unparalleled success enjoyed by Liverpool and Everton both in England and in Europe). In part this problematic relationship has also heightened the sense of ambiguity among many in the city towards an English national identity which makes little accommodation to the differing ethnic origins of its citizens.

The Catholic-Irish traditions are now viewed as less divisive in contemporary Liverpool than in Glasgow. While this has not always been the case, these traditions now form an integral part of the distinctive collective identity of the city of Liverpool. In part this process is explained by that city's relationship with an Englishness which carries not simply connotations of southern England, but of an England which has ignored the city and treated its citizens poorly. In other words the collective identity of Liverpool appears to be united in its distrust of 'Official' England.

In Glasgow, it is the perceived lack of loyalty in a Protestant Scotland of a Catholic community (which, however inaccurately, are immediately associated with having close Irish connections) which allows that city's identity to be fractured to some extent along the lines of politico-religious labelling. This is a process which is given symbolic form through the clubs of Celtic and Rangers and their attendant rivalry.

Interestingly, while many Celtic supporters feel uncomfortable supporting the Scottish national football team, the apathy towards the England football team cuts across the divisions

between supporters in the city of Liverpool. What was common among all supporters interviewed in both cities was the important role of the media in amplifying various discourses and images which exist of themselves and their communities, both internally and externally. It is specifically to the position of the media in this process to which we now turn our attention.

Notes

- (1) It should be noted that a great degree of hostility towards the Catholic-Irish had existed within the industrial wing of the labour movement. It would take a considerable amount of time before many of these suspicions disappeared (Gallagher, 1991: 27). For a recent account of the relationship between Catholicism in Scotland and its links with Scottish politics see Lynch (1995).
- (2) Many of these were seasonal workers who worked in Scotland during the summer and returned to Donegal during the winter. The contact continues today, with coaches travelling between Glasgow and Co. Donegal throughout the year, and on a daily basis during the summer months. Nowadays, however, they tend to carry friends and family visiting relatives in Donegal and Glasgow rather than workers.
- (3) This is not unique to the Scottish experience, see Blain *et al*, (1993: Chapter 1) and Holt (1990).
- (4) See Gallagher (1987), also, by the same author, Blue and Green in Scotland, *Socialist Scotland*, Summer 1990.
- (5) For an account of how the success of the Irish team has both transcended the divisions of gender and pulled into focus the issue of identity in 1990s Ireland see Neil McCaffrey's in Rowan (1994: 136-144).
- (6) For a study of the link between aspects of youth culture and football see Redhead, (1991) *Football With Attitude*, Wordsmith, Manchester.
- (7) In particular see Allison, L. (ed) (1986) *The Politics of Sport*, Manchester University Press and chapter one, Sport and National Culture, in Blain *et al* (1993).
- (8) For example take Conservative MP Norman Tebbit's famous 'cricket test', where he questioned the civic loyalty of those people living in Britain who actively supported the opposing team when England played cricket. To do so, he suggested, was an indicator of an individual's lack of British (English) patriotism.
- (9) See Chapter 4, Celtic and the Media, in Boyle, (1991) and the following chapter.
- (10) For a recent account of Scottish supporters travelling abroad see Giulianotti, (1994).
- (11) See 'Life in a divided community' (*Scotland on Sunday*, 19 June 1994) and for comment on Alex Salmond's initial speech on sectarianism in Scottish society, see,

'Salmond tries to woo Scots Catholic voters' (*The Guardian*, 24 September 1994)

- (12) The role that the media play in the identities of the clubs and their supporters is discussed in the following chapter.
- (13) For an account of the issue of race politics in the city see note 5, chapter 5. Also for an account of the Chinese community in the city see Wong, M.L. (1989) *Chinese Liverpudlians: A History of the Chinese Community in Liverpool*, Liver Press.
- (14) This is also happening in other spheres outwith sport. A recent BBC/RTE drama, *The Hanging Gale*, set in Co. Donegal during the famine years of the 1840s, brought together the Liverpool-born McGann brothers (all in their thirties) to play the lead roles. All commented on how important their Irish Catholic roots had been in shaping their childhood and identity in Liverpool. Joe McGann noted 'They used to call Liverpool little Ireland when I was growing up. There's a serious reinvestment now in people rediscovering their Irish roots' (*The Guardian*, 10 May 1995).
- (15) For an account of the issue of football and racism in Liverpool see note 4, chapter 4.
- (16) The documentary *Black Britain*, BBC 2 (29 January 1991) interviewed black Liverpudlians about their social and cultural experiences in the city over the last number of decades. Also see Gilroy (1993) for his examination of the complexity of contemporary Black identities in Britain.

Chapter 7: The media and identity-formation

'I just wonder if anyone who has not grown up in the West of Scotland can truly comprehend what has been going on here for the last century, and so discover some level of understanding of just how important the fortunes of the Old Firm are in daily lives. It isn't Brooklyn or the Bronx, New York or even Chinatown.

IT'S MUCH MORE SERIOUS.'

Alan Davidson, Let's get serious Liam, *Evening Times*, 6 September 1991

Introduction

The previous chapters have dealt with some of the discourses interlinked with the formation of collective identities in the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool. These include the importance of specific historical narratives; religion and the process of religious labelling; and the interplay between political and cultural identities. What this chapter seeks to do is both to pull together some of these strands, and by focusing on the position and role of the media in the process of identity-formation, develop these arguments in more detail.

Initially, the relationship between media, discourse and identity which was outlined in chapter one is briefly revisited, in so doing emphasising the context within which this chapter is located. Then attention is turned to the representations and constructions of the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool which appear in the media, and in particular how specific images and discourses of the cities are linked to the economic and political development of each city which has been outlined in the previous chapters.

Following from, and closely linked with this, is an interest in how football and its supporters are represented/constructed through various media outlets, and the extent to which, in this process, they come to view themselves as part of wider collectivities. Also there is a concern with the interconnections between these representations/constructions and the various discourses of religious, political and cultural identity which are operating at local, national and even international levels.

With regard to the case studies, there is also an interest in the existence of alternative communication channels among these supporters (such as the fanzine movement) and the extent to which discourses that circulate among supporters may, or indeed may not, challenge those that exist in mainstream media.

What is primarily of interest here is not to examine the accuracy or otherwise of many of the representations and discourses that circulate within the mainstream media (while that in itself is another considerable project, reference is made to some of the issues where it is thought relevant), but rather to investigate attitudes and perceptions among supporters in the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool towards both the media and the images which they produce.

Section 1: Media, discourse and identity

The media's relationship with modern sport has helped transform our understanding of this particular area of popular culture (Whannel, 1992). Mediated sport can be an important cultural arena in which ideas about various aspects of social relations can become naturalised. Today most sporting cultures are to some extent mediated through television, radio or the print media. As has been argued elsewhere, in this process of transformation not only are discourses of identity mediated or simply transmitted, but in many instances they can be constructed or even at times invented, if the political or economic climate is suitable (Whannel, 1992; Blain *et al*, 1993; Blain and Boyle, 1994).

This is particularly true in the field of international sporting competition, where sport can become a symbolic projection of various collective identities. In some instances this can be positive. For example, the success of the Republic of Ireland football team since the mid to late 1980s has helped to promote a particularly positive image of that country and its fans abroad. Moreover, the success of a sport which has been historically viewed as 'foreign' in that country has been an important part of a wider process of rethinking what constitutes the defining cultural characteristics of

Irishness. In addition, it has helped in the two way process of reconnection between people living in Ireland and those who form part of the Irish diaspora (especially young people). (1)

However, at other times international media sport becomes an arena in which the supposed superiority of one country or ethnic group over another is celebrated. As Hugh O'Donnell has noted in his study of the construction of international sporting stereotypes:

[Sport can] function on an international level as a site in which advanced countries can and must act out their preferred myths through self- and other- stereotypes, and celebrate those qualities which, in their own eyes, make them more modern, more advanced, in short superior. [] This process routinely involves downgrading other national groups. (O'Donnell, 1994: 353)

While much of this process of myth reinforcement is conducted in the media's transformation of sport, a note of caution regarding the origins of many of these discourses needs to be introduced.

Firstly, media institutions are themselves subject to a range of economic, cultural and political pressures which heavily influence how they choose to frame or make sense of events. For example, *The Sun* newspaper in England may report a riot involving England supporters differently than the edition of the same paper aimed at a Scottish readership. Both are addressing different culturally defined markets (Blain and Boyle, 1994). The popular press's at times overtly racist treatment of German tennis players at the Wimbledon Tennis Championship may differ from that found on a more sober public service broadcasting channel such as the BBC (where any racist overtones may be much more subtle), which in turn may differ from the over-hyped coverage offered by a commercially driven satellite station such as Sky (see Blain, *et al.*: 1993). In other words, the mobilisation of particular discourses of identity are partly determined by a range of factors, such as the audience being targeted, the specific media institution carrying the material, as well as current political and social attitudes.

Secondly, it is worth emphasising the point made by Philip Schlesinger when he argued for scholars:

not to start with communication and its supposed effects on collective identity and

culture, but rather to begin by posing the problem of collective identity itself, to ask how it might be analysed and what importance communicative practices may play in its constitution. (Schlesinger, 1991a: 150)

It can be misleading to place the media at the centre of the process of identity-formation. While they may be a key site in constituting and reconstituting various discourses (and indeed in many instances both legitimising and marginalising ideas and value systems), the media are not necessarily the primary definers of either discourse or aspects of identity, a point that hopefully has become evident from the material in the previous chapters, where issues of history and historical narratives, religion and religious labelling and ethnic and political identity have been to the fore.

Adrian Mellor has warned against what he views as an increasing tendency within the academy either to view the media as the definer of individual and collective identities, or, at the other end of the scale, the tendency within some postmodernist writing to suggest that people are in some sense completely autonomous from social structures. He argues that the:

alternative is to treat people as active agents interacting with real structures. People make their own cultures, albeit not in circumstances of their own choosing. Amongst these circumstances - within and towards which their activity is directed - are structures of representation; but so too are structures of class, ethnicity, and gender, along with deliberate economic and political strategies that bear upon these. These things are real. They do not merely exist in discourse. Their reality and their consequences exceed their representation. But people are not merely constructed by them. Even in leisure, people act intentionally; although in doing so they may slice the world along a different grain to that expected by the melancholic intellectual. (Mellor, 1991: 114)

What this chapter is interested in is the way that supporters interact with various media discourses, which can be both a mediation of an external reality and a construction of a particular version of the world. What is argued is that it is important to situate media coverage in detailed contexts of interpretation. This does not negate the power, importance and role that the media can play in helping to make sense of a group's collective identity (usually by a process of boundary-marking), but simply alerts us to the fact that this influence will vary depending on a range of other factors in operation, at particular moments, in specific social circumstances. It is this complex

and shifting theoretical relationship that the empirical work in this chapter seeks to emphasise and illuminate through the case studies.

Section 2: In the cities

When A. and R. men hit the street
To sign up every second band they meet
Then marketing men will spill out spiel
About how us Glesca folk are really *real*
(Where once they used to fear and pity
These days they glamorize and patronize our city-
Accentwise once they could hear bugger all
That was low, glottal or guttural,
Now we've 'kudos' incident'ly
And the Patter's street-smart, strictly state-of-the-art,
And our oaths are user-friendly).

Liz Lochhead, Bagpipe Muzak, Glasgow 1990.

The 'new' Glasgow

The popular media images of cities can be complex, multi-faceted and at times contradictory. Representations and constructions of cities may be constant or differ across various media, depending on a number of variables such as the medium, the specific target audience, and at times, the economic currency gained by mobilising particular signifiers of a city.

For example, the evoking of the 'Mean Streets' image of a crime-ridden Glasgow and its personification in the character of the police officer *Taggart*, has been economically beneficial to the commercial Channel 3 station Scottish Television, as it seeks access to the lucrative UK television network schedule. (2) However, on that same channel's Scottish arts programme *Don't Look Down*, or in an upmarket travel programme emphasising the attractions of the city, that particular image of Glasgow and its citizens is more likely to be replaced by one which portrays the city as a vibrant cultural centre for the media and arts.

In collecting media representations of the city since 1968, Sean Damer notes that

the images of Glasgow:

From the *New Statesman* to the *Guardian* and the *Sunday Times* to the BBC, not to mention the tabloids, [present] a coherent imagery whose parameters were so fixed that they constituted a stereotype. The stereotype was of a filthy, slum-ridden, poverty-stricken, gang-infested city whose population consisted of undersized, incomprehensible, drunken, foul mouthed, sectarian lumpenproletarians who were prone to hit each other with broken bottles and razors without warning. (Damer, 1990: 5)

For many writers this image provided a backdrop against which to set their own dramatic work. Indeed it could be argued that for some television dramatists such as Peter McDougall it is still this overwhelmingly masculine image of the city that their work is concerned with. (3)

What is of interest here is the extent to which this stereotype became both the dominant external and internal image of the city. It was political attempts to regenerate the declining industrial city and to attract inward investment which in part led to a radical overhaul of the city's image during the 1980s, specifically with the aim of altering the external image of the city. (4) In a range of initiatives including the city's hosting of the International Garden Festival (1988), the *Glasgow's Miles Better* campaign, its success in becoming European City of Culture (1990) and its recent securing, in the face of competition from Liverpool and Edinburgh, of the title City of Architecture and Design 1999, the city has consciously attempted to change its image as it transforms from a declining heavy industrial economy into one driven increasingly by the service industries, many of which are clustered around the arts and media industries. (5)

Whatever the political and economic merits of such a policy and its success in tackling the economic and social deprivation characteristic of urban Britain during the 1980/90s, it is clear that the traditional media representations of the city have been challenged. Even the image of the city portrayed in the long-running television police drama *Taggart* has become more complex, with storylines which touch upon the divisions in lifestyles between those living in the affluent 'new' Glasgow and people from the 'old' Glasgow whose material lives remain untouched by the changing image

of the city.

Within mainstream British television drama, media representations of the Scots and Glaswegians in particular have also changed over recent years. Actors and actresses with Glaswegian accents have increasingly played characters who are not necessarily primarily defined by their Scottishness, for example, Robbie Coltrane as the police psychologist Fitz in ITV's BAFTA winning *Cracker* and Siobhan Redmond as Maureen Connell in the BBC's award winning series *Between the Lines*, as well as regular characters in ITV's *The Bill*. This is not to say that stereotypes do not appear, such as the alcoholic Glaswegian in the BBC's short-lived soap *Eldorado*, but even this stereotype is being reworked in a more complex and image-conscious way in something such as the BBC's *Rab C. Nesbitt*, which attracts the majority of its audience from outwith Scotland.

It is not being argued here that any one group of images or discourses are necessarily more accurate than another. What is being suggested is that any image of a city, which is presented as being representative of that city and its citizens as a whole, is only offering a partial view of a complex picture. These images are important, but it is also possible to attach to them a power which they do not always carry, in particular with some of the people who live in the cities themselves.

One of the points of similarity between Glasgow and Liverpool has been the extent to which both cities have been defined by the media as overwhelmingly working class cities, with a strong sense of self-identity, of which football and its attendant culture has been an important element. But while Glasgow's image has undergone a radical overhaul over recent years and in the process become more rounded and in many ways more complex, the city of Liverpool has seen itself being represented within an increasingly narrow frame of reference.

In my Liverpool home

Skidmore (1990) has documented how the media, initially through the press in the 19th

century, have helped to both construct and perpetuate the image of Liverpool as a crime-ridden 'problem' city. She traces the evolution of these discourses, many of which originated from official police sources and were uncritically reproduced by London-centred media throughout the 19th and the 20th century. She notes how in particular the discourse which associates Liverpool with law and order problems, once established and legitimised, can continue to set the parameters within which that city is viewed even when, as in Liverpool's case, other cities have a substantially higher crime rate, yet are not represented as such in the media (Skidmore, 1990: 55). (6)

With the exception of a period during the 1960s, when the city appeared to be one of the focal points for the changes taking place in British popular culture (specifically those centred around music and youth culture), changes personified by the emergence and the international success of The Beatles, Liverpool has been a city defined in terms of social deprivation, militant politics, and a passion for football. (7) Like Glasgow, it has also been viewed as a city with a strong oral culture, a breeding ground for stand-up comics and music hall and television entertainers. However, it is worth noting how in recent years the image of Liverpool in the media has become interlinked with football and its supporters in a more pronounced manner than in Glasgow. While Glasgow was attempting to re-invent its city image, Liverpool during the same period suffered a number of tragedies (Heysel (1985), Hillsborough (1989) and the Jamie Bulger murder investigation and subsequent trial (1993)), which in part reinforced deeply embedded media representations of the city.

Detailed examinations of the media coverage of Hillsborough and its impact on the city have been conducted elsewhere, and in particular the untruthful allegations made by *The Sun* newspaper against Liverpool supporters in the aftermath of that disaster. (8) These allegations centred around the alleged criminal behaviour by supporters at the match, accusations which were subsequently found to be untrue. What is of interest at this point is the extent to which the media's coverage of a footballing disaster became transformed into a wider series of representations of the city, and its people as a whole.

This in turn mobilised a number of recurring media discourses regarding Liverpool and Liverpudlians most of which centred around the apparent propensity of the population towards criminal and anti-social behaviour.

The association of football, and its predominantly working class supporters with 'hooliganism', has been an issue that has been subject to much media coverage over the years in Britain. (9) However, it was not simply the reproducing of a number of supposed 'truths' regarding football fans which occurred during the reporting of Hillsborough which is of interest. What clearly emerges from the reporting in the English national press of the reaction of the city to the tragedy in which 96 supporters would ultimately die is the extent to which overwhelmingly negative perceptions of that city have become deeply embedded in mainstream media accounts of Liverpool and its population.

The authors of the report, *Hillsborough and After: The Liverpool Experience*, note how the national press coverage developed:

As time progressed new angles and directions were sought and later coverage connected 'blaming the fans' to a broader negative image of Liverpool as a city. The *Daily Express* [21/4/89] in an article "It's a shame that soccer is turned into a religion", choose to highlight how the anonymous author felt "after Hillsborough we are being deluged with sentimentality." It suggested that the "wonderful spirit" of Liverpool was actually one of "resentment and self pity". It launched an extreme attack on Liverpool as a city:

the visitor's overwhelming impression is of defeat, not endurance, of slovenliness, not local pride, of disintegration, not community [] And the sacred tenet of the spirit of Liverpool is that it is all somebody else's fault. It is the government, 'starving the city of funds', never mind that public money has been poured in for years. It is the big companies turning their backs on Merseyside, never mind that they did so because the workforce was workshy. [Daily Express, 21 April 1989] (Coleman et al, 1990: 82)

Across a range of newspapers from the right-wing *Evening Standard*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Daily Mail* through to the liberal *Observer*, not only was the character of the city held up to ridicule; also ridiculed was the extensive television coverage devoted to the collective outpouring of grief in the city which was discussed in chapter 5.

Anthony Burgess, writing in the *Daily Mail*, commented on the public memorial services and the open collective expressions of grief as Liverpool:

feeling sorry for itself [] to turn a football pitch into an open air cathedral is perhaps to confuse the highest and lowest instincts of mankind. (*The Daily Mail*, 24 April 1989)

Interestingly, this opinion was not shared by much of the coverage in the Scottish media. The first game that Liverpool F.C. played after the disaster was a friendly arranged with Celtic in Glasgow on the 30 April (the then Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish also being a former Celtic player). The outcome was over 61,000 supporters (including 7000 from Liverpool) raising £500,000 for the Hillsborough Disaster Fund and paying tribute to those who died at Hillsborough.

Underlying many of the attacks on the city was a view of it as both crime-ridden and violent, and at the same time representative of all that was wrong with the so called 'dependency culture' of the 1970s, which the Conservative government, and Mrs Thatcher in particular, systematically attacked during the 1980s. This was a point picked up in the discussions among groups of supporters that took place in Liverpool:

Gill, Group 3: The media have their stories written before they arrive, that's even if they do arrive!

Mike, Group 1: Hillsborough (the coverage of) was shocking. The cliches rolled out, it was the fans to blame, we're all scallies, we're all scroungers living off the state, we're all violent. It was totally out of context and wildly inaccurate, but then it's only Liverpool, fair game to some, eh?

Pete, Group 2: It works both ways, the media have a go, we feel set upon, they view that as vindication and so on. It's really hard to change an image that is so all embracing.

Brian, Group 3: No one connects it with politics or economics. It's all genetically programmed Scousers who steal and fight all the time. It's not failed economic and political policies, it's our fault, we're to blame and that fuels the resentment among a lot of people.

The issue of English national identity also was commented upon:

Dave, Group 1: It's partly about identity, because Thatcher got associated with southern England, which has little connection with Liverpool, and the media loved Thatcher, so we did get a bad press.

The local media, in particular the press were distinguished out from the national media.

Stephen, Group 4: The local press are the opposite. I mean they are very parochial, I suppose all local press are really. But its not always healthy, its like being on the defensive the whole time, and the danger is you feel excluded, so you look inward, which isn't really healthy either.

The explanations of this perceived media bias against the city also came out clearly in the interview groups:

Nancy, Group 2: A lot of London-based journalists, who come up to Liverpool for the day. In the north Manchester is the media centre, and that doesn't help because of the rivalry between the cities.

The perception of the existence of a media bias against Liverpool and the viewing of all things connected with the city of Manchester in a favourable light, and in a footballing context particularly Manchester United, were also evident from a report which examined attitudes among schoolchildren living in Merseyside to football in Liverpool. It noted that ideas about the media being biased in favour of Manchester had become firmly established even at this young age:

Supporters on Merseyside claim United are the darlings of the media (regional TV is based in Manchester for example) and that the exploits of Liverpool F.C., in particular, are continually underplayed compared to the much more modest performances of United. The following statement seems to sum up the feelings of many Merseyside fans on this issue. It comes from a 15 year-old, male, regular follower of Liverpool.

I think that a lot of the alienation towards teams is stirred up by the press. Manchester United are never out of the news and all people hear is 'Man U this' and 'Man U that' and what Bryan Robson ate for breakfast ! You get sick of this and Merseyside people hate Man U because of all this coverage. (REPORT, 1987: 29)

What also emerged from this report was that even at this young age the schoolchildren on Merseyside were acutely aware of the negative image that was attributed both to their city and its citizens by the national media. Many felt, ironically in the light of the coverage of Hillsborough, that it was through supporting the city's football teams that a more positive image of Liverpool could be projected to the outside world.

Female, 14, Occasional [attender at matches]

People think that here in Liverpool we are thugs and hooligans who are all on the dole, fiddling the DHSS. This is not true. We set an example when the all-Merseyside [FA Cup] Final took place.

Female, 15, Never [attends matches]

Football is a great thing for our city, with two wonderful teams, and brings Mersey pride all round and creates a great atmosphere everywhere.

(Report, 1987, 15/16)

What is evident among the groups in Liverpool is that there exists among many of the people who live in the city a perception that it is a city unfairly represented in the media. This was felt to be particularly the case in factual news reporting in the national press and in news and current affairs programmes which originated from what was viewed as the London and Manchester-based broadcast media institutions.

Until recently, Liverpool has failed to confront the importance of external and internal image building in a way that other cities, in particular Glasgow, have acknowledged as being a crucial part of any strategy of urban redevelopment. The development of the waterside in Liverpool, including the Albert Dock complex, the opening of the Tate Gallery in 1988, and the recent bid by the city to secure the title of City of Architecture and Design 1999, suggests that this attitude is changing. What is also required is a more rounded range of representations which reflect the complex and multi-faceted identity of the city. For example, as discussed earlier the 'invisibility' of the city's Black population in images of the city is a cause for concern for many in that community, suggesting that some citizens are excluded from having a stake in the future development of the city.

It is important to note that image-building in both cities, while perhaps creating a stronger sense of civic pride (something which both cities have always had), does not ultimately guarantee a better future for all its citizens. It requires to be accompanied by political and economic actions which begin to tackle the economic problems which undermine the social fabric in many urban areas throughout Britain today.

Section 3:

Official and unofficial media

I was told when I joined this club about Celtic's paranoia - now I know it's true. We are hard done by religiously and politically. There are people against us [] I meet people who hate me just because I'm manager of Celtic.
Liam Brady, Celtic manager 1991-1993, shortly after taking over at Celtic Park.

Media Bias?

The issue of media bias was also an issue widely commented upon by the interview groups in Glasgow. What was significant, however, was that while in Liverpool there was a perception of bias against the city from the English national and regional press, in Glasgow (the main centre of the Scottish media) nuances of bias were perceived to be aimed not at the city as a whole, but at specific clubs, and by association their supporters. This is an important point in that it suggests a degree of sophistication of reading among many fans. In other words, it calls into question the extent to which the output of many mainstream media organisations (especially the national press) is trusted by sections of supporters whose attitudes are shaped by knowledge gained in other social contexts.

Among Celtic supporters, media bias against the club forms part of a wider perception of discrimination in general against Catholics from within some sections of Scottish society.

Brian, Group 3: Let's not forget, that at the end of the day, Scotland is basically a Protestant country, and the media broadly reflect that. Yes, it's not as bad as twenty years ago, but the idea that discrimination, the nods and wink culture, has disappeared completely simply isn't true.

John, Group 1: It's not long ago that the Scottish media didn't even mention Rangers all-Protestant signing policy, and let's be honest it was actually an anti-Catholic institution. It was natural in Scotland, wasn't it! It was the biggest secret in the media. That is only twenty years ago.

Even among the younger supporters, a suspicion of the media and its allegiances is very much in evidence:

Chris, Group 5: You need to read everything, because otherwise you

don't know what people are thinking about you and Celtic. We take an accumulation of everything, and select from it.

With regard to the Scottish press, across the interview groups it was the same papers which were highlighted as being either anti-Celtic, or pro-Rangers.

Paul, Group 4: One paper gives us a fair crack of the whip and that's the *Glasgow Herald*.

John, Group 1: I find the *Scotland On Sunday* is reasonably objective and quite good. The tabloids say what the majority of Scotland want to hear and obviously the majority of Scotland are Rangers fans, Protestant Rangers fans. *Scotland On Sunday* look at it objectively, they tell you why this is happening. The *Sunday Mail* and *Daily Record* are telling you what people in the streets are telling you, they offer no insight.

Brian, Group 3: A lot of them are Rangers fans with typewriters, *The Sun* and the *Daily Record* in particular, apart from looking at a readership and channelling your efforts towards getting them to buy your paper, they are pro-Rangers most of the time.

Anthony, Group 3: I don't know how many times I've picked up *The Sun* who are so blatantly anti-Celtic it's incredible and found a front page story that connected Celtic with this and that, usually some IRA connection story, it's absolute rubbish.

Dave, Group 2: Never buy the the *Sun* or the *Daily Record*, or the *Daily Ranger* as we call it. *The Sun* is a politically suspect paper anyway, but it really is anti-Celtic as well.

There is in part an economic reason for the quantity, if not the quality, of Celtic and Rangers stories in the press. Put simply, stories relating to Glasgow's two major clubs sell newspapers. This is also the case in the city of Liverpool, but both the *Liverpool Echo* and *The Post* are not dealing with the same kind of internal city rivalry that exists in Glasgow. (10)

Part of the Scottish *Sun's* strategy in its circulation battle with the *Daily Record* has been to devote more attention to its sports coverage and forge closer links with particular clubs. During Graeme Souness's reign at Rangers, for example, relations between the manager and the *Sun* newspaper resulted in a number of exclusives for the paper, the most notable being the signing of the Catholic, and former Celtic player,

Maurice Johnston for the club in 1989. Souness's close relationship with that newspaper when he returned to Liverpool as manager (with his agreement they carried exclusive pictures of him recovering after major heart surgery) did little to endear him to supporters at that club who still viewed *The Sun* as an anti-Liverpool paper, following the lies it published about the city and its football fans in the aftermath of Hillsborough.

The 'Old Firm' link with sports journalism in Scotland is interesting and highlights some of the geographical problems faced by journalists working within a relatively small sporting environment. The degree of attention devoted in the press and broadcasting to the 'Old Firm' is a source of constant irritation to football supporters outwith the west of Scotland.

This is related to the importance of sources in aiding journalists. In such a relatively small marketplace, it sometimes appears that journalists are not keen to upset some of their key sources. Indeed, it could be argued that there appears at times to be a relatively stable consensus among various sections of the Scottish media regarding sporting issues. There have been notable exceptions. *The Herald's* James Traynor incurred the wrath of (the then Rangers manager) Graeme Souness with his criticism of the club's poor performance in European competition and was subsequently banned from Ibrox stadium. Much of the sports writing in *Scotland On Sunday* has also been willing to dissent from some of the more settled relationships existing within Scottish sport, the latter typified, for example, by inattention to the issue of sectarianism and racism in Scottish sport (again with exceptions such as Ian Archer, who writes currently for the *Scottish Daily Express* and the *Glasgow Evening Times*). The *Daily Record's* recent attack (1995) on the governing body of Scottish football, the Scottish Football Association (SFA), following a piece of market research into Scottish football supporters commissioned by the newspaper, was designed not to antagonise any of its readership, mobilising as it did the dislike among many fans of both Celtic and Rangers for the SFA.

Moorhouse (1991) has argued that the media portrayal of Glasgow as a tribal city, with two 'warring' communities (Catholic and Protestant), is reproduced by both the UK national and Scottish media. This image, he claims, is popular in Scotland:

and possibly more so in England where it exudes that enticing whiff of primitive savagery which it is one of the cultural roles of the fringe 'nations' of the UK to provide [] it is often not realised outside how proud the Scottish football culture is of the clash of Rangers versus Celtic - 'the greatest club game in the world' as it is routinely referred to - as something the English have not got and cannot match. (Moorhouse, 1991: 204/205)

While agreeing that the media play a key role in constructing a particular version of the 'Old Firm', which helps not only to sustain interest in the clubs and the fixture, but has the important economic element of selling newspapers and attracting viewers to television, we should not underestimate the power of alternative discourses. These discourses may attempt to highlight some of the issues which do not get discussed in the blanket coverage given by the media to the 'Old Firm' rivalry.

Fanzines, media discourses and identity

Are they (Celtic supporters) media led? Have they been brainwashed? The 'old guard' the 'dynastic figures', often try to claim they are...It suggests a following of zombies. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but surely not all of the people all of the time. Certainly not this support. (Graham Spiers, *Scotland On Sunday*, 23 February 1992)

The influence that the media exert over the sport of football has become more pronounced in recent years (Barnett, 1990; Whannel, 1992). Both broadcasting and the popular press play an important role in setting the parameters within which issues relating to football get discussed. Partly as a reaction to the increasing commercialisation of the game, an alternative channel of communication among supporters has developed through the growth of the fanzine movement. (11)

While these publications, by fans for fans, can articulate concerns not treated in the mainstream media, it is important to note that there also exists an awareness among supporters of existing media discourses. Fanzines may be used by supporters to reinforce these discourses if they view them positively or challenge them if they are deemed to be negative. For example, those Scotland supporters who travel abroad to

follow and support the Scottish national football team revel in reproducing or living up to the image of the friendly, noisy and hooligan free 'Tartan Army' propagated by the Scottish media. This awareness of the importance of the media has played a central part in the recent restructuring of the internal and external image of the Scottish football supporter who follows the Scottish team when playing in Europe. Richard Giulianotti noted this awareness during the World Cup in Italy in 1990:

in presenting themselves to the world through media-friendly signification, Scots declare images of English hooligans to be accurate indices of national isolationism. They, in turn, manipulate this recognition of media power, through the enactment of a bizarre internationalism ad infinitum. (Giulianotti, 1991: 510)

Again the oppositional element is important in defining the characteristics of the 'ingroup'; in this case the Scottish supporter. It was a process that was clearly evident at the 1992 European Football Championships in Sweden, where the Scottish supporters were voted by UEFA 'the best behaved fans of the tournament'. What has become clear is that part of this behaviour is dictated by a desire to be seen as different from the English football supporter, who has become associated, in part through media coverage, with violence, political extremism and hooliganism both in Britain and throughout Europe.

As has been pointed out by Richard Giulianotti, a central component in this image is the need to appear different. He argues that among Scotland supporters:

The desire to differentiate themselves from England and its fans is so regularly voiced as to have become routine. (*The Herald*, 22 January 1994)

This can also partly be explained by the differing reaction that one has from members of other countries when at football tournaments. On hearing English being spoken, many assume that supporters are from England and are thus hooligans. When they realise you are Scottish or Irish, their attitude towards the fan is much more friendly and welcoming. There are very real advantages in being recognised abroad as a football fan who is not an English supporter, and this partly explains the extravagant, almost kitsch form of dress so beloved of Scottish supporters abroad (kilt, sporrán, tartan and the like). Although English speakers, it helps identify them as in fact *not* English.

This process of boundary-marking is also true of the relationship that exists between 'Old Firm' supporters. As was noted in Chapter 4, few sets of football supporters are as aware of the historical evolution and traditions of their clubs (excepting of course that many of the historical narratives may be inaccurate). Each group of supporters define itself in part against the other, and in this process re-affirms its sense of difference and uniqueness.

It has been noted earlier how other areas of civil society also play a role in this process of socialisation, such as educational and religious institutions. Another arena can be the media which continually emphasise and in the process reproduce the uniqueness of the 'Old Firm' rivalry, and in so doing also boost newspaper sales, radio audiences and television viewing figures. Thus the circulation of media discourses relating to Celtic and Rangers are not just important in cultural terms, but also matters in material terms to the Scottish media.

Of course some issues are more problematic than others, for instance the role of sectarianism and racism in Scottish society. For the media the dilemma lies in the fact that while they have no problem discussing the 'unique atmosphere' of Glasgow derbies, they find it more difficult to tackle or examine some of the sectarian overtones which in turn help to generate that atmosphere. Instead, it often gets reduced to a 'colourful' characteristic of life, something that is unique and endemic to the west of Scotland.

This point is often made when overseas or English born players actually play in their first 'Old Firm' match. During the season 1994/5, the Danish international Brian Laudrup, playing for Rangers, and the Dutch-born Celtic striker Pierre van Hooijdonk both made their debuts in an 'Old Firm' match. In the build-up to the games and in the aftermath media analysis, much attention was devoted, particularly in the press and the club newspapers, to how each would cope with the 'unique atmosphere'. Van Hooijdonk, who scored in his first Celtic/Rangers match, commented on how it had

been the best atmosphere at any Celtic match he had played in, and how the derby match (routinely referred to by both the Scottish and English media as the biggest derby game in the world) was well known to football followers in his native Netherlands. Nowhere in any of the coverage was reference made to the religious and cultural undercurrents which underpin this particular derby match.

Celtic and Rangers fanzines

The growth of the football fanzine movement during the 1970/80s has been heralded as an important attempt to provide the supporters with a voice with which they can raise their concerns about a game, which has historically been run by people who have shown little interest in the needs or opinions of the supporter (Curran and Redmond, 1991; Haynes, 1995). Haynes (1995: 39-79) provides an account of how the explosion in fanzines from 1987 onwards helped both to reflect and change the environment surrounding football fan culture in Britain (by the 1990s there were over 600 fanzines, with *When Saturday Comes*, the largest, having a circulation of almost 40,000). Many of these publications, which are produced by supporters using desk top publishing facilities and are sold outside football grounds as well as through newsagents and specialist bookstores, take issue with mainstream media accounts of football (in particular those found in the popular press) and provide alternative viewpoints and opinions on the club and its supporters.

A degree of caution is of course required when mapping out the discourses which circulate in and among the fanzines, and many can not be simply read as being an accurate indicator of the attitudes of all supporters. It is important to remember that football culture is based on partisanship and rivalry, and this is reflected in much of the content carried in the fanzines, which may criticize opposing teams or groups of supporters.

Moorhouse (1994) conducted a detailed survey of the two main fanzines produced by supporters of Celtic (*Not The View*) and Rangers (*Follow Follow*).⁽¹²⁾ He

attempted to examine the discourses in these publications which related in particular to the issue of sectarianism. Unsurprisingly, in the light of what has been discussed in previous chapters, he argues that *Follow Follow* espoused a pro-Unionist, anti-Republican political stance. Interestingly, that fanzine also identified a media campaign of bias against Rangers F.C. and its supporters. They based this accusation on what they perceived was the media's unwillingness to highlight Celtic F.C.'s and its supporters (in their view) pro-IRA links and sympathies. Moorhouse concludes:

It is hard not to be amused by a fanzine that carries advertisements for a cassette 'There's Something Stirring in King Billy's Bogs' and for a marmalade 'King Billy's Orange Preserve', but 'irreverent' is exactly what *Follow Follow* is not. It is serious, edgy and embattled, holding on for some 'cause' that tends to be appealed to rather than being specified. (Moorhouse, 1994: 183)

This explicit link between the club's supporters and the symbols of Ulster Unionism is a continual feature of much of their fanzine output, certainly constituting one aspect of the broader political identity of many Rangers fans.

Suspicion of the media is also much in evidence in the most popular Celtic supporters' fanzine *Not The View*. During 1993 the central issue for Celtic supporters was the question surrounding the future ownership and direction of the club. With the majority of supporters opposed to the old Board of Directors, the fanzine *Not The View* became part of a wider movement to have them replaced, which ultimately happened in 1994. In addition to this campaigning role, Moorhouse assesses the fanzine as one which:

promotes the ideology that there is widespread discrimination, systematic discrimination, in Scottish society against Catholics and Celtic Football Club though its writers sometimes wonder whether this is just their own 'paranoia'. (Moorhouse, 1994: 189)

Certainly many of the supporters in the interview groups viewed the fanzines as important, although they were also seen as only one of many media sources of information regarding Celtic. They were viewed as more reliable than many of these, such as, for example, the popular press in Scotland.

Tom: Group 1: Fanzines like *Not the View* are important, they generate discussion among the supporters, and remember, at their best, they can be very funny and do reflect that sharp terrace talk.

John, Group 4: Yeah, they do also allow gossip and stories about players [usually Rangers] to circulate among supporters.

Stephen, Group 2: It's a part of being part of a network, you don't always agree, but it's funny and in its own way emphasises that people really care about this club.

Moorhouse (1994: 191) also claims that there is little evidence to suggest the existence of a sectarian culture in the west of Scotland. He argues that much of what passes for sectarianism exists solely at the level of rhetoric, and that sectarianism is not an issue in Scottish society and should not be elevated into one by journalists or academics. In addition, he suggests that these groups have spent too much energy focusing on the rhetoric of sectarian conflict without producing material evidence to substantiate the existence of intergroup conflict. In fact, one of the most striking aspects discovered during research into this project is the extent to which most journalists and academics do not engage and focus on the issues surrounding the supposed sectarian culture of Scotland, or in particular the west of Scotland.

He concludes by stating:

In all truth, the fanzines I have considered scarcely say much about what it is to be 'Scottish'. (Moorhouse, 1994: 192)

This point was picked up in a review of Moorhouse's chapter in the national Scottish Fanzine *The Absolute Game*, with the reviewer concluding:

Follow Follow wishes it was English. *Not the View* wishes it was Irish. Quite what either of them has to do with 'Scottishness' escapes me.
(*The Absolute Game*, No. 38, May/June /July 1994)

Both these statements are interesting, as it would appear that both are underpinned by a very specific, tight definition of what constitutes being 'Scottish' and what constitutes legitimate displays of 'Scottishness'. Yet many people devote much of their time to following these clubs and in the process make large financial and emotional investments in them. The opinions of large sections of people who live in the west of Scotland, however unpalatable they obviously are to both authors, do tell us something about the complexity of identity in contemporary Scottish society and do not deserve to be so

contemptuously dismissed.

This is not to suggest that the perception of one's religious affiliation is a primary definer of identity to the extent that it can be in, for example, in a city such as Belfast, where a 'religious' identity can also become a marker of ethnicity. However, it appears, particularly among the young working class people interviewed in this study, that perceived religious affiliation is one of many levels of identity that play an important part in their formative experience of growing up in Glasgow, to an extent that is simply not the case in a city such as Liverpool.

In a recent interview, the writer and journalist Simon Kuper, who had visited Glasgow as an outsider and written on the Celtic/Rangers rivalry, noted that:

I do agree [] that I was probably overhasty in 'dismissing sectarian influences as a significant force in West of Scotland society' - or more specifically, in West of Scotland politics. The Monklands East by-election, and the wrangling that went on there before it, helped me to realise that, though I was out of the country last year, so once again I don't really know much about this subject.

(The Absolute Game, No. 41, Jan/Feb. 1995)

While Moorhouse is right to urge caution in simply using written texts as evidence of the existence of sectarianism, what is clear from the material in this and previous chapters is the extent to which these discourses do exist and circulate among supporters, and in so doing, can, and do, at specific moments influence their social and political behaviour.

As Bairner (1994) has argued, these discourses and the perceptions of prejudice that accompany them will continue to hold a resonance for many in the absence of open and public debate. This is not necessarily to suggest that these perceptions would disappear as a result of more open discussion. However it may begin to facilitate a greater degree of understanding between groups with differing outlooks.

In Liverpool, fanzines associated with the two main clubs in the city, Liverpool and Everton, have been primarily concerned in recent years with the changes taking place at their clubs. (13) While a continual reference to Manchester United does mark many of the fanzines, particularly those which support Liverpool F.C., these usually refer to what they view as the extreme praise being given to the Manchester United team by

media that are perceived, as evident from the interviews above, as biased in favour of that club.

The rivalry between the Liverpool clubs and Manchester United symbolises the uneasy relationship between the cities, where a poorer city, such as Liverpool, feels that it is Manchester which has attracted the investment which has come to the North West of England. The excessive media attention devoted to Manchester United over the last thirty years, based around their success in the sixties which was achieved in the aftermath of the 1958 Munich air disaster in which a young United team was wiped out, has, in the eyes of Liverpool supporters, been in stark contrast to the perceived lack of acclaim bestowed by the media on their club. This was felt to be particularly unfair during the period (1970s/1980s) when Liverpool dominated English and European football for over a decade yet while Manchester United were relatively unsuccessful at this time, they were still viewed by the media as the 'glamour' club in England.

In many ways these fanzines such as *When Skies are Grey* (Everton) and *When Sunday Comes* (Liverpool) occupy a more traditional fanzine territory, being primarily concerned with specific football related matters at the clubs, while also making fun of other clubs and their supporters, in particular those of Manchester United. They can also provide a focal point through which supporter concern can be articulated, such as the recent (unsuccessful) attempt to prevent the seating of the Kop end of the ground at Liverpool's Anfield stadium.

Jim: Group 3: I mean the fanzines are a laugh, and also a way of extending a dialogue among supporters. They often do tell you things about the club that you didn't know.

Pat: Group 2: They often take issue with media reports of the club (Liverpool), but they can, like a lot of the press here, be a bit insular, but things like religion and the like don't come into it, because it's simply not an issue here.

Section 4:

Observations on the sport, media and identity relationship

The media enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the football industry in Britain as a whole and Scotland in particular (Blain and Boyle: 1994). The extensive coverage given by the media to football is economically important both to media institutions and to the sport itself. On one hand it sells newspapers and attracts viewers and listeners to broadcasting, while on the other it gives the sport a high profile and free publicity which is increasingly important as it attempts to retain existing sponsors as well as attracting new ones into the game. Also, broadcasters in Britain now pay substantial sums of money for the right to carry football on television. (14)

It is worth remembering that football, and football fandom, are based extensively on competition and rivalry. In addition, part of the experience of being a football supporter, is the bond of loyalty that exists between the fan and the club. A crucial part of this complex relationship between a supporter and a football club is also the relationship that an individual has with the other supporters of that club. As Gerry Finn notes in his examination of football violence:

The extent to which club affiliation plays a prominent part in any one individual's social identity will be variable. The triggering of that element as a salient feature of an individual's social identity will vary across different social situations [] To be a football supporter requires an individual to recognise some shared identification not only with the club, but particularly with the other supporters.

(Finn, 1994b: 108/109)

It is in this process of identification with other supporters, part of which is achieved through defining oneself against some 'other', that the media can play an important role.

Studies have shown that this process of boundary-marking is particularly marked in coverage of international sporting events, with many of the seemingly apolitical discourses associated with media sport being very similar to those which circulate in the political arena (Blain *et al*, 1993: O'Donnell, 1994). As Blain *et al* (1993: 191) note:

When UEFA's Control and Disciplinary Committee ordered a replay of the Stuttgart-Leeds first round European Cup tie at the beginning of October 1992, apparently favouring the German side despite its having broken the 'foreign players' rule in the second leg of the tie, German lobbying was seen by the British

press as having secured an unjust reward. The coupling in the real domain of ideology of sport and politics was well illustrated by the *Herald's* comment (5 October 1992) that 'the real truth is that the Bundesliga has completed the double initiated by the Bundesbank'.

However, what this chapter, and indeed the previous ones have emphasised is the importance not simply of focusing on media texts and identifying specific discourses, but of also being aware of the extent to which supporters engage with these discourses. In this instance what appears to happen is that while the media may reproduce, amplify and even reconstitute part of the identities associated with clubs, cities and supporters, many of these will already exist within and among members of that social group (in this instance supporters of specific clubs). In other words, it could be argued that in the case of Celtic supporters, various social and historical factors such as religion, schooling and family socialisation are key determining factors in their identification with the club, and by association other club supporters, almost irrespective of what the media report.

This is not to suggest that people are simply acted upon by external forces, but while they of course make choices and decisions many of these are influenced by the environment in which they will have grown up. The fact that football support in Glasgow is broadly divided along particular religious lines, in a way that it is not in Liverpool, is not determined by the media, but rather a range of social and cultural factors. The media are important, in the sense that they help to foster a wider feeling of collective identification among members in the social group and may even put different members in touch with each other. This process can also be complex. Many Celtic fans have their sense of collective identity as supporters heightened by sharing the common assumption that their club is unfairly treated by sections of the media (Boyle, 1991). Thus any process of boundary-marking by the media may be both intentional and/or accidental and is continually subject to changes in the political and economic climate.

The media can become one part of a complex relationship that helps link an individual to a larger collective grouping. At certain moments the media are important

in legitimising and giving a profile to groups of supporters, such as in the coverage of a successful Cup Final victory, or the aftermath of a tragedy such as Hillsborough. At other times and in specific social circumstances their importance may be less so.

For example, the *perception* of difference which may exist between people who meet for the first time in a social environment and, in discussing football find out that they support different 'Old Firm' clubs, may then become based on their perceived different religious or educational upbringing (however inaccurate this may actually be). This will often happen in the west of Scotland among young males who find themselves playing with supporters of an opposing 'Old Firm' club in an amateur football team. While this support will then become the butt of jokes between Celtic and Rangers supporters (the ratio of each in the group can be important), there is also immediately a clear perception that some team-mates share a similar background (or have a different one) from others.

One needs to be cautious about ascribing too much power to the media's ability to shape and determine individual and collective identities. However, place the media and their role within a broader framework which recognises the importance that historical, economic and cultural factors play in shaping aspects of social identities, and they become one part (however important at times) of a complex process.

Globalisation and the return of the local

Finally in this chapter, it is worth briefly making a number of points regarding the relationship between the forces of globalisation and how they are impacting on sport and identity. The extent to which sport is being increasingly reshaped by forces of globalisation, by which time-space relationships are being altered with political and cultural implications, has been addressed elsewhere (Maguire, 1993; Jarvie and Maguire, 1994: 230-262). It has been noted that while football World Cups and Olympic Games appear to offer examples of global cultural events, the impact these may have on national and cultural identities is complex (Blain *et al*, 1993). (15)

Ultimately any impact on the process of identity-formation of such events is determined by the specific historical, economic and political circumstances within which they are made sense of (for example Portugal's coverage of the Barcelona Olympics was in part determined by the political relationship that country has with its neighbour Spain, see Blain *et al*, 1993: 175-181). What is of interest in the Scottish case is that, while external European and global pressures are impacting on both the football and media industries in that country, this has not necessarily led to some sort of cultural erosion or standardisation in Scottish sport (Jarvie and Walker, 1994). What has happened has been a resurgence of interest in what might be called the local or regional.

This has been driven in part by a realisation of the economic benefits that can accrue to media organisations can accrue from focusing on issues specific to Scotland and not covered in other media. Recently, both BBC Scotland and its main commercial rival in the Scottish market, Scottish Television, have been keen to promote themselves as being distinctly Scottish in their output. (16)

The Scottish media's interest in, say for example the Celtic/Rangers rivalry, is as pronounced as ever, emphasising that while media and sporting organisations are subject to global economic pressures, this is in some instances being accompanied by a resurgence of the local. This is particularly true where specific market places and political and cultural spaces coincide to some extent.

As was suggested in chapter one, debates around the global and the local cannot simply be framed in the context of individuals or groups being located in either one space or the other. As Schlesinger notes when he argues for an actionist perspective on identity formation:

Such a perspective requires us to see identity not as a prior condition of collective action but rather as a continually constituted and reconstructed category.

(Schlesinger, 1991a: 173)

It becomes necessary in this perspective to be aware of the position that the media occupy in such a process, and to be alert that at particular times, in specific circumstances, its importance will vary considerably.

Notes

- (1) This shift is brilliantly captured in the work of Irish playwright and novelist Dermot Bolger, in particular in the plays *The Lament for Arthur Cleary* and *In High Germany*, which directly deal with the unifying role that Irish soccer success has had for members of the Irish diaspora. Both plays are published in Bolger, D. (1992) *A Dublin Quartet*, Penguin, London.
- (2) *Taggart* has been one of Scottish Television's biggest successes over the last ten years. It regularly attracts over 12 million viewers on the ITV network, and has been sold by Scottish Television to numerous countries abroad (it has been a particular success in France). Such is its importance to the station, that even after the death of its lead actor Mark MacManus in 1994, Scottish Television are still hoping to continue with the series.
- (3) See for example his recent work for BBC Scotland such as *Down Among the Big Boys* (1993).
- (4) For a more detailed account of this process see Damer (1990), Spring (1990) and the review of Spring's book by Schlesinger (1991b).
- (5) For an excellent overview and discussion of the Enterprise and Heritage debate in Britain see Corner and Harvey (eds.) (1991).
- (6) For example, official crime figures for Scotland, England and Wales for 1989 ranked Merseyside seventh in the recorded crime list (Manchester was second). While for both homicides and violent crime, per head of population the region was ranked tenth.
- (7) Williams (1991: 165/166) has noted the importance that music and television played in the newly evolving terrace culture that was prevalent in Liverpool during the 1960s.
- (8) See Coleman *et al* (1990), Walter (1991) and for an inside view of *The Sun's* coverage of the disaster see Chippendale and Horrie (1992).
- (9) The main texts are Dunning, E., Murphy, P. and Williams, J. (1988) *The Roots of Football Hooliganism*, Routledge, London. Williams, J., Dunning, E. and Murphy, P. (1989) *Hooligans Abroad*, (2nd edition), Routledge, London. For an overview of the research into football hooliganism in Britain see Williams (1991), and more recently a collection of essays, Giulianotti, R., Bonney, A. and Hepworth, M. (eds.) (1994) *Football, Violence and Social Identity*, Routledge, London.
- (10) Radio is also important, with the commercial station Radio Clyde's Saturday

afternoon sports (football) programme *Super Scoreboard* being the most listened to radio programme in the whole of Scotland. Radio Clyde broadcasts to west and central Scotland and is one of the most commercially successful of the ILR stations in the UK. The dominant position of Clyde is being challenged in 1995 by a rival commercial station Scot FM, which has secured the rights to broadcast live Scottish football previously held by Clyde.

- (11) For a history of fan participation in the game see Taylor, R. (1992) *Football and its Fans*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, and after Hillsborough see Taylor, I. (1991). With regard to the role of football fanzines and fan culture see, Jary, D., Horne, J. and Bucke, T., (1991) Football "Fanzines" and Football Culture: A case of Successful 'Cultural Contestation', in *Sociological Review*, August, 39 (3). A detailed examination of the rise of football fanzines and the sociological and cultural origins of the fanzine movement is provided by Haynes (1995).
- (12) *Not The View* (the official Celtic club paper is called *The Celtic View*) began in 1987, and sells an estimated 10,000 copies a month, making it one of the biggest selling fanzines in Britain. *Follow Follow* started in 1988 and is the most popular of the fanzines produced by Rangers supporters. For a full list of all fanzines associated with Celtic and Rangers, see the fanzine listings in the nationally distributed *When Saturday Comes*, London.
- (13) Interestingly it was out of Merseyside that one of the earliest football fanzines, *The End* emerged in 1981, representing the crossover that was taking place between football and music in and around Liverpool at that time (see Haynes, 1995). For a full list of the fanzines associated with both Everton and Liverpool see the listings page in *When Saturday Comes*.
- (14) A recent example of the escalating costs involved is the deal struck in 1992 when the satellite broadcaster Sky Television and the BBC paid £306 million to the FA Premiership. This gave Sky Sports the exclusive rights to screen live English Premier League football, with the BBC carrying edited highlights on terrestrial television.
- (15) As Blain *et al* conclude in their study of the relationship between media, sport and national identity: 'sports journalism, albeit very unevenly, is as likely to produce a turning inward toward national concerns, and a buttressing of a sense of difference, as it is to operate ideologically on behalf of a harmonious world, even, as we have seen, at that mythic habitat of the familial, the Olympics. Perhaps this bolstering of the national is even preferable to the pretence that the civilities of village life could ever operate on a global scale.
Lacking evidence to suggest that the metaphor of village life is applicable to the world-spaces created by the audio-visual industries, and in the presence of so many indications of continued, in some domains even expanded, distance and atomisation, we should not exaggerate the political and cultural significance of a moment of worldwide admiration for Totó Schillaci or Carl Lewis, for Steffi Graf

or Derartu Tulu, no matter how wonderful it may have been at the time'. (Blain *et al*, 1993: 196)

For an overview of some of the debates regarding globalisation see Robertson, R. (1992) *Globalisation: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Sage, London: Featherstone, M. (1990) *Global Culture, Theory, Culture and Society*, No. 7, and by the same author, (1991) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, Sage, London. In addition see Larson, J.F. and Park, H-S. (1993) *Global Television and the Politics of the Seoul Olympics*, Westview Press, San Francisco.

- (16) In 1994 Scottish Television actually increased its market share of the audience to 40.7%, at a time when most terrestrial channels were seeing their market share fall with the increased competition from satellite and cable delivery systems. See Rob Brown, Turned on to a Cultural Identity, (*Scotland On Sunday*, 19 February 1995).

Conclusion

The point about football in Britain is that it is not just a sport people take to, like cricket or tennis or running long distances. It is inherent in the people. It is built in the urban psyche [] The way we play the game, organize it and reward it reflects the kind of community we are.
Arthur Hopcraft (1990) *The Football Man: People and Passions in football*,
Introduction, Originally published 1968.

The identity game

David McCrone has suggested that:

The question to ask is not how best do cultural forms reflect an essential national identity, but how do cultural forms actually help to construct and shape identity, or rather, identities - for there is less need to reconcile or prioritise these. (McCrone, 1992: 195)

What has been of central concern throughout this work is the interconnection between various identities, religious, political and cultural, and how the cultural form of football has helped to continually give public expression to these. It has been argued that football occupies an important position in a range of social identities among groups in both Glasgow and Liverpool. Its importance varies depending in part on the surrounding political, economic and cultural environment.

McCrone (1992: 195) has argued that in the late twentieth century 'we wear our identities lightly, and change them according to circumstance'. He suggests that the notion that people carry a single all-embracing identity with them does not in fact stand up to close scrutiny. While this work clearly demonstrates the complex nature of contemporary identity, and that these identities are not static but are continually being acted upon, it also suggests that in particular circumstances the ability, or even the desire for people or communities to drop one aspect of their identity and simply select another may be limited. In other words, while rejecting the monolithic concept of identity, it is also clear that some aspects of identity are more deeply embedded than others.

To many people in both cities, football and their support for particular clubs, help to give specific identities symbolic form. For example, in Liverpool this manifests itself in a

strong sense of a city identity, while in Glasgow, for supporters of Rangers it may be part of a wider Protestant identity. One can accept the argument about the fluidity of identity-formation while still recognising that some symbols and myths will be more deeply rooted and have a greater purchase than others. It appears that when a particular component part of an identity is under threat, this can lead to a strengthening of its importance for a particular group. It could be argued that, while evidence of discrimination against Catholics in the west of Scotland may only exist at the level of anecdote, what emerges from the fieldwork (chapter 5) suggests that this perception of difference exists among some Catholics, and in turn may impact on an individual's sense of identity and possibly, in certain circumstances, influence their behaviour.

Interestingly, the importance of religious labelling and perceptions of religious discrimination have been recently recognised by some political leaders in Scotland. Alex Salmond of the SNP noted in a recent address:

The religious divide in Scotland is one which many of us thought had been bridged long ago. But last year the Monklands by-election demonstrated that there is still a sore in Scotland, with some communities (some few communities hopefully) divided along sectarian lines. (Salmond, 1995: 3)

Salmond, presumably aware of the perception among some Catholics of the SNP as being a 'Protestant' party (see chapter 6), expanded on the importance of symbols in his vision of a civic Scottish identity.

We cannot adopt for a new nation any symbols or structures that even inadvertently exclude any section of Scottish society. We must find a means to express Scottishness as an inclusive, not exclusive statement of identity. (Salmond, 1995: 3)

The extent to which this can be achieved is very much open to debate. However a recognition of the issue in the political arena is a not insignificant move.

The media and identity

Often key markers of identity are presented as having an ahistorical place in a flow of tradition; they are viewed as 'given' and 'natural'. For example, in chapter 4 we saw how elements of historical narratives and traditions associated with the clubs become adopted by groups as part of a way in which the contemporary supporter connects him/herself to the past. Thus, the Liverpool F.C. anthem 'You'll Never Walk Alone', although only relatively recently associated

with the club, has become embedded in the traditions and symbolic meanings attached to that club.

The media play an important role in documenting aspects of a club's history and tradition. However, what became clear as the fieldwork progressed was that, while the media were deemed to be important in projecting aspects of the club and its supporters into the public domain, other factors such as patterns of education, religious beliefs and family histories were crucial in shaping the relationship between an individual, a club and the supporters of that club.

What becomes evident from this work is the need to empirically ground more general theoretical assumptions about the relationship between the media and identity-formation, whether this be at a local, national or international level. As the world becomes more complex, there remains a need to address the experiences of individuals and communities in the context of this changing environment. It is only through using such contextually grounded material, both to inform and challenge theoretical discourses, that a clearer picture of contemporary cultures will emerge.

Endpiece

While Glasgow and Liverpool have both been shaped by the influx of 19th century Irish immigrants, it is clear that this process has been different in each city. Differing political and economic environments have conspired to give each city a distinctive character. One characteristic shared by both is the important position that football occupies in their cultural lives. It seems reasonable to assume that, despite any impact that political and economic change may have on both cities, football will remain symbolically important in Glasgow and Liverpool, both reflecting and giving shape to a range of identities.

While it could be argued that the rivalry between Celtic and Rangers represents one of the last vestiges of religious intergroup conflict in Glasgow (although one would have to add to any list the Orange Order marches which still take place every summer in the city), to ignore or dismiss the feelings and passions invested in the clubs by their supporters is to be guilty of both misreading and underestimating the symbolic allegiances individuals still have with

particular forms of collective identities.

To many people in both cities football is an important element in their everyday lives. It offers excitement, passionate highs and lows and a forum for expressing a larger collective identity. At times this may be viewed as progressive or, in the case of racism and sectarianism, regressive. However much one may find this level of intense support difficult to understand or justify, it remains a central aspect of popular cultural behaviour in modern society. As such it is an area certainly worthy of continued investigation, offering a range of insights into the contradictory and complex process of contemporary cultural identity-formation.

APPENDIX 1

Initially the project had been focused on the relationship between football and identity in Glasgow. However, I wanted to broaden out this debate by introducing a comparative element. Both the cities of Glasgow and Liverpool (linked as important centres of 19th and 20 century Irish immigration) and the supporters of the main football clubs within them became the focus of attention.

The desk research informed the selection of the groups which took place through contact with supporters' associations. These associations supplied me with lists of people who were interested in taking part in the project and I then contacted these supporters. The groups attempted to represent fans who regularly attended matches. In Liverpool these consisted of both Liverpool and Everton supporters. The Glasgow groups contained only Celtic supporters partly as a result of the origins of the project discussed in chapter 2 and also because of the potential difficulty of interviewing Rangers and Celtic supporters in one group. This point emphasises the extent to which football in Glasgow functions as a potentially more divisive social factor than it does in Liverpool (see chapter 3).

The groups: *Glasgow*

Group 1: Peter 40s, Tom 40s, John 20s, Michael 40s, Alex 40s, Sean 50s, Eamon 40s.

Group 2: Stephen 20s, Dave 20s, Bill 20s, Paul teenager, Tom teenager, Shaun 20s.

Group 3: (all teenagers), Brian, Anthony, Paul, James, Martin, Harry, Seamus, Robert.

Group 4: Paul 20s, Pat 30s, John 40s, Jim 30s, Maria 30s, Jill 20s, Lee 20s.

Group 5: Chris 30s, Andy 20s, Alan 20s, Mary 30s, Susan 20s, Graham 20s.

The groups: *Liverpool*

Group 1: Liz 30s, Ann 20s, Mike 30s, Dave 30s, Phil 30s, Nigel 30s.

Group 2: Nancy 20s, Pete 30s, Pat 20s, Barry 20s, Sue 50s, Gary 50s, Jane 50s.

Group 3: Gill 20s, Jim 20s, Eileen 30s, John 30s, Dave 30s, Brian 20s.

Group 4: Mike 30s, Stephen 20s, Gerry 20s, Helen 30s, Evelyn 20s, Kenny 20s, Arthur 30s.

Group 5: Kevin 50s, James 20s, Bill 40s, David 20s, Tony 30s.

It was felt that any attempt to ask all the groups a set list of questions would be too rigid given that each group took on a dynamic of its own. In the Glasgow interviews, after an initial warm

up period, the following areas/questions were raised for discussion. While the first two questions were asked in this order in all the groups, the remaining questions were not necessarily addressed or raised in the order they appear below, but were covered in all the group discussions.

- How did you begin to support/follow Celtic?
- How important was schooling in this process?
- What do you understand by the Celtic tradition?
- Is religion important in supporting Celtic?
- Is media coverage of the club fair?
- Are fanzines important?
- Do you support the Scottish national team? leading on to issues of cultural and political allegiances
- Do you support the Irish football team? extension of the above debate

In the Liverpool interviews the same approach was adopted which allowed the discussion to at times move away from the specific issues raised. One of my roles was to pull the debate back to the questions/issues which I wanted addressed at some stage in the interview. A number of specific questions regarding Manchester and the English national team were added for these groups. The questions relating to schooling and religion which generated substantial debate in the Glasgow groups were, as I had suspected, deemed of little importance in Liverpool.

- How did you get involved in following football in the city?
- Was schooling or religion important?
- What is the link between tradition and football in this city? leads to discussion of the importance of football in city identity.
- Explain the rivalry between Manchester and Liverpool? leads to discussion of regional identity and media coverage
- Do the clubs and the city get fair media coverage? leads to discussion of tabloid press in particular.
- Do you support the English national team? leads to discussion about English national identity, and support for Irish team.
- Is there a lot of support for Ireland? extension of the above debate

Of course the quotes used in the thesis are selected from an abundance of material. However, what has been attempted, as far as possible, is to allow the supporters a space in which they can tell their stories. Part of my role as a researcher was to organise, contextualise and group these around particular themes which are of course of my choosing. In addition, rather than simply reproducing large extracts from internal group discussions I wanted to emphasise the extent to which many of the same ideas and perceptions were reproduced across the groups. It should be noted, however, that this is not done at the expense of indicating significant differences of opinion where they existed.

Appendix II

Evidence from the Scottish Election Survey (SES) 1992* suggested that two thirds of the population viewed any conflict between Protestants and Catholics as being either not very serious (49%) or not existing at all (14%). In contrast 25% thought the conflict to be fairly serious, while 9% viewed it as very serious.

Direct questions regarding the seriousness of any conflict between Catholics and Protestants were not asked in the interview groups. As a result, it therefore becomes difficult to draw any direct comparisons between this work and the SES. While there are obvious limits to the data which can be supplied in survey research, the SES results do point to the possibility of viewing Celtic supporters as not necessarily representative of Scottish Catholics in their perception of sectarianism. In the SES for example 32% of Catholics viewed the conflict as very serious or fairly serious, while 64% saw it as not very serious or non-existent.

However, this also emphasises the need for more in-depth qualitative work given that only 14% of the survey said that no conflict existed. While the Celtic support in general are overwhelmingly Catholic (see Boyle, 1991), the supporters in this work make no claim to speak on behalf of the Catholic community. However, given that many are part of that community their opinions are valid when viewed within the context of their support for the club.

* Scottish Election Survey Data Set, Economic Social Research Council Data Archive, University of Essex.

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