1 INTRODUCTION 3

THE FIELDS OF STUDY 7
1.1 TRAINING 9
1.2 GAMES 15
1.3 SOCIAL SCENE 27
1.4 THE PARTICIPANTS 28

2 WHY AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF SPORT? 32

INTRODUCTION 32
2.1 PREVIOUS SPORTING SCHOLARSHIP 32
2.2 SCANDINAVIAN SPORTING SCHOLARSHIP 34
2.3 ACADEMIC CONFUSION 35
2.4 CONCLUSION 36

3 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF RUGBY 38

INTRODUCTION 38
3.1 'FOLK GAMES' 39
3.2 SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS 40
3.3 PUBLIC SCHOOL STRUCTURE 41
3.4 THE FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE GAME 42
3.5 EXPANSION 44
3.6 MODERN CONTEXT 46

4 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES 50

INTRODUCTION 50
4.1 METHODOLOGY 50
4.2 NEW WRITING PRACTICES 51
4.3 EXPERIENTIAL ETHNOGRAPHY 54
4.4 TOWARDS THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPORT 59

5 LEGITIMACY IN FIELDWORK 63

5.1 THE REFLECTIVE APPROACH 63

6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS 66

6.1 COMPARISON AND INTERCONNECTION 66

7 CONSTRUCTION AND CONFIRMATION OF BRK MEMBER IDENTITY 71

INTRODUCTION 71
7.1 SOCIALISATION THROUGH SPORT: INTERACTIONIST APPROACHES TO SPORTS RESEARCH 71
7.2 STAGES OF BRK MEMBERSHIP 72

7.3 RUGBY PRECONCEPTIONS 73
7.4 PRE-SEASON 74
7.5 THE ACCEPTANCE PROCESS 77
7.6 THE SOCIAL LIFE OF BRK 82
7.7 SOCIALISATION-AS-INTERACTION: FUTURE APPROACHES 85

8 NEGOTIATING GENDER 87

INTRODUCTION 87
8.1 LOCAL CONTEXTS 88
8.2 WOMEN AND RUGBY 91
8.3 TRAINING SETTING 93
8.4 'NO PAIN, NO GAIN' 95
8.5 THE SOCIAL SETTING 98
8.6 CONCLUSION 101

9 EMOTION AND STYLES OF DISCOURSE 104

9.1 COMMUNITY AND MATESHIP 104
9.2 RESEARCH ON EMOTIONS 106
9.3 EMOTIVE DISCOURSE 107
9.4 CLOSED COMMUNICATION 108
9.5 SEMANTICS OF RUGBY LANGUAGE 109

10 BRK COMMUNITY: REAL, IMAGINED OR POSTULATED DIASPORA? 112

INTRODUCTION 112
10.1 THE CARRYING OF CULTURE 113
10.2 TRANSFER OF SPORTING PRACTICES 115

11 CONCLUSION 119

11.1 NEW DIMENSIONS FOR THE STUDY OF SPORT AND ETHNICITY 119

12 EPILOGUE 126

23 AUGUST 2006 BEGINNERS COURSE BERGEN SAND AND SKATE HALL 126

13 APPENDIX 128

13.1 THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF RUGBY UNION GAMES 128
13.2 MATCH REPORT 130
13.3 GLOSSARY OF RUGBY TERMINOLOGY 133

14 BIBLIOGRAPHY 138

1 Introduction

From its development in pre-industrial Britain from forms of folk games and its emergence as a popular schoolboy activity, rugby union is now considered one of the world's fastest growing sports. Played predominantly with fifteen players per side over eighty minutes, although seven and ten player versions are popular, rugby is one of the most physically demanding sports taking place today. Players use their hands to move the oval shaped ball backwards or laterally to team members in an attempt to gain ground and avoid being tackled by the opposition. Points are awarded by touching the ball down for a *try* over your opponent's goal-line or by successfully kicking goals. Individuals and teams combining physical strength, endurance and speed with technical aptitude and tactical knowledge become most successful at the game although at the amateur level, no specific prerequisites are required.

Alongside the expansion of the British Empire, rugby has spread to the furthest reaches and left an indelible mark upon countries from the Pacific to Southern Africa and the Americas. Norway has an organised national competition, albeit on a small scale, and Bergen Rugby Klubb has been the dominant force in the past few years. This thesis looks at the inner workings of this unique club from an experiential ethnographic perspective. Who is it that plays this game and how did they become embroiled in an activity so alien to mainstream Norwegian society?. Was rugby on such a small scale so different to the game I knew so well from my upbringing in New Zealand where the top players are icons and the practice is an all encompassing component of everyday life?. Did the game play an important role in defining the social identities of those involved?. And finally, were the processes involved in participating in the club's activities viewed in similar ways or were they subjectively mediated at an individual level?. I undertook an extended season's fieldwork with the club as an active member hoping to find answers to these questions and discover why sport makes such a valuable contribution to the anthropological study of social fluidity.

Throughout this study, the contexts in which the sport is played in Bergen and the identities of the participants involved are viewed as expressions of the production and reproduction of central themes in contemporary society. My research is essentially located within the practice of 'doing' sport and involves those who participate in, rather than consume, or lie on the fringes of the practice. I attempted to use my role as a fully involved playing member of the

group in order to achieve a more internalized cognitive interpretation of the social realities of my team mates and thus found the methodological form of sports anthropologist Robert R. Sands (2002) an inspiring example. Sands' extensive use of an experiential form of ethnography in sporting practice allows the fieldworker to use his/her experiences and understandings of the culture as a validating tool for the behaviour and realities of fellow participants.

Bergen Rugby Klubb is made up of a diverse group of members who are somehow bound together by their fascination and enjoyment of the game of rugby itself, and the activities provided by their association with the club. Membership is comprised of an even contrast of foreign and local players which necessitates a detailed investigation of ethnic differentiation at both a sporting, and wider social level. Some foreign members carry with them cultural messages which can de-emphasise their differences and other local members can be drawn to the club out of a need to reinvent themselves within more pure forms of masculinity not found elsewhere in local society. The social situations provided by the club allows players to dip into an arena of diversion and mateship which is familiar to some and not others, yet affords a temporary respite from the challenges many face in everyday circumstances. The sense of love and community esoterically created within the club comes without too many conditions regarding long-term commitment or involvement and offers many members a security otherwise difficult to find elsewhere in society.

The way in which players socialize and become integrated into the club can be understood in terms of the same prosessual nature of identification Barth (1969) applied to interaction of identities across boundaries. Identities within BRK are created and confirmed in flexible and ongoing processes which are constantly revised in accordance to forces in operation both within and outside the social group. Foreign members face contrasting and often contradictory issues regarding their reputations within the game, whereas local players must have their roles confirmed by adapting themselves to the cultural cleavages brought about by a limited knowledge of the game and its surrounding custom. Although we attempt to maintain our repertoires of individuality, this thesis can be more closely defined as a socio-historical project which looks at how groups and individuals are entwined in relationships shaped by the flow of people, cultures and practices in everyday life. Based upon an anthropological perspective, the processes within and surrounding BRK can be viewed from both a contemporary and historical sense in order to establish the possibilities of viewing a small

sporting community as an important component of culture. The almost diasporic community created by the expatriates in Bergen stands in stark theoretical contrast to the forced location of migrant workers or refugees and allows us to talk of a reconfigured process of enclave-building within the setting of a sporting practice.

To set the stage upon which BRK is to be understood, this thesis begins with a detailed description of the various fields of activity in which my season of active fieldwork took place. Where do rugby players in Bergen practice and play and what is their agenda outside the playing arena?. In answering these questions I describe the match scenes from games played in an attempt to orient the rugby novice to an understanding of a different lifestyle, and to heighten the ability of the reader to 'come up close' to the emotion, hurt and elation involved in playing such a physically demanding sport. The social scenes are a fundamental part of what it is to be a BRK member, and I dissect various situations in order to relate the functioning role friendship and mutuality has within the club.

The anthropological study of sport has only recently begun to show signs of credibility within the discipline and chapter two draws upon previous scholarship in order to illustrate parallels to this study of rugby as well as to highlight some of the problems a purely sports orientated theoretical stance can have in handling important anthropological concerns. The previous uncertainty amongst academic circles stemmed from a lack of understanding as to what sport could contribute to fundamental questions of social categorization and change. Sports scholarship is now of inter-disciplinary importance raising questions and providing answers to issues that are inextricable linked to larger concerns regarding gender (Hargreaves 1994, 2000 and Wheaton 2004b), ethnicity (Brownall 2000 and MacClancey 1996), political and social belonging (Archetti 1999, Giulianotti & Armstrong 1999 and Sands 1999). The need to further develop frameworks for the analysis of sport has seen the exposure of sporting-related ethnographies to diverse theoretical critique which has helped locate and challenge findings in ways that reveal the complexity, not totality, of sporting enquiry.

Chapter three provides a socio-historical description of rugby from its formative roots in English folk games through to its importance as a public schoolboy activity and its spread throughout various parts of the world. Rugby has survived many upheavals both from within and outside the game, yet has established itself as one of the biggest team games in the world in terms of playing numbers and exposure. The formative setting in Britain and the

subsequent expansion provides a context for the introduction and playing of the game in minority settings such as that in Bergen and leads us to ask why certain traditions inherent in the game provide the platform for the production and reproduction of fundamental social values.

Chapter's four to six describe the methodological and theoretical stance taken for the study of sport in a minority setting. I justify the use of a participatory form of ethnography with the subjects I wish to understand and show how my background as a New Zealander has given this undertaking more of a sense of legitimacy. The complex social life of BRK members and the context of the community in a minority setting have demanded a flexible theoretical stance that has incorporated aspects of dynamic social practice and process best associated with Bourdieu and a more traditional structural functionalist approach common to students of, amongst others, Victor Turner. Sporting practice is connected to structure, action, event, history and change that makes the use of one theory alone seem weaker than it possibly is if taken in isolation to others. In this sense, the strength of anthropology and its historical focus on shared and flexible knowledge make for an ideal companion to the scholarly study of sport.

Chapter seven unravels the stages involved in becoming a BRK member and how identities are constructed and confirmed through sporting practice. The process reveals itself to be ongoing and flexible in nature with constant revision and change taking place due to various processes from within and outside the social group. The process of recognition is revealed to be as essential to developing a sense of self as it is to the sporting setting. The reputations and experiences of foreign players are contrasted with local members in order to ascertain how different roles are positioned and influenced alongside larger patterns of social change which are seen to be both historical and developmental in nature.

Chapter eight looks at the notion of gender and how the presumptions about traditional rugby masculinity were negotiated by BRK members. I looked at various field settings in order to gauge a range of behavioural and ideological variants that could best theorize structures of masculinity amongst individuals and within the community. This process was one as complex to me as it was among those in the group as we were faced with a small and intimate assemblage of conflicting notions of manhood. Players looked subjectively at their

positioning within the club and struggled with demands from home and within mainstream society as they negotiated their way through the on and off field activities.

Chapter nine explores the concept of emotion and its traditions in the sport of rugby and the style of discourse within BRK. Rugby encourages players express emotions of controlled aggression and overt camaraderie but to suppress emotions that relate to pain and injury. A central factor in the way players socialize in sport, emotion is seen to be linked to opportunities for individual self-development and acceptance into the sporting group. Emotions that are contained within sporting practice must be treated separately from anthropological interpretations of emotion and the motives of those who are merely consumers, or occupy a fringe role in sport such as supporters. The consistent use of a certain form of colloquial English terminology in rugby club related discourse is seen as not only an expression of the colonial influence within the club but also one way in which this particular group differentiates itself from the traditional British scene.

Chapters ten and eleven examine this unique sporting group in Bergen form an anthropological perspective in an attempt to unravel the true story of just what it is that is created here. BRK represents a real expression of a cultural form transferred to a minority setting and forging itself and its surrounding message into a type of enclave in which its members gain great pleasure. For the foreign players, BRK acts as a form of societal respite whereby one can ‘be who he really is’. In contrast, the Norwegian member paradoxically becomes something he is not, but in a similar way learns to share in a sense of closeness that is not so readily available within his own society. For all its peculiarities and inherent struggles, BRK functions as a successful rugby club and its ethnographic value as a minority small scale sporting culture represents an evocative attempt to explore performance in ways that can further explain the multitude of resemblances and disparities intrinsic in social life.

The fields of study

The cultural scenes that made up my research were composed of football pitches and training halls covered at various stages throughout the season in grass, gravel, sand and ice as well as social settings in bars, clubrooms or players' homes. Depending on the nature of the ethnographic research, the field could include the sea, the mountains, school classrooms, bus journeys, media centres and in fact any arena in which information can be revealing and informative. Each scene has potential to offer the ethnographer a slightly different perspective on the familiar or may invoke social behaviour of a new kind that in turn can provide validity to the cultural reality of the sporting group. My role as a member of BRK required a competency in being able to take part in a way that was seen as acceptable to other members as well as knowing the rules that guided the interaction between members. The knowledge I had of the game helped in my initial introduction to the various cultural scenes, however I felt the ongoing sense of spatial distance that was due to my background experiences of rugby culture. The cultural scenes were often felt to be transcending a fixed reality in which a group of players stood in a bar or at training describing tales of past events that produced consistent images and manifestations of a different reality. The awareness of this veiled cultural space can help interpret the changing nature of the cultural behaviour exhibited by members which in turn enlightens the motivations that define each member's identity as a rugby player.

Based upon descriptive field notes taken during the season, I shall now portray the cultural scene in Bergen during various parts of the 2004 season in order to build up a picture of the reality of being a member of BRK and their 'rugby world as it was'. My writing style essentially deploys the same rhetorical strategies used in modern popular fiction in order to capture the cultural experience of the rugby club as accurately as possible. The description of the victorious match in Oslo and the antics surrounding that particular rugby trip reveals a world that is intended to feel very 'real' to the reader and elucidate a reality hidden to all but a small segment of society. The depiction below of the various fields of activity become more than just a reproduction of the raw data I gathered throughout the season, they represent the 'self-evidential reality' (Blackshaw 2003: 43) which is revealed in the discursive events that comprise the rugby-life for members of BRK. A hermeneutic approach to the discourse on rugby life in Bergen needs not only to know what the players get up to at training sessions and during game situations, but to place their practices alongside what they say and know, how they form social relationships and structures, and where they see their particular role in society which is mediated in some form through their participation in the club. My interpretation of events throughout the season should be seen as an argument against any

claim to forming ideological truths from empirical findings, and more as an ethnographic form of biography which presents a version of experience somewhere in between the cultural 'reality' and my personalised narration of these events. The text is at once descriptive in its intention to place social settings, characters and events in a context more immediately understandable, but also moves to theoretical and interpretive mode along the way as more knowledge of the cultural reality is gained and processed. This transition is not specifically intentional but more indicative of the anthropological project which accumulates within ones mind through a combination of thought and, in my case, direct practice with the cultural group. The discussion is based upon episodes of narrative which are often interrupted by discursive nuances that indicate my own position as being un-detached from the objects of study, and thus bound up with prior discourses and social experiences concerning rugby practices. From this, the reader will not be presented with a precise history of the evolution of rugby in Bergen but rather an attempt to position the cultural life and setting of the club and its participants within the socio-cultural context and realism that itself helps transform and reproduce. This idea can be referred to as a description of the 'cultural imaginary' (Castoriadis 1987) of the world of BRK and its members which is found in the narrative perpetuating itself as a discourse of reality involving a circle of characters in a contemporary storyline.

1.1 Training

January 2004

Møhlenpris grusbane was to be the winter training location for BRK I had found out. I hadn't been there before, but after pedalling my way up over Nygårdshøyden in the dark, drizzly mid-winters night through a dreary park full of the town's unfortunate substance abusers, I was given a direction via a mumbled point and proceeded down the back side of the park towards the lit-up field which must have been the training ground. There were some adolescent kids kicking a football about and four guys sitting on the concrete steps when I arrived. I didn't recognize any of them which was not surprising considering the fact that I only knew one member of the club prior to embarking on this project. Playing football on hard surfaces was something I was accustomed to, but the prospect of playing rugby on gravel left me slightly concerned about how the contact part of the game was to be trained away from grass. I rode over to the guys sitting talking on the steps and confirmed that they were

here for the training session as well. I had to ask what the normal procedures were for winter training and whether of not it was possible to train on grass anywhere. "No, we only play touch rugby here and do lots of fitness stuff. We usually train the physical tackling stuff in the sand hall". Now that was something new to me as well; I had played beach football and volleyball before, but had never thought of sand rugby, but it immediately made sense considering the conditions in the winter made it nearly impossible to find available grass surfaces. "Even in the summer, the kommune[1] hardly ever lets us use any of their grass pitches, so you'd better get used to this and the sand; that's rugby in Bergen". I immediately thought of the paradox that these guys were presenting me with: rugby was being promoted and encouraged on extremely varied and limited training resources and when the team finally gets to experience a proper fifteen-a-side game in the summer on grass, the only experience they will have will be from playing touch rugby on gravel and barefoot sand rugby in a small hall. I thought it could possibly work quite well, if the players were very fit and had learnt lots of formations, handling and tackling skills and running moves, but in all likelihood the transition to a full-field match, especially for those new to the game, would be an interesting spectacle.

Training in Bergen in the middle of winter is a test of ones patience and dedication. Rarely does it get so cold that snow is a big problem, but often ice coupled with a persistent drizzle and breeze make for a type of thigh-tightening, finger-tip numbing irritation that is often only slightly negated by the fact that training at this time of year is healthier that sofa-lounging in hope of an early spring. In his own pre-season running narrative, Robert Sands viewed his experience of the performance of speed as being multi-dimensional in which 'performance became the common denominator, faces the numerator and the division of the two was speed' (Sands 1995: 3). In my case, I wondered what would be the common denominator?; and how multi-dimensional rugby in Bergen would be?. Where was the home of BRK amongst this rain and sand?. Møhlenpris grusbane[2] lies in the middle of a somewhat 'shabby' residential zone moments away from the middle of town and is a popular recreational area for child and student football teams. My initial training session revealed a seemingly full-size football field marked in chalk, with transportable goalposts as well as a number of miniature five-a-side goals. High wire fencing surrounded three sides of the field which had concrete terraced steps

[1] Bergen kommune is in charge of allocating training and playing fields for the various sporting clubs in Bergen.
[2] Subsequent development following the 2004 season has seen the training field transformed into an all-weather artificial grass surface. BRK continue to train on another gravel surface in the winter however (Gyldenpris grusbane).

on the other which was covered by an old stand roof. I assumed there were changing rooms underneath, or perhaps maintenance equipment, but no-one I asked knew about this. “We get changed here on the steps, it’s best not to leave any valuables lying about either”. At the western end of the field lay a large area covered in water, presumably as a result of a blocked drain. The entire surface was slightly concave from the middle, running to the sidelines, no-doubt a common field design in Bergen given the relentless rainfall. Behind the eastern end of the field lay a patch of grassy-mud type surface that was occupied by a group of children chasing a football.

More guys arrived to join us lingering about by the steps, and as soon as a ball appeared, those of us changed jogged about passing the ball casually between us. The plan was usually to begin by warming up with a few circuits of the field followed by some touch rugby I was told. Having not played any form of rugby for eight years was not such an issue for me, it was more of an eagerness to get to know both the structure and level of the training sessions as well as to form relations with the established members with whom I was to spend a significant amount of time with in the forthcoming season. Training had no real beginning, it was more of a merging of those who arrived first and didn’t want to get too cold, with those coming late. It was the players with obvious experience and ‘seniority’ who called the shots and concluded the touch game by calling everyone in to form even groups for ball-handling drills. The levels of enthusiasm and competence were naturally varied and difficult to judge so early on in the season. As with all amateur sport I had witnessed or been involved with there were those who revealed a deadly serious intent in every aspect of their participation and those whose blasé propensities rendered immediate judgement of their performance and attitude extremely difficult. My conscious aim in the initial stage of the winter training sessions was to demonstrate my competence as a rugby player, or more precisely provide the more established members with evidence of skills-training aptitude. I was not sure when the first proper fifteen-a-side match on grass would take place, but was happy to be able to participate in hard-surface training for some months before the season start due to the emphasis on two key performative prerequisites: fitness and ball handling skills. Without these, the game of rugby becomes an extremely challenging and frustrating past-time which no amount of bulk or aggression can compensate for. I gauged from the initial training sessions that, whilst being a relatively diverse group in terms of age, nationality and body shape, these guys had an interest in keeping fit and healthy and sufficient knowledge of how to pass and handle a rugby ball which would only improve throughout the year.

My impression of these rugby players was not too dissimilar to my initial preconceptions. Here were the similar types of ex-patriot British, South African and Antipodeans that I knew from times spent in the old English Pub watching early morning rugby matches beamed in via satellite from the other side of the world. They were predominantly in their early to middle ages with work and/or family ties to Bergen. Most were established in Norway and sufficiently integrated enough to have adequate command of the Norwegian language and local social processes, although the rugby-related surrounds continued to act as a forum for voicing discontent about 'the missus', 'the locals' or the 'damn rain'. New foreigners in town also found their way to the club environment, initially as a support network in which to find employment and accommodation. Their girlfriends were usually obtained prior to entry into both the rugby club as well as the country itself. I was familiar with the 'light-hearted' tone and form of social interaction among this group having lived a number of years in Norway, although my time spent engaged with the 'foreign community' had been limited. Most shared similar struggles adapting to life in Bergen, and most found some comfort in recoiling from the everyday life circumstances to a chair at the bar with a pint of Guinness. I recognized a couple of the local players as being regular English Pub-goers and obviously fond enough of the traditions found in such an establishment to decide on playing a very non-Norwegian game. These guys seemed well versed in the English banter that characterized the environment as opposed to the majority of the local members who seemed to be young students. These players seemed very interested in learning the game first and foremost and inevitably some of the 'cultural baggage' that such a club would provide them with later on.

Training on the gravel continued every Tuesday throughout the winter and into the spring months before a problem with a booking clash with a football group led the team to move up to Storetveitmarken skole and yet another gravel field. Most Sundays also involved a more informal gathering of members to play touch rugby on the gravel and later in the summer on the artificial surface at Krohnsminde. These sessions were important not only for fitness and skills purposes, but on a social level they enabled me and other newer members further invaluable chances to establish relationships with team mates, and observe patterns of 'informal' behaviour outside the relative 'structure' of the official bi-weekly training sessions. News of training times, locations, changes in venue and often the intended goals of forthcoming sessions were posted in group emails, usually at the beginning of the week, and often via a text-messaging service that always encouraged us to 'spread the word'. The coach and those who had assumed the responsibility for dealing with the local authorities regarding

field bookings were in charge of sending out this information. On some occasions training was cancelled or we were forced into finding a new 'patch' of ground due to the presence of other sporting groups, mostly football teams, who claimed to have booked the surface first. I gathered from witnessing this a number of times both in the sand hall and on the gravel surfaces that BRK members were used to this happening and although consistently venting their anger and frustration amongst themselves and towards the other teams training, took this quotidian occurrence as merely being 'part of playing a small sport like rugby where no-one knows anything about us and don't really give a shit anyway'. The exception to the seemingly 'taken for granted' logic that football took precedence over rugby when it came to disagreement over pitch-booking came when school aged children were playing informal football organised amongst themselves. On a number of occasions we merely 'assumed' rights over the field due to our size and age, but often with the help of some members telling the youths to 'fuck off' or 'we have booked this pitch tonight', regardless of whether the club had or not.

The Bergen Sand and Skate Hall was the venue for Thursday contact training sessions throughout the winter. The hall was smaller than a football field and divided in half by a long wooden fence and netting. One side was for skateboarders and BMX riders who could practice their tricks on various wooden ramps and rails, and the other was covered in some ten centimetres of sand on wooden base. The size of the sand arena was perhaps one third of a proper football field and was unheated and without any form of protective barriers along its margins. Despite the risk of getting slammed into the walls or having elbow and knee skin removed from landing on thinned out sections of the sand floor, the main purposes of the hall were to introduce and train the essential physical side of the game to new and established members. My focus in the sand hall was to regain the confidence and technique required when tackling and mauling which I had not faced in over eight years. For newcomers to the game, the physical aspects of rugby can come as somewhat of a shock, but the knowledge of correct technique is critical to both the enjoyment of the game and the avoidance of serious injury. I was not the only newcomer to the winter training sessions and felt pleased for both myself and on behalf of the others that the senior members took time to both explain and perform the correct skills before the first practices increased in intensity. The first three sand hall trainings left noticeable impressions upon my body which had for so long been sheltered from the physical nature of contact sport, but my first injury came in early February when I had the misfortune to end up at the bottom of a tackle covered by two of the larger members

of the team. Forced to stand aside wheezing as a result of being winded (at least that was all I was capable of feeling at that time), I entered into one of the defining realms of what it meant to be a rugby player in one's own and others' perception: the ability to accept and endure pain.

The injury, which turned out to be two cracked ribs, is rather common amongst contact sportsmen and women, but certainly one of the most debilitating. My insistence on attending every training session I could was partly as a result of wanting fluidity in my field notes and observations, but equally significant was the awareness of the implications one could face if seen to be sidelined by injuries which are acknowledged to be an inherent part of the game. Most practices were punctuated by some sort of injury or at least complaint of 'carried' injuries by different players, and I took this as being a ritualistic, almost devotional rite of passage for the athlete engaged in sport: 'I felt that my legs and shoulders were leading me through each session and responding in various ways to the contact they endured. If I made it through feeling energized and strong or conversely feeling jaded and empty, I still had the desire to continue on next time and pay some kind of subconscious homage to whatever it was that was driving my body'. The constant mention among players of aches and pains was evidence of the bodily and symbolic communication that the performance of sport enabled and was a notable feature throughout both the training and social gatherings I attended. The more I thought about my own body and my reactions to it in comparison to fellow team mates, the more convinced I became of the potential sporting endeavour provided for the study of liminality and cultural interpretation.

Training throughout the summer was a haphazard affair with many players leaving town for work, family or vacation purposes. Scheduling fixed days to gather became harder due the lack of numbers, although I noticed a core of more experienced members using the Sunday informal touch sessions as a focal point for maintaining the seasons momentum. Of the players I spoke to regarding the structuring of training and their suggestions for improvement, feelings were somewhat pessimistic as to the way the rugby season was drawn out and lacking any sort of coherence or plan:

> The season seems to start ok with the winter training and everyone enthusiastic and turning up, but then when the games start in the spring, the students have their exams and the summer break makes it hard to

keep the same side together and it's just like starting over again after the summer when the games start again.

It's hard when we train at different pitches and different people are coaching. People make little effort to turn up to training regularly and there are different teams for almost every game which makes us vulnerable against Oslo. In the winter we have lots at training, but when the season starts we are down to our usual suspects.

We don't have much in the way of goals. Most people are happy just to win all the games and especially beat Oslo to win the championship. Few people think of personal or team improvement. The uncertainties about who is coaching, where we are to train each week and the lack of common goals are the main concerns.

People who coach and arrange everything do it voluntarily so I guess we cant ask too much from them but at least we try to encourage new players each season and try to improve enough to win each game.

We have enough 'personalities' in the club who always turn up to training so that mostly we don't just mess about. There could be a better dialogue between the coach and other senior players over what we should be trying to achieve each training instead of just 'finding out' amongst ourselves each time.

Coaching rugby in Bergen is an area where improvements could be made. Too much time is spent on playing touch and doing fitness drills, whereas not enough time is spent on skills, speed, agility and specific strength for rugby. The same thing regards tactics which never seem to be discussed until two weeks before the season or the week before the final. If some time was spent every week it wouldn't matter who played, as everyone would have a basic grasp of how the team was supposed to play.

One wonders how the structure and emphasis of future BRK trainings will develop given the apparent limitations on time and resources available to its membership. The voluntary nature of amateur sport and the obligations players have at work, at school and at home seemingly prevent the implementation of a structure and facilities that are so greatly needed if the sport of rugby is to develop beyond the gravel, sand and consistent attendance obstacles which are only to apparent to all who have chosen rugby as their leisure pastime. But away from the exertion of the playing fields, rugby in Bergen has a social function which, as we will find out later, provides a defining impetus for club membership.

1.2 Games

2004 Norwegian National Series Table[3]

		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts.
1	Oslo Rugby Klubb	6	6	0	0	149	15	18
2	Bergen Rugby Klubb	6	5	0	1	190	29	16
3	BSI Rugby	6	3	0	3	149	95	12
4	Stavanger Rugby Klubb	6	3	0	3	69	55	10
5	Trondheim Rugby	6	2	0	4	52	142	9
6	East Coast Barbarians	6	2	0	4	43	150	8
7	Glommen Rugby Klubb	6	0	0	6	10	176	1

The BRK and BSI[4] men's teams competed in the 2004 Norwegian XVs series against teams from Oslo, Tønsberg, Horton, Stavanger and Trondheim. The series is organized by the NRF[5] in conjunction with the clubs on the basis of a 'home game one year, away the next year' principle. Due to the small numbers playing the game (most notably outside Bergen and Oslo) and the problems of gathering fifteen of more players to commit to certain scheduled weekends, games are often defaulted or players are loaned-out to the opposition in order to play a match. In the case of BRK, the first scheduled match of the season against Glommen Rugby Klubb was forfeited in our favour, as was the BSI match against East Coast Barbarians. BSI loaned players to Trondheim after their team arrived short of numbers, but still managed to beat them comfortably. The only loss of the season for BRK came against Oslo Rugby Klubb in May; a match that perennially determines who will host the final. BSI won three of their six matches finishing third, thus qualifying for the bronze medal final. Both the medal finals were extremely close matches, with BRK beating ORK 14-11 and Stavanger Rugby Klubb victorious over BSI 23-17. Both Bergen teams also competed in the national seven-a-side series which took place in Oslo, Horton, Stavanger and Horton, with BRK winning all tournaments. Due to the fact that BRK and BSI are essentially comprised of the same practicing rugby players in Bergen, exchanging players to ensure a full side is common

[3] P= games played, W= games won, D= games drawn, L= games lost, F= points scored, A= points conceded, Pts.= total series points

[4] Bergenstudentenes Idrettslag (Organisation representing university student sporting activities in Bergen). Many of the local players are current or former school or tertiary students and the idea of forming a student club is based upon two main objectives: to be entitled to funding from BSI for certain costs, and to make the game more widely known and available to locals who may be interested in starting. BSI has not yet achieved a sufficient organisational structure or player base to consider separating from BRK, and the clubs' continue to operate in tandem in an effort to promote the game in the best ways possible.

[5] Norges Rugbyforbund

hence I was able to play in nine matches throughout the series including both medal finals, only missing BRK's away match in Trondheim and both BSI's series games against Stavanger.[6]

The national series began in inauspicious fashion on May 8th with both BRK and BSI having scheduled home matches against Glommen and East Coast respectively. Both sides failed to gather enough players for the trip to Bergen resulting in an automatic 20-0 default victory. I had prepared myself for the preceding weeks for my 'comeback' on the rugby field and felt glad being a new member of the club, but more eager than ever to prove my worth as a player in a proper match. As I was new to the rugby scene, the default came as a bitter disappointment but to most established members it was not totally unexpected as 'those guys over there are always struggling to get teams together, especially to away games. We're used to that, but usually play amongst ourselves anyway'. As it turned out, an internal match was arranged and took place at a somewhat hastily arranged football field in Alvøen. The student team was made up mostly of local players new to the game and were never able to compete with BRK who unofficially managed to score one hundred points without reply. I felt genuinely sorry for the new players facing such an initiation, largely without possession of the ball and made a point of offering encouragement to them hoping they would not be so disheartened from such a mismatch. Despite not scoring a try, I felt relieved to complete the game at first 5/8th[7] having been involved in the majority of the action when the backline was able to receive the ball from the forward pack. I experienced a wealth of impulses and insights into the Bergen rugby world that day and began to feel the positive benefits of further inclusion into the BRK 'family' which was in essence the key to my unlocking more of the cultural codes that lay at the heart of my anthropological analysis.

The following weekend a group of twenty-five players travelled from Bergen to Tønsberg to face the two sides who failed to make the trip to play us the previous weekend. The majority of the players left Bergen on Friday afternoon by coach, but due to work commitments I was unable to join the team and instead left on an early morning flight. I was immediately struck with the contrast from last week when arriving at the ground with proper field markings and rugby posts, although we did not have the luxury of changing rooms, instead occupying one end of the pitch whilst the opposition had the other. BRK was to play the first game and I was

[6] Full results from the 2004 season can be found on the official NRF website http://www.rugby.no/terminliste
[7] A full list of rugby-related terminology is found in the glossary

pleased once again to be chosen at first 5/8th, a position I was comfortable with having played there before but one which was very much the pivotal link between the backs and the forwards. During warm-up, I observed slight tension between a few of the stronger personalities regarding the way in which we were to approach the opposition from the outset of the game and the nature of the 'psyching-up' routine immediately preceding kick-off. My previous experiences playing rugby in New Zealand provided me with many examples of players considering a ritual-like surge in aggression as essential to entering the field in the frame of mind they considered 'right' for rugby, and also those who found solace in their own calm thoughts. I was a firm believer in the latter form of game build-up, but judged it to be a personal preference which suited my own characteristic mood before physical endeavour. Others may well have benefited from a communal accumulation of temper, in the same way that football hooligans have been shown to fashion aggression and hate amongst themselves. There were a number of people who offered words of advice, usually the same ones who were most animated at training as well. The newer players, myself included, seemed focussed on their own game, and expressions of seniority and tactics amongst the side gave way to a shared desire to win the game once the match began. It was immediately evident that the East Coast Barbarians would be no match for us as our forwards had too much strength and our backs too much speed. I managed to score my first try for the club and gain some small personal satisfaction from that despite the fact that no-one else either knew or really cared. It is never easy to judge players in one-sided games, but I felt pleased with my own contribution in the same regards as my respect for the others. BRK had size and had pace which made it hard for the opposition to begin to challenge us, especially without the skills or experience to maintain possession of the ball.

After thirty minutes break, the BSI side prepared to face a Glommen team who seemed to be made up of largely the same group of players who had appeared in the previous game. BSI were five players short and I was only too happy to volunteer to play for them given the relatively light challenge we had just faced. The main difference in team build-up was the measured words of encouragement coming from the captain encouraging us to 'go out there and enjoy ourselves, do your best, that's all I ask'. This coming in contrast to the BRK message of 'get into these fuckers hard straight from the kick-off', and 'go in to the rucks fucking hard so these pricks feel it and wont want to be around next time'. Glommen were badly out of shape, both in terms of fitness and structure, and BSI managed to exploit this in all aspects of the game, eventually bettering BRK's scoreline by winning 76-10. I managed to

score three tries and handled the kicking duties as well converting eight of the twelve tries scored. Whilst personally feeling pleased about my own effort, I noticed the common sense of satisfaction among the BSI players after being on the receiving end of such a drubbing the previous week. I saw games like this as being both farcical in terms of one sidedness, but also as serving a useful purpose for players (on the winning side) new to the game in that they had the opportunity to test out the attacking skills that featured prominently throughout pre-season training. A defining moment occurred late on in the match when one of our most enthusiastic new players scrambled the ball away from a maul close to the opposition line and sprinted over to score and celebrate in a most ecstatic manner, only to turn and discover that the other players had heard the referee blow his whistle earlier for an infringement. I spoke to the unfortunate 'try scorer' later that night and was told in a quite sincere way that his exuberant celebration was down to the mere fact that 'I haven't scored a try before and as a forward I am always stuck at the bottom of rucks eating grass and getting my body smashed about. It's you backs who get all the glory!'.

Two weeks later, the annual clash with arch rivals Oslo Rugby Klubb promised to be a much tighter encounter in the tradition of previous meetings between the clubs. Talk amongst the more experienced players revolved around 'who was, and was not playing for Oslo', perhaps with the idea that certain members would make it harder for BRK to win the game. I had no idea of what to expect other than the mere fact that previous games over the years had been decided by less than ten points, and that 'victory or defeat has usually not been decided until late in the game with these guys, but we always reckon we have the best chance to win'. My personal preparations for the game were not ideal with a family member lying ill in hospital, but I was glad to be starting the match to divert my attention for a period of time and get a chance to gauge the form of our likely opponents in the final later in the season. The training ground to SK Brann was an ideal venue, despite being small in size. We had the relative luxury of proper changing facilities and a marked out pitch with posts and corner flags as well as a number of supporters and curious bystanders. Our warm-up and team talk was focussed and indicative of the importance the club places upon this fixture. The general level of banter and humour among the players was well below the usual standards at training and previous games and I judged this to be a combination of the nervousness amongst the newer players alongside the pressure to win at home to ensure we hosted the final. Both teams were

welcomed onto the field by a small battalion of Buekorps[8] organized by a BRK member to ensure rugby in Bergen would aspire to follow the traditions of local sport and culture by using the services of the iconic drummer boys. Despite the strong wind in our favour, we were unable to open up the game to make use of our strength in the backs and the first half was punctuated by scrappy forward encounters and careless errors. Oslo led at the break with a solitary penalty kick and knowing our advantage was gone, a drastic change in plan would be required if we were to win the game against the wind. More frustration confronted us in the second half as Oslo's agile fullback scored a try out of broken play and later added a second to give them a 13-0 lead which we were unable to respond to.

Victory was obviously unexpected given the joyous celebrations, but it was deserved and left a depressed taste in our mouths knowing we had not performed to our capabilities and had forfeited the home advantage in the final. I had the feeling afterwards that we never really got to grips with the game and still had much to offer, but knew that victory in Oslo later on was certainly a very real possibility. I noted my own feelings afterwards as 'disappointment that I still felt ready to get some action after the final whistle, which I guess is indicative of the whole backline'. I felt a genuine sadness that we lost and the more I thought about it, the more I could acknowledge the identity of being a BRK member and the importance victory plays in defining who we were. I was still very much a newcomer, but I felt the moments of gloom immediately following the final whistle as my own, and as a shared expression of whom we were as a club and the way our cultural identity was mediated through a response to a rugby match. These emotions were not imaginary, but consequences of forms of identification that have been produced and reproduced in the discourse and practice of rugby. In contrast with other forms of mainstream collective identity that, like the football team whose training ground we had just played on, are very much interactional products of 'external' (community) identification, BRK was operating on 'internal' self-identification.

With the disappointment largely behind us, the next away game in Stavanger provided us with a chance to regain winning form again against a club with a longer history than BRK and perennially the third placed team in the national series. Being the central base for the Norwegian oil industry, I assumed that Stavanger Rugby Klubb would consist mainly of

[8] A Buekorps (literally Bow Corps or Archery Brigade) may basically be described as groups of boys carrying mock crossbows (and recently girls also) who take to the streets of Bergen each spring and march to the beat of drums, flying their flags and sporting their brigade's uniform.

expatriate British workers, but was surprised to find a number of Frenchmen and young local players who, I was later informed, had benefited from rugby tuition at the town's international school. I was also informed to 'watch out for some of the quick young backs, and some of the dirty old bastards they usually have in the pack'. Having been selected at half-back for the first time, I recalled these comments at kick-off, knowing that my presence as a link between the forwards and backs would necessitate continuous dealings with these contrasting 'types'. Eighteen BRK players were present for the game, so we had the luxury of three substitutes to guard our possessions on the sidelines and carry our water bottles. I recognized the referee as the same man who had officiated our first match of the season and knew from that experience that his inconsistency would prove to be a major hurdle to overcome. Stavanger had the obvious intention to negate our superior strength by spoiling the game as much as they could, and the referee seemed unable to know how to deal with this. In one instance, whilst attempting to feed the ball into the scrum, the Stavanger flanker grabbed the ball from me with his hands and fed it back into his own pack (an illegal move) only for the referee to respond to my incredulousness by telling me to 'get on with it'. We managed to hold a small advantage into the second half following a gratuitous intercept try and, despite never being in any real danger of losing, were unable to play the expansive game we had hoped for. The final scoreline of 15-3 was a fair indication of a game marred by many errors on both sides, poor refereeing and underhand tactics by many of the Stavanger players.

I found it frustrating playing in a position for the first time that required both a stable forward pack and a consistent referee. The stop-start nature of the game was a continuation of the previous match against Oslo and I was beginning to wonder if this was indicative of the 'double-edged sword' upon which rugby in Norway precariously rested. We had faced teams who were either so new to the game or so unfit that it made for more of an extended 'training-style' game with little or no defensive requirements, and teams that were reasonably competitive and so intent on spoiling the opposition's game that the flow of the game became somewhat dependant on referees who could not apply the rules consistently. To only criticize the referees is harsh though because amateur sport in general is notoriously difficult to officiate, especially in sports being played outside their 'native' areas. Top athletes tend to know rules and regulations so well that an almost telepathic form of communication can occur between player and official, but this is far from the case for people with only limited knowledge of both the laws and the skills of certain sports. Referees are faced with the dilemma to either stop for every infringement they see thus never allowing the game to flow,

or to prevent this by overlooking certain breaches in the rules. For players who are well versed in the sport, as many are with rugby in Norway, one can never be sure about how a match is to flow or be officiated, and just what factors are to determine this on a particular day.

Following the prolonged summer break in which training had been very irregular, it was a relief to once again concentrate on the fifteen-man games which were to take place in the autumn leading up to the final in Oslo. An 'internal' series match between BSI and BRK at Fana Stadion allowed for players to try out different positions and the teams were deliberately balanced out in terms of experience in order to avoid the hopeless situation which had occurred in the first pre-season encounter. I played first 5/8th for BSI alongside both newer and experienced members and although the BRK forwards had the upper-hand, the match was open and enjoyable to play in, perhaps as a consequence of the 'social' atmosphere surrounding the game. BRK won comfortably 40-10 to secure the points required to play in the final and everyone seemed to agree that it was an invaluable exercise both in terms of preparation for the remaining games and the 'match' practice we had with fellow team-mates.

BSI faced a depleted Trondheim team in dreadful weather conditions at SK Brann's training ground looking to secure the points required to meet Stavanger in the bronze medal final. A phone call from Trondheim immediately prior to the game indicating that 'we will need to borrow a few players' did not bode well for a meaningful contest and as it turned out they could only field nine of their own members. Despite the poor turnout and constant rain, we managed to make up the numbers and played an enjoyable fifteen-a-side match. The majority of the BSI squad were young and relatively new players who had trained with eagerness throughout the season taking advantage of whatever resources we had available to develop their rugby skills. I noticed the main divide in rugby membership in Bergen resulting from those who had played before and those who had not, which in turn amounted to the English speaking (and occasional local) vs. Norwegian grouping. It was not so difficult to see this distinction on the playing field and it made me more determined to provide myself as an example of one who could blend into both groups when required. In fact, I saw it as necessity for the future development of rugby that new members were trained and encouraged in positive ways and by making myself available to play for BSI when others may not have seen it as so necessary, I hoped that the benefits would be mutual. The Trondheim side were even more inexperienced than BSI, and we managed to dominate the game in the forwards leaving

the backs with plenty of room in which to run in the tries. As half-back, I saw a lot more of the ball than I did against Stavanger, and managed to score four of the seven tries in a 35-5 victory. Some of the BSI players continued to surprise me with their adept displays, especially in such difficult conditions. The general mood following the match was buoyant and I sensed a measure of pride coming from the players when praised for their performances. Norwegians are known for their reserved demeanour and I find their modesty when it comes to analysing personal sporting performance rather intriguing, so it is not so easy to ascertain thoughts based on direct questioning. I encountered time and again the 'room for improvement' adage which often belied the fact that some of these characters were very skilled sportsmen who had taken it upon themselves to pursue a totally new sport, and had quickly become proficient enough to contribute to entertaining and winning games. On behalf of these new guys, I was genuinely happy to see their pleasure, to play my part in helping them win, and hopefully see their improvement lasting to the end of the season.

Due to work commitments I was forced to miss my first match of the season, the BRK trip to Trondheim. Having been comfortably beaten by BSI the previous weekend, the hosts managed to field a team but were never competitive enough to challenge BRK who dominated every aspect of the game and ran out 60-0 winners. By all accounts it was solid match training ahead of the final in Oslo in two weeks time. The last series match for BSI was played as the curtain-raiser to the international match at Fana Stadion between Norway and Andorra. As many of the BRK members were playing in the international, it was almost the same BSI side that beat Trondheim two weeks ago, and would prove to be a stern test of their improvement against the defending national champions. We had to contend with dreadful weather conditions once again, but I saw this as perhaps an advantageous thing for us, given the usual dry conditions in Oslo. Far from being overawed by the experienced visitors, we managed to compete at a high level in the first half, having a fair share of ball and field possession and leading the match after twenty minutes. My game was ended close to half-time however, after making a tackle and receiving (by all accounts unintentionally) either a boot or a knee in the face which open up a deep gash under my eye. I was mildly concussed and driven to the doctors to receive treatment whilst the match continued. Given the close state of the game, I was particularly disappointed having the misfortune of not only being injured, but also having to leave the ground before the match concluded. A phone call confirmed that we had stayed level with Oslo right to the end before going down 11-14 which, considering the relatively large differences in experience between the sides was a superb result. My focus

turned to the final in a week's time and how the one-eyed fieldworker was possibly going to play. The doctor advised against any form of physical exertion for a fortnight whilst the cut healed, but the prospect of participating all year and missing out on what was in essence the most important highlight of the year was hard to bear. The following Saturday morning I removed most of the protective bandages and left for Oslo.

With work commitments again hindering me from joining the majority of players on the Friday afternoon coach journey across to Oslo, I caught an early morning flight with two others and made for our rendezvous point along Karl Johan's Gate. As with most away matches and the inherent problem of player's deciding to travel at the last minute, the uncertainty of having a full squad available or not was often discovered shortly before kick-off. On the occasion of the final game however, I was reliably informed that 'old members seem to creep out of the woodwork' and during our morning meeting it revealed that we were to have the extreme luxury of up to five reserves. We were naturally subdued over brunch, but maintained the typically good natured humour I had become accustomed to over the course of the season and I sensed an air of expectant confidence as we dispersed in various vehicles to the ground.

Our usual changing room setup of a patch of dry grass in the corner of the field by the car park welcomed us again as nobody was sure if we would be offered, or even if there existed, proper facilities. Again, this was nothing new to us and considering the fine weather and eager mood of the players we were more focussed on getting our kit on and beginning preparations. The full squad arrived in good time and we began our preliminary warm-up drills in a secluded area away from the main field and the eyes of the opposition. One of the more satisfying observations I found different from previous matches this season was the fact that everyone seemed to know one another reasonably well and knew where their position would be and the obligations that came along with that. Things had indeed progressed throughout the season and the collective focus of the drills and stretches was one of togetherness and a resolute desire and optimism that this indeed was going to be a match that was ours for the taking. I was named on the bench for the first half and considering my facial wound was not fully healed I was not too disappointed, but was eager to make an appearance in the second half and help contribute to a hopeful victory. After a final few minutes of personal preparation, increased intensity and words of wisdom from our captain, the 'lets get out there,

play like we know we can and hit them fucking hard' message led BRK out onto the pitch in front of close to one hundred spectators .

Bergen immediately took the initial clashes to Oslo in a confident manner pinning the opposition on their line after strong lineout work and diligent support play around the rucks. We were unable to break the resolute Oslo line and had to make do with two close range penalties to take a six point lead. Further intensity in the scrummaging and competitiveness in the lineouts allowed Oslo more of the ball after the initial twenty minute onslaught and well against the run of play, the home side was back in the match through an opportunist try to their fullback. A successful penalty just before half-time gave Oslo a narrow 8-6 lead and as we caught our breath during the break it became self-evident that the eradication of small errors and the maintenance of controlled discipline and cohesiveness was essential if we were to carry the trophy home in forty minutes. More tightly contested play from the outset of the second half resulted in neither side being able to cross the try line but a solitary penalty to BRK gave us the lead 9-8. I had come on by this stage to play in the rather unaccustomed position of wing and was eager to pressure my marker who I recognized as one of their better players from the two earlier clashes this season. Play continued to be confined to the forward packs and the inside halves and was punctuated by a number of injury breaks and indiscretions that led to players being sin binned. With no more than five minutes left Oslo gained the ascendancy once again with a penalty to lead 11-9 and from the restart we knew it was our last chance to keep the ball in possession long enough to come close enough to their line to either score a try or hope for a kickable penalty to be awarded in our favour. Our pre-match plan finally came into fruition in the final seconds as a strong set of rolling mauls left the ball available for our backline to show its superior pace. The ball was skilfully moved through the line and out to our full-back who showed great skill in evading his opposite number to score in the far left corner to effectively win the trophy for BRK after a two year period with ORK. We saw out the time added for injuries and were collectively ecstatic with the manner in which we had competed and held our nerve to win such a close rugby game. Everyone travelling for the final had contributed to our success and shown immense pride in supporting each other on the field as well as feeling the satisfaction of participating throughout the season at training, fitness sessions, touch games and other social events that made the team bond well enough to achieve our main objective for the season.

With the nail-biting victory over arch rivals Oslo enjoying a week of reminiscing back in Bergen, it was time to focus on the final competitive match of the season. BSI had enjoyed their best season on record and had developed collectively throughout the year to produce some strong performances which resulted in the bonus of hosting the bronze medal final against Stavanger RK. Having not started against Oslo the previous weekend, I was glad to be in the team alongside mostly newer Norwegian players who had the opportunity to create a small piece of sporting history for the club by claiming a medal, but also for rugby in Bergen to confirm its dominance of domestic rugby. Cheered on by a number of the BRK players and a few friends and partners, we competed strongly in the first half with a much more determined and improved Stavanger side than we had faced earlier in the summer. Despite scoring a fine try and defending resolutely, we trailed narrowly at the break and knew it was a match we could win if we maintained our composure and avoided basic errors. The second-half continued from where we had left-off with exciting and open rugby covering the full length of the field. One more try to BSI took us to within a point (17-18) of Stavanger late in the game but our fate was sealed after a fine try out wide by one of their best players to extend their lead to 23-17. Our endeavours to score again took us into their half as time ran out, but we could not manage to retain possession and both the game and the season were over. A disappointing loss considering the closeness of the game, but the players could hold their heads high having come so close to beating a well-drilled team who had greater experience of fifteen-man rugby than did BSI. Senior BRK members mentioned the improvement of the team throughout the season and reassured us that 'you'll beat them next year if you work hard to improve on eliminating errors and show the same commitment seen out there today'. I had the personal dissatisfaction of badly missing a penalty kick in the first half, but made three more successful attempts and felt satisfied with a more involved contribution to the game than I was with last week's final. What the BSI side lacked in terms of experience and the technical skills of playing rugby was met with levels of enthusiasm and commitment that unified a group of players together to produce a competitive team.

The predominantly Norwegian-player composition of BSI does not have the benefit of having rugby ingrained in the psyche of its members in the same way as it does for myself or other foreign players from rugby playing nations. The physical requirements of rugby are present with the local players; strength, speed, agility and fitness are common to popular sports in Norway such as football, handball and various winter sports such as snowboarding, alpine and cross-country skiing. However, the way in which certain sports are embedded in parts of

different cultures and societies allows us to view diverse levels of performance (in contrasting contexts) in a multitude of ways. The empirical material gained from my season of immersion with the rugby community in Bergen cannot alone stand as the basis for theoretical interpretations of the engagement I was part of. Instead, the type of interpretations I gather and present throughout this study can be regarded as making sense both in terms of the broad perspective in which they have been historically tested and the specific activity of rugby at the local level in Bergen. The anthropological methods used to analyse rugby in Bergen are in essence intended to provide a means of reflecting on local society and at the same time viewing the historical and social construct of rugby as an arena for understanding processual forms of cultural creativity (see Archetti's examination of football and tango in Argentina, 2003).

1.3 Social scene

The social life of the BRK members in the context of the rugby club related situations I was part of throughout the season provided the players with a means in which to challenge and rationalize contemporary issues of modernity including the way in which masculinity is socially constructed. I attended parties, after-match functions, gatherings in pubs to drink and watch rugby beamed in from throughout the world via satellite television and generally 'hung-out' with members of the club in a variety of settings in order to understand the feelings of mutuality and mateship that characterized the social situations. The particular discourse that dominates these social settings is a form of colloquial English that is familiar to the majority of participants, but at the same time rendering inclusion from 'outsiders' rather more problematic. It is in the social arenas that one finds the manifestations of a sense of cultural community, or self-identity in which language is the dominant medium of expression where props and other such commodities are not readily incorporated into the process. Contrasting minority sporting groups such as surfers, windsurfers, climbers, rafters, skateboarders and snowboarders use certain commodities as markers of their social positions and sporting styles and although consumption as an expression of identity is not a new conception, the use of material objects in contemporary sporting expression is a recent phenomenon. These individualised sporting activities offer participants the chance to enter into an imaged-based culture in which some become so immersed that their very leisure, work, family and living arrangements are dictated by their involvement in the subculture (Wheaton 2000: 256). Rugby

in Bergen, and for that matter the rest of Norway, is less of an individualised imaged-based culture relying on material expression, than it is a tight-knit community based around the importation of various English cultures and their diverse expressions. The diaspora of the English language into colloquial forms throughout the British Empire has led to distinctive characteristics that are almost incomprehensible from one group to another outside their original settings, yet retain the common denominator of 'Englishness' which contributes to the very production of a sense of 'rugby community' in Bergen. Through a semantic analysis of the language used in social settings and common rugby related correspondence between members of BRK, one can find evidence of the meanings and experiences that are bound up in these cultural relations. Whereas the open intention of the foreign players and those with the most experience of the game is to encourage more people to play and engage themselves with the internal workings of the club, in reality the collective identification of the common language usage makes this more problematic. Further analysis of the factors that influence the processes of socialization that members of BRK undergo will be discussed at a later stage but it is worth mentioning the way in which the collectivist nature of foreign players maintains itself in certain social situations.

For many, though I hasten to add this is not all inclusive, the leisure world that involvement in BRK allows is linked to a past legacy of collective memory that the majority of the foreign members share in common. In Bergen, and indeed in other rugby playing towns throughout Norway, the leisure-time that club involvement encourages is rather inadvertently mindful of 'strangers' who might in turn unintentionally view the behaviour of the members as being rather exclusive. The social settings in which I was part of were manifestations of a sense of 'community' without the responsibilities attached that made movement in and out of the particular settings easy for members who did not regard the group as being exclusive in any way.

1.4 The participants

This project is based upon the male members of the 2004 Bergen Rugby Klubb. It includes members of the not yet fully independent BSI student team who are incorporated into the structure of BRK. Also involved actively within the club are a women's team and a group of junior players, although these two groups were not actively studied due to the fact that they

mostly had separate training and playing arrangements, thus making combined fieldwork impractical. Altogether, BRK has some fifty members[9], of whom fifteen-twenty made up the core group of male members participating on a regular basis in this study. The age structure varied from those new players in their late-teens to those in their late-thirties and early-forties. Coaching and captaining was predominantly divided between four-five players of British and Commonwealth nationalities all with previous playing experience both abroad and in Norway. Responsibility for team selection and training arrangements was shared amongst the senior players who were present at the particular time. The committee was elected at the annual general meeting in March by way of nomination and ballot and included a larger representation of Norwegian players compared with positions of leadership and coaching held on the training field.

According to official annual figures published by the *Statistisk sentralbyrå* (Statistics Norway)[10], the non-Norwegian born players in BRK make up some of the smallest minorities in the total migrant population. As of January 1 2005 the total immigrant population without any Norwegian background was 364 981 out of a total population of 4 606 363. From this 7.9% we can select the nationalities that played a part in BRK during the 2004 season.

- British 11 069
- Irish 463
- French 2 523
- South African 565
- Canadian 1 212
- Australian 763
- New Zealand 278

The foreign membership of BRK was a representation of the 16 873 residents in Norway from the above nations. This group made up 4.6% of the total immigrant population and 0.37% of the total national population. Of slightly more relevance to our study of a small group based in

[9] Exact membership is very difficult to ascertain and cannot alone be based upon those who have managed to pay their annual registration fee. Many are 'affiliate' members who participate in occasional training sessions or play a match if they happen to be in town that particular weekend and many simply join in the social events and are rarely seen with a ball in hand. Fifty would appear a reasonable guess combining the women and men who have made more than the occasional appearance throughout the course of the season. What I term the 'hardcore', from which the majority of this ethnographic data is obtained, consists of less than twenty members.
[10] http://www.ssb.no

Bergen, figures show that out of the 19 504 immigrants in the city (9% of total), 849 were from Britain and the other nationalities did not even register amongst the twenty largest groups (in other words, less than the 337 Serbians and Montenegrins who were at number twenty). What is most noticeable here besides the confirmation of our minority status in a town and country with a very small total immigrant population is that BRK represents possibly the largest and most organised social group comprising these minorities.

Employment and family circumstances lie behind the passage the majority of members have taken to Bergen, and I presume those of similar nationalities living throughout Norway. Initial contact with the club usually occurs through word of mouth; usually from someone either already involved or a friend of someone involved. This was my introduction, and indeed everyone I asked about the reasons for their involvement responded with a similar story. Some had been here for more than ten years and had established homes, jobs and families; some had just arrived in town to establish themselves with a new (local) partner, whereas others had been here for a number of years still trying to ascertain their place in society. The majority of members had a good command of the Norwegian language and in many regards occupied a somewhat anonymous role amongst immigrant groups in society simply by functioning like any other Norwegian citizen. BRK was the secret space so different from the mainstream which gave the foreign members the chance to act out their cultural traits in familiar surrounds.

The Norwegian members made up slightly more than half the total membership, and virtually all the women and junior contingent. Of the core BRK men's team that trained and competed throughout the season, eight were Norwegian. Most of these were either students or former students who were enticed into the game through pre-season recruitment days or the traditional word of mouth. The majority had some kind of sporting background and, as we shall see in coming chapters, were attracted to the game for its uniqueness both on and off the field. The homogeneity prevalent in Norwegian society was to a large extent reflected by those who played rugby but one important factor that may have led them to such an exotic game concerns the fundamental Norwegian *væremåte* (way of being). By playing and associating themselves with a little known or understood game and culture, these members go against the traditional concern in the highly integrated nature of society with how their expressions place themselves in a wider context. They have chosen to try out something few of their peers have fathomed and many have subsequently learned to enjoy, understand and

succeed at it. In fact the benefits of playing a physical sport which is based upon traditional markers of masculinity and the sense of support and community available for those who establish themselves within the group are seen to outweigh risks associated with creative expression.

Despite the diverse nature of BRK membership, differences are seen to become more de-emphasised as players become accustomed to the various symbols which help generate and foster a shared sense of community. As we shall discover later in this study, members act in strategic and often rhetorical ways when negotiating their way through the fields of club activity, and their participation is seen to be as much about inclusion as it is exclusion. For members of BRK, the community emerges as a contextualized variant from player to player but the convergence of traditional markers of rugby 'culture' allow for boundaries to become emphasised which demarcate the club from other groups in mainstream society. It is the continual interplay between the differences and similarities of members that is at the core of understanding the social makeup of BRK which forms the basis of the following chapters.

2 Why an anthropology of sport?

Introduction

Anthropologists are concerned not only with traditional or exotic societies, but with wide-ranging social and cultural issues involving social relationships, social organization and social and cultural change. Their overall goal is to take a holistic, cross-cultural perspective in order to lend analytical weight to the comparative study of social systems and their attached values. Anthropologists study sport as a part of culture in terms of its importance in people's lives, how they are organized, and their connections to cultural ideologies and major spheres of social life. Research in the anthropology of sport helps us understand sports as social phenomena but, beyond that, often leads to the discovery of problems based in the structure and organisation of either sports or society. In addition to its social significance, sport today is an important economic and political phenomenon which interacts and develops alongside a number of major social values such as gender relations, social inclusion and governmental policy formulation. Anthropologists studying sports in society want to understand the social and cultural contexts in which sports exist and how those contexts are influenced by sport. They also want to understand the social worlds that people create in connection with sports and the experiences of individuals and groups associated with those social worlds. In doing so, anthropological research can reveal sport to be a central expression of the valued behaviours that form the structures of the larger cultural world in which the sport is located.

2.1 Previous sporting scholarship

The development of a separate sub-discipline of anthropology recognized as the anthropology of sport emerged from the growth in the mid-1960s in the United States of uncritical sociological work which was "rooted in the assumption that sport reflects society" (Donnelly 2003: 19). The predominant sociological theory at the time was structural functionalism which enabled sport to be viewed as beneficial and functional for individuals in the same terms as schools and families were seen to follow integration and pattern maintenance systems for institutions. This rather confined beginning gave way to what Ingham and Donnelly (1997) referred to as the 'critical shift' in the sub-discipline which saw sport in critical terms not only reflecting society, but reproducing dominant social and cultural

relations in society at the time. Ideas of social reproduction in sport were based largely on developments in the sociology of education which drew upon the work of Bourdieu on the French school system. Social issues which dominated the discipline in the 1970s resulted in a further shift in orientation towards issues of gender and race which were increasingly subject to change and contestation. Sport became to be seen as "one of the last bastions of masculine power…and as one of the barriers to changing race relations" (Donnelly 2003: 21). The lack of agency in theories of reproduction allowed sociologists to develop resistance theories in which individuals were able to oppose the structural forces reproduced in society and use sport in ways that were beneficial in a more self-reflexive, de-institutionalised way. Sport today is a global phenomenon which is so pervasive in all aspects of social, political and economic life that future developments require the continued cross-disciplinary use of research and knowledge to further illuminate key issues common to all societies. While the sociology of sport has developed into a fully recognized sub-discipline, anthropology is only just beginning to view sport as a subject worthy of such a status and must continue to use its unique methodological and cross-cultural perspectives to establish its rightful place.

Until recently, academic marginalization has characterized the study of sports from an anthropological perspective as a viable and edifying form of social inquiry. Although social scientists have long described forms of sport and play, especially large-scale events such as the Olympic Games (see MacAloon 1981, 1984), such mention was typically peripheral to issues considered more central to the traditional themes of anthropological inquiry. During the 1970s and 1980s anthropologists began contributing to the inter-disciplinary field of sports studies which was dominated to a large extent by North American and Western European sociology but also drew upon contributions from disciplines such as history, philosophy, economics, anthropology and biology to mention but a few. Detailed ethnographic works based solely on the anthropological description and analysis of sport only began to emerge in the mid-1980s when acknowledgement of the theoretical opportunities and challenges that arise when sports are given serious attention by fieldworkers began to surface.

This trend continued throughout the 1990s, a period during which a diverse range of ethnographic accounts of various sporting practices firmly established the anthropology of sport as an inseparable field from the rest of the discipline. Works of note include Archetti's (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2003) analyses of ethnicity, masculinity and morality within Argentinean football and dance; Giulianotti and Armstrong's (1997, 1999, 2001) edited works

on football identities, violence, modernity and culture from studies throughout the world; Armstrong (1998) and Robson's (2000) acclaimed ethnographies on hooliganism and fandom; edited volumes on sport and post-colonialism (Bale & Cronin 2003), football nationality and the state (Duke & Crolley 1996), power and identity in football (Brown 1998), sports ethnicity (MacClancey 1996), the culture behind sports and games (Dyck 2000) and most recently a volume on research methods for sports studies (Gratton and Jones 2004). Sands' contribution to methodological interpretations of sports ethnography (1991, 1995, 1999, 2002) has benefited from his varied and intense active participant role in the sports he uses to relate his findings to encourage future sports based research. All these diverse works present specific ethnographic case studies and develop theoretical and methodological perspectives that align the importance of the anthropology of sport alongside other more traditional social indicators such as gender, kinship, emotion and ethnicity.

2.2 Scandinavian sporting scholarship

Scandinavian research into sport has a clear parallel, according to Fasting & Sisjord (2001a), to the development of the media exposure to elite sports, and this has been evident in the research on economics, sponsorship, drug-taking related aspects of top-level sport. Although none of the Nordic lands have specific organisations dedicated to the anthropology and sociology of sport, interdisciplinary sports science groups such as the *Norsk forening for idrettsforskning* hold yearly seminars on specific sporting themes (Fasting & Sisjord 2001a: 90) and in 2002 the Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education held an international workshop on football history and culture. Whilst the North American tendency towards sports studies has focused on economics, professionalism, social mobility and institutional structure, Norway has seen research undertaken on themes as diverse as the socialisation of sports, relations between elite and amateur competitions and competitors, gender, emotions, leadership, the media and gender, discrimination and 'values' of fair-play in sport (Fasting & Sisjord 2000b). Archetti's influence has led to a number of football related studies in Norway, notably Hognestad (2001), Goksøyr & Hognestad (1999), and Armstrong & Hognestad (2003). The Norwegian School of Sports Sciences (*Norges Idrettshøgskole*) maintains a Department of Cultural and Social Studies with a "wide scientific focus including philosophical, historical and social perspectives for the development of physical activity and sport" (www.nih.no). Compared to the volumes dedicated to football throughout the world, rugby has received scarce mention other than the occasional historical analysis (Nauright and

Chandler 1996) and (Dunning and Sheard 2005), and none in Norway other than infrequent articles in minor district or student newspapers.

2.3 Academic confusion

This marginalization of the study of sports as a legitimate and worthy field of academic enquiry can be viewed in parallel to developments from within the social sciences. Inadequate theorisation argues Brownall (2000), was linked to a general confusion about what exactly could be said about sports that was of general importance to the discipline, and the fact that sport occupied a peripheral position in anthropology that could not be explained by the dominant theories of the day. The very notion of sport and play has been essentially separable from other aspects of social life such as the family, the state, multi-culturalism and nationalism and this has also been evident in sociological circles where the struggle to relocate sport as a distinctive field separable from cultural studies was specifically drawn out (Dyck 2000). Sport, according to British sociologist Eric Dunning, has been victim of the "pervasive Western tendency towards reductionist and dualistic thinking" that trivializes sport and leisure as being of no economic value and a non-serious activity involving the body in contrast to the positive value placed upon 'work', 'mind' and 'economics' (Dunning 1986: 4). Although it is now widely accepted that 'bodily' based approaches in anthropology occupy central relevance to the discipline, the perception that sport is summed up by the 'statistics that follow' remains widespread and this fact, as noted by Bourdieu (1990), masks the dispersal of ways of playing and participating and the social diversification of those involved. The approach this project will take offers new insights into sporting practice looking beyond merely the surface 'results', and argues for an in-depth methodological analysis as being essential to the uncovering of deeper symbolic meanings behind sports participation.

The legitimacy of sport as field worthy of research in anthropology emerged out of the shadows of sociological thought after an article by Roberts, Arth and Bush ("Games in Culture") appeared in *American Anthropologist* (1959) which "was one of the first systematic attempts to put definable parameters around the concept of games....it served to stimulate productive theoretical debate regarding the special role of sport in human society among anthropologists" (Blanchard 1985a: 288 in Sands 1999: 5). Ethnographic investigation during this conceptual period centred upon North American academic focus on social issues prevalent during the 1960s and 1970s including race, power and concerns about inequalities

that were related to sporting practice and consumption.[11] The development in 1974 and future success of the Anthropological Association for the Study of Play (TAASP) led to the publication in 1985 of *The Anthropology of Sport* by Blanchard and Cheska which was the first manuscript specifically about sport ever to be published. Sport was then viewed as 'representing one of the few remaining frontiers in the discipline' (1985b: 293) and whilst the subsequent years have not seen the academic treatment of sport rise to the same extent as its prominence in global discourse, there now at least lies an acknowledgement of its fundamental role pertaining to the debate on the changing world order.

2.4 Conclusion

Although sport has long been recognized as one of a number of strong indicators or expressions of culture, the behavioural patterns that make certain groups distinct can be studied anthropologically to compare and contrast human cognition across societies using sport as a constant indicator of lived reality. From this, rugby in Bergen can be compared to rugby in other nations where the sport also occupies a marginal position as well as with areas where it is accepted as a foundational activity and representation of national identity. If we accept sport as containing and reproducing universal features of the cultural world we live in, then in turn we find any activity involving competition, rules, rewards, skill and chance worthy of comparison. Anthropologists now invest considerable time in sustained ethnographic inquiry into sporting practices and can speak not only to those occupied with similar lines of research interest, but also to those fundamental questions that lie in cultural and political boundaries.

As Barth (1969) noted, the actual nature of differences between cultural groups may not necessarily be commensurate with the processes upon which they are accomplished thus making the definitional processes by which boundaries are formulated and shifted critical. The way in which sport can enlighten boundary conceptualization "pertains to the processes by which differences and similarities are declared, made culturally significant and fashioned into identities for the groups or 'imagined communities' thus constructed" (Dyck 2000: 32).

[11] Also at this time came a focus on forms of popular and mass culture such as the 'hippy' and later 'punk' movements that were ideologically linked in their expression as movements of resistance to mainstream culture. These groups have attracted a considerable degree of attention not because they presented a unified shift in social order, but because they gave rise to popular alternatives to the cultures from which they developed.

Ethnographic accounts of sport have been addressing issues on individual and group levels that view boundary identification in the construction of social identity as essential to the complexities inherent in negotiating the contradictions involved in everyday life. Questions concerning individual and communal participation in sport from local levels to the international stage are inextricable linked to larger concerns regarding gender, ethnicity, political and social belonging that are of interdisciplinary importance. Anthropology also has the potential to enlighten historical accounts of such concerns which has already been seen with colonial sport which was intended to serve as a form of colonial social control. Rugby in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, football in central and southern Africa and cricket in India and Pakistan are examples of the way through which colonial hegemony was enforced and later resisted by local populations as they attempted to forge their own unique forms of regional and national identities. The ethnographic study of small scale sporting cultures such as cricketers in the Trobriand Islands, surfers in England or rugby players in Bergen, represent meaningful attempts to analyse performance in ways that can reveal and further explain the multitude of similarities and differences inherent in social life.

3 History and development of rugby

Introduction

The game of rugby football as we know it today descended from traditional forms of 'folk games' in pre-industrial Britain and later emerged and developed as a schoolboy activity, independent of the house-masters and other authorities who sought to discourage and even ban the spread of the game. With the sport developing almost independently at various public boys' schools in England in the nineteenth century, the need for a unified governing structure led to the formation of the Rugby Football Union in 1871 which paved the way for the spread of the game to British colonies and further a field. The modern game is now one of the largest and fastest growing sports in the world, played in over one hundred countries spread over five continents. The 2003 World Cup attracted an audience in excess of three billion viewers making it the third largest sporting event on a world scale surpassed only by the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup.[12] This chapter shall broadly trace the socio-historical development of the game from its earliest known roots through to the present day in order to present a context for the introduction and playing of the game in minority settings, such as that in Bergen, Norway.

The much loved myth of a single defining event marking the birth of rugby has endured a long and popular life and has even led to the naming of the World Cup by the IRB, the "William Webb Ellis Trophy". The alleged 'incident' dates back to 1823 when, during a football match (soccer as it was played then) at Rugby School, a young pupil named Ellis picked up the ball and ran with it showing "a fine disregard for the rules". Historians have for quite some time seen beyond the myth by looking more closely at the facts and what was known about the developmental stage of the game at the time. Ellis was indeed a pupil at the school between 1816 and 1825 but never had the actual deed attributed to him until 1880 when a former pupil, Matthew Bloxam, wrote an article for the school magazine *Meteor*. Bloxam had in fact left the school by the time the 'incident' was alleged to have taken place and was most likely responding some fifty years later to the threat that rugby faced from social transformations and groups considered 'alien' or 'inferior' (Dunning and Sheard 2004: 52).

[12] Official figures from the International Rugby Board (www.irb.com)

In order to explain the social evolution of rugby football in Britain, we must move away from simple reductionist theories which see social transformation occurring along structureless chronological lines and examine the unintended interconnections which saw the game move through transitory stages that were borne out of the particular context within which the game was played at the time. Dunning and Sheard (1979) have produced arguably the most thorough socio-historical analysis of the game of 'football' in which they contend that the development of the two modern forms of the game (rugby and soccer) can be traced through five main stages, each of them characterized by more elaborate behaviour and formalized rules than its predecessor. The trend which can be seen in the developmental stages of football to a large extent mirrors the trends in wider British society which became more and more 'democratized' and therefore increased the demands upon its citizens to show common social and behavioural restraint. Modified versions of the game were played at different stages by different segments of society thus in a temporal sense, the emergence of rugby as a unified sport cannot be clearly defined and must be viewed within the context of the development of society at large during the five main stages.

3.1 'Folk games'

Stage one lasted from the fourteenth century into the twentieth century[13] when 'football' was the common name given to a number of different types of 'folk games'. Authorities often banned such activities and regarded them as threats to property and public order and in some cases, even to life. Literary and court records from as far back as the fourteenth century revealed the extent to which authorities tried to stamp out such games, but it seems fair to assume that the combative nature of early football was attractive in different ways to men than other popular leisure activities such as cock-fighting or public executions. Dunning and Sheard suggest that the popularity stemmed from the fact that 'one ran the risk of receiving and not simply inflicting injury. By adding the spice of fear, such as risk….a central function of these folk-games lay in the opportunity they provided for generating excitement akin to

[13] Evidence of modern games prior to the fourteenth century is rather unreliable but some have tried to trace the origins of 'football' to the sixth century Roman Empire sport of "Harpastum" (a Greek word for 'seize' and later becoming known as "Calcio" in Florence). The Romans in turn may well have adopted the game from the Far East in China or Japan where a similar game had been played centuries before. 'Ball in hand' type games can also be traced to pastimes carried out by the Celts ('Caid'), the Welsh ('Criapan'), the French ('La Soule'), the Vikings ('Knappan') and even ancient Polynesians, Eskimos and Faroe Islanders. What is known however, is that early running and handling ball games did take place and were extremely violent and unorganized in nature. The variations of the game came to be known as "foote balle" by the twelfth century and in the following two centuries no fewer than nine European monarchs made it an offence to play punishable by fines or even imprisonment.

that aroused in battle' (Dunning & Sheard 2004: 22). Games were more about struggles for territory, whether it was a street or a set of fields, and the prestige of one group against the other often outweighed individual 'skill'. Early games had elements of what later became distinct activities such as rugby, soccer, polo, hurling, hockey, boxing, wrestling and cricket and were often so violent and competitive that few showed any interest in adhering to any form of 'common rules'.

3.2 Social transformations

The second stage, lasting from 1750 until about 1840 coincided with the period of industrialization and modernization in which social categories were transformed in British society and the folk-antecedents of modern football declined together with the common sporting interest of members of the aristocracy and gentry. This shift in the balance of power between classes from the aristocracy to the urban-industrial middle-class (*bourgeoisie*) was what Dunning and Sheard referred to as a process of 'embourgeoisement' (Dunning & Sheard 2004: 57). It was during this stage that rugby began to emerge as a game distinct from other forms of football, and this was to a large extent due to changes in the public schooling system in England.

Prior to 1800, public schools had been the domain of pupils of 'relatively low social status' (Dunning & Sheard 2004: 41). Transformations in society in the late eighteenth century however, saw an increasing number of boys from the 'landed' classes, or the sons of gentry, enrolled in public schools. Seen more as a means of fostering independence from living away from home than as a source of formal education, these schools began to see structural changes in the relations between the boys' and their masters and in the activities that took place inside and especially outside of the classrooms. The seven main public schools consisted at the time of Eton, Harrow, Westminster, Charterhouse, Winchester, Shrewsbury and Rugby and each of these played similar forms of football that maintained its structure based upon the system of pupil 'self-rule' which became established during this period. Whilst the social composition within the schools was changing, the standards of teaching had not, nor had the conditions within the schools and this led to various rebellions in which boys' often violently protested against their socially inferior masters.[14] According to Dunning and Sheard this unrest led to a

[14] Well documented rebellions at Winchester (1818) and Rugby (1797) had to be quelled by the army and the use of the Riot Act.

system of in-house rule referred to as '*prefect-fagging*'[15] which had a direct impact on the future development of the main two forms of football which were soon to emerge as distinct forms. Whilst we need not be detained by the internal structures of public schools in the 1800s, it is of pertinence to note that this '*fagging*' system emerged at a time when the power struggle between senior pupils and school masters seemed unable to be resolved. Playing field activities were solely organized and carried out by the pupils in most cases defying the orders of their masters to partake in activities such as football which were still perceived to be unruly and irresponsible. The power relations at the schools meant that football was beginning to adopt a common structure although still following local, rather than regional or national styles. Running, handling and kicking were evident in all of the main schools, and according to the Webb Ellis myth, Rugby School began to adopt the 'running' style alone after 1823, although as we have seen this was more likely just another local characteristic among many fluid styles throughout the country that would in time lend itself to a unified footballing code some decades later.

3.3 Public school structure

The rapid transitions continued during stage three which lasted from 1830 until about 1860. Public schools became better organized and subject to more formal regulations in contrast to the troubled period which marked the establishment of the system of social hierarchy at the end of the previous century. Footballing rules began to take on a more meaningful and accepted role in playing field activities and the discipline of the boys in accordance with these was markedly improved. Rugby School began to emerge as the first public school to successfully adopt reforms which saw the autonomy of the boys preserved whilst at the same time ensuring the dominant position of the masters. Under the guidance of its new headmaster Dr. Thomas Arnold, Rugby quickly gained a reputation for being a school which encouraged and benefited from a close master-pupil relationship (Chandler 1996). For the first time, football was given a legitimate status at a public school and emerged as an example of Arnold's 'emergent educational ideology which laid stress on the 'character-forming' properties of team-games' (Dunning and Sheard 2004: 67). The football field became a type of testing ground where manliness was developed and rugby became the sport of choice in

[15] This system was in reality the exercising of hierarchical dominance by older, stronger boys over younger, weaker boys. The juniors were referred to as 'fags' and were forced into performing menial tasks for, or on behalf of the older boys and prefects. The system was most evident on the playing fields whereby the 'fags' were forced to mark boundaries, stand in goal and generally aid the seniors in their enjoyment of sporting activities. School masters had very little impact on the social relations and structures outside the classroom and saw this as an 'adequate' trade-off in return for their dominance to be acknowledged within.

which this was best accomplished. By 1845 the first set of written rules were introduced and documented at Rugby School in order to avoid certain disputed points in the rules of football that entered the school through pupils from outside the surrounding area.[16]

3.4 The formal adoption of the game

The development of the game accelerated when the players left school and moved on to universities thereafter forming clubs and formal competitions. This marked the beginning of the fourth stage in the development of rugby which lasted from 1850 until about 1900 in which rules were formalized and the public school forms of the game were adopted by society at large. There is no evidence for a sudden emergence of the game of rugby onto the national scene; instead the developmental process needs to be viewed in light of the local contingencies and social structures of the schools and wider society at the time. There were many factors involved and they were operating at varying levels, some of which were interconnected in a variety of ways, but which all led to the gradual emergence of the two distinct versions of the game. The 1845 rules were in need of clarification if the game was to expand outside Rugby School because not surprisingly, it was only the former pupils who knew how the now distinctive 'Rugby-style' was played and if they were not involved in playing or organizing matches, then rules would simply be made up according to the traditions of the majority who happened to be playing.

By the mid-century, men were now playing the game in greater numbers as former students of Rugby and other rugby playing schools such as Blackheath and Cheltenham started to spread their versions of rugby football rules across the country. Rivalries and disagreement between ex-Rugby and ex-Eton students led to the drawing up of a set of rules known as *Cambridge Rules* in 1848. Debates would continue throughout the next fifteen years specifically over rules concerning running, offside and 'hacking'[17] as well as broader societal issues that were common in Victorian England at the time regarding the 'tension between local initiative and endeavour on the one hand, and central control and public activity on the other' (Chandler 1996: 21). Matters came to a head in 1863 during the final meeting of various representatives from 'kicking' and 'handling' football clubs in London and Charterhouse School. The

[16] At this time Eton also began to draft their own rules for their form of football, which later developed into what we know today as 'Association Football' or soccer.

[17] Hacking, or the deliberate tripping up of a player whilst running with the ball, was a common practice among those playing early variants of rugby and was seen by some as representing a necessary element of danger in sport and even helping develop courage among the boys. The debate surrounding the merits of such practice was to play a significant role in the eventual split which led to soccer and rugby becoming separate games.

proposal to ban the acts of 'running in' and 'hacking' which had been previously adopted under *Cambridge Rules* led to the withdrawal of support from Blackheath Club and the formation of the Football Association. This meeting came to symbolize the moment when Association Football (soccer) and Rugby Football (rugby) irrevocably split, but it was not until 1871 that the meeting took place with representatives of twenty-one clubs that ultimately formed the Rugby Football Union.

It had become obvious that the two games, one emphasising carrying and the other kicking, had such radical differences that they could not go forward under the same banner. Richmond club called the meeting to ensure that the clubs were playing under the same rules which were applied at Rugby School, however the controversy surrounding the meetings which formed the Football Association continued regarding the dangerous acts of 'hacking' and 'tripping'. Certain clubs found that their playing strength was continually being depleted by injuries through hacking and were determined to remove such practices from the game. Although the decision taken at the meeting to ban hacking caused vehement disapproval from the veterans of the time, especially the Rugby School 'old-boys', the game was widely seen as a pastime which not only espoused the virtues of masculine strength and courage, but also the display of control and good-will which was not evident in some of the violent practices that were common features in earlier decades. The formation of the Rugby Football Union in 1871 could not however have foreseen the game spread at such rapid speed and split once more as a result of factional disagreement within its own ranks

As the 1870s drew to a close, the social composition of the game had begun to change irrevocably, and throughout the 1880s it became clear that there was a wide rift between the middle-class players and administrators in London, Ireland and Scotland, and the working-class men who made up the majority of the playing population in Wales, the West Country and the northern counties of England. By the early 1890s rugby was widespread and well over half the Rugby Football Union's clubs were in northern England. Whilst the changing social structure of industrialized England was reflected in the development in the south of the game of rugby, so too did the working-class structure and attitude of the north impact upon the public schoolboys' game. Rugby in the north quickly came to place a premium on success and to achieve such high goals, everyone involved in the game from officials to players and supporters were prepared to defy rules and regulations that were imposed from the south (Martens 1996: 32). Modifications to suit local conditions in the north and continual bickering

with the Rugby Union over compensation for players' 'lost wages' led to a mass exodus in 1895 of twenty-one clubs from the English Rugby Football Union and the formation of the 'professional' Northern Union, which later became the Rugby League.[18]

3.5 Expansion

The final stage in Dunning and Sheard's developmental analysis of modern rugby lasted from the end of the nineteenth century until the present day which began with the rapid spread of the game outside England and the challenges which it faced when the inevitability of professionalism also changed the nature of the game as we know it today. At the time of the formation of the Rugby Union in 1871, Scottish, Irish and Welsh clubs had also been actively playing a similar form of rugby to that of the English clubs and the game was to spread rapidly (or had already) throughout the British colonial outposts to countries as far off as New Zealand, Australia, Rhodesia, South Africa, Argentina and America. The first nation outside Britain to embrace rugby was Australia, when the Sydney University Club was formed in 1863, and by 1880 there were forty one clubs in Sydney. New Zealand was introduced to the game by Charles John Munro on his return from schooling in London, when he organised a match between two clubs in Nelson in 1870 which was played with a mixture of Association Football, Victorian Football (later to become Australian Rules Football) and an amalgam of rules from various carrying codes then in vogue. The Maori population displayed a natural aptitude for the game and their subsequent involvement was to facilitate the easing of tensions between the indigenous and colonial populations of New Zealand who had been at various stages of war for decades. The enthusiasm for the game quickly spread throughout New Zealand and by 1888 a Maori team toured Europe playing an incredible seventy-four matches of which they were victorious in forty-nine. The tour was to lay the foundations for the famous 1905 "Originals" tour in which New Zealand lost only one of thirty-two matches and was followed by the unbeaten 1924 "Invincibles" tour, by which time the "All Blacks" were the strongest rugby team in the world.

[18] Whilst the history and development of the Rugby League code of football is of meritorious analytical value, I will choose to avoid discussing its formation and subsequent expansion other than mentioning its struggle to spread beyond the Northern context in which it originated in Britain. League has always been overshadowed by Union in New Zealand even though it enjoys strong support amongst working-class Maori and Pacific Islanders and before its move in the 1990s to a national competition, league in Australia was confined to the Eastern states of Queensland and New South Wales. Whilst Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia and perhaps France are the only competitive nations, some twenty-five countries also play on the international stage, making rugby league the second most popular form of 'oval-ball' football in the world after rugby union.

Whereas Rugby union has all but monopolized winter sporting exposure and popularity in New Zealand, across in Australia the rival codes of 'Australian Rules' football, rugby league and rugby union have all enjoyed state-specific levels of support that has been sustained throughout the twentieth, and into the twenty-first century. This does not mean however those relations were always harmonious; in fact class-relations between Australians were continually tested when faced with the two World Wars and questions of 'sport or war'. Privately educated men who remained loyal to the union code were critical of those who chose to continue playing league and 'Aussie Rules' when war was raging, and in the decades following the First World War, rugby league assumed the leading position in New South Wales. Australian Rules remained essentially a Victorian dominated game whose attempt to establish itself in the eastern states was largely undone by the attractiveness of rugby league, which today remains the most popular rugby code in the East. Ironically enough, the sustained growth and appeal of league in New South Wales and Queensland also ensured the survival of its rival code, rugby union. Southern and Western states were firmly in favour of 'Rules' football which appealed to all classes, whereas rugby league in the East was firmly in the hands of the working-class. This meant that union continued to be played and supported by the remaining white-collar niche in Sydney and Brisbane, and although not able to provide a unified club competition like 'Rules' and league did[19], union remained a popular game in certain segments of society throughout the century. The game was to experience a surge in popularity after it became fully professionalized in the 1990s thanks to the success of the 'Super 12' competition and the national 'Wallabies' side winning the 1991 World Cup[20].

At the same time rugby was expanding in Australasia, the code was introduced to South Africa as early as 1858 by the Reverend "Gog" Ogilvie, who had experienced playing the game in Buenos Aires and in 1862 the first recorded match was played between civilian and military teams in Cape Town. The South African Rugby Board (SARB) was formed in 1889, also the year during which the inter-provincial Curry Cup competition began. Following the 1891 visit by a British touring side, enthusiasm for rugby among the Afrikaans had become

[19] The Victorian Football Association (VFA) was formed in 1877 and was the first Australian Rules competition. The rival Victorian Football League (VFL) formed in 1897 and was to be the most prominent league in the game until it expanded in 1989 to become the Australian Football League (ARL). In Sydney, the New South Wales Rugby League (NSWRL) administered the Sydney Premiership which began in 1908 and ran until 1994 when it was superceded by the Australian Rugby League (ARL) competition. After the Super League was formed in 1997, the game was in turmoil with two rival competitions; however prolonged legal dealings led to the amalgamation of both the ARL and the Super League in 1998 to form the National Rugby League.

[20] Australia is in fact the only nation to have won the William Webb Ellis Trophy twice following victories in 1991 and 1999. The other winners were New Zealand in 1987, South Africa in 1995 and England in 2003.

widespread and their appropriation of the game coincided directly with their nationalistic political ascendancy, which was 'a way of demonstrating and representing a specific brand of ideological power' (Grundlingh 1996: 201). Rugby continued to represent the privileged status of the white population under apartheid up until 1992 when the SARB merged with the non-racial South African Rugby Union to become the South African Rugby Football Union.

Elsewhere, rugby was beginning to take root in less obvious places. In 1872 the first French club was formed at Le Havre and by the turn of the century matches had taken place in Fiji, Samoa, Romania, Argentina and Japan. The game also began to spread throughout North America where, after five years in the universities the first cross-border game took place when Harvard University played McGill University from Montreal in 1874. The lack of concise and clear rules, ambiguities in the game and complexity of rugby drew a lot of American players away from the game and major changes were invoked, most notably the 1906 ruling on the 'forward pass' which led to the development of American Football, and the decline in the popularity of rugby. Although a handful of clubs remained, rugby did not re-emerge until the 1960s, a period during which college campuses turned to the sport because it was one where many could play and escape the rigid discipline and professionalism inherent in college (American) football. The number of clubs grew from around eighty in 1965 to over one-thousand by 1980 and necessitated a governing body which led to the formation of The United States of America Rugby Football Union (USARFU) in 1975.[21]

3.6 Modern context

Since World War II the game has developed greatly throughout the world although the balance of power has primarily stayed in the southern hemisphere with the New Zealanders, South Africans, and Australians[22] and with the teams that make up the Six Nations Championship in the northern hemisphere.[23] From the 1960s onwards, there were an ever-increasing number of international tours which involved the main rugby-playing nations and also Japan, Canada, Fiji, Argentina, and Western Samoa. France began to produce strong and flamboyant teams capable of beating any side and the presence of famous foreign players and

[21] Now known simply as USA Rugby, membership is said to be over fifty-thousand spread throughout seven Territorial Unions (TUs) and thirty-seven Local Area Unions (LAUs). The national men's "Eagles" have qualified for four of the five World Cups, whilst the women's team won the first World Cup in 1991 and were runners up in 1994 and 1998 (http://www.usarugby.org).
[22] The annual Tri-Nations Series between New Zealand, Australia and South Africa has been held since 1996 and is widely considered to be the world's best competition outside the Rugby World Cup.
[23] The Six Nations is an annual competition held between the top six nations in Europe: England, France, Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Italy.

coaches in the Italian domestic competition raised the standards of the game there immensely. As well as in New Zealand and Wales, rugby union is regarded as the national sport in the Pacific Islands of Tonga, Western Samoa and Fiji and the governing body, the International Rugby Board (IRB) can boast ninety-five full members and eight associate members, including the Norwegian Rugbyforbund (NRF).[24]

Since its inception and spread, rugby retained an 'amateur' ethos which enabled it to avoid the struggles that forced the game's structure to change back in 1895. Social tensions were less likely to have an impact on a game which was traditionally dominated by the middle-classes and operated an organizational configuration that emphasised the playing of the game for pleasure purposes only. Expansion proved successful despite various hybrid forms of the original game developing throughout Britain and across the world and any form of business intrusion into the autonomous world of sport was viewed with outright abomination by rugby's various governing authorities. As with the initial events surrounding the formation of rugby union and its subsequent split in 1895, the changes that took place in the twentieth-century necessitating a move away from amateurism must be viewed as a collective process, which in terms of rugby becoming professionalised, was bound up in the forces of modernization and commercialism rather than as a result of a single event or popular movement. The increasing popularity of national leagues and international fixtures led to new levels of competitiveness which in turn demanded a greater level of 'seriousness' from both players and officials.

The event that symbolized most the internationalization of the game on a commercial scale was the inauguration of the 1987 World Cup in New Zealand and Australia. If anyone was ever in doubt regarding the economic potential of the sport and its chances of building upon such success whilst languishing in the shadows of an increasingly defunct amateur ethos, then ensuing events would force them to change with the times. Players began to be paid, if indirectly and disguised, to play and train or to move clubs; payments for product endorsements and promotional activities were often channelled into funds, insurance policies, vehicles and houses; the movement of players from one club or even country to another increased rapidly as did the incentives that went with such transfers; national rugby unions were forced to radically change their structures in order to incorporate sponsorship, media and other organizational interests into their future plans; and the relationship between

[24] Norway is also a member of the Association of European Rugby (FIRA) which was formed in 1999 to promote, develop, organise and administer European rugby under the authority of the governing body, the IRB.

player/club/organization/nation necessitated the formation of formal and informal representative groups to deal with the increasing demands placed upon all parties. The 1990s saw an increase in the intensity of media and corporate interest in rugby union as the potentially advantageous arena for profits and viewers grew. Southern hemisphere Unions were much more liberal in their interpretations of what in fact was to be applied to the 'amateur' regulations that were limited by the International Rugby Board, and most of the top players in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa were in fact 'professional' prior to 1995, if not in terms of the rules laid out by the IRB.

In August 1995 the IRB announced that 'the concept of amateurism as a central philosophy of the game is redundant. Many may regret its passing, but its resurrection is not possible'.[25] There would be no prohibition on any form of payment. Ironically, the announcement came exactly a century after rugby league had split from rugby union over the issue of payments to players. Players immediately found themselves almost 'free agents' and were able to move clubs and negotiate contracts with clubs and sponsors. Vast sums of money were paid for television rights to club and international fixtures and 'scientific' approaches to training and physical conditioning taken from other professional sports increased the speed and attractiveness of the game from a public perspective. The game today is one of the fastest growing sports in the world and with media exposure of its World Cup only surpassed by that of the Football World Cup and the Olympics, everything points towards the game continuing its successful expansion into nations without rugby traditions.

An important factor to mention by way of conclusion relates to the success of the game's expansion due to the almost universally accepted theoretical adherence to the sport as being physically tough, yet largely free from its long held image as a violent game. As we have seen in this chapter, and will develop further in chapter eight, rugby emerged as a male institution which was based upon displays of strength, competitiveness and more often than not, violence. This image was a social creation to promote a desired type of masculinity thought necessary at the time, and has in all essence been preserved through to today. Whilst the game can be thankful that the most explicit acts of violence are rare and have to a large degree been eradicated from the modern game, less overt manifestations of rugby's darker image continue to be an omnipresent part of the game, especially at the amateur level. Victories are still referred to as 'annihilations', 'whippings' or 'good old-fashioned hammerings', and players

[25] Vernon Pugh, Report by the Amateurism Working Party to the IRB, Paris, August 1995.

are actively encouraged to exercise ‘controlled’ aggression within the realms of the game’s governing laws, which inevitably strikes accord to those players who possess a somewhat violent-natured disposition. Rugby is one of the few sports (perhaps we can include ice-hockey as well) in which aggression is defined in the signifying logic of the game despite all the attempts from the International Rugby Board and its member rugby unions to downplay such an image and make the game an accessible and appealing option for members of both sexes.

4 Methodological issues

Introduction

The spate of recent post-modern theoretical and methodological debates surrounding anthropological research has not resulted in any governing paradigm but has given weight to the importance of marrying the traditional ethnographic goals of discovery and interpretation together with the personal input and experiences of the anthropologist. Much of what is *not* said in the world of sport, from grass-roots schoolboy football teams up to the professional level, in fact reveals more than what *is* said, so it is imperative that those concerned with the study of sport are equipped with methodological and theoretical tools that enable complex issues to be presented in a communicative way. To most ethnographers, the balance runs between the scientific objectivity interpreting from observations with the subjective feelings resulting from direct participation. Adopting an experiential approach of direct immersion allowed me to see, feel and experience as a subject as well as ethnographer the creation of a shared text of meaning. This active participant role has been the basis behind my fieldwork and has resulted in guiding me toward the form of narrative writing I feel best suits this methodological approach to studying a minority sporting group. The aim of incorporating this method, as is the basic premise of any ethnographic study, is to orient the audience to a possible different lifestyle, and to heighten the ability of the audience, the ethnographer, and those written about to understand one another and themselves at least a little better.

4.1 Methodology

In any kind of research involving human agents, personality, perception, and even agenda weigh heavily on the outcome and conclusions. My role in the field has been integral to both the research and experience thus enabling tools of contemporary ethnography, especially reflexive narrative, to ideally suit the study of athletes, sport, and sporting cultures. The very nature of this experiential approach makes any attempt to present the subjects in a scientific, objective or generic way an impediment to interpretation, thus the decision to place myself in focus in order to relate a more fluid and inclusive story of BRK and its members. Herein lies the challenge of entering into a cultural setting one is familiar with based upon previous experiences and assumptions. The case study here dictates being able to differentiate between the contexts in which prior knowledge has been gained and the altered perspectives that

provide rugby in Bergen and its participants with its characteristic foundation. I entered the club setting with a confident knowledge of the game based upon my upbringing in a country where rugby is the national sport. In terms of being able to directly participate in the sporting and social activities, I was in a sense sheltered from the initial cultural reality that faced the uninitiated as they attempted to fathom the game and its culture. But I soon found that my preconceptions about the game and my ability to play would not automatically enable me to view and understand the nuances that were to characterize the game and the club in this marginal setting. My experience of rugby had been limited to settings where the game and its 'culture' played a large part in the social realms of society in general, and in a sense, I was entering a new setting where the minor status of rugby would challenge my understanding of the 'generality' I saw within the game's surrounding culture. Herein lays the primacy of ethnography: to understand the differences in those we sometimes perceive to be similar. My background with rugby has enabled me to produce a text that offers a validation of my previous cultural experience as well as a new perspective on a cultural group in vastly different surrounds. The voice that becomes a defining feature of this style of ethnography differs from the distanced interpretation in classical methodologies or the myriad of possible translations found in post-modernism in the sense that the reader is presented with an authentic reality that is derived only from the cultural members. In a sense, the type of interpretism described, amongst others, by Geertz and Bourdieu has a similar objective to the type of ethnography presented here in that it elucidates knowledge about participants and their cultural reality using symbolism and a reflexive voice.

4.2 New writing practices

What can be achieved through new writing practices in qualitative research has been discussed by Richardson (2000) who maintains that whatever form of representation one chooses in an ethnographic account, from prose to creative arts through to reflexivity, the project must been seen as being "humanly situated, always filtered through human eyes and human perceptions, bearing both the limitations and strengths of human feelings" (2000: 15). In order for qualitative research to retain its aesthetic merit and express a reality of lived experience, the boundaries of social science must be opened up beyond the limitations set by an academia restrained by past traditions of scientifically 'disciplined' policing. The way in which sporting groups and practices represent significant cultural complexities and dynamics offers a broad scope for new writing practices to capture and explicate changing social

realities. If we are expected to write to an agenda that adheres to the classical social science conventions that portray a certain vision of what should constitute knowledge, then leeway to individual narrative and method would seem extraneous at the expense of telling a more vivid and representative account. This postmodern argument that views any method or theory with distrust and certainly lacking privileged status makes way for a class of ethnographies Richardson terms *Creative Analytical Practice Ethnography* or *CAP Ethnography*.

> CAP ethnography displays the writing process and the writing product as deeply intertwined; both are privileged. The product cannot be separated from the producer or the mode of production or the method of knowing….Ethnographers learn about the topic and about themselves that which was unknowable and unimaginable using conventional analytical procedures, metaphors, and writing formats (2000:10).

The writing genre that comes closest to the representation I endeavour to present here is a narrative style referred to as *auto-ethnography*. These are "highly personalized, revealing texts in which authors tell stories about their own lived experiences, relating the personal to the cultural" (2000:11). The approach gives the author some sense of a reprieve from the difficulties faced in representation of the 'Other' by placing his/her experiences in focus whilst using various writing techniques to construct an authentic depiction of the cultural setting or event.

Ultimately however, there is no one single way of conducting research and writing an ethnographic analysis that is applicable to every situation or cultural assemblage. Different audiences require diverse writing practices that can mould the qualitative data together with the purpose of the inquiry to deliver a humanly situated account of a cultural practice. Whilst the creative drafting of a text can deliver merit to an ethnography that attracts response from a wider audience, it is the research practice and methodology that remains the defining criteria for successful ethnographic practice. Without the situational foundation in place to suit the demands of a unique portrayal of a culture, the audience has less of a chance to use the text as a modus for relating their own personal experience, or cultural perspective to the ethnography. As Richardson further explains her belief in the inseparability of ethnographic life from the self, using a creative novelty in a text must not alone suffice at the expense of science itself; "I want to look through both lenses, to see a 'social science art form'" (2000: 16).

Anthropology stands as a beacon for cross-disciplinary science due to its insistence on having contrasting methodological and theoretical perspectives open for change and reappraisal. However, one must not lose sight of the primacy of the disciplinary exercise by diverting attention entirely away from the participants. The human beings and the practice of culture from which ethnography formulates its analytical and theoretical questions are open-ended categories which demand situationally formulated methodologies in order to avoid falling victim to an unconscious interpretation that can contradict the nature of lived reality. The open-ended and comparative measures an ethnographer adopts when participating in fieldwork or analysis are mandatory requisites that help avoid advance labelling of a socio-cultural reality that cannot be pre-determined, but must be borne out of a fusion of empirical and contextual evidence.

In determining a methodological stance for the study of rugby in Bergen, I was more concerned with epistemological issues surrounding my role as a rugby player alongside those who were to be my subject matter, rather that pure technical matters such as how to collect data. I saw this emphasis resulting from the nature of the study at hand and its goals taking in to account the ontological demands of an 'at home' practice which I often felt enveloped by. How I could talk to my fellow team-members and play the game with the social sidelines were of little concern compared with the way in which participant observation would lend its weight to an epistemological expression of my own personal rugby culture vis-à-vis the local context in Bergen. My adherence to the legacy of anthropology as a comparative science which looks at social phenomena to suggest models of human nature was, throughout my fieldwork, reminding me that the actuality I was experiencing was not an empirically correct phenomenon I should strive to validate, but a cultural reality bound within its own uniqueness. Similarities with other players could be easily seen and experienced and often taken for granted but as is often the case with initial impressions, one can be misguided and it is only through a deeper analysis of how resemblances work in the rugby settings that I was able to build upon or refute my deductions.

My method of interpretation should not be seen as a stance in itself against the dichotomy posed between schools of post-modern, interpretive or positivist methodologies, but more a direct period of intense participation whereby my examination is formed from an integration of observation, participation and analysis. The shared cognitive space between myself and other rugby players was not a negotiated one, but a natural result of like-minded people

internalised within a lived field of expression. It was in this space that I found usefulness in using my own experiences as contrasting reflections upon the primacy of my objective, which was of course participant observation. I was not an ethnographer out in the field with pen and paper or voice recorder, but a rugby player getting wet and cold, getting injured, feeling the adrenaline rush from scoring a try or tackling an opponent and a team-mate sharing some the joys and frustrations of the game together at the pub. The process of reflecting on the game, the party, or the pain was to draw out the anthropological methods I had learnt away from the rugby arena. I recalled the day's events in order to look for peculiarities amongst the routine or find possible clarifications of incidents that struck me as life as BRK members saw it. In this way I felt no sense of obligation when interacting with other team members, other than to participate to the best of my ability in an activity I enjoyed.

As a guide to the potential effectiveness an intensive participation methodology can have, I had at my disposal empirical evidence from researchers on sporting cultures and practices that provided me with some degree of reassurance that immersion in a sporting group one is familiar with in a common setting can provide results and rewards beyond the realms of confusion and wonder that surrounded my participation. Methods applied to the study of sport are wide-ranging whilst at the same time they adhere to principles that maintain anthropology as being a force in the critical discourse that engages sociology, cultural studies, history, and other such comparative disciplines. Such a cross-over of academic persuasion presents opportunities for sport to realise the potential for varied methodologies and forms of analysis to further develop critical social theory. In which direction it can lead is open for future speculation, although recent developments in sports ethnography have broadened the scope for texts to be juxtaposed and transformed in the classical anthropological tradition. Sands (1999b, 1999c, 2002), Wheaton (2004a) and Brownall (2000) exemplify recent anthropological approaches to the study of sport by providing substantive empirical attention to the differentiation of notions of ethnicity and tradition in sport which help us understand more fully the place of sport as a component of culture.

4.3 Experiential ethnography

The form of ethnography I have chosen to adopt in this study falls somewhere in the space the postmodernists have created between themselves and the more classic positivist styles of

anthropology. As in any successful kind of ethnography, the fieldworker cannot avoid spending time within a particular culture, learning and interacting with its members so in this respect the method described is far from novel. However the way in which empirical accounts of culture avoided the implications the ethnographer's experiences had upon the research has enabled a reflexive narrative to help produce a richer, more inclusive text. This 'experiential' approach, termed and used successfully by American anthropologist Robert R. Sands, enables the ethnographer to:

> Progressively move through a series of stages deciphering cultural behaviour and codes, a rite of passage, whether subtle or overt, directly or indirectly acknowledged by both ethnographer and cultural members. Integral to this is reflexivity and narrative, whereby the ethnographer becomes just informant providing information and experiences to the understanding of the culture. The ethnographer's experience should not be the central focus of the research but be used as a validating tool for the experience and behaviour of other participants in the cultural group in question (Sands 2002: 124).

Experience combined with a reflexive narrative, according to Sands, by itself does not fully explain a cultural reality; "for this to occur, narrative must be grounded not only in experience but in a systematic attempt to frame this experience in lived representation of both ethnographer and cultural member" (Sands 2002: 136). This is done with the aid of other traditional tools of ethnography, such as the interview, observation of certain events, life histories and entries from field journals. Whilst fieldwork impressions are gathered from the messages inherent in the various processes, it is in the *experience* that one can situate these interpretations in the social context. The form of reflexivity in the experiential approach differs from that of post-modern ethnography in the way in which the learning and interpretation project occurs within the ethnographer. Instead of drawing upon one's own personal view based upon the representation provided by the ethnographer, the reader is invited to reflect upon how the author actually becomes immersed in the subject as an equal participant. By being situated within the ethnographic process (in my case as a new member of BRK), the need to be constrained by the traditional auspice of neutrality that could adversely effect the cultural group diminishes until one is left with an experience as close as possible to the lived context in question. Experiencing the elation of victory, the disappointment of defeat, the pain of injury or the frustration irregular training conditions brings is essential in reducing the effects of the dichotomies that ensue from a more sidelined ethnographic participation. By this I refer to the way in which the act of participating and immersion in the cultural group becomes integrated within the observational requirements of

the experiential ethnography. To observe the actions of football hooligans in Scotland or youth gymnasts in China using traditional interpretative methods cannot fully unlock the cultural experience of the participants because the cognitive reflections of the researcher are interpreted, rather than internalised, from the realities of the subjects. This is not to down-play the role of the 'outsider' in ethnographic work because in most situations the researcher will not have such an intimate role within the group under investigation, however it merely allows for the ethnographer to gain access to different types of data than that of a more detached observer.

Ethnographers having similar cultural experiences to other athletes or members of different sub-cultures deliberately step out of the paradox that is created by adopting the role as an outsider attempting to fathom the internal makeup and strategies of a cultural group. Examples of recent studies carried out by ethnographers on sporting groups provide a unique insight into methods of direct immersion that use reflexive narrative in various forms to reconstruct a sporting reality that is gleaned from the same intensive interaction and skills validation processes that occur for any new member. Alan Klein's *Little Big Men* is a formative ethnography of eight years studying the sub-cultural world of elite bodybuilding in California in the 1980s. Combining multiple methodologies, Klein portrays a vivid picture of the hegemonic masculinity taking place against the backdrop of a social history of bodybuilding in order to reveal the complex nature of the psychological and cultural contradictions and tensions found within the subculture. Klein's autobiographical voice brings out the sounds inside the gym, the "sweating and grunting" (Klein 1988: 31) and a multiple dialogue that creates a work full of symbolic cultural meaning that has its authenticity rendered in the authors total immersion. The unbroken continuity the ethnographer attempts to maintain between himself/herself and members of the cultural group may not necessarily permit a complete immersion, but as Klein discovered through further ethnographic research on a Mexican frontier baseball team, shorter more regular periods of fieldwork can also achieve effective results. Over a period of four years, Klein returned to Laredo each time benefiting from an increased level of trust and acceptance from the informants who perceived him as "somewhat more real, a person who will return continually" (1997: 260).

Robert Sands has spent extensive periods of time participating with, and studying American college basketball players, footballers, sprinters and surfers using experiential ethnographic methods. Each period of study has attempted to let the reader feel the experience of

participation from the point of view of Sands and his fellow team-members, as well as providing knowledge and understanding of the culture that the experiences are encased in. His active methods probe the contemporary mechanics of identity attribution (see Sands 1991, 1995) to college athletes and himself using sports that have a high degree of ethnic diversity. Sands was able to use his own position as an athlete to contextualize the identity attributions of his team-members using cognitive structures that "not only operate to define a particular identity to group members and non-members but also act as a continuing litmus test for who is and who is not considered a group member" (Sands: 1999: 34). Further analysis of his team-mates' linguistic, cognitive and behavioural patterns enabled him to develop an affinity within the domain of a sprinter. The cultural knowledge that was sited within the identity of an athlete became clear the more he experienced, wrote, and analysed his data.

> As I was accessing the knowledge domain of sprinter, I learned how to be a sprinter. I suggest that a cognitive domain can be thought of as an individual culture, accessed in response to interactions between identities. And herein lies the key: I did not access or retrieve that knowledge of sprinter from books or running practices by myself. The domain of cultural knowledge that is part of the network of sprinters is accessed through the interaction of individuals in a cultural identity and this knowledge is represented in how the individuals perceive the content of that particular identity. Knowledge is made available through universal cognitive rules that are expressed in order and arrangement of positions within an identity. Ultimately, we can see how our minds work in the way we order and arrange our social relations through the identity complex (Sands 1995a: 20).

Belinda Wheaton based her methodology upon her 'insider role' as an established windsurfer within a group of surfers on the South Coast of England. She adopted similar research methods to my participation with BRK and others actively engaged with a sports group and noted that 'the researcher cannot pass as a group member, s/he must become one' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995 in Wheaton 1997: 164). Her observations were focussed on the windsurfing beaches as well as other sites that commonly attracted windsurfers, such as bars, surf shops, trade events, and other informal gatherings at private homes (2000: 256). Wheaton used her position of standing to observe both marginal and established members of the windsurfing community in order to refine and develop analytical themes that emerged from her extended period of active participation. Formal interviews played an important role in her grounded theory approach (see Glaser & Strauss 1967) in which her research questions could be merged, tested and analysed using the data collected from interviews and observations. Her research methods enabled her to illuminate the multiplicity of voices and

realities of a windsurfing culture in relation to power (female verses male) whilst also acknowledging and describing the shared values and behaviours of the community.

The construction of certain post-modern identities that Wheaton attributed to images and practices of consumption were increasingly difficult to define and were subject to continual individual and collective reinterpretation. For the windsurfing participant, concludes Wheaton, forms of collective identity were presented as a unique sense of 'sub-cultural authenticity and localized resistance' to commercial consumption (Wheaton 2000: 270) which included ambivalent expressions of masculinity that were less exclusive of women and 'other men' than many traditional institutionalised sporting cultures (2004b: 149). As a woman in a male dominated sport, Wheaton was faced with methodological dilemmas that could have affected the outcome of her data collecting processes. Instead of overtly announcing her presence as an ethnographer who also surfed, Wheaton initially decided to adopt a covert positioning[26] within the group in order to gain access to the intimate and male-dominated culture. But as her levels of commitment and windsurfing ability gave her credibility within the subculture, the dilemma became less pronounced. Indeed, many of her informants did not care one way or the other what her role outside the group involved, and she saw her decision not to inform everyone as part of the rationalization process of ethnographic practice.

Modern rugby culture has also been challenged and reinterpreted in various ways that confront traditional forms of hegemony and structures evident within BRK share many similarities with the windsurfing culture described by Wheaton. Both sub-cultural groupings exhibit forms of communal identity and gender relations that are not definable as singular monolithic categories but that occupy culturally diverse, contested and revised spaces in varied forms. Wheaton's ethnographic immersion allowed her to gain an understanding of the central meanings the windsurfers gave to their sport and its accompanying lifestyle. Her role as an accepted and respected member of the community enabled her to conclude that it was the commitment to the sport rather than its surrounding image that gave windsurfers central meaning to their cultural lifestyle. Cultural research based on statistics and interviews or

[26] Wheaton's initial attempts to 'hang out' at the beach for observational purposes were greeted with comments such as; "Are you an actor or a windsurfer?" (Wheaton 2000: 261). Wheaton justified her early covert fieldwork as being necessary (and ethically justified due to the beneficial nature of her results for the study of gender roles in sporting subcultures) in order to avoid her potential subjects withholding information should she openly announce her academic intentions. This dilemma was gradually resolved as Wheaton's windsurfing abilities and commitment to the activity improved and she was able to gain acceptance and full access to the 'core' community (Wheaton 2000: 257-61).

observation from a distance can illuminate various central issues but by offering actual experience as a means for elucidating cultural reality, active involvement in sporting research can present innovative and challenging revelations regarding human social nature.

The role adopted by Sparkes and Holt (2001) in their ethnographic study of cohesiveness in a university football team was that of overt participant observer (Wolcott 1995). Holt joined the team as a graduate student, later becoming a coaching assistant and was involved in every formal and informal team setting throughout the season. By becoming intensively involved with his team-mates, Holt was able to "simultaneously observe their behaviours, actions, interactions, special events, and crises as well as taking part in all of this so as to better understand the experiences and meanings constructed within this subculture" (2001: 241). Essential to the success of this study was the reciprocity gained through social relationships within the team which was equally evident and fundamental to my project. Holt was a worthy football player who knew how to act in 'culturally appropriate' ways and found his age, appearance and ethnicity following the homogeneous makeup of the squad. I too was part of a group which contained a certain degree of cultural homogeneity although the various nationalities and age differences were unlike the team Holt was a part of. What we shared was the fear of having misleading preconceptions about the sporting setting we were entering into and how we were to suspend our own notions based upon our previous sporting experiences. Holt maintained a reflexive journal throughout his eight month long period of fieldwork and used its subjectivity to monitor events within the team and his own personal feelings at different stages throughout the season. In order to understand the meanings associated with the feelings of his team-mates Holt reflected upon the roles ascribed to him as a member of the team and how they influenced his research process:

> I recognized the importance of looking beyond the immediacy of personal feelings about events to consider the wider influence of events on the team as a cultural phenomenon. As a consequence, even though it is impossible for researchers to become aware of all their situational subjectivities within any given project, I found the attempt to monitor my own subjectivity within this study a productive undertaking (2001: 243).

4.4 Towards the ethnography of sport

These examples of intense ethnographic participation reveal successful research on sport based upon three common themes. Firstly, the defining feature of a particular ethnography is its purpose rather than a focus on the methods used to produce material for later analysis. The purposes can often change once the cultural field of enquiry and its participants are better understood and the researcher is accepted as more of an equal, but the mere nature of such inquisition enables a flexibility of method that allows for such development. The inductive nature of sporting settings means that pre-imposed theoretical frameworks can have adverse effects on data collection by way of drawing upon preconceptions about the participants and the field of enquiry. Some sites can be very familiar and enable the purpose of investigation to focus on clearly definable boundaries in which to carry out research, however others that occupy multiple locations of interaction with a diversity of participants can potentially lead to problems that require goals to be modified.

Secondly, the role of the ethnographer within the sporting group has proven to be critical to all of the studies mentioned, even though functions and backgrounds have been varied. A rapport based on friendship and certainly a reciprocal respect with fellow team-members or those being studied allows the flow of information that is the essence of what determines the ethnographer's lived experience of the cultural group. The process of gaining the trust of individual informants can be rapid but can also be delayed or made complex if social factors such as age, sex or ethnicity are turned against the researcher. Such hindrances at the outset of fieldwork can often be used to the advantage of the researcher but this more often than not involves his/her explicit display of shared feelings and experiences of joy, pain, effort and sacrifice that predicates the group's cultural membership. Ethnographic research can be explicitly based upon a sporting group or setting that reflects the research focus or, as is often the case, the characteristic nature of the group can provide an open-ended framework for developing new questions that guide the path of the enquiry. Data can be collected and analysed, and experiences negotiated and contextualized in vastly diverse ways based upon the reality of human distinctiveness and cultural relationships within the field, and it is the way in which these issues are moulded into the overall framework of the project that demands careful attention.

The third essential attribute of interactive sports ethnography regards the use of multiple methods of data collection. Qualitative research engages in a wide range of research methods all of which can lead to valuable ethnographic data and all of which are appropriate to the

unique purposes of the enquiry in question. An active participant role in sports research requires methods that have potential to generate hidden, more subtle and elusive meaning from the behaviour of fellow cultural members. By accepting the subjective reality of the social environment in which research is to be carried out, one can better understand the fluidity that is constantly constructing and changing patterns of behaviour. Traditional data collecting techniques using notebooks, formal and informal interviews, recordings and questionnaires will always be used in the social sciences to collect more formalized records that can then be analysed and interpreted by rich social data only accessed by long and consistent periods of in-depth participation within the cultural group. Ethnographers must be prepared to collect and record data at the most unexpected occasions as Sands noted when trying to approach a basketball team-mate for an explanation of style. Sands struggled to get his questions understood by the young player until a moment of great skill in the game resulted in the informant turning to say, "That is black style, man". For the remainder of the match, the player was able to clearly relate what he meant by black style (Sands 2002: 67).

My own previous experience conducting undergraduate research on the formation of a new professional rugby league team in Auckland, New Zealand (Mountjoy 1996) involved the use of multiple forms of data collection due to the historical nature of the enquiry which aimed to trace the complex process of club formation through the eyes of the players, sponsors, coaching and management staff. Semi-structured research interviews were conducted within the club and corporate settings in order to gain explanation, rather than description, of the experiences of key decision makers behind the club including the team captain, club president, head marketing officer, and chief executive of the main corporate sponsor. The interviews were structured in a way that allowed the subjects to reveal insights into their attitudes and experiences that may not have been apparent to me during my background research. Face to face meetings with high profile sportsmen can often turn out to be rather fruitless exercises if the subjects are accustomed to providing the 'right' answers that place the club and the player's role in it above their own subjective thoughts. I approached each interview confident in my own background knowledge of the players and the club formation, and purposely bypassed questions commonly posed by the media in order to both maximise the time I had with each interviewee, and focus on the research objectives I had in mind. This approach was intended to make the respondent feel he/she was carefully chosen to reveal aspects of his/her playing or managerial contributions that were specifically relevant to a worthwhile study. I took these personal experiences with me to the training field in order to

observe the workings of the team using more unobtrusive methods that could record actual behaviour as it happened, contrasting it with the disclosures gathered during the interviews. The methodological decisions I made during research in Auckland and in Bergen, as well as those made by others who have conducted ethnographic studies on sport, were first and foremost based upon the specific objective nature of the research. In most cases one needs to make use of a multitude of contrasting qualitative approaches in addition to quantitative data that takes into account the time constraints and scope of the project as well as the fundamental essence of just what contribution the research can make to the cultural reality in focus.

5 Legitimacy in fieldwork

5.1 The reflective approach

My interest in sport as both a 'spectator' and 'practitioner', in the case of this study, has enabled me to experience and analyse life within BRK in a more encompassed form rather than seeing the club and sport one-dimensionally. I have mixed the pleasure with the pain, which in doing so has enabled me to form a more humanistic, sensory view of some of the core experiences found both surrounding and within BRK. Central to the objective of ethnographic fieldwork is the ability to read between the lines, experience the lives of others and absorb and unravel what is left unsaid. Any certainties associated with the sport of rugby are more often than not over-ridden by tensions, peculiarities and contextual anomalies that make any spurious notions of universal conformity in sport open to critical conjecture that I hope to address throughout this thesis. The flexible form of narrative used in this thesis is adopted in an attempt to dramatize and hopefully provide coherent analysis of a social group that goes about its business largely unnoticed by mainstream society. Ultimately, the true test of the authenticity of this research will come from the readers who can possibly come away with a better understanding of the BRK community by experiencing in some small way, moments from the life of this group of people. In my attempt to create a meaningful picture of the lived reality of the club members, judgement can legitimately be based upon whether or not my interpretations and experiences are fairly represented in order to make explicit what is implicit to the cultural participants of this study. The criticism commonly levelled at ethnographic research in general regarding the objective assessment of reliability and legitimacy note Gratton & Jones (2004: 169), also points to certain other factors that one must consider:

- Is the ethnography contextually complete by making full reference to the context within which the group exists?
- Can the text give the reader a sense of understanding the culture by relating a feeling of almost being there?
- Has a range of data collecting methods been incorporated into the research in order to strengthen the validity of the claims?
- Doe the text provide a plausible account and explanation of the cultural group?

The answers to the above points lie in the minds of the fellow rugby members and other interested readers; however the most critical factor in my own assessment has been my personal relationship to other members of BRK. It was team-mates who held the information from which I could attempt to decode the behaviour that they express in the various sporting and social arenas and without developing friendly, cooperative relations I would have been unable to test my research strategies. After I began training and meeting the players on a regular basis I found there to be a consistent willingness from team members to talk about themselves, friends, opponents and rugby in general which made my task of gathering information on a personal and cultural level easier than I had anticipated. How I recorded and stored this information and ultimately analysed and interpreted it was of course less than straightforward, but I saw this openness to pass on information as a positive aspect of the type of fieldwork I chose to carry out.

The type of ethnography I have undertaken has not been harmful to the participants. I have entered into the club with a personal agenda as an individual interested in playing a particular sport and meeting new friends. The knowledge I gained was for the sake of understanding the diverse makeup of a cultural group and to share this knowledge with all interested parties. There was no political agenda that stood behind my endeavours and I had no reason to present the players' emotions, desires, goals, thoughts or performances in any other way than that which I viewed and experienced them. I decided not to actually change the identity of the players as I saw them, but to ensure the confidentiality of not discussing certain information provided by one player to other team members, I gave anonymity to their names. Robert Sands shares the view of many ethnographers that "the integrity of the fieldworker and the specifics of the field situation – the personality of the ethnographer, the culture under study, the cultural scene where research occurs, the intended use of cultural information and knowledge – should dictate the type and openness of the research methodology" (Sands 2002: 116). The characteristics that I consider to be paramount in ethnography such as trust and understanding are also borne out in common social relations between equal human beings and my season with BRK has given me lasting friendships that may have been difficult to develop had I not respected the integrity of my team-mates and myself personally.

Coming from New Zealand, where rugby is revered as a national pastime, I can claim to be relatively well versed in the game and its lore despite only beginning playing competitively towards the end of high school. Rugby is an unavoidable phenomenon in New Zealand, and

even the non-playing, non-following layman finds it hard not to be aware of the game's influence on both the local and national socio-cultural makeup. But my knowledge and experience of the actual game and the lifestyle that surrounds it has a bias specific to the New Zealand context. It could give me a window of opportunity into the induction and acceptance process that surrounds new membership in BRK, but it could not claim to give me a representative feeling of what it is like to be a player here. Every player would be drawn to the club for various reasons, and would negotiate their introduction, their first injury, first game or first after-match party in a unique way. My insight into the sport is not intended to provide me with objectivity on which to theorize rugby or to judge the experiences of both new and established players, but merely to place myself and my own personal impressions with the club alongside everyone else's on an equal footing. The reflective approach I take in writing this thesis is a conscious attempt to avoid the pitfalls of exclusively explaining the experiences of 'the other' by including myself as a legitimate field subject. I did not feel marginalized as a person or a rugby player at any point throughout the season, so saw no reason not to assess my own thoughts and experiences as raw field text rather than confine them to segments of analysis.

6 Theoretical frameworks

6.1 Comparison and interconnection

An interpretative approach based upon interdisciplinary models of analysis will be applied to this ethnographic study of sports because the aim is not to attempt the impossible and single out and specify a unique paradigm that best fits my findings, but to recognize that a broad theoretical approach to a complex subject offers greater potential for further anthropological analysis and understandings. This is in line with the direction I see the discipline heading now moving beyond current post-modern trends toward a realization that theoretical perspectives such as structure, function, action, event, interpretation or history must be viewed as interconnected realms that adhere to the premise of anthropology as the most comparative and flexible of the social sciences.

The generally accepted notion among anthropologists is that most attempts to define and study social phenomena can be classified in terms of a central dualism between agency and structure theories. How this dualism is applied to sport presents interesting scenarios that an experiential ethnography can help unravel by attempting to interpret information from tacit, rather than explicit, knowledge. This unformulated knowledge appears when 'we know more than we can say, and the more we can say, the more our unarticulated or tacit knowledge grows' (Maykut & Morehouse 1994: 33). It is my contention that as my tacit knowledge of the participants in the rugby club and the culture surrounding it increases, it can be developed into explicit understandings based on my active involvement as a club member.

In the same way as the social meaning of a work of philosophy may be reversed (for example, the works of Descartes, Kant and Marx can change meaning over time), sporting practices always present great elasticity, thus offering a great availability for usages that are altogether different and even opposed in meaning (Bourdieu 1990: 163). In likening sport, at a given moment, to a musical work, continues Bourdieu, 'it is both the musical score (rules of the game) and also the various competing interpretations; and each interpreter is confronted by this, more unconsciously than consciously, when he prepares 'his' interpretation' (Bourdieu 1990: 163). Herein lays one of the central aims of this project: how to gain a better understanding of the members' different interpretations of participation vis-à-vis the values laid down by the rugby club culture in order to test the hypothesis that club structure is a

determining, yet complex factor mediating individual inclusion and exclusion. Sport is an inherently social phenomenon and the processes that define various members' positioning within the structure of the rugby club as well as the meanings and organization that occur between participants in social situations can be viewed in structural, processual, symbolic and interpretative ways, each to be viewed as supplementary to one another rather than as providing a singularly intrinsic unifying social theory.

Definitional and theoretical use of the structural functionalism loosely attributed to the Manchester school (most notably Gluckman, Mitchell and Turner), the dynamics of social practice and process (Bourdieu) and symbolic interpretivism (Geertz) will encourage epistemological flexibility that can transcend the gap between researcher and participant and help produce a more feasible set of theoretical statements about the realm of social life surrounding BRK. It is in the practice of my experiential immersion in the daily life of rugby players that can enable my experience to 'cross the final bridge that spans the chasm of researcher and those studied….offering the reality of meaning in the "eyes of others"' (Sands 1995: 8-9).

Bourdieu's method of generative structuralism, seeking to address this dialectic relationship between agency and structure in the analysis of everyday life will be applied to this project to argue that members of BRK are exposed to certain practices that convey meaning about what it is to be a valued member of the club and the emerging rugby culture in Bergen. The understanding of the social structures surrounding rugby in Bergen and of the dispositions of the habitus of the agents who live within these structures (players, coaches, supporters and so on) will be aided by the use of Bourdieu's conceptual tools, notably *habitus*, *fields* and *dispositions* (Bourdieu 1977, 1990). Exposing members (and this includes myself) to such representations is to display those aspects of rugby habits that are valued. Those members who possess and/or adopt these habits that are accepted within the realms of ideal club practices will in turn fit more readily into the culture of the club, whereas those who do not will potentially risk being marginalized. Social situations (or 'dramas') such as rugby training sessions, gym training, actual matches, tournaments and 'after-match' functions will be investigated and analysed using the experiential method of participant observation together with the extended-case method developed from the Manchester school and seen as representations of certain aspects of the culture found within the rugby club context.

Of the many relevant themes characteristic of the Manchester approach, the concern for methodological focus on the social processes involved with conflict and conflict-resolution can be applied to the hypothesis that views the rugby club as a social system with rules of legitimacy and power that can be seen to have inconsistencies and contradictions when the social actions of its members are observed in various settings. Thus, my focus will be upon the actual processual practices that constitute the participants involvement, and the way the structures and functions of the club are able to include or exclude people. I shall determine how and if they can be interpreted in different ways, rather than adopting the earlier approach synonymous with Evans-Pritchard or Radcliffe-Brown that emphasized the stability of cognitive structures and their opposed social units. My contention is that the structure of the rugby club cannot be viewed as an abstract cultural concept but rather as a field that contains logics, rules and values of membership that maintains its social positioning despite internal conflict and resistance which can stem from allowing manouvourability and interpretation by individual members.

The extended-case study deals with events over a period of time involving the same actors in a series of social situations in which their structural positions can be analysed from a processual standpoint. This 'depth' analysis essentializes everything seen on the surface of social interaction without viewing individual action as a specifically integrated unity. We see structures in society continually emerging, relocating and modifying in varying and unpredictable ways and this, I contend, occurs within the culture of BRK and can be developed with the help of the extended-case method and structural analysis. The training sessions, matches, tournaments and social functions can be linked as a series of events or practices that involve the same people to see how members' actions and relations change, or remain the same, in accordance to the structural settings of the club. The appeal of this methodology lies in its emphasis on individual agency or people's ability to structure their own relationships with other members and also the clubs ideal practices and norms without losing sight of any structural tendencies inherent in modern social systems.

In Bourdieuian terms, the *field* here is sport, more specifically rugby. To elaborate in terms of the rugby club, it is seen as a dynamically structured system of social positions with the nature of the club defining the situation for its occupants and is structured internally in terms of power relations. Values and legitimacy within the field itself are constrained and defined in accordance to these relations and to establish legitimacy within a field, it is necessary to

'comply' with the rules and logic established and recognised within the field at any given time. It is this compliance or non-compliance that will be tested throughout this project. Maher argued that there are certain characteristics of a field:

> Fields are at all times defined by a system of objective relations of power between social positions which correspond to a system of objective relations between symbolic points: works of art, artistic manifestos, political declarations, and so on. The structure of the field is defined at a given moment by the balance between these points and among the distributed capital (1990: 8).

These internal power structures viewed within the club in the form of the coach and senior members from a rugby background can be seen to confer power and legitimacy to some practices, while relegating other practices such as non-commitment or the lack of overt aggression to a subordinate or marginalised status. This is achieved through amassing the symbolic capital (essentially social prestige) valued within the field. To gain authority and power, argues Bourdieu, agents take on board the culture or the habitus of the field, and as they amass more capital they become more powerful gaining more control and legitimacy, so becoming empowered to influence others. In rugby terms, certain rules and practices are dominant so that to be an effective participant in the field, it is essential to assimilate the tacit rules that govern the practices and strategies as legitimate. The dominant practices within rugby such as toughness, teamwork and the suppression of pain serve the intended logic of legitimizing practices that support the unity and desired values within the game. In this research project I intend to use the concept of the field to help locate the discourses and practices that impinge upon the construction of rugby player identity and play a decisive role in determining their social position within the club.

Bourdieu's key concept of habitus, 'the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisions' (1977: 78), and the practices which make these habits possible, will be applied to the rugby club to consider how certain individual aspirations and practices of its members change (their dispositions) in relation to the conditions present in the clubs' wider social structure. The primary habitus for some members of the club has involved the sport of rugby albeit in varying degrees, whilst for others new to the sport it has not. However, the habitus of the Bergen club and that of the game of rugby itself is imposed upon all members and it is in this context that social behaviour will be analysed, and the hypothesis that sees the rugby club as including or excluding according to its own values and legitimacy will be tested. The positions of identity negotiated by players may be ascertained through the experiential

methodology in terms of analysing the dispositions that stand opposed to, or aligned with, the valued structures and standards set out by the club and of individual circumstantial desires. If the senior members can be constructed as ‘ideal’ members in these terms, then the bodily and social expressions of each team member can be viewed as a type of mediation between individual agency and institutionalised (club) structure.

7 Construction and confirmation of BRK member identity

Introduction

Sport participants encounter a wide variety of socialisation experiences. The meaning of sport participation, and the values thereby encountered, makes sense only in the context of the experiences and social relationships of those involved. Hence for some participants sport builds character, for others it does not. There is no single response to sport participation due to the fact that that sport is not a carrier of one single set of messages. Sport participants are therefore recipients of various responses through the socialisation process, some of which may be more widespread or privileged than others, but values other than 'dominant ones' are also communicated. The *interpretive interactionist* framework (Coakley 1993) used in sociological contexts, is useful in attempting to capture the core meanings and contradictions of rugby players' experiences by examining the nuances in their language and behaviour on and off the field (Denzin 1989: 25). It also captures the dynamics of the socialisation process as it is related to sport and can be applied to the case study of BRK. This chapter shall describe and attempt to link the socialisation process within BRK at personal, cultural and structural levels to the overall context of social relations and cultural practices in which social development occurs. Although we find great variation in the roles and identities among BRK members, clear processes of socialisation were present throughout the season that played significant roles in constituting their position within the club.

7.1 Socialisation through sport: Interactionist approaches to sports research

The theory of socialisation as interaction outlined by Coakley (1993) maintains that people were conceived of as more *active* and interactively interdependent with others. Socialisation occurs through interaction between active and creative agents whose behaviours are grounded in their own reflexive definitions of certain situations. Socialisation is a continuous process through which human beings develop a sense of who they are and how they are connected to the world around them. BRK, as one example of a social group in society, acts as a site of control and power that has the potential to influence its member's behaviour personally and at an interactive level with relationships with other members. The type of socialisation I refer to

here is specific to the study of sports but remains part of the process whereby people acquire a social identity and learn the way of life within their society. All of this amounts to the learning of specific aspects of a culture, which in the case is rugby-culture in Bergen.

Far from being a purely one-way functional process whereby new participants become products of certain dominant values transmitted by the wider society, socialisation must be considered as a two-way interaction where the meaning of participation can be attained from the viewpoint of the individual participant. The sequence of experiences and decisions leading to participation with BRK are inextricably gleaned through the social and cultural context in which it is situated. Members of BRK, regardless of whether or not they come from a cultural background that has ingrained in them a familiarity with the sport of rugby or if they are new to the game like most Norwegians, have sufficient social, cultural and sporting experiences necessary to develop individual perceptions about their own involvement in the club. Supporting this concept is the social interaction theory which sees the individual gathering information about the interactions and symbols used to communicate the important aspects of the BRK rugby culture. The individual filters this new information based upon the past experiences and perspectives he/she brings to the new experience. It is through social interaction with others that the new member interprets experiences and gives meaning to each situation. When players develop shared meanings of a situation, even allowing for diverse interpretations, they develop common understandings which influence the assumptions of how to behave in certain situations. As I attempt to describe how BRK members socialise, the use of social interaction theory allows a greater emphasis and focus upon the experiences and perceptions of the individual participants. Ethnographic research carried out over the course of the season shows how players have integrated the socialisation processes with participation into their lives.

7.2 Stages of BRK membership

Using active participant observation and interaction methods coupled with informal interviews and the use of extensive field notes, I was able to gather information from a cross-section of new and established members about how they were introduced and became committed to the club and rugby participation. The more I analysed the data, the more I saw a connection between many of the ongoing processes that makes up member's lives and the

decisions they make in terms of personal levels of sporting participation. Players continually monitored and adapted their participation decisions in accordance to changes in social and personal circumstances and their reasons for participation on one day or in one venue were continually evaluated. I was able to identify patterns that showed how player involvement was directly related to other events that were important in their lives at the time thus making the socialisation process a personally mediated one. Whereas traditional society was based around relatively fixed and stable social identifiers such as marriage, work, age and religion, contemporary society has evolved to become more fragmented and identity "becomes more mobile, image-based, self-reflexive, and subject to exchange and innovation" (Kellner 1992: 141). In a way, the lifestyle choices of many BRK members reflect the ambiguity in Kellner's argument that the desire for a unified and coherent sense of self has been undermined by increased cultural complexity (Kellner 1995). Whilst players seek the rugby club for varying sporting and non-sporting reasons, it is a merging of consumption patterns that reflect both traditional social identifiers and the aspirations towards individual self-identity that are borne out by research into BRK socialisation patterns.

7.3 Rugby preconceptions

My first season with BRK, as an experiential ethnographer (or more specifically as a utility outside back in rugby parlance), has enabled me to uncover some of the more subtle features of individual and group behaviour than a more sidelined or unobtrusive method of observation would have been able to provide. Despite the fact that the game of rugby is very familiar to me, being the national sport in New Zealand[27], the setting here in Bergen is not, hence the decision to undertake a season playing and examining the sport in relatively 'exotic' surroundings. The stages of socialisation I undertook were on a comparable level to other new members, although involved certain cultural preconceptions that enabled me to analyse both my own and other members' reactions to the process of inclusion. I was confident that through my own reflexivity regarding my body's lived experience of social and competitive performance I could provide a better understanding of individual and group dynamics within the club, however I bear mention of the need to digest and extrapolate all this within a theoretical and explanatory framework appropriate to my findings. Jay Coakley's (1993)

[27] Rugby was not my sport of choice throughout my childhood which was devoted to football, but I began playing in my final years at high school from the age of 17 and continued to combine both sports through my undergraduate years at Otago University.

model of sporting experience as a social construct involving dynamic social and individual processes helped show me how and why individuals within the club could create and negotiate their own and other's involvement. As a marginal sport in Bergen, rugby occupies an intermediate position between its individual members and the wider social order and can thus be viewed as a challenge to dominant societal norms and constraints and a re-negotiation based upon differing sets of values.

It was my initial preconception that rugby in Bergen would be a field transplanted from the very core Anglo-Commonwealth base of traditional values that characterize the game and its social presence in the most dominant arenas throughout the world in which the sport is played. From this, I assumed membership within the club would revolve around such values, mannerisms, styles of 'mateship', toughness and not the least sportsmanship and that the newer local members would be attracted to and influenced by the sport as a result of this. Prior to my entrance into the field I was interested in determining whether or not my subjective experiences on the training, playing and social arenas would enable me see a differentiation between peoples' reactions and attitudes within the three settings. I wondered whether it may be apparent that newer members are attracted to the club for purely social reasons and may negotiate their experiences on the field in different terms. It was a big unknown to me just what the structure of the club and the game in Bergen consisted of other than the fact that it was a relatively newly organised sport here and that active involvement was an even split between Norwegian and foreign members. I knew very little regarding the adjustments members made to the values of the club and how their social positioning was consciously or unconsciously regulated. By recounting examples from the various stages of becoming a BRK member, including my own, central questions regarding how expressions of violence, solidarity and inclusion/exclusion mediate individual or group experience can be ascertained and analysed with the help of interactionist theory.

7.4 Pre-season

My participation as a new member began in early January 2004 with twice weekly training sessions at Møhlenpris grusbane and inside the Nordnes sand hall as well as Sunday games of

touch rugby[28]. I also attended the BRK AGM and the first informal social gathering/season tactics meeting at one of the local player's apartment. For me, these initial few weeks were full of new impressions, but most of all new faces. I had previously known just one member, who is one of the club's central figures and has proven to be a source of much valuable information regarding the short history of rugby in Bergen and its workings. Being in the depths of winter and still some months before the start of the playing season, I found myself on most occasions being one of the few new members in the club, surrounded by a core of ten-fifteen players with a season or more of 'insight' and 'mateship' under their belts. Although not at all perturbed by this, after all ethnographers are more often than not thrown into unfamiliar settings, I found myself adopting a slightly withdrawn position feeling I had a point to prove. This, I assumed, was due to the fact that I was a New Zealander and the only other fellow countryman I gathered to have previously graced the black and red of BRK happened to be a skilled player!. At the first team meeting in fact, the club captain on hearing where I was from inquired as to whether or not I had any interest in helping out with coaching the backline!. My surprise was obviously evident in my urge to produce a rapid and neutral response in front of fifteen faces I didn't know:

> Errrm….I've not played for quite a few years now and haven't coached before, but if there's anything the captain or coach needs help with I'll only be happy to oblige.

I trained hard in January with the specific intention of getting recognized by the other members as someone that could benefit the club despite getting two ribs broken in the third contact session of the year in the sand hall. As injuries are a common part of the game, being at the receiving end also provided me with the opportunity to observe peoples reactions to such occurrences, as being sidelined was to be a common problem for a number of players throughout the season. My role as a field student did not of course allow me the relative luxury of recuperation so I continued to train and observe despite the discomfort and learned more about the characteristics of the individuals mostly rather than forming any coherent picture of the club structure as a whole. This initial period of socialisation however, initially

[28] The origins of touch rugby or simply "touch" can be traced back to Australia in the 1960s. All that is needed is a rugby ball, a space to play and a group of players. The game is similar to rugby but without the tackling, scrumming, rucking, mauling, lineouts and kicking and can be played by males and females regardless of age, size or ability. Touch is fast, simple and exciting and promotes the fundamental skills of running, handling, evasion and support play, whilst developing basis principles of attack and defence, without the fear of getting hurt. Partly due to the weather and lack of grass surfaces available to players in Bergen, touch is widely regarded as an essential and practical means with which to practice and promote the game here.

indicated to me the varied politics and symbolism of the club that I assumed were borne out of such diverse member backgrounds. Here I was running about with nineteen year old students from Bergen, British oil industry workers in their thirties, other ex-pats with families, some with expectant wives, some with ex-wives, newly arrived Australians reuniting with girlfriends, doormen from local bars and other students who experienced their pre-socialisation stages of rugby whilst studying in the UK or Australia. In other words, the diversity was huge and this had an obvious effect on the participation levels at training/touch rugby/social events from week to week. But the obvious unifying factor that was clear to me from an early stage was that these players clearly thrived on the friendship that membership in BRK provided. Here was a setting which in practical terms I felt reasonably comfortable with despite initially only knowing one player. I knew from my upbringing how the game was played, was punctual and did not miss any training sessions and shared the similar culture and 'life circumstances' with many of the other players. However, the way in which the club was organized and more importantly for my project, how the setting influenced the decisions and characteristics of the local members especially were to provide the real challenge for my fieldwork.

It could be useful to adopt a terminology of 'core' and 'fringe' members here, split between those who have had their identity as a BRK member confirmed by other established players and those whose acceptance has not been fully ratified due to their failure to live up to the requirements of the core group and the imported rugby protocol. The core members that began pre-season training maintained their enthusiasm throughout the season, but were supplemented by another slightly larger group of mostly local players whose appearances were somewhat sporadic. I would categorize BRK as an example of a cultural group less rigorous in its internal enforcement of rules, regulations and vetting procedures due to the varied life circumstances of its members, yet still maintaining an identity that requires novices to undergo role-transition. And it seems that the success or failure of this subjective transition has led some Norwegian players to feeling at home with the core squad and others to feel frustrated in their attempts to meet the requirements that initially attracted them to the game and club in the first place. The overriding impression I had before joining and subsequently throughout my fieldwork was that of a welcoming hand given to all interested men and women, boys and girls of any shape, size and ethnicity. It is in the varied responses from players that I have ascertained a cross-section of scenarios that can enable me to analyse theories of construction/ reconstruction and confirmation/ reconfirmation of a BRK identity

(Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel 1999). I have tried to take a more holistic perspective when reviewing my notes and materials to see interconnections that can be formed from the individual aspects of my experience. I wanted to know more about the identity construction that takes place for players new to the game and those like me that have had a foundation in previous years yet within a different setting. One of my initial hypotheses was that the structure of the club would be based upon the traditional rugby values and habits transplanted to a foreign setting and these in turn would define the levels of acceptance/ostracism experienced by the players. This however, turned out to be a rather more complex assumption than I had imagined.

7.5 The acceptance process

The analysis of the BRK cultural group entails the description and analysis of rugby as a 'social world', or as a subculture[29] in which people develop their own ways of doing things and relating to one another. Playing rugby and being a member of BRK occurs in connection with complex processes of identity formation. Donnelly and Young (1999) identify a four-phase process through which an athlete enters a particular sporting subculture:

- Acquiring knowledge about the sport
- Associating with people involved in the sport
- Learning how people think about their sport and what they do and expect from each other
- Becoming recognized and fully accepted into the sport group as a fellow athlete

The processes of socialisation into sporting subcultures are viewed by Donnelly and Young as far more deliberate acts of identity construction rather than purely formation. Members begin to act in ways characteristic of the established members of the subculture by adopting certain mannerisms, attitudes, styles of dress, speech and behaviour, however such perceptions are usually not so accurate and are frequently stereotypical (1999: 223). This ethnography of rugby players in Bergen examines these processes of socialisation and identity confirmation to gain an insight into the characteristic social order of the club.

[29] Subcultures are often defined via their opposition to the values of the larger culture to which they belong. Although this definition is theoretically contentious, it can be usefully applied in certain sporting contexts where the group exists on the fringe of mainstream society. BRK members share certain behaviors and beliefs that differentiate them from the larger Norwegian culture of which they are a part. Subcultures can exist in a variety of contexts all of which need defining individually, but in this case, the category helps delineate relevant cultural issues surrounding the club and its members.

As a recreational-based group, BRK contains certain features or elements that act to define who is and is not a member. Subtle and not-so-subtle tests become the means by which membership is validated. These can be observed with regards to new players who are, for various reasons, attracted to the club and more often that not, to the game of rugby. How those established members of the club interacted or did not interact with the newer, more marginal players became a process of testing, or validating cultural membership. The club has a very welcoming policy of being open for all potential players and does not openly exclude players who cannot perform reasonably well for one reason of another, thus the choice of continuing with the club is left up to the individual and his own judgement as to whether or not his performance and behaviour is acceptable within the realms of his own perception of club-cultural membership. Tests of acceptance or inclusion were sometimes subtle, but on the training or playing fields, members could see clearly the varying degree of participation and skill that constituted the club's loosely drafted membership standards. On the social stage, players were able to use their previous knowledge based upon personal experience with rugby culture such as those from Britain or its former colonies, or the tenuous understanding new members had of the sport and its social form.

The *pre-socialisation* phase, according to Donnelly and Young (1988), represents the first phase of identity construction and lasts until the player makes direct contact with the cultural group and is recruited and/or received as a member. Friends and the media provided the main sources of information to new players about the sport of rugby and the activities of BRK and combined to attract future members to their first training sessions, thus entering the socialisation stages of BRK identity construction. Stories prevailed concerning heavy drinking and singing after games alongside tales of sporting camaraderie and teamwork:

> I heard from a friend at a party that there was a good bunch of guys who played rugby, and it was not too serious sounding, but really social. That sounded like a good mix for me, so I went along to training.

> I thought American football and rugby sounded exciting to play, so when I saw a poster up at my school, I go the inspiration I needed to start.

> I used to hang out with some people who played rugby and started watching games on tv at the English Pub. It looked physical and fast, but the guys said anyone could play and they had fun party's afterwards.

> What I missed most was playing a physically demanding sport that had a great team spirit to it. Not individual pursuits like skiing or non-contact sports. Rugby sounded like it had both these elements.
>
> I thought rugby was only for big, fat ugly guys with no teeth who liked to beat each other up and drink loads of beer all the time.
>
> Rugby has always been my favourite sport since childhood and when I heard there was a club here in Bergen, it was natural to start playing. I love the physical requirements and of course the social part.

For me personally, the pre-socialisation stage of rugby was divided between my upbringing in New Zealand where rugby was a pervasive part of the nation's psyche and my initial impressions of rugby in Bergen. As previously discussed, the influence of immigrants from English public schools was crucial in the establishment of rugby in its most distant colony, and carried with it the same conscious design to produce 'the civilized gentleman, who was also manly' (Phillips 1996: 71). I attended New Zealand's oldest secondary school[30] for five years from 1987-1991 and was well versed in rugby's traditional value system, although preferences for soccer and cricket limited my playing of the game until my final year. I took with me the sense of tradition that the game represented and was an avid follower of the provincial team alongside most of my friends. The heroic tales from past and present All Black[31] heroes and their exploits both on and off the field were never far away, although very much fuelled by a media desire to use rugby as a primary means to promote New Zealand's image as an independent nation. I appreciated the values of sportsmanship and 'mateship' that were instilled in us during our school days, and although the boisterous image of rugby players appreciating themselves in the pubs or club-rooms after games were all too common, this was in fact merged with the general social lifestyle of New Zealanders who followed the game.

I was rather ambivalent about playing again in Norway after so many years away from the game and knew very little about BRK other than the fact that they were the best side of the few that played competitively in Norway. I knew one senior player and heard that they trained quite regularly, but at irregular venues and with varying turnouts. Players were a mix of foreigners living or passing through Bergen, and locals who had recently adopted the game.

[30] Otago Boys' High School was founded in 1863 and based directly upon the traditions of English public schools at the time.
[31] The name given to the New Zealand national rugby team during their famous 1905 tour of England and Wales.

My impression was that it was a small but socially diverse group who got together for the sake of having some fun whilst indulging in a physical activity most were familiar with. I took from these fragments of knowledge that BRK most likely accommodates a wide range of internal differentiation, given its marginal position in the local sporting scene, and wondered how my preconceptions would compare to those who have not previously been exposed to the game.

The *selection and recruitment* stage of socialisation is more flexible and ongoing in character and can be seen from an analysis of early exchanges and events in the season. The way in which players selected or sought out their respective roles within the club was mediated to a greater extent by individual circumstances rather than by the club or senior individuals imposing strict guidelines to membership participation. Those with a familiar background to the game and comprising a large proportion of the foreign makeup of the club tended to rely on their previous experience and conceptions of the game to execute their individual performances, finding a reassurance in familiarity. The club is based upon symbols that allow some members to maintain concepts of self, and some to develop and guide their new found identities. The flexibility and the greater emphasis on the personal negotiation of roles within the club come alongside the more subtle appearance of structural, historical and contemporary values in society that underpin club activities. The social relations occurring within BRK are very much part of, albeit on a small and relatively hidden scale, wider developmental change in modern society. The following exert from my field journal highlights some of the early exchanges during the pre-season that constitute the construction and confirmation of BRK identities: [32]

> Another dull night with persistent Bergen showers, but actually not so cold. The lights were on this time and only a few kids were knocking a football around at one end of the pitch, so we practically had the whole area to ourselves. Only four guys when I arrived at 5pm, but by 5:30pm about a dozen were warming up, mostly the usual characters from before, as well as me and two other guys I had not seen before. They were chatting with Bc8, so maybe they were friends he'd taken along. Started off doing a few light circuits to warm up, throwing a ball casually among us, Bc2 as usual shouting out for us to 'stay close' and 'keep warm'. Not much talk generally, the new guys looking slightly nervous as if they didn't know what to expect from tonight's training. Bc2 seemed to be the one calling the shots tonight, and no-one had any obvious objections to him splitting the group into two to play some touch. One of

[32] Player anonymity is consistent throughout this thesis and the references used (Bc2 etc) are taken directly from a list I used in my field journal to represent different players.

> the new guys looked very anxious not to stand out by doing anything wrong, but immediately played the ball the wrong way after a touch. Bc5 ran over and quickly explained the rule and the player looked slightly sheepish but glad for the information and attention. We continued for another thirty minutes, until Bc2 suggested we split into 'forwards' and 'backs' and work on some set pieces. A debate began between some seniors about the merit of this so early on in the season, with the others just looking on and waiting for final instruction. Bc8 then said: "look, you take your guys and do whatever, all the backs come with me and we'll go through a few basics". The two new guys went with their friend, but one was called back and told to go with the backs as "you're fast, not fat and ugly like Bc2". After explaining some basic running lines, Bc8 set us out in a line and tried to initiate a grid, which, even though I had not seen it before, was straightforward enough. It didn't work so well though, and we reverted back to some three on three 'draw and pass' grids which seemed to make more sense to the new guys. Training petered out after an hour, and players began to drift away. I wondered how the new guys had found tonight's session and approached one to ask whilst we were changing shoes: "I've never tried rugby before, but it seems fun….don't know much about the rules and stuff, but just have to listen and learn from you guys".

It came to my attention that more often than not, the comments of derision directed at players for making 'silly mistakes' like dropping an easy pass, or going for the more difficult option when an easier one was available, were saved for the senior players who 'should know better'. New players who are unaccustomed to the rules and tactics of touch rugby were either encouraged to 'try again' or had the rule explained back to them. I fell into the former group on most occasions, even though I was not yet known so well personally by other members. I was a Kiwi, so should certainly 'know better'. Most senior players did not take these common 'insults' personally, however, and gave back as good as they got. Certain guys like Bc2, Bc5, Bc6 and Bc8 were consistently animated at training sessions and, whilst they were experienced and skilled players, their mistakes or lack of attention at practice was something they, and other seniors, felt could be criticized in the typical 'piss-take' way. Newer players did not have this distinction. They could not appear to be uninterested or laughing at senior players for their mistakes because they were in the phases of impression management that required them to acquire the skills needed to be a rugby player that would hopefully be recognized later on by the BRK seniors.

From my personal perspective, the partnerships developing here early on in the season revolved around issues of reciprocity, rapport, and trusting relationships. I had a slight advantage over some of the other newer members in that I came from a country where the culture of rugby is ingrained into society just as cross-country skiing is in Norway. I knew

how to act in culturally appropriate rugby ways and consequently my behaviour was acceptable to the older members early on. Personally this enabled me to unwilling bypass stages of integration and acceptance as if my cultural background was taken for granted. There was a certain difficulty I faced in researching something I found obvious in that I had to be continually aware of suspending my own preconceptions in making the familiar seem unique in order to separate my playing role from my analytical role as ethnographer. Others, certainly those tending not to speak up at training or showing uncertainty in various rugby club settings, were clearly observed consolidating the selection and recruitment stages of BRK identity construction. The socialisation phase allowed me to compare my own experiences with other members who learnt to adopt, accept, modify, challenge and ultimately establish their own identifications with the politics and symbols of the group as a whole. The monitoring process I adopted saw me include the reflections and reactions of team-mates in various settings (private, social, training, game-situations), my relations with them, how I was developing personally as a new member, what my effect on others was and how the politics and certain individuals within the club affected the balance of the club environment.

7.6 The social life of BRK

The following statements were made by various players during informal interviews which took place throughout the season:

> The social side of rugby here is similar to that abroad. You all work hard as a team to achieve goals and relax after a game with the opposition in a friendly environment because you have shared something. It's a common bond joining people from different countries and cultures.

> Norwegian rugby culture is different from rugby culture around the world – less macho bullshit. But it still remains an open and friendly culture where having a few beers after the game with your opponents is the norm.

> Rugby has a different social element to it than other Norwegian sports, in particular soccer. It requires people to be more outgoing both on and off the pitch. Things like social bonding, masculine toughness and sportsmanship are common to Norwegian society but not to the same degree as witnessed in the rugby club.

> Locals are curious about rugby, but still bound by misplaced beliefs that it is a non-serious and dangerous game connected with heavy drinking.

> We are used to training and playing hard to achieve goals in most sports in Norway, so in that respect rugby is not so unique, but it is the fellowship between the guys and girls when we are not playing that is so different and rewarding. It is a sport for people of all cultures.
>
> The social part of rugby is something I find very satisfying. I have learnt that rugby culture allows you to enjoy a beer after a game, play games and sing songs. In other sports like soccer, this happens, but is more hidden from society.

Social expressions of camaraderie within BRK are similar to those found in New Zealand, Britain and other nations where rugby has achieved high status but at a level that reflects the marginal position rugby has and its diverse membership. Imagining incidents of rowdy behaviour, feats of drinking and other outrageous occurrences connected to previous rugby occasions, whether actually experienced or not, played an important role in BRK social discourse. In a similar way to which pre-match discussions on 'hurting' the opposition by inflicting pain was more of an emblematic approach to building up tension and focus rather than a bona fide demand, social talk was often equally metaphorical in nature. All the after-match functions I attended throughout the season involved drinking ceremonies connected to team awards and renditions of traditional songs (usually English or French) as well as stories from the game of personal heroics or blunders, whether real or imagined. For the newer members at the club, these traditions were presented in the social arenas as paradoxes to the images many had of the sport and its accompanying lifestyle. To hurt, to fight, to drink heavily and to injure and be injured were less the reality than they were demonstrative romanticizations of a sporting image that does not exist as strongly today as it did before. Stories, like injuries, are used by many players to attest to one's masculinity and membership in the rugby culture and help in their personal differentiation from people involved in other sports, and even from members of the opposite sex.

New players became aware of the meanings behind the social activities during their socialisation process by having the values and scenes acted out on a regular basis, usually by the senior members. As the stories and the fellowship were repeated, the newcomers began to feel more at ease with the surroundings and through their increased level of participation, were able to have their BRK identities gradually confirmed. For most new members, this process of acceptance came about as a result of being perceived as a reliable individual who played a part in the maintenance and development of the club social structure, but for some,

certain acts of crazy or bizarre behaviour enhanced their reputation. Rugby occasions are not as frequent in Bergen as perhaps they would be in major rugby playing nations where society is more in tune with the sport and its social importance, and reputations and identities are never fully confirmed by all members. Each sporting and social occasion alike gives individuals the opportunity to maintain and reshape their social repute, thus indicating the fluid and reflexive aspects of social relations within the BRK community.

Whilst the initial stages of identity construction largely took place in the first part of the season, the final stage of *acceptance/ostracism* was ongoing due to the critical difference of confirmation, which was largely in the hands of established members. Newer members were not afforded the luxury of being instantly accepted due to their lack of rugby background thus relied upon senior members to acknowledge their membership as a situationally located social object: a BRK player. Role requirements are not at all engrained or enforced within such a small club whose motto is to welcome as many new members as possible regardless of age, size, sex, ethnicity etc., and drastic measures to overtly banish or ostracise any player were not seen by me. However charitable BRK is to diversity there are certain guidelines that are apparent in which little leeway for individual negotiation is tolerated. In rugby this often involves issues of trust, commitment and sportsmanship and whilst not resulting in any drastic measures from the club's hierarchy, certain incidents have placed the spotlight on values that are at the core of the club and made clear to all members. One incident at a training night concerned the lack of appearance from one key player ahead of a game. A senior player made his feelings obvious in front of all the players during a break in practice:

> If he wants to play next week then he has to turn up to training. Does anyone know where he is tonight anyway?. It's just fucking ridiculous not to show up when we have a game coming up. It's great that all you guys get down here each week because that's what it's all about in this club; we support each other and only let one-another down by not showing up. If anyone sees him, tell him to make sure he gets the fuck down here on Thursday.

Here we find an example of a clear instruction given by a senior player directed at a member not present which highlights a certain contradiction in the values of rugby at the amateur level. The nature of the diversity in membership allows for varied participation as long as certain 'legitimate' reasons are given and accepted, like for example, work of family commitments. When reasons for non-appearance are not forwarded, thus unable to be accepted or understood, then the traditional value that insists that the team is prioritized ahead

of a game is restated to all. The player in question was in fact slightly injured after the previous training session, and when I mentioned to him the up-coming match and his key role, his reply indicated that he ought not to let his team-mates down: “I’m injured so don’t see myself as much use, but if they say I have to travel, then I guess I have to travel”.
In this case, which was one of a number of incidents where players were lambasted both in front of other members and privately, the purpose was to demonstrate to others an example of what the ‘ideal’ requirements were for a player’s acceptance as one who follows the unwritten code of conduct for a BRK player. Here, the player is not in fact confirming his own identity or role as such, but is placing himself quite unwittingly in the stage of having his identity confirmed by established others. He considered himself to be injured and not able to train or even play in the upcoming game, yet saw that his absence would be viewed negatively by others and reconsidered against his will. BRK is not strict in its internal procedures regarding role requirements of new members but it does try, mainly through the influence of its senior and most established members, to encourage some form of adherence to principles of unity, sportsmanship and discipline that are needed for any sporting group to function as more than just a fragmented social organ.

Confirming BRK identities, as we have seen, is an ongoing and flexible process. They should not be thought of as ‘static positions and entities…but are constantly undergoing revision and change due to a variety of processes both within and outside the subculture’ (Donnelly and Young 1988: 237). Players from abroad face contradictory issues regarding their reputations within the game based on experiences from their homeland whereas local players have to adapt their personal circumstances and limited knowledge of rugby to position themselves within a role that can be confirmed by others, as well as one that they are personally content with. The cultural interactions that take place amongst BRK players are part of larger social patterns of change that are both historical and developmental in nature. To construct one’s own and have roles of identity confirmed are fundamental and ongoing processes that are as visible in the marginal case of BRK as they are in more mainstream cultural groupings.

7.7 Socialisation-as-interaction: future approaches

There will be attention given to how people define themselves and their bodies in connection with sport and physical activities and how they make decisions about current and future

participation. Identities related to sport and physical activities are grounded in social relations and social groups, and how the overall process of involvement in these actions is related to control and power and to what extent it is characterized by shifting commitments and opportunities necessitates further research. As more studies utilize qualitative methodologies grounded in interactionist frameworks, sport participation will not be conceptualized as a variable as much as it will be viewed as a site for overall social development and the creation and duplication of various fundamental cultural practices. To socialize and form positions of identification through sporting practice and within sporting groups is part of the ongoing organisation found in the practice of everyday life. Barth's (1969) emphasis on the processual nature of identification and interaction across the boundaries they share with other identities is still very much applicable today in relation to sporting activities and participation. This collective dialectic of identification presented by Barth allows for further analysis and understanding of individual and collective transaction and interaction within sport to be seen as a negotiable variable. On the sporting field we see player's choices being constrained somewhat by the interaction with others and are naturally drawn to a better understanding of what the collective nature of the particular group actually is in analytical terms. From this type of group conceptualization we are better placed to incorporate individual narratives of sporting performance into forming models that not only take into account the processual nature of interaction, but draw together the marginalised actors alongside traditional stereotypical markers of sporting activity. Sport alone cannot be taken as a separate realm of expression which is disengaged from everyday social relations and thus any approach taken to theorize interaction among sports men and women must incorporate the dualism that exists between a purely sports-centered view of social relations and an anthropological model of ethnic identification based upon the theories of, amongst others, Barth.

8 Negotiating gender

Introduction

The social construction of values attributed to the playing of rugby and the participation in the culture surrounding the game have achieved a remarkable degree of uniformity throughout the white rugby-playing world at least (Nauright 1996: 11). There has been a significant level of resilience of rugby and its attendant masculine culture to resist challenges from outside. While the masculine identities promoted have not always been the same or put forth for the same reasons, a pattern of masculine hegemony is clearly recognizable in rugby playing societies. While we need to be careful in concluding that there is some kind of trans-historical patriarchal domination in these societies, masculine hegemony, usually defined by white males of the middle and upper classes has existed, albeit in slightly different forms. During my nine months spent playing, training and socializing with members of BRK, I was able to witness and experience the salient nature of gender in the construction of player's identities and question the presumptions about traditional rugby masculinity. By examining the broad range of behaviours and ideologies in the different settings I found it difficult to theorize expressions of masculinity amongst the players as unitary or self-explanatory notions but instead saw diverse markers of masculinity used individually to suit varied life circumstances.

In this chapter, I will theoretically contextualize the study of BRK male rugby players using my season of participant observation to compare and contrast the situation in Bergen with previous traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity, with the aim of offering thoughts on a possible shifting role of male identity in marginal sporting contexts. I found individual subjectivity played a large role in both the negotiation and contradiction of masculinity experiences within the differing realms of club activity. For many players, BRK is negotiated as an attractive social and sporting option occupying a place on the fringe of the ever more demanding levels of self-actualization (Gullestad 1996) found in contemporary Norwegian society. Research into this changing state of male affairs needs to contrast empirical studies in both public and private domains in order to further identify gendered role fluidity and development. Like recent studies of non-mainstream sports such as windsurfing and climbing (Wheaton 2004; Robinson 2004) which refute any particular radical 'new' embodied masculine identification in favour of highlighting the complex variables involved in male

relations, my examination of BRK places the actors in the midst of the changing discourse of identity formation. BRK is a site for both the challenging of, and the re-invention and reconstruction of existing gender roles and traditional labels of masculinity. My findings indicate that the younger, 'newer' members negotiate the hegemonic form of masculinity by retreating from mainstream organised sport and finding rugby as an alternative arena for physical activity that offers a particular 'space' away from tackling 'gender challenges' in everyday society. This chapter specifically investigates how male rugby players construct and interactionally live up to shared images of masculinity in various rugby settings. On the other hand, a diametrically contrasting, often unintentional construction of images of femininity occurs. The rugby 'field' is one social terrain situationally located among many where men's hierarchical conceptions of men (and women) are individually and collectively created, contested, and continually reconstructed.

8.1 Local contexts

Norway is experiencing a period of transition with regards to the customary gender order due to the drive towards equality in general legislative policy. Traditional conditions of modernity heavily influenced by institutions founded upon homogeneity are being transformed by increased levels of individualism which call into question certain moral values underpinning contemporary society (Gullestad 1996). Fundamental questions concerning the role of the traditional patriarchal order are being ever more challenged in a period of rapid social, cultural and economic change and sport provides us with one opportunity in which to locate changes and challenges to this vulnerable order. That general social and cultural processes and phenomena are inextricably manifested in sport is irrefutable, but how is masculinity to be analysed anthropologically in the confined settings of a rugby club?. Ethnography gives us an understanding of what takes place between co-actors in specific social situations and from this we can construe paradigmatic meanings within the immediate social organization of the club and sport. Continuing analysis of gender issues through an experiential ethnographic eye shows how male members of BRK construct and interactionally live up to or resist shared images of masculinity in the various club settings.

Rugby has traditionally evolved as a site of controlled masculinity and participation has been imbued with a dominant set of meanings about what constitutes a 'normal' or 'real' male. Yet

in the Norwegian context, the processes of identity formation bound up with involvement in rugby places players in a precarious position between public performance and personal struggles with competing forms of knowledge. Rugby, as previously discussed, has from the outset encouraged displays of toughness, courage, instrumentality and expressions cognisant with the affirmation of an 'authentic' masculine sense of self. With this in mind, BRK can be seen as presenting a realisable and accessible option for traditional forms of maleness in the face of a contemporary 'crisis of masculinity' (Næss 2001: 129). From the interaction that occurs on the training field and on the playing arena, to the equally important 'after-match' social situations, rugby is a historically grounded sporting ritual entrenched in a masculine world (Dunning and Sheard 1979, Donnelly and Young 1985). Theoretically, masculinity has been more of a presumption in early writing on rugby rather than a problem and as Messner (1992) argues, this has led to the denial of emotional intimacy in sporting cultures and has had a destructive effect on the body. The aggressive use of force to achieve goals, whether verbally or physically has had a precluding effect on intimate sharing and reciprocity, yet research on masculine ideologies in sport has largely been limited to young males in mainstream organized sports (McKay et al 2000) with marginalized, non-mainstream activities and the influence of age having only recently been approached (see Wheaton 2004; Rinehart & Sydor 2003). According to MacClancy (1996), sport is used by a diversity of people to express, manipulate and negotiate their identities, as well as to challenge the way they are identified by others, and to assist in the creation of new social identities. With regards to traditional rugby masculine identities, we see BRK as occupying a role in which it formulates its own kind of resistance and reproduction of values that are new to some, and not to others, yet individually formed due to individual contexts. The way in which rugby in New Zealand (Phillips 1996) and football in Argentina (Archetti 1999) have been used to exemplify notions of maleness as being directly related to the formation of national identity, can be contrasted to the forms of masculinity acted out within BRK. Here we see experiences which are related to more localised forms of identity yet contain clear elements of social division, change and continuity that are found on the national scale in other examples of male-dominated sports, such as those studied by Phillips and Archetti.

It seems that players often opted to play rugby and join in the social activities as a divergence from the routine and mundane choices offered in society. Most of the Norwegian members had tried mainstream sporting activities such as football, handball or basketball and saw the opportunities that BRK offered as new and exciting, both in a sporting and social context. For

older members, largely made up of foreigners from British or ex-colonial nations, the familiarity with the game and its traditional culture made participation and acceptance easier, however this group viewed engagement with the club individually due to personal circumstances, making general conceptualization difficult. The differences in ages, nationalities and life experiences of the players affected the way in which masculinity was negotiated and performed especially with regard to the younger local recruits and the older, more experienced foreigners. The 'ambivalent masculinity' theory used by Wheaton (2004) to describe windsurfing subcultures can help in the analysis of the various experiences and expectations of BRK members. Pejorative connotations of the word 'macho' in Western cultures has led, according to Wheaton, to variable notions of masculinity despite the fact that the particular image of the sport was of macho masculinity. Competitiveness in male dominated sports has also led to a contradiction between developing 'positional identities' while retaining a need for closeness and rapport with others. This contradiction, Messner claims (1995: 112 in Wheaton 2004), lies in 'male's ambivalence towards intimate unity with others'. However one of the common threads throughout my fieldwork was the notion of 'mateship'[33] and how this was, alongside the rewards gained from playing the game, the main attraction of participating in club activities both on and off the field. Men found comfort in a common front against the uncertain transition posed by new social patterns and feminist ideals by feeling welcomed into a group where values of friendship and camaraderie were held above those of sporting abilities. Being 'one of the boys' was integral to the measured success of acceptance into the BRK circle, and enough to fulfil many player's individual needs in terms of feeling a recognized identity coexisting between an emotional 'male bonding' and traditional competitive tendencies. Many of the following comments gathered throughout the season were typical of this positive duality perceived through BRK involvement:

> The most rewarding aspect is the social side; there is a lot to do outside the trainings.
>
> The feeling of being part of such a team-spirit is why I play. It's difficult to say what is more or less valuable, but the trainings, the games and the social aspects make up the 'rugby package' for me.
>
> I think the social environment around the rugby club is different to most Norwegian team sports, we have more fun and anyone can come along. I wanted to keep fit and be better at English, and I have met some very nice friends, and been on many nice trips.

[33] A commonly used generic term in Australia and New Zealand symbolizing friendship between two males or within a group of males. Based primarily on principles of equality, trust and mutual support.

> Everyone takes the game seriously and gives 100% in games, but everyone is friends after the game and everyone drinks together. I don't think other sports in Norway experience that. Rugby is so new here, and the old players are very open to us new guys and are happy to help us learn.

These comments indicate the way in which this 'duality' is experienced by the Norwegian players in contrast to sporting groups they have previously been involved with. The way in which I perceive this is directly related to my own conceptions of what 'mateship' is essentially about and just how ingrained this is in New Zealand culture, and especially surrounding the playing and social aspects of the game of rugby.

8.2 Women and rugby

In writing about BRK, I have inevitably chosen not to address other issues and questions that are also important. For example, in relation to the issue of gender, I have not focussed on the women's team and questions such as 'what does it mean to the women to be involved in BRK?'. My silence on this should not be taken to mean that we see women's rugby occupying a less salient position in Bergen or that it entails narrower academic interest, rather the fact that my time constraints prevented me from carrying out ethnographic research within both groups. However, females were more often than not present at the more informal training gatherings and were active participants in Sunday games of touch rugby. Much of the organisational aspects of the club were voluntarily undertaken by female members and at no stage did I hear or witness any serious objection to this. When females were present, I noticed a slightly decreased use of obscenities by the male players, although this was not always the case, as one male player put it: 'This is rugby; it's not a sport for pussies'. For the females I spoke to throughout the season regarding their opinions of the game, the general consensus was that it was indeed a male-dominated sport in which 'boys could be boys', but that it in fact appealed to the female members in similar ways to the males: 'We like trying something different, and rugby certainly is that; also the social aspects of being involved in a sporting group that is not entirely segregated when it comes time to practice or socialize'. The greatest change to have taken place in rugby worldwide in recent decades is the fact that the game is no longer a sole male preserve, with increasing numbers of women beginning to play. Much of the typical stereotypical behaviour associated with the game is now either dead or in the process of dying out. Rugby players have tended to be a special 'type' but the type has altered

rather dramatically. Off-field behaviour especially has begun to change, largely in the direction of greater restraint and control, yet the very nature of the game and its traditions tends not to invalidate the arena for its underlying and systematic reproduction of masculine identities.

The breakdown and loosening of the structures and ideologies that once held rugby players together into close-knit, all-male groups is a complex social process, as is the way in which we are to theorize about women's role in the game. A stage has now been reached where women are frequent and, more importantly, *welcome* visitors to rugby clubs. This is indicative of the fundamental changes which have begun to take place in the relations between the sexes. Rising levels of equality in society today suggest that men have begun to accept rather than resist and the fact that they actually want to be with their wives, girlfriends and children rather than solely with other male members of the club. It appears likely with regards to BRK that family, work and study life takes precedence over the club in terms of focus and devotion and that the old-style rugby player and club structure has become just an historical curiosity. He is gradually being replaced by a much more restrained figure, one who is more 'conformist' with respect to the dominant social standards and adopts a much more individualized approach to his involvement in the club and game. It is true that some heavy drinking, obscene singing and rowdy behaviour still exists within the confines of BRK but, increasingly, they are being limited to special occasions such as away matches or Christmas parties. And even in these situations, women members and player's partners are often very welcome to participate in the festivities. On the occasions where players commented upon the absence of certain individuals at trainings or games, those with family or work commitments were never looked upon with any sense of derision. As the following statements show, certain personal circumstances were usually met with an acceptance that the club has no position to take precedence over individual priorities.

> The trainings have been quite good but it can be frustrating if some of the guys are away with work or have family stuff to do. We all understand that, and there are always enough senior players about to make the trainings worthwhile anyway.

> Everyone in this club has their own things to do with work, kids, school and so on, and we don't expect people to sacrifice those for the club, just as long as they give their best when they can make it.

> The people who coach and organize all the games and trips do it voluntarily so I don't expect them to be holding us new players' hands all the time. We need to all do our bit to keep the club a fun place.

That the male members of BRK are devoted to their wives, partners, children and careers and show little or no animosity to the involvement of women members in club activities is without doubt. However, my analysis of rugby as a historically grounded activity ingrained in traditional masculine imagery requires a more explicit placement of women and images of femininity. Being male and playing rugby does indeed signify the important, yet often conflicting role masculinity plays in defining one's own identity, but cannot be seen to place women into positions of subordination. The wives and partners I spoke to throughout the season saw the involvement of their respective partners in BRK as being essential to their physical and mental wellbeing, but not as a detrimental sign to their own role within the relationship. Most were very supportive in the way that 'it makes him happy to be with those guys' even though one acknowledged that sometimes there is more of a burden placed upon childcare responsibilities, especially for away games. Most partners and children came along to some, if not all the home matches and knew the importance of the social activities after the games. Rugby club activities did not take total precedence over family matters however, with many occasions arising of players being unable to travel, train or attend certain social functions due to commitments at home. Much of the organisational work through the BRK committee was carried out by women members, including the annual Christmas party and the often problematic and bureaucratic task of scheduling games. The women involved seemed happy to take over such roles, perhaps to the same extent that the men saw their roles in the club as being bound up in the enjoyment of the game and the companionship minus any organisational responsibility.

8.3 Training setting

In most organized sport, the role of the coach or trainer is significantly distinct from that of the players. Essentially this entails certain levels of active engagement during training sessions but non-active sideline participation during competition. The hierarchical structure commonly adhered to in this instance is of a different order with regards BRK. Here the coaching and leadership roles are fully active during game situations as well, or to put it simply, everyone involved with training also plays games, yet the hierarchical structure exists in another form. Those who possess the knowledge of rugby, those who have been involved

with the club longest and more often than not, those members established in Bergen from traditional rugby nations are the ones that to a large extent determine the club's structure. Occasionally, I witnessed players questioning the authority of the coaches, but this was more often than not verbal 'sledging' amongst the core group of members who occupy the loose confines of 'shared leadership'[34]. Newer members were usually silent observers to most of these confrontational situations, but they could not have avoided seeing such outbursts as reiterations of rugby's traditional reputation of reinforcing what it is to be a 'man'. The authority witnessed on the training field can be seen as a combination of achieved and ascribed status (Merton 1957) in which members are renewed and replaced according the requirements of the club during one particular season or even one particular training session.

The different ways in which authority is mediated between players of various skills and experience is, as we have previously referred to in the socialisation process, as much about forwarding the rules and techniques of the game as it is the holding together of the social dynamics within the club. The training sessions throughout the season were essentially the chosen leisure time of a selected group of (mainly) young males who engaged in a personal and collective project of masculine expression. Values of mental and physical toughness, mastery of skills, group solidarity and adventure were continually played out in ways that did not overtly punish non-conformity, but rather celebrated traditional markers of what it was to be a male. Forms of masculinity that have traditionally been the subject of swathes of criticism with regards to notions of domination and denial were instead seen on the training stage as sentiments members could enjoy and be enriched by. The natural appropriation of such forms by players of standing within the club had on occasions the more detrimental effect of alienating certain members from the club totally, or more often than not, during specific instances. I saw this as being a natural consequence of both cultural divergence as well as the fact that ideas of typical maleness as perpetuated by certain members did not necessarily correspond to the personalities of all male players.

BRK members can be categorized as those who have both a love of rugby and/or a fascination of the opportunities playing the sport and being involved in the club offers one's own lived reality. Some of the ideas espoused upon the training field may be rather remote from the

[34] I never witnessed any overt forms of confrontation from the newer members directed to the older, more established players, although privately with assurances of total anonymity, some of these members were willing to offer some of their thoughts on certain personalities or situations they took issue with.

lives of the majority, yet they are exposed to the group as a way of looking back upon days when the virtues of the traditional rugby player were able to propagate a prowess that has faded considerably in contemporary society. The dichotomy that unravels from the training field is central to the changing and challenging roles males find themselves in today. On one hand, BRK operates as a window of respite for a small minority in society to engage in an activity that forges a unique sense of community within a community. This minority operates within the traditional (albeit very confined) scheme of British/colonial rugby value structures which are shaped through the largely independent configurations of masculinity. Opposing this framework lay the realities of many members, including virtually all the foreign players. We live with wives, partners, children, conflicts, anxieties and responsibilities which make our role as a rugby club member seem to act as a counter force to the reality in which we reside. With gender structures have becoming increasingly complex and challenged in contemporary Norwegian society (Gullestad 1996, Næss 2001), BRK provides an example of a setting in which a certain way of being a male prevails, even if those involved are not quite sure of the implications their participation has to today's confounded gendered configuration.

8.4 'No Pain, No Gain'

Experience of pain, both the inflicting and the receiving, is a central theme in the sport of rugby. Whilst the game is regulated by a set of rules that punishes foul play and un-sporting conduct, rugby is commonly accepted as one of the toughest physical sports played today. Players wear little or no protective equipment other than gum shields and occasionally head caps in stark contrast to other similarly aggressive sports such as ice hockey or American football where the body is almost fully protected by pads, guards and helmets. This lack of protection dramatically increases the risks of experiencing and inflicting pain and new players are quick to realize that one of the most central prerequisites to achieving acceptance and status within the ranks of fellow male team members is being 'man enough' to accept pain, and in certain situations, to administer it. Some of the sentiments from newer recruits to the game attest to the stereotypical view of rugby being a tough, uncompromising pursuit:

> To be a good rugby player, you have to show aggression, but in a disciplined way. You have to show loyalty and stand up for your team-mates by obeying orders from the coach….and backing up your fellow player in all kinds of on-pitch scraps, like when the fat prop on the other team tries to punch your scrum-half!. Both mentally and physically you have to be tough to play rugby at any level. It takes a lot

> of guts (and a little less brain perhaps) to stick your head into a pile of kicking fat bodies or getting in the way of the opposition's seven foot second-rower running at full speed. Rugby also teaches you to ignore aches and pains, because you get many of them, and some serious ones as well, and you learn to see the difference.
>
> The difference with rugby compared to other team sports in Norway like soccer, handball and basketball is that it is more physically intense and challenging and team focussed.
>
> Strength, speed and toughness are qualities of rugby which I admire. It is an excellent form for physical training and provides me with an opportunity to release built-up aggression in a relatively controlled manner. Physically rough sports like hockey or rugby appeal to only a small minority of Norwegians, and they all have a large foreign influence.

But the game also has, according to many, a misrepresented image amongst Norwegians:

> I think rugby is seen as a violent game generally played by foreigners, if not some strange relative of American football.
>
> At my work, they look at me as a mad guy; they know nothing about rugby and think it is the same as American football. They think it is rough and don't seem interested.
>
> Locals are curious, but still bound by misplaced beliefs that it is a non-serious and dangerous game connected with heavy drinking etc.
>
> Rugby is not seen by the local society at present. The traditions surrounding rugby are known but the fact that they are carried out by Norwegians in Norway makes them look completely different.
>
> Most people seem to think you have to be big to play rugby, fat and ugly with no teeth or hair and therefore they are scared of trying because they are afraid of being beaten. It's weird, because all the values we know from rugby are well known to Norwegians, and it shouldn't scare them away.
>
> Most people I know see rugby as a violent men's game with lots of beer drinking afterwards.
> Rugby is all about inclusion and fellowship with team-mates, and people that think you have to be big and fat and drink lots of beer are wrong. All guys play….big, small, skinny, ugly.

Players are expected to conceal any pain they may be experiencing, and a direct contrast can be seen between players who become injured and complain or stop playing (opening up their masculinity to question) and those who remain silent and continue to play (exemplifying their rugby masculinity). As pain and injury were common occurrences at nearly every training

session and match I attended, the following examples emphasise the varying responses to incidents that help emphasise and define the masculine tendencies at work in BRK settings:

> He's a tough bastard!, did you see his head come off (Bc9) knee just then?!. He looks like a headless chicken running about over there now!.
>
> Come on, get up ya pussy!, it's only a bit of gravel rash, get on with it!.
>
> Look at him standing about over there. Any excuse to sit out the hard tackling sessions, what a wanker.
>
> Who is that new guy there? He's going hard out already, bit of a tough nut he is, we'll have to make sure we keep him going through the winter, keep him interested. I reckon we could use a tough guy like that, what do you reckon?.

A young player who attended one of the pre-season training nights received a nasty gash to the top of his head after an accidental clash of knee on head resulting in a considerable flow of blood. Another player found a first aid kit and wound a make-shift bandage over his head:

> Bc3: Just sit there until the bleeding calms down.
> Injured player: Its ok now, should I join in again?.
> Bc3: Wait a bit, there's no point in getting sand and shit in it.
> Injured player: It feels ok, it doesn't hurt.

The newcomer looked decidedly unsure of his next move, noticing the attentive gaze he was receiving from other players continuing the training session. His impression of rugby being a tough and uncompromising sport was immediately realised through his first training injury, where in any other circumstance his normal logic would dictate that he tends to it in a sensibly hygienic manner, he was faced with an uneasy personal dilemma in the presence of fellow peers, many of whom were experienced rugby players. He was most obviously attempting to convey his 'apparent toughness' to the others by concealing any apparent discomfort his wound was causing and being prepared to have his head exposed to even more hardened knees. Traditionally, rugby players have always been held in high esteem by their peers for concealing any pain they may be experiencing and having others talk about it after the event, if at all. Legendary tales of past players continuing the game despite broken bones and horrific wounds loosely plastered up remain today, as if exemplifying a masculinity that may be slightly outdated today due to the laws regarding blood and stoppages, yet showing those

new to the game that receiving an injury and experiencing pain without flinching is very much a pre-requisite of this 'manly' sport.[35] Imagining pain played the biggest role during common rugby club discourse however. Discussions prior to matches invariably included mention of how the team should inflict maximum pain on the opposition:

> Lets be the first to smack into these guys hard so they really feel it. You'll see, they won't be hitting us back as hard if we get the first big hit in.

> Get stuck in to these pricks. If you see a guy lying over the ball or holding one of our players, do what you have to do to get him the fuck off, don't wait for the referee to see it.

Explicitly violent conduct was minimal during the encounters over the season and this is evident in the generally harmonious relations fellow players from throughout Norway have for one another. On all trips away the host team traditionally arranges dinner and drinks and relations between the opposing sides reflect mutual appreciation of some of the defining characteristics of rugby; one plays hard and fairly on the field doing everything in one's power to assert your strengths over your opposite, and conversely, after the match old friendships can be rekindled and on-field battles negotiated and exaggerated through various forms of male bonding, such as drinking and singing.

8.5 The social setting

> For me and many other guys, the club is like our home away from home. I've developed lasting friendships here and even with some guys playing over in the east coast. I think most guys play the game because they like the physical training and the competition, but I don't think I've met anyone who hasn't enjoyed themselves at the pub after the game. That's where you'll see real social bonding….and it's so much more authentic, unlike situations you'll find in other social settings here.

BRK offers aspects of traditional rugby social culture to its members but at a milder level with plenty of scope for internal differentiation. Whereas rugby was developed in Britain and spread throughout the world with the intention of nurturing the development of culturally idealised forms of masculine character in boys and men, today's modern form in Bergen

[35] I also happened to experience numerous injuries throughout the season including broken ribs in pre-season training, which despite considerably discomfort for a number of weeks did not prevent me from training. During a match against Oslo Rugby Klubb I attracted the attention of an unwelcome knee which left me with a gash under my eye and an enormous headache, however I did not see it as necessary or felt under any obligation to do anything else but jump in a car and get it stitched at the doctors office!.

emerges from the preserve of traditionally dominant gender ideologies of the past and provides players with an arena for re-negotiation and enactment of less clearly defined social roles. The culmination of a match, or occasionally a training session, was the rugby party which was always hosted by the home team and took place at a bar or clubhouse. The main ingredients were usually some sort of dinner followed by copious amounts of beer and the singing of songs that celebrate traditional, yet veiled masculine values. Participation in these after-match functions was largely, although not fully exclusively, male dominated. Female players or partners that were present in social settings were not excluded in any visible way and on the contrary found the activities of the male players mildly amusing and not the least threatening. This is directly comparable to common rugby club scenes in Britain and the ex-colonies a decade or more ago that interactionally, if not intentionally revolved around misogynistic rejection of the feminine in favour of often quite ritualistic expressions of 'manhood'.

A typical post-match rugby gathering develops as follows: players arrive and buy drinks while waiting for dinner. General conversation revolves around light-hearted musings surrounding the game and once the food is cleared, the speeches begin. These are usually initiated by the travelling side and can take up to thirty minutes depending upon the number of beers available as 'prizes' to the award recipients. The captain of the side who has prior to this ceremony, gathered up thoughts and votes from throughout his team, reads out the various awards that culminate in the drinking of a pint of beer. The main honours are the 'player's player' and 'best opposition player', whereas all the others are bestowed upon players who achieved dubious distinctions of, amongst others, 'worst haircut', 'best dropped pass', 'best animal impersonation' or anything connected to a particular situation or player that lends merit for a public mocking. Once all the awards are given, players line up and drink their beer as quickly as possible, some of whom have numerous to consume. This ceremony is witnessed and cheered on feverishly by all in attendance and repeated by the opposition straight after. It is common for either the youngest/newest members as well as those who repeatedly make the same type of on-field 'mistakes' to consume the most beer and inevitably feel the effects before the others. This type of ceremony is prevalent throughout the former colonial nations and indeed in Britain, it is also an accepted part of rugby's off-field culture of sarcastic humour and camaraderie. The mutual respect of rivalries on the field is always reflected during these award sessions and culminates in the singing of traditional rugby songs. One song that was heard at all the after-match parties was the popular Canadian folksong

"Alouette", which usually involved at least one female being serenaded under false pretences, but I did not witness direct female involvement in any of the renditions. Translated to "lark" in English, Alouette is about plucking the feathers from the bird in preparation for cooking with each verse referring to a different body part. The song, as sung in rugby form, is as follows:

Alouette

Chorus: Alouette, gentile Alouette. Alouette, je te plumerai (Repeated between verses)
Leader: Does she have scraggly hair?
Group: Yes, she has scraggly hair!
Leader: Scraggly hair!
Group: Scraggly hair!
Leader: Alouette
Group: Alouette (Chorus)
Leader: Does she have the furrowed brow?
Group: Yes, she has the furrowed brow!
(Song continues in this fashion, adding one more descriptive phrase and then repeating all phrases)
Two glass eyes?
A broken nose?
Double chin?
Saggy tits?
Pot belly?
Clammy thighs?
Furry thing?

Male players actively participated in this song and commonly viewed their engagement innocuously, in terms of 'having a laugh', 'not hurting anyone' or 'getting into the spirit of things' but never in any overtly derogatory sense. For the few females present during the performance of this song and other variants of traditional 'bonding songs', the consensus was that it was a relatively harmless, somewhat amusingly childish way that 'boys were being boys'. In no situation did I see females visibly disturbed or any males forcing them into participating in a scene that could render any individual inferior. Schacht (1996: 559) defines the after-game setting as one 'where masculinity is most fully celebrated and femininity most forcefully put in a subordinate position' in terms of females being expected to play an active role in their own denigration. Furthermore, he states that forms of masculinity would cease to

exist if it were not for the reproduction of rigid hierarchical images of manliness that include the rejection and distancing of all aspects of femininity. The case in point with BRK is that there is no commonly accepted form of masculinity that systematically defines the male location in sporting or social contexts. Individual and societal conceptions of gender are relationally dependent and both coexist and transform in ways that do not leave one either dominant or subordinate.

8.6 Conclusion

Members of BRK are unique in that their mere variation in character and life situation allows for an acting out and acceptance of broader parameters of 'doing gender' than one would find in less dispersed social groups. Whilst the older, more experienced and usually foreign players tended to demonstratively express their ideologies in traditional ways more accustomed to established rugby nations they also used masculine identifiers such as work and fatherhood to define their roles in local society. Younger, less experienced members faced equally diverse impressions when entering and exploring the rugby world and were forced to negotiate the contradictions that risk, competition, intimacy and indeed cultural diversity presented on a regular basis. In the context of contemporary Norwegian society, the processes of identity formation these younger players entered into presented them with opportunities to engage in practices that both deliberately and unconsciously emancipated themselves from the very social dictates that attracted them to the club in the first instance. Bourdieu (1990: 63) suggests that embodied learning is 'the social game embodied and turned into second nature' and through participation with BRK, players have been able to turn the cultural practices of intimacy, aggression, competitiveness and control presented to them into their own individual markers of masculinity. The ways in which the particular forms of gender are embodied within the rugby club offers a small insight into far-reaching and vital question of how sporting groups can produce, reproduce and contextualize the notion of equality in social structures. By outwardly offering somewhat conflicting notions of manhood, BRK as a cultural group in one way provides its members with an opportunity to challenge the threats to contemporary masculinity, although this was not articulated to me explicitly during my fieldwork. Players felt that the club acted as an open device which, once entered into, could be used in a positive and also flexible way which seemed to be the main reason BRK has established itself as an attractive place of recreation for its diverse membership.

The institution that is BRK, made up of such large variation, finds itself in a position of deconstructing ideologies of natural gender difference in an attempt to mask the origins of masculine identity. Rugby's traditions of hegemonic masculinity are tempered in Bergen by the context within which the game is played and the social status of its actors and herein lies the paradoxical dilemma for future progress and promotion of the game in Norway and for the development of minority sports elsewhere: how are the base structures of a sport and its traditional culture to be adapted to new settings (and what is to be retained) in order to avoid an exclusivity and negative connotation that can hinder its development?. Rugby in Norway is a deviation from the traditional sporting forms commonly found in society yet the players it attracts do not view themselves as marginalised or indeed stigmatized for taking up an activity that few have experienced. This research can be applied to other physical endeavours and institutions in Norwegian society that struggle to overcome barriers of exclusion based upon gender, age or ethnicity due to a dependence on past structural attitudes and relations. Rugby is a sport that has been founded upon ideals of a hegemonic ideology of competition, courage and strength and has thus fallen victim to contrasting notions of exploitation, violence and superiority yet it is an activity that provides certain groups in certain settings, like BRK, to create their own subjective space of positive gendered expression in an increasingly problematic gendered society.

Throughout this thesis, the relationship between BRK member's experiences on and off the playing field and traditional forms of embodied masculinity has allowed us to theorize gender as a social configuration which structures both social action and contributes to a continuation of certain gender bias. Rugby in Bergen is male dominated, as is the game traditionally in all other countries in which it has been introduced. That this leads to an arena in which gender 'differences' are more visible is a natural outcome of male identities being contested, played out and ultimately defined in accordance to the sport's signifying logic. The habits of the player's individual subjectivities are appropriated through the BRK community in a way which produces and reproduces meanings about individuals and collectives. Rugby requires strength, courage and toughness and is used as an outlet for a form of male bonding which does not necessarily denigrate images of femininity, but allows for a space in which women are seen to be secondary factors. The often 'carnivalistic' occurrence of certain forms of male sexist banter within the club ultimately exists as a way in which males prove the significance of their masculinity amongst their peers. This is done by distancing themselves as much as

possible from the feminine by using such sexist banter in a derogatory way, for example: A player may ridicule another by referring to him as a ‘pussy’, a ‘soft-cock’, a ‘bitch’ or simply as being ‘weak’. Despite the fact that the majority of such comment occurs in a light-hearted way, it implies the way in which certain physical and social processes surrounding rugby-related activities feminize actions that are seen as the antithesis of being a ‘true man’. Away from the rugby scene and on the home front, members occupy a new space which provides them with challenges that do not require the same kind of expressions of masculine identity shown within the club. Whilst certain forms of masculine expression within BRK can be defined relationally to images of femininity, they need to be viewed more as social constructs in which members share and celebrate values of camaraderie they deem to be important in an environment they are most comfortable in.

9 Emotion and styles of discourse

9.1 Community and mateship

Different sports evoke forms of emotional expression that have characterizing effects upon the participants and the public perception of the game and its culture. Sporting subcultures such as BRK can offer emotional experiences that differ from those found in mainstream sporting groups through the need to foster a sense of identity through social bonding. Rugby provides an example of how emotion and behaviour are continually being tested and interpreted in contrasting terms that directly effect the identity formation of the individual player as well as the group or club's formation. Essential to the success of a rugby player is the ability to act aggressively on the field whilst having emotional restraint to avoid both personal injury and letting the team down by engaging in violent conduct. Off the field however, 'mateship' or the overt emotional expression of solidarity towards fellow team-mates and the opposition is a prerequisite that has equal bearing upon one's role within the community.

This shared emotion was very much evident throughout the season with BRK and on each occasion I witnessed scenes of joy following winning performances, the sense of community amongst the players was strengthened. Most notable was the immediate events surrounding the victory over arch-rivals Oslo in the national final, and the celebrations which followed the game. For the majority of the eighty minutes no one side had been able to take command of the match and the lead changed hands on numerous occasions before a try to BRK in the final minutes secured victory 14-11. 'We all ran over to the try scorer encompassing him in a heap of sweaty adrenaline induced exuberance and finally exchanging vigorous bear-hugs, high-fives and even kisses in scenes closely reminiscent of football celebrations in Argentina or Brazil' (personal field notes 25/9/2004). After the final whistle was blown, celebrations continued throughout the medal ceremony and in the make-shift dressing rooms and onto the bars in the city as stories resonated of on and off field accomplishments. These were defining moments for both the players and the club not only in terms of celebrating bringing the trophy back to Bergen[36], but by offering the players a context with which to affirm their cultural membership and displays of emotion that played a large role in defining their BRK identity.

[36] Oslo Rugby Klubb won the national XVs final in 2002 and 2003

Rugby encourages players express emotions of controlled aggression and overt camaraderie but to suppress emotions that relate to pain and injury. These amount to the way in which the sport, or in this instance BRK, takes a persuasive hold of its individual members through the expression of emotional habits that are accepted and encouraged within the realms of ideal club practices. In Bourdieuian terms, these expressions of sporting sentiment may substantiate a form of hierarchy between individual members and the ideal structure of club practice, but in reality, the player's were not exploited by the sporting ideology presented to them. The physical and emotional requirements of BRK members were not compromised by an unreflective fear of obedient conformity that is present in certain sporting and social structures. Relationships between emotion, meaning and the physical activity that comprised the reality of BRK were redefined in alternative ways that did not necessarily defy traditional rugby values and structures or discipline and belonging that are typical of the BRK ideological makeup.

The sense of community that was present throughout the season with BRK was built upon individual personalities who each had the capacity to contribute, in forms of adherence or conscious disobedience, to the maintenance and social awareness of the club structure. This symbiotically mediated relationship with the club was a certain part of the larger culture in which players lived-out their real worlds by seeking to satisfy their social desires. In the modern Western world, the autonomy of the individual competing in organized sport results in concepts such as equity and fraternity becoming objectified and subliminally desirable (Mentore 2000: 68). It can be said that the social bond that defines BRK membership has as its foundational rationale a common form of equity that already exists in the natural world, and players merely adhere to the rules, regulations and equality in habitual ways. Rugby is played to universally accepted rules on the field and bases its success or failure upon factors such as discipline, strength, emotional support and bravery. The game provides players with the opportunities to act out these innate fraternal tendencies in ways that unconsciously assimilate to the tacit rules that legitimize the club structure.

Bourdieu's notion of the 'field' as a dynamically structured system of social patterns is conceptually useful in understanding wide ranging cultural dynamics, however the rugby 'field' in Bergen is largely defined by its occupant's positioning according to individual experience and adherence to the codes of sporting conduct widely found in society. Values of legitimacy found in the club are therefore open to adaptation and levels of obedience or non-

compliance must not only be seen in relation to hierarchy but also to individual self perception of social equity. Bourdieu's social theory is based upon an enduringly hierarchical social space in which subjective disruption and change is possible only in relation to structures of the 'field' which are objectively allocated. Change must be 'externally determined' thus making internally mediated agency problematic to the objectivist-subjectivist dualism Bourdieu seeks to define his theoretical stance. Despite this however, Bourdieu provides many useful theoretical and methodological arguments pertinent to my analysis of BRK as a social group. The practices of playing rugby and socializing are improvisatory and strategic in nature, and offer possibilities of freedom and constraint. Players act according to what they consider the 'right way' based upon processes that are neither unconscious nor wholly conscious, but which 'you recognize' through some forms of embodiment (Bourdieu 1990: 66). My own role within the cultural group as a player also bears direct comparison to the epistemological contradictions Bourdieu was himself aware of in his social analysis of research. Ultimately though, it is the flexibility in which Bourdieu allows his theories to be interpreted through an emphasis on practice-based research that I find his arguments so useful in analysing and interpreting BRK experience.

9.2 Research on emotions

Future research on emotions and how they specifically affect processes of socialisation in sporting groups must involve a complex set of behavioral, physiological, subjective and cognitive factors. Feelings, perceptions or beliefs about imagined or real performances and social relations can best be seen in relation to norms of propriety that prevail within particular cultural groups and societies. The emotions that are contained within sporting practice vary from culture to culture and are to be treated in a separate context from phenomenological interpretations of the universality and cultural determination of emotional response. Anthropological interpretations of emotion in sport are relatively scarce and have been confined to descriptions and motives of sports fans (see Giulianotti & Armstrong 1999, 2001, Archetti 1997 and Robson 2000) but the interpretive nature of the discipline stands well equipped to examine emotional change over time in a wide range of cross-cultural sporting arenas.

Emotions can be experienced within vastly different structures of social hierarchy that emphasise ethnicity, gender, social class, age and sexuality as avenues of both social control and expression. Out of such contrasting sporting settings, one can view emotion primarily as a form of self-expression, or in other instances as performances of solidarity or conformity to social situations and relations. Questions of concern for anthropological research in sport include factors influencing the emotions that surround levels of discipline in sport and how this affects opportunities for self-development, which emotions are likely to adversely affect levels of acceptance into a sporting community and how emotion affects the socialisation process in the construction and reconstruction of sporting identities.

9.3 Emotive discourse

On the small scale level of the rugby community in Bergen, speech patterns can be characterized as having certain tacitly-shared understandings about how it is appropriate to converse in rugby-related social settings. Whilst in some societies loud and animated forms of expression are considered more the norm, others regard the privacy of inner emotions as a priority over open displays of emotive discourse. Somewhere in between these two extremes lie the speech patterns common to members of BRK which provide insight into the social and cultural context in which the rugby community operates. These forms of speech are to be viewed not only in the contemporary context within which rugby is played, but also from the different cultural and sporting backgrounds that form the local club membership. Made up of roughly half Norwegian and half Anglo[37] members, English was the main language used in most playing and social settings, even though the majority of the foreign players had resided some considerable time in Norway and had achieved a solid command of the local language. The Anglophone domination of the rugby community clearly marks the boundary between the naturalized local club members and the foreign contingent with cultural and geographical backgrounds that are to a degree de-emphasized through participation in the social enclave found within the club.

[37] Of the core members who featured throughout the season, the non-Norwegian players predominantly consisted of a mixture of English, Irish, Scottish, French, Canadian, South African, Australian and New Zealand members.

9.4 Closed communication

Through the consistent and rather pervasive use of a linguistic form removed of its mainstream English correctness, members predominantly from diverse British lands and their former colonies have given the BRK community a symbolism of closed communication that demarcates itself from the rest of mainstream settler society. The repertoire of verse and colloquial language common to both the playing and social settings is distinctive in that it is not a 'British-only' thing, but becomes an expression of the colonial makeup of the former empire returning to forge this 'non-British' style of enclave. The space created through the use of a colloquial form of language, or the 'ways of speaking' that are accepted as appropriate by the rugby community is evidence of the niche formed by certain non-British members in accordance to the prevalent socio-cultural conditions in Bergen. To refer to BRK as a speech community in this respect would be to characterize certain members as having a tacitly-shared understanding of how it is appropriate to speak in rugby settings. Cultural norms regarding the expression of emotions can vary significantly even within a language group, but for the foreign players this understanding was more of a natural occurrence due largely to the fact that most had come from a rugby-playing (English language) background. Differences between players originating from countries such as Australia, South African and New Zealand were less prominent than they are in reality, as we saw a common purpose in overcoming the cleavages that might prevent such communion in other circumstances. One could contrast the way in which Scandinavians tend to behave in similar ways when abroad as groups of tourists, students, pensioners or workers despite arguing ferociously for ways to distinguish themselves from one another on home soil.

For the Norwegian members involved in the club and sharing different cultural norms as well as unfamiliarity with the game, understanding this sense of tacitly-shared of the language usage would not be as simple in the final analysis due to the hegemonic nature of this 'niche' language. By its very nature, rugby is one of the most physically demanding full-contact sports and this predisposes an animated language of contention with little chance to hide one's own inhibitions. Being able to train and play together with my team-mates gave me the opportunity to hear a vocabulary which, whilst not being an entirely homogenous communicative system, was simple, restricted and repetitive. I was able to contrast this with personal communications away from the playing field in social settings as well as with correspondence commonly available through the BRK mailing list and website. The analysis

of the semantics amongst the activities of the club throughout the year leads one away from developing merely a culturally entrenched view of the relationships, but towards a way in which the intra-cultural makeup of the group acts and defines itself within the framework of the club's social structure.

9.5 Semantics of rugby language

Typical language usage within BRK is laced with incomprehensible terms and expressions which can often appear unintelligible to those not familiar with both the game and colloquial forms of the English language. The terminology is a classic symbol of one of the ways in which the rugby community is forged as it uses a layer of verbal communication which is not mainstream English. I was lucky enough to be well integrated in this process at the outset of my fieldwork based upon my background growing up in New Zealand where rugby jargon and unique colonial dialect is commonly practiced in daily life. Whereas the type of communication common to rugby strongholds such as Australia, South Africa and New Zealand is also part of the prevailing social contexts in which the game is played, in Bergen the form of expression becomes an inward looking closed form of communication. The arcane nature of the often non-British form of English spoken[38] is recognized as being appropriate for use within certain settings and provides us with further evidence of the parameters that help demarcate the social enclave. The inventory of rugby/colloquial-specific words and expressions are purely meant as light-hearted replacements for standard ones (if indeed *they* are known in the first place!). The informal nature of the social scenes surrounding BRK allows for flexible attempts to interpret often indecipherable discourse but it is inevitable people outside the group will often feel excluded even if this is not the deliberate intention. The foreign players merely carry on speaking in their usual ways and the locals have to learn to deal with this and adopt assured ways of conversing which are unfamiliar, yet essential to unlocking certain codes that ease immersion within the group. The introduction of new words and expressions from mainstream English-speaking (rugby) culture is a marker of social change and cultural influence alongside the necessity for openness by those who are in need of acquiring the familiar phrases and words.

[38] Included in the appendix is a match report I wrote following BRK's victory in the NM Final against Oslo RK.

Whilst an analysis of speech patterns relating to expressions of deeply ingrained emotions and value concepts that differentiate the Norwegian language with forms of colloquial English is beyond the scope of this particular example, we can familiarize ourselves with rugby-specific standardized expression. The majority of the communicative situations that occur within BRK are characterized by small-talk, greetings, partings, jokes, curses and so on. These are often highly culture-specific routines, representing the dialectic and cultural background of the individual, yet share a common thread that ensures the communication remains relatively 'closed'. By being closed off to non-English speakers, or those who are new to the game and its inherent expressions, the language flow is predictable yet open to a vast array of individual interpretations which can often deviate from the speaker's original intended meaning. Using my match report which appeared on the BRK website shortly after the final as an example of this closed communication, those not completely familiar with colloquial forms of the English language can be excused for finding parts rather incomprehensible. The intention with the written example[39] is similar in its expression to the common discourse that takes place between the players in playing and social settings. Essentially, its purpose is to 'take the piss', which essentially exposes team mates in a humorous yet slightly demeaning way. The control mechanism that is commonly used by the individual is a form of self-irony which is intended to lessen the likelihood of someone taking personal offence. The layer of terminology is more often than not laced with jargon which is not mainstream English, but derived from colloquial forms of the language that emerged in the former British colonies of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

The consistent use of such terminology in rugby club related discourse represents not only an expression of the colonial influence within the club but also one way in which this particular group differentiates itself from the traditional British scene. Although differences between the foreign players become less pronounced in the context of the neutral setting in Bergen than they would be for example in England, New Zealand or Australia, the semantic analysis of the spoken and written word shows that even the smallest minority can use language to forge their own 'niche' existence within a larger community. Speech patterns are more often than not representative of the prevailing socio-cultural conditions found both within the group in question and in society at large and for the foreign members of BRK, language usage is a primary marker of the carrying of cultural messages. The presence of a colloquial

[39] Further examples of which can be found on the official BRK website http://www.rugby.no/bergen

configuration of forms of rhetoric allows us to view the styles of speech as deviations from conventions of interaction which demarcate forms of British English. Although the light heartedness and casual demeaning talk is not especially unique to colonial nationals, it is the emphasis that is placed upon the resulting intimacy and camaraderie which defines the group from others. The following chapter will explore this group formation idea further and suggest a furthering of the categorization within BRK from a more theoretical perspective.

10 BRK community: Real, imagined or postulated diaspora?

Introduction

The BRK community can be viewed as a type of cultural group constituted on one hand as a distinction between members and non-members, and on the other, between the internal differences found within the group. The classification I give to the club and its organisation follows more traditional sociological and anthropological identification models of social differentiation, however I further propose that the unique setting and circumstances surrounding the formation and operation of the club leads to the configuration of a postulated Anglo enclave. In empirical terms, BRK is easier to define in regards to its function and consistent success on the playing field on a local and national level. Analytically however, the task of locating the meaning and place of such a small-scale sporting group presents a far greater challenge despite my own 'inside' background as a New Zealander familiar with the tradition of rugby. During the planning and eventual fieldwork phases of this project, my theoretical references were to a large extent drawn from anthropological notions of ethnicity and boundary formation and negotiation. The processes mentioned in the introduction enabled me to define my project in terms of its centrality to past anthropological theory before attempting to incorporate more specific forms of methodology and definitions related to the study of sport. The classification of the individual member and the collective BRK group can only be viewed in conjunction with the contact that takes place within the fields of club activity and can thus adhere to the way Bourdieu (1977, 1990) defined the improvisational quality of interaction. The collective nature of the club identity is inextricably linked to the embodied habits of all its members, which, following Barth (1969) is organized, manipulated and situationally defined across the group boundaries during interaction. The lived reality in which I have been a part of represents a small segment of universal social features ever present in our society and these can only be properly analysed under the guidance of classical anthropological frameworks, such as those provided by Barth and Bourdieu.

Rugby, as discussed in-depth earlier, is a striking phenomenon in the way that it expanded from its ancient English roots and followed the spread of the British Empire, becoming strong in some parts but not so in others. Cricket likewise, has followed a similar path, and although

a vastly different game, is well worth further comparison. In the late twentieth century, a small number of men from various corners of the former Empire have managed to introduce and cultivate this imperial sport and even manage to persuade local Norwegians to adopt it as their favoured pastime. In the same type of way as cricket has spread and developed, rugby can be seen as acting subversively in this context as it unfolds as a continuation of the expression of former British Empire. The vicissitudes bound up in the BRK social scene in Bergen allow members to form a sense of '*communitas*' in Turner's (1974) terms, which is an expression and moulded transformation of the past, in a context suited to the present. This postulated communitas is closely linked within forms of self-expression and a spurious sense of belonging in a setting that members hope to find certainty, diversion and mateship in a world where many other aspects of life seem uncertain.

As future members from abroad arrive in Bergen, new elements creep into their lives such as relationships, children, careers, financial responsibilities, family breakdowns and the ongoing challenges presented when adapting to a new culture and way of life. The social and playing gatherings offered by the rugby club provide an arena for both newer and established members to imagine and reminisce ephemeral moments from their past lives abroad and to attempt to maintain forms of masculinity that may have been challenged along the way. The narrative forum that demarcates the social settings allows for a communion of deep-felt mutuality that is forged unconsciously as a way to share and lessen the threats, anxieties and uncertainties found beyond its boundaries. The respite from the feelings associated with being in a foreign setting is temporarily found within the confines of the rugby arena and can be viewed as a challenge to more postmodern approaches to group organization which views personal identity as being largely self-created within the sanctity of completely independent repertoires. Rugby collectiveness in Bergen tends to follow more of an old fashioned modernist project which allows us to view individuals being flexible in their creation of an enclave through a fellowship of respite which in turn adds meaning to a new way of life for most members.

10.1 The carrying of culture

The foreign membership in BRK consists of a group of privileged immigrants from developed countries. This stands in contrast to other immigrant groups in the city who have arrived

following hostile circumstances and face a longer and sterner test of adaptation and acceptance by the local society. The lack of scepticism shown to the small percentage of immigrants from Western nations, and indeed signs of benevolence from the local population, have made it easier for members of BRK to feel secure and supported in acting as 'oneself' when entering the various social scenes associated with the rugby club. The platform established by the club helps players define who they are but also, as with classical analysis of identity formation, it tells us who we are not. The majority of the foreign members are well-functioning participants in Norwegian society with local partners, children, jobs, language proficiency and neighbourhood networks which mirrors the rather more secret space that BRK occupies so vastly different from mainstream life. The fact that the foreigners perform on and off the playing field in their own usual ways, with their own cultural characteristics, makes it essential for local players to understand and adopt certain practices that were previously unfamiliar. Any feelings of exclusion by newer members is therefore not entirely linked to overt actions of the foreign bearers of the rugby culture, but more due to the fact that they are merely going about a familiar activity in similar ways to which they have previously done in a new environment.

The forging of this ethnic space in Bergen through a rugby club, and its associated arcane atmosphere in the midst of mainstream Norwegian society is in essence the carrying of a culture. We become who we really are during these incursions into a domain of temporary respite, whereas the Norwegians engage in the rugby arenas in almost opposite ways by momentarily becoming what they are not, but for varying reasons, appreciating the change. The similarities exist however, in the very practice of playing the game. Whatever nationality or identity one brings to the training field, the game remains the same. The colloquial nature of the 'Britishness' pervading the club provides a backdrop for the playing, the training, the drinking and the general forms of mateship that delineate the game and club from the rest of Norwegian society.

The temporary respites bound up in this movement of culture occurs within the context of society at large and can thus be viewed almost as a generalized form of diaspora culture. The foreign members articulate their club involvement primarily through 'more decentered, lateral connections and a shared ongoing history of adaptation' (Clifford 1994: 306). Rugby is an example of a cultural form built from 'multiple attachments encoding practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, (the) host country and its norms' (Clifford

1994: 307). Foreign players who have established and maintained the presence of this loosely bounded enclave can be seen to use a dispora discourse in the way they pursue their interest in rugby as a way to revive and maintain a connection with their prior homeland. Whilst here in Bergen there is no sense of lamenting past history or battling against an oppressive national hegemony, the way in which rugby is played and its accompanying culture carried stands rather paradoxically to the way members successfully integrate into Norwegian society and continue distancing themselves from their previous homelands. The discourses I was part of throughout the season represented varied responses to adaptation in a new country, whilst sharing a common denominator which is a sport that is essentially British, with unique dimensions added from its former colonies. The game by definition maintains its Anglo structure which dictates the way it is played but is heavily influenced by expatriate forms of non-British culture which make up a significant proportion of the clubs core membership.

10.2 Transfer of sporting practices

The culture of masculinity referred to earlier plays a small but significant role in the re-qualification of rugby as an imported cultural practice to Norway. As the empirical evidence suggests, the implications of a transfer of such practices in time and space do not entirely make for reproduction, but in fact point to a re-enactment with new and diverse contexts. The transformation is thus an ongoing process bound up with larger issues from the local level social contexts in which the various members operate through to wider implications of how in fact the various layers of meanings generated by such a club formation can be interpreted and influenced from one member to another. Whereas football has become the most universal sporting form without parallel, perhaps the most British of all sports, cricket, can serve by way of comparison to underline the way layers of meaning are transformed through sporting practice. At a metaphorical level, Trobriand Island cricket[40] seen through the visual medium of ethnographic film reveals the way in which the Trobriand culture transforms the British game into a ritual of exchange. The cultural identity of the Islanders can be seen to symbolically re-interpret a foreign practice as a way to disclose their capacity to adapt and impose their realms of inventiveness. The function and meaning of the cricketing practices shown in the film are also seen to reveal metaphoric links to other spheres of Trobriand life

[40] *Trobriand Cricket: An Indigenous Response to Colonialism* (1973). An ethnographic film by Jerry W. Leach and Gary Kildea.

including hierarchical and gendered structures as well as the way in which movement analysis of sport and dance is directly related to the culture that produced it. The performance process combines the imitative aspects of human movement with the abstract non-imitative processes in order to make this type of cultural practice more spatially and temporally familiar (Ness 1988).

What we see here is an example of the way in which the movement of sporting practice differs from the flow of religious doctrines and political systems which operate at a more formalized level. Sport operates with a level of fluidity that allows the analysis of social development and the production and reproduction of social practices to be reoriented *within* the sport as opposed to being taken as a medium for the interpretation of activities on the fringe of, or outside the actual 'doing' of the sport. The way the Trobriand Islander's project their own sense of self and meaning on life through cricket allows us to gain further insight into ways in which ethnicity is both a collective and individually internalized process. The outcome of the social interaction through sport is varied and its manipulability allows us to find ways of discovering how boundaries of organization are produced and reproduced. The cultural differentiation exemplified in cricketing practices in the Trobriand Islands and indeed amongst rugby players in Bergen is located within the various games rather than being solely confined to the fringes of the practice. The Trobriand Islanders design a group strategy for defeating the opposition that revolves around the constant 'growing and shrinking of spatial form' (Ness 1988: 145) which can also be used as an organizing metaphor in other domains of Trobriand. The performance aspects of BRK activity can also be viewed as markers of other social relations and characteristics that take place at both an individual and group level. As we have seen through the analysis of gender and socialisation, it is often the processes of performance that can reveal certain configurations bound up in the culture that created them that may be less visible elsewhere.

We have seen through the application of theories of sports practice that one can enter into a world of social interaction that is seen to produce common and divergent meanings which are essential to the understanding of cultural differentiation. Yet the anthropology of sport alone cannot formulate solutions to what Dyck (2000: 32) referred to as the 'processes by which differences and similarities are declared, made culturally significant and fashioned into identities for the groups thus constructed'. The most relevant theoretical reference in anthropology for my study of the rugby community in Bergen lies within an amalgamation of

a sport specific participant methodology and a more basic anthropological model of ethnicity. We participate in a sports practice that is at the same time a fluid model of ethnicity. The struggle to categorize and allocate forms of identification is ever apparent when people try to forge a sense of belonging and share experiences which in turn generate a sense of collectivity. It is in the perpetual nature of this relationship between the individual and the collective that we seek to conceptualise what a particular sporting group actually represents in the real world, and for this to be attempted let alone achieved, one must view identity differences and boundaries as emerging out of a processual interaction rather than as fixed social constructs. Within this framework of differences emerge ways in which collective notions of similarity are delineated from the actual processes that take place through (in this case) sporting practice. Throughout this thesis I have referred to the de-emphasising of differences between players in the specific context of a 'common' sport in an 'uncommon' setting (or 'uncommon'/'common' depending on who you look at). Sport is all about differentiation however, especially amongst the sexes, and in order to understand the significance of the involvement of BRK members we should look beyond the need to establish neat cleavages and groupings which may only conspire to mystify individual participation and collective forms of identity. Instead I propose a twofold approach that both; shows respectful adherence to historical analyses of individual and collective interactions that are possible to be viewed as emerging and changing in conjunction with certain ascribed social structures and categories; an awareness of the personal subjectivity involved in categories ranging from 'culture' to 'ethnicity' to 'community' from which individuals experience their own forms of 'lived' or embodied reality in ways that lend a certain creativity to their personal outlook of self and others.

In a sense then, one can view the different fields of activity surrounding team sports as forms of interplay between diverse actors who converge at boundaries that are both stable and flexible at the same time, allowing for the emergence of a synthesis of similarity and differentiation that becomes the overriding force behind social interaction. Forms of identity are not fully constructed from within any given social boundary but are conceptualized and indeed realized through the interaction that takes place amongst the players as well as through ascription by others within and outside of the group. The complex nature of sporting practice must be viewed as a deeply cultural form of expression. Levels of participation from both the players and the consumers allow us to view standing social arrangements more critically from a new perspective and provide tools for a more in-depth analysis of the various contradictions

exposed by sporting identities. Whichever type of sporting collective is taken into consideration however, one cannot rest merely on the stories told and the practices experienced in order to unveil the sense of reality within the group. Identities and categories may well be in a constant state of flux, yet they are never entirely modern entities and thus must be recognized as being historical by-products of prior contestation.

11 Conclusion

11.1 New dimensions for the study of sport and ethnicity

The essence of carrying cultural messages is borne out in the ongoing social dynamics within BRK. It is entirely feasible to theorize this group as being part of a process in which a community based enclave is created and sustained by the ongoing use of rhetoric and strong metaphorical symbolism. The space created for non-British forms of English within the club comes about because certain nationals from ex-colonial lands find themselves living in Bergen, and begin to play rugby which is not a Norwegian phenomenon. In a sense we become rather similar and equal within this group as our differences are de-emphasised and we lay down a loosely demarcated structure from which other potential members, most notably the Norwegians, can attempt to decipher.

Rugby, like football and cricket, has been appropriated throughout the world in ways that adhere to local social, political and economic conditions. A brief word on how these flows and changes came about can be of comparative value to the future of a minority sport like rugby in Norway. We can now refer to the 'Pacific Island style of running with the ball', 'Brazilian magic' or 'Caribbean flair', and British forms of the various games become 'their sports' in a certain way. Cultures develop their own interpretations of play only *after* learning what conformity within the conventions (colonial rulers) entails and how important a determinant this was to social organisation. Dominant British beliefs transferred through sporting practices such as social behaviour, standards and conformity were to have a lasting impact throughout the postcolonial period as they became attached to egalitarian principles which transcended divisions in colonial social order. Bourdieu (1990b) followed on from Gramsci's analysis of hegemonic forms (in Crehan 2002) by allowing sport to be understood as a cultural institution which maintains and promotes the order of social relations, even if divisive issues appear to distance harmonious relations. The divergent nations that emerged from the imperial reign were free to continue the development of sports in ways that were on one hand defined by the legacy of their colonial rulers, but on the other heavily influenced by unique forms of emerging nationalism. In Norway there is no British colonial history or any particular reason why rugby should be played, but it is the *kind* of social space created by

BRK defining shared beliefs, attitudes and divisions between many different people we look to for comparison.

Rugby is forged from a fellowship largely made up of British citizens and those of the former empire who need not interact with the local population, but inevitably do so without really changing their rules of conduct. The imagined ethnic space created is seen by the local population as a 'way of being' for the expatriates which is similar to the chains of metonyms Norwegians use to define their place in society (Larsen 1984). The time it takes Norwegians to form these chains which help identify and explain new social phenomena in such an integrated society is indicative of the relatively small scale in which the game is played and is developing. There is general confusion as to what the game entails both on and off the field and from the pessimistic side people often take an isolated fact (or game) and quickly attach to it a misleading metonym (rugby-violence-drunkenness). But for those who do take up the game, thoroughly enjoy it, learn the rules and even become extremely talented players, the mechanisms of social configuration become something different. It almost becomes a Norwegian project as new knowledge and experience is placed in positive past categories. The links in the social chains of reality are seen in a different perspective by certain individuals who come to regard Australians, English, New Zealanders and South Africans as fairly mainstream members of local society. This is due to the fact that, like most Norwegian citizens, the majority of foreign members have local partners and similar employment and social networks. The chain connections are in fact forged and activated by the local members as they begin to understand the nature of mateship and the communion such a game and club forges. They see a tiny percentage of their society acting out traditional forms of masculinity and community through an unusual sporting practice that evokes subtle longing for involvement in such a fellowship. Forms and arenas of pure masculinity are few and far between in mainstream Norwegian society (Næss: 2001) and BRK provides an opportunity to delve into a different form of traditional male friendship and gain what Norwegian men of a certain age and type may have been longing for: *being with the boys*.

The moments of respite the foreign bearers of rugby culture enter into can thus be linked to the repertoire of identities in which we are almost obliged to follow our niche existence but alas, this is never fully understood. It is the wives and partners of the BRK members who stand at the front line of the inevitable conflicts such an exiled existence brings. The adherence to traditional ways of being makes people uniquely different and it brings us into

conflict, but it due to the positive benefits such diversity entails that enables us to remain tied to our families and friends in a foreign setting. Throughout this study I have referred to the rugby community as being flexible, yet slightly arcane in the way it can give off a sense of concealment to those who are not so familiar with the codes of practice. Even those with the familiarity may not necessarily form automatic bonds in other walks of life, yet the varied membership is able to come together and function in a highly successful way. Rugby will most likely remain a marginal pastime in Norway which will continue to attract as many new foreigners and robust Norwegians as it can, but still meet the same sense of bemusement and misinterpretation as it does today. The marginalized nature of the practice of running hard with an oval shaped ball or trying to stop your opposite from passing you using strength and technique may remain the activity of a select few, but it is the significance of the supporting aspects of the game and the community that may become better understood. Rugby as a complex form of ritual activity relies on the forging of loyalty and friendships through on and off-field action and through the juxtaposition of distinctiveness each member brings to the club, we recognize new social meanings. Through such an understanding of this diversity, Norwegian identity can be seen through sporting practice to become less exclusively integrated and constructed within internally homogenous boundaries and more open to a form of liberal conceptualization which takes into account marginal groups and activities.

BRK is for many a small but significant part of life and will continue to provide a form of *communitas* for future members that may be hard to explain, but a little easier to experience. The identity of the BRK member can be understood as being akin to a character in a plot which is part of a contradictory challenge to common activities and assumptions of social life in Norway. The presence of an imported sporting enclave and its characteristic style of conduct can be seen as a reconfiguration of social connections based upon community, belonging and the exchange of cultural ideas and practices. The expatriate community involved in the club represent only a small fraction of the total migrant population in Bergen, yet contribute to a diasporic network imaginary which in its own unique way uses an old British sports practice to spatially define its own niche existence. Through the various social scenes connected with rugby, these members see what they have in common with others and in turn, contrast their differences whilst forging their sense of identity in a new land. The aspects of identity we share make for an easier transition into the social group, yet make us different to those who are not so similar. BRK acts in conciliatory ways not only to allow rugby to act as a classification of similarity to different people, but through interactive

practice it shows us how forms of socialisation and reflexivity are contested in real life processes. The communications, disagreements, conventions and eccentricities within the club are merely representations of what we do, how we relate to one another and ultimately who we are.

For the Norwegian members of BRK, the initial ephemeral nature of their involvement draws them into a complex cultural dynamic. The recurring contradictions such a participation affords requires a period of learning and adherence should membership endure. Rugby is on the very periphery of mainstream Norwegian society and has yet to attract the focus of economic of political interests that play such active roles in traditional sporting life here, yet the game is an interesting example of a changing modern cultural form in a new location. The flexible, competitive and internalized social patterns at work within the club emerge at a time when challenges to social identities and the configurations of modernity are rapidly reshaping our collective lives. Ethnography involving small scale sporting groups can be compared and contrasted in a variety of settings in order to delineate aspects of diverse rationality that are exposed through performative practice. Anthropology will continue to probe the boundaries of society in order to discover what rules and regulations are being maintained and challenged by its citizens and in turn reflect upon modifications that open and close central divisions of social existence.

One may surmise the generality of my arguments as an attempt to shy away from possible solutions to some of the peculiarities and contradictions found within society today, yet I have undertaken an analysis of the practice of the everyday life of a small rugby club which despite its marginal status, validates some of the general statements found in anthropological theory. The validation of forms of masculinity that occur throughout the cultural and sporting settings of BRK lends theoretical weight to the common acknowledgement amongst sports ethnographers (Archetti 1999, Klein 1997, Sands 2002, Wheaton 2000) and sociologists (Coakley 1993, Hargreaves 1999, Messner 1992) that sport is a ‘gendered’ social institution which can be viewed as a microcosm of society. Whereas the study of gender in sport has shown a predominance to incorporate the interplay of racial inequality, class, sexual orientation, violence and politics into its theoretical alignment, I have chosen to focus upon aspects of sporting practice that have not commanded such rigorous analysis. Masculinity as seen through participation in a small-scale amateur rugby club offers the chance to view the male side of sports practice as a pure cultural form which is both emergent and changing as

well as being influenced by traditional paradigms situated within the social history of the sport. The notions of maleness that have strongly influenced the spread throughout the world of the various rugby codes are used by BRK members as identity formers in ways that are ultimately defined in accordance to the gender bias which is inextricably tied up in the game's signifying logic (Messner 1992, Nauright 1996, Schacht 1996).

Of theoretical importance to the study of gender is the way in which ideas of maleness can be viewed as markers of social transformation, such as the 'hybridization' of European immigrant society in Argentina (Archetti 1999) through the use of sport and dance to form conceptions of a national identity. Foreign members in BRK use the game to fashion their own identities in a context so different, yet offering the flexibility to determine their own cultural conceptions of masculinity that reflect both the transfer of ethnic forms and the forging of a cultural space. To paraphrase Archetti (2003), the analysis of rugby in the local context must also be seen to reflect the complexities inherent in the idioms of gender and nationhood. In contrast to the forms of communion forged in Archetti's Argentinean example through football and tango, BRK can be seen to forge a sense of an imagined community without any defined sovereign boundary. Yet we have seen that through a specific social practice, BRK reflects the creation of a cultural space over time in which actors revive a foreign sporting practice on the margins of mainstream society using the continual interplay between internally and externally mediated forces that essentially constructs their communal identity.

The way in which rugby players negotiate their way around the training field and in social situations are mere processes or 'social dramas' (Turner 1974) that allow us to view the group dynamics of BRK as cultural imperatives that forge social transformation. Such imperatives include the socio-cultural meanings surrounding rugby and its imported culture and the way they are negotiated and internalized by members of the club. Whereas to most of the foreign members, rugby and its surrounding culture has a manifest meaning, the Norwegian members experience the latent meaning of the game and its cultural logic which presents certain challenges to becoming fully incorporated in an imported cultural tradition (see Turner 1978). This study has looked at the structural organization of BRK with help from the processual dynamics bound up in the theories of both Barth and Bourdieu. The ways in which the forms of ethnic incorporation and the maintenance and reinvention of boundaries has been revealed throughout this study of a sporting practice has required a set of theoretical abstractions that

enable the uniqueness of BRK to be contextualized in a way that best considers the elasticity of socially differentiating signs and meanings. Individual members of BRK do indeed make strategic choices about their club involvement, however the historical nature of the game and its defining logic imposes certain parameters that influence these choices thus making further theoretical advances based upon advances Barth's early (1966) transactional analysis of social exchange pertinent to the study of sporting activity.

The anthropology of sport tries to understand the social and cultural contexts in which sports exist and how these contexts are influenced by sport. The social worlds that people create in connection with sporting practice and the experiences of individuals and groups associated with these social worlds are ultimately questions that are pertinent to general anthropological debate. In many ways, the anthropology of sport remains 'one of the few remaining frontiers in the discipline' (Blanchard & Cheska 1985b: 293) due to the inadequacy of general theorization (Brownall 2000) that clearly defines sport as containing distinctive legitimacy which is separable from general studies of culture (Dyck 2000). The study of BRK has shown how the behavioural patterns of individuals and groups involved in a sporting practice can reveal complex social identities, contradictions and cultural meanings involved in everyday life. Recent ethnographical accounts of sport discussed above have in many ways taken historical accounts of sporting practice into the realms of broader cross-cultural frameworks of anthropology which has helped strengthen the anthropology of sport as a distinct and worthy member of the discipline. Participation and membership by individuals within BRK have shown how questions pertaining to larger social concerns regarding gender, ethnicity and social belonging can be revealed in complex ways. From this, the use of mainstream anthropological models of ethnic expression and boundary contextualization can be applied in accordance to carefully considered methodological frameworks which can then enlighten and further advance the constructive discourse on sporting practice.

Further analysis of the multitude of ways in which sport can forge identity at both local and national levels needs to take into account the ways in which athletes and sporting groups in different cultures and in varying sporting endeavours are produced and projected at a comparative level. As we have seen throughout this thesis, diverse sporting experience has often been influenced by, and reacted to, similar processes yet the ways in which these experiences have been negotiated has often been vastly different. The social and political value of comparative cross-cultural work lies in the way in which interpretation enhances and

at the same time undermines the formation of 'stereotypical or Eurocentric or insular, parochial, inward-looking thinking about sport (Jarvie 2006: 50). Whilst the bulk of my argument has related to the processes surrounding the transfer and adoption of a 'privileged' male-dominated Western sport and its related culture, further approaches to the anthropological study of sport must fully recognise the richness and social significance of sporting endeavour in culturally diverse locations. As portrayed today by the world's media, global sport is the preserve of commercialized Western interests (Bale & Cronin 2003), which in turn manages to marginalize the values and status of sport in non-Western societies. Examples given of ethnography carried out in the Trobriand Islands (Ness 1996), China (Brownall 2000), Bali (Geertz 1973), Argentina (Archetti 1999) and Mexico (Klein 1997) show how sport is refashioned to suit the needs and complexities of the local societies, thus becoming essential and significant to these groups in a way that demands inclusion in a more complete framework of understanding the nature of a truly 'global' notion of sport.

We have seen how identities, boundaries and categories emerge from the practice of a small group of rugby players who in their own unique ways contribute to the forging of a cultural reality in which a sporting club plays a significant part. There is nothing particularly unique about the act of playing rugby, but when we view sport comparatively in more theoretical terms, a certain team or a game can be viewed as being part of an integrated structure which operates in less formalized ways than political systems or religious doctrines. The production and reproduction of collective practices through sport permits forms of social development to flow from north to south, east to west in fluid ways and thereby provide us with fertile and exciting grounds for future analysis of human behaviour. An anthropological approach to the study of sport must continue to strive towards formulating its own body of theoretical principles that can illuminate the value of treating sporting practice and its participants as an important part of social life. As with other sub-disciplines within anthropology, sport requires boundary fluidity in order to relate the cross-cultural comparative studies that have emerged in modern times with more historical analyses that have laid the foundation for the production of social change. In other words, the anthropology of sport needs to be 're-centered' within the framework of mainstream anthropology in order to fully utilize the transformative nature of sport as a revealing component of cultural and social life.

12 Epilogue

23 August 2006 *Beginners course Bergen Sand and Skate Hall*

Three years have passed since my initial year with BRK and the chance to gauge the parallels with some of those formative evenings in the cold and dusty sand hall was a pleasant experience. Having spent time recruiting new students at the annual orientation day, members of the BRK committee had managed to compile four pages of interested names and awaited the response at the first training session. A group of six or seven seasoned members were on hand to guide the twenty or so newcomers who consisted of an even mix of males and females. Initial basic ball handling and running drills made way for tackling practice which in effect is the essence of playing rugby; the intense physical side of the game is what makes it stand out from other sports, and is more often than not the determining factor as to whether or not new players remain in the game or choose something less demanding. I immediately noticed some of the trepidation amongst the new faces which reminded me of the initial period of my fieldwork and the new members trying the game out then. The ability to tackle to the ground a fully grown 185cm/90kg male who is trying to run around or directly through you requires a combination of a number of elements including skill, technique, fearlessness and strength. I asked one of my mates who was guiding this particular drill if the techniques should be explained first considering that my 'partner' in this exercise had just asked me 'what to do'. His reply made some sense: 'yeh, we will do that, but we're just trying to get the new guys to feel what rugby is all about. Let them feel some hard contact and see how they respond, if they like it and come back next time, then we have something to work with'.

The session ended with a mini six on six game with both teams made up of a mix of new and experienced members. The aim, said the 'coach' for the evening, was to score over the opposition's line through passing and support play but not to go into each other 'too hard'. Inevitably it was a physical fifteen minutes with the foreign members giving it that extra bit of vigour that signified both the friendly competition between ourselves to 'get one over' your team-mate, as well as to impress upon the potential new recruits the skills and commitment expected from BRK members. I felt invigorated from both the physical nature of the workout and the presence amongst old friends alongside potential new team-members. They were encouraged to come back next week for more of the same and to tell their friends as well. I hoped they would and felt a sense of pride in the way a small group of enthusiasts can

continue to maintain and espouse the virtues of the BRK community. The club remains at the level of 'underground enclave' in a sense, but represents far more to those involved than any outsider would construe. For the foreign member, including myself, involvement will remain at varying levels for the whole time we reside in Bergen even if dodgy knees, crooked backs and heaven forbid *old age* dampens our enthusiasm to dive in the sand at the knees of a sweaty mate. We can be more of who we are and that is something mainstream society may not offer in such a pure form. For the Norwegian members, rugby will become the sport of choice to a few more males and females each season, and will continue to offer the opportunities for a closeness and sense of genuine community and mateship that has been decisive in retaining the membership of those before them.

On the playing field, BRK retained the national title in 2005 with another typically hard fought win over the 'old foe' Oslo RK. This year has seen a slightly revised series involving separate groups from East and West Norway playing each other in an attempt to get the most players together at one time as possible to avoid embarrassing forfeits or mismatches. BRK continues to dominate but have been pushed close by Stavanger RK who have shown noticeable signs of improvement and enthusiasm and could be the potential finalists in seasons to come. BSI have tried hard to gain more independence from BRK, but remain tied in many ways until the playing numbers and organisational capacity improves. A new group of students from NHH (Norwegian School of Economics) has begun to train together and the tireless work from a most committed BRK coach has seen the game introduced to a number of schools in the Hordaland district. The BRK women have also continued to win their matches and be driven enthusiastically by a dedicated core of members. Judging by the eagerness of the newcomers and the resolve and passion of the established members to expand and promote their sport, the club as a whole can benefit in the future from an inclusive gender structure, both in terms of playing numbers and internal leadership structure.

This thesis has referred to rugby as a microcosm of the global exchange of cultural practices. It could be said that the emergence and spread of rugby and football in Britain in the nineteenth century marked the beginning of the globalisation of sport, and that the flow of sporting practices has now reached Bergen in the form of a game that has played a key role in the maintenance of certain ethnic identities. It is my hope that BRK continues to provide an example of how this continuance also leads to the incorporation of diverse identities.

13 Appendix

13.1 The general principles of rugby union games

"Rugby is valued as a sport for men and women, boys and girls. It builds teamwork, understanding, co-operation and respect for fellow athletes. Its cornerstones are, as they always have been, the pleasure of participating; the courage and skill which the game demands; the love of a team sport that enriches the lives of all involved; and the lifelong friendships forged through a shared interest in the game.

It is because of, not despite, rugby's intensely physical and athletic characteristics that such great camaraderie exists before and after matches. The long standing tradition of players from competing teams enjoying each others company away from the pitch and in a social context, remains at the very core of the game. Rugby has fully embraced the professional era, but has retained the ethos and traditions of the recreational game. In an age in which many traditional sporting qualities are being diluted or even challenged, rugby is rightly proud of its ability to retain high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behaviour and fair play." [41]

Overview

● A rugby union match lasts for 80 minutes (two halves of 40 minutes each) and is controlled by a referee, usually assisted by two touch judges.

● Each team alternately attacks the opposition goal or defends their own. These goals are marked at each end of the pitch by a pair of tall (typically 10m or more) posts set 5.6m apart, and connected by a cross-bar at 3m above the ground; the whole forming the approximate shape of a letter H.

● Forward passes are not allowed. Dropping the ball forward is also prohibited and is called a knock-on.

● The ball can only be advanced by running or kicking the ball forward.

● A tackled runner must immediately release the ball and the tackler must immediately release the tackled player.

● Play is continuous; any stoppage of play must be immediately restarted (unless there is an injury).

● A scrum restarts play after a forward pass or knock-on and can also be awarded in other situations.

● A lineout restarts play after the ball travels into touch (out of bounds).

● No blocking, normally all supporting players must stay behind the ball carrier.

[41] Taken from the 2006 Edition of the International Rugby Board Playing Charter.

● A Try is awarded when the ball is carried or kicked across the goal line and downward pressure applied to the ball. A try is worth 5 points.

● 2 points are awarded for a successful conversion kick after a try.

● 3 points are awarded for a successful penalty or drop goal kick.

● After points are scored, the ball is kicked back to the scoring team (except in sevens).

● The game is governed by laws not rules, the referee is the sole enforcer of those laws.

● The game clock is kept by the referee on the pitch and is stopped only for injury. Injury time is the time spent attending to injuries and is added to the end of each half.

● Two additional judges are utilized on each touchline to signal when the ball has left the field of play, and to assist the referee in various capacities.

● For the purist, a try is the main form of scoring, and the primary aim of most attacking teams is to score tries. Drop goals and penalty kicks are usually augmenters, a last resort against a steadfast defense or to punish ill-disciplined opposition. In reality, close games and even those in which many tries are scored, are frequently won and lost on the relative success of the goal kickers.

The full updated laws of rugby union can be found at the International Rugby Football Board website www.irb.com/laws. The IRFB is the governing body for rugby union.

13.2 Match report

NM Rugby Final Review 2004
Oslo RK v Bergen RK

25th September 2004
Ekeberg, Oslo

Leaving the rain behind for the season's last hurrah against the old rivals the BRK lads (and Hanro) converged in planes, trains and automobiles in orderly fashion upon Oslo's fine paved boulevard for pre-match bacon sarnies and chips. No throwing of food or waitress chatting-up this time of the day, in fact very orderly and subdued musings highlighting the fact that we are indeed civilized gents, or perhaps that Derek's folks were present and Willie was not. After fighting our way past the throng of squealing autograph hunters and blazing press lights we worked out seating arrangements (thanks David) for the trip to the ground. It was a relaxed atmosphere amongst the lads, but signs of seriousness were evident as kick-off was approaching fast. Svein Jarle even declined the opportunity to visit the pet shop, even though they had a 3-for-1 deal on budgies.

The first car arrived just before the press did and we managed to find a decent dry patch of grass, with ideal sized rocks and bushes nearby that were to be our changing rooms. We were indeed well catered for. The other cars pulled up in good time and the 'switch on' message reverberated throughout as we got changed and prepared some preliminary warm-up drills. It was rather gratifying at this stage of the season not to have to shake hands of introduction and decide who was to throw line-outs and wonder if we had any substitutes or a referee. Things have indeed progressed throughout the season and the collective focus of the drills and stretches was one of togetherness and a resolute desire and optimism that this indeed was going to be a match that was ours for the taking. I don’t think anyone caught a glimpse of the opposition before kick-off and even if they had managed to coerce Jonah Lomu into a comeback, we still would have maintained the positive determination (well, especially those of us on the bench). After a final few minutes of personal preparation, increased intensity and words of wisdom from Ian, the 'lets get out there, play like we know we can and hit them f***ing hard!' message led the black and reds out onto the pitch before a 200+ strong audience.

Bergen immediately took the initial clashes to Oslo in a confident manner pinning the opposition on their line after strong lineout work and diligent support play around the rucks, all under the watchful eye of referee Winnie. This was to be a game where offsides, knock-on's and slowing tactics were to be called up and backchat/dirty play punished with penalties or cards neither side could afford. The stakes were high today and having an official out there with authority and knowledge of the game was something unaccustomed to most of us during the season's matches. It was a mark of respect to Winnie that Oslo (and those on the sidelines) made few words of disrespect throughout the match, although his reputation was somewhat tainted later on that night with a bizarre ritualistic display of pouring a pint over himself, whilst happily settling down after with a prized bottle of Watermelon Breezer. This type of behaviour would result in banishment from the club in some southern latitude countries Winnie, but you may just label this shift in drinking pattern 'old age'?.

Unable to crack the resolute Oslo line BRK had to make do with two close range penalties which Francis eased over after adjusting his headband to see straight. More intensity in the scrummaging and competitiveness in the lineouts allowed Oslo more of the ball after the initial twenty minute onslaught and Drillo's long ball tactic became more evident as a harmless midfield rake from Oslo's fullback Gio miraculously evaded BRK's three-quarters and, like a W. Wilson at an ungdomsskole, the pill was plucked before any authority was on hand to restrain it and Oslo had the game's first try. Well against the run of play, the home side was back in the match and after losing Derek through injury and Eivind briefly to the bloodbin the possession evened out and enabled Oslo's fly half to regain the lead 8-6 after a careless offside. Halftime came and gave the boys time to reflect on the tightness of the game and the need to eradicate small errors and continue to play as a cohesive unit in order to carry the trophy home in forty minutes. Words of wisdom from Captain Ian and somewhere, someplace Drillo shouting 'more shit kicks over the top please!' ended the drinks break and the second and deciding half kicked off.

An early penalty to BRK, converted well by Francis, gave the visitors the lead 9-8 which was to stay until the dying minutes. Both sides were testing each other's resolve in set pieces, with ascendancy swinging back and forth and naturally resulting in minor acts of aggression judged worthy of numerous penalties and sin-binnings. Karl received his obligatory card at a critical time midway through the half but was ably replaced by Donnie showing just why Harlequins had a scout on the touchline looking at this 'utility of all utilities'. Backline play was consigned to close quarter running and hard tackling by the insiders Dave, Hamish and Hanro with little room for free-flowing play that was our intended weapon. Likewise, Oslo seemed unable to swing the ball wide without dropping it or cutting back in, so the ascendancy we needed to push for the final flurry was left to our forwards who to their tribute never stopped running despite such dodgy knees, bloodied faces and unkempt hair.

Five minutes remained when a kickable penalty was awarded to Oslo and they duly gained the ascendancy once again 11-9, much to the excitement of the flag-waving, drum-beating supporters high up in the stands. BRK were not to be outdone though and straight from the kickoff rucked and mauled the ball (with a Drillo or two thrown in) up to the quarter line and presented Hanro with a chance to discover how to pass straight to Hamish and realize that a backline move at speed was long overdue. Pace and swift passing through Hamish, missing Tim to Dave Bourne then on to the head-banded, tank-legged enigma himself Francis with the line in sight. Oslo were late to the party and (my view obscured) no doubt five sidesteps, two fends and a Rokococo shimmy later, the ball was planted and the final was back in Bergen's hands. Scenes reminiscent of a Larry Flint weekender minus the Lolitas gave way to a tense few minutes of injury time with last minute blood bin replacements before the final knock-on and whistle gave BRK the NM title 2004 with a score line of 14-11. Jubilant scenes followed, more mate-like than Flint-like, as the ghosts of the past two seasons and the early season loss were banished.

Ian thanked all the guys involved for their commitment throughout the whole match which was first and foremost a collective team victory with each and every member of the squad contributing to a vital pass, tackle, knock-on, wayward kick or bottle refill all enabling in some small way the trophy to head back to the 7-fjells adorned with the black and red ribbon.

Speeches made, medals hung, photos taken, slaps, kisses and tickles later and it was b-line to the pub and the after-match function. Luckily all the lads and supporters made it through the variable nocturnal nightlife scenes of Oslo's inner east to a hard to find underground den with

cheap pints, food and disco lights. Tim had obviously stopped off at the off-licence on the way and Willie was intent on establishing that the Oslo lock was not the only one with long hair present that night. Stories of heroics on the field were thrown about dominated by who would take away the knock-on award. Willie was in contention up to the final whistle until someone discovered he was not at the ground. There should have been a Drillo award for kicking: 'kick and hope for the best, it worked in the 1994 and 1998 World Cup's, so it's gotta be good for us'. That's rugby in Norway, taking the best from both worlds. Pints were downed with ease during the awards, especially Winnie's, with merit given to those who played well, dressed badly, retired and looked in rubbish bins.

The jovial atmosphere of the den made way for some street action as a large BRK contingent headed out in search of new adventures. Yours truly, pleased at avoiding a whack to the damaged eye during the game, was duly punished for having the wrong shoes on and pile-driven into a bush by Hanro and finished off by Dave Hume. Not one for the scrapbook that. Aussie Dave and Ian played Boy Scout leaders to a group of adolescent's intent on pulling each others hair out and beating one another with their shoes, whilst the rest of us had trouble keeping up with our tour leader Dave Hume. Dave, next time carry a GPS so we don't get lost please?. Some of us made it to an establishment named Dattera til Hagen including tourboy Samir who slipped his way in past the doorman despite being only 12. The place was packed upstairs, perfect for gropers but not so for geezers so tables and chairs were found downstairs upon which to assert our west coast presence. By this time the beer had kicked in and tummies were rumbling again so with little activity on the drinking/checking front and no takers (well, we had Hanro with us) for our obvious good looks, charm and wit it was kebab time.

Oslo locals Arnt and Kristine guided the way to Peshawa Pizza (sic) where the doners were downed with the class and dexterity of…..well, a Svein Jarle eating a doner……After a pit stop at our new found friends apartment for a final refreshment it was apparent Arnt's charm offensive was not working and Kristine was moving ever so close so we headed back to the hostel in the wee small hours. Just enough time though for trolley races with Ayrton Van Wyk, Alain Irving and Rubens Bourne providing onlookers with much amusement. Why is it that trolleys always turn-up on street corners at 4am?. The hostel was home already to Karl, Fran, Dave Hume and Aussie Dave when we arrived and after a quick undie wedgie from Ian, Karl was happy for the rest of the night, only to be kept awake by something Fran found amusing coupled by the fighting in the corridors, the fire alarm going off and increasingly high methane levels rising to the ceilings.

A great weekends rugby and festivities had by all and a fine way to cap off a long and staggered season that showed where the heart of Norwegian rugby truly lies.

Tom Mountjoy
September 2004

13.3 Glossary of rugby terminology

All Blacks - the national team of New Zealand

Backs - the group of players normally numbered 9 through 15 who, save the scrumhalf, do not participate in scrums and lineouts.

Blind side – the area of the pitch closest to the touch line in comparison to where the ball is at any given time. The opposite space is called the open side.

Blood bin – any player with an open cut is required to immediately leave the field for treatment and can be replaced whilst off the field.

Call – an instruction given by key players to team mates informing of the next intended play.

Centre - either of the backs wearing No. 12 (inside) or No. 13 (outside). These players are usually powerful runners who are the heart of the backline, running attacking and defensive plays. The inside centre can also be called the 2nd 5/8th.

Chip Kick - a short shallow kick usually delivered over the head of an onrushing defender to be quickly retrieved or caught by the kicker or one of his/her supporting players.

Conversion Kick - a kick at the posts after the awarding of a try scoring two points if successful. The kick must be attempted directly from a spot perpendicular to the spot where the try was awarded. Usually taken with a place kick, it can be rushed when the kicker makes a move towards the ball. If taken as a drop kick it is uncontested.

Ellis, William Webb - the person, as a student at Rugby School, credited with inspiring the modern game of rugby football in 1823. He later became a priest and passed away in Southern France.

Feed - the rolling of the ball into the scrum by the scrumhalf which must be straight down the tunnel.

First 5/8th - the back wearing No. 10 who normally receives the ball from the scrumhalf. Also called outside half, fly half or 5/8th, he/she will call plays for the backline, pass the ball to other backs, or provide most of the tactical kicks.

Flanker - either of the two forwards wearing No. 6 or No. 7. Also called wing forwards or breakaways they bind to the scrum outside of the locks just behind the outside hip of the props. They can play always on the same side of the scrum or can specialize on either the open side or blind side. The players with the fewest set of direct responsibilities, and therefore the position where the player should have all round attributes: speed, strength, fitness, and handling skills, their job is to aggressively pursue the ball in open or loose play, gain possession, support the ball carrier and place pressure on opposition kickers.

Forward Pass - an illegal pass to a player ahead of the ball causing the ball to be awarded to the opposition team by way of a scrum.

Forwards - the group of players normally numbered 1 through 8 who bind together into scrums, lineup for lineouts, and commit themselves to most rucks and mauls.

Front Five - a common name for the entire front (props and hooker) and second row (locks) forwards. Commonly known as the tight five.

Front Row - the common name for the Prop/Hooker/Prop combination at the front of a scrum.

Fullback - the back wearing No. 15 who normally plays deep behind the backline. In offensive situations the fullback is a dangerous attacking position hitting holes unexpectedly at pace. In defence the fullback has primary responsibility for covering all tactical kicks down field by the opposition as well as being the last man to defend an opposition break.

Haka - a cultural dance display with various chants performed by many South Pacific teams as a challenge to the opposition before a match.

Halfback - the back wearing No. 9 who normally feeds the ball into a scrum and retrieves the ball at the base of scrums, rucks and mauls. Also known as the scrumhalf.

Hooker - the front row forward wearing No. 2. The player is supported on either side in the scrum by props and is required to gain possession of the ball in the scrum by hooking or blocking the ball with one of his/her feet. The hooker will normally also be the forward who throws the ball into the lineout.

Injury Time - during a half, the clock is stopped by the referee while any injury is attended to. After the normal half's time has expired (e.g. 40 minutes) injury time is added on.

IRFB - International Rugby Football Board. The IRFB is the ruling body for Rugby Union worldwide and has primary responsibility for setting and adjusting the laws of the sport and running the Rugby World Cup championships for 15s and 7s every four years.

Knock On - losing, dropping, or knocking the ball forward from a player's hand resulting in the ball being awarded to the other team in a scrum.

League - a version of rugby played normally with 13 players under different laws than Rugby Union. The two codes deviated over professionalism and often have a contentious relationship towards each other.

Lineout - the set play restarting the game after the ball has been taken out or kicked to touch. Both sets of forwards will line up opposite each other with the side throwing calling a play. The throw must be directly down the middle of the two lines.

Lock - either of the two forwards normally wearing No. 4 and No. 5. Typically the largest players on the field, they have primary responsibility for being the power in scrums and securing the ball in lineouts. Due to their size, they are also normally powerful forces in all loose play, rucks and mauls. Also known as second row forwards.

Loosie – a colloquial name for loose forwards, used especially in New Zealand.

Maul - typically forms after a runner has come into contact with opposition tacklers and the ball is still being held by a player. Once any combination of at least three players have bound themselves to the ball carrier then a maul has been set. The primary difference from a ruck is that the ball is not on the ground.

Number 8 - the forward who wears the jersey with the No. 8. This player binds into the scrum normally at the very base between the two locks. His/her responsibility is to initiate attacks by the forwards from scrums or to provide a stable ball from the scrum for the scrumhalf.

Offside - during rucks, scrums, lineouts, and mauls an imaginary line is present over which any player crossing before the set piece is completed commits a penalty.

Open side – the area of the pitch which has most open space in comparison to where the ball is located at any given time. The narrow space is called the blind side. Flankers can also specialize as either open or blind players.

Pack - another name for all the forwards when they are bound for a scrum.

Penalty - any number of infractions or violations which award the other team a kick.

Penalty Kick - an uncontested kick awarded to a team for a major infraction by the other team. The kick can be taken directly at goal and scores 3 points if successful. If the ball is kicked to touch, then the ball is awarded back to the team which kicked the ball out of bounds.

Penalty Try - the awarding of a try due to a flagrant violation by an opposing side that prevents an obvious try from being scored.

Pitch - the field upon which a rugby match is played.

Prop - either of the two forwards normally wearing No. 1 (loosehead) or No. 3 (tighthead). Responsibilities are to support the hooker during scrums and 2nd rows during lineouts.

Ruck - typically after a runner has come into contact and the ball has been delivered to the ground. Once any combination of at least three players have bound themselves then a ruck has been set. The primary difference from a maul is that the ball is on the ground.

RWC - short for Rugby World Cup. Tournaments played every four years for men's 15s, women's 15s, men's 7s, U-21 men and U-19 men.

Rugger - colloquial name for the game.

Scrum - the formation used in the set play restarting the game after a knock-on or forward pass. The forwards from each side bind together and then the two packs come together to allow the scrumhalf with the feed to deliver the ball into the scrum. A scrum can also be awarded or chosen in different circumstances by the referee.

Scrummaging - the process of setting and completing a scrum.

Second row - either of the two forwards normally wearing No. 4 and No. 5. Typically the largest players on the field, they have primary responsibility for being the power in scrums and securing the ball in lineouts. Due to their size, they are also normally powerful forces in all loose play, rucks, and mauls.

Send off - after flagrant, numerous or a malicous foul, the referee can elect to expel a player from the match. The player cannot be replaced causing the side to play one less person. Normally the sent off player is banned for at least one match after the send off and depending on the severity of the offence can be banned for more than one match to life.

Sevens - a form of rugby union invented in Scotland and played with only seven total players, usually three forwards and four backs. Each half typically last only 7 minutes but can be longer. Games are almost always played during a sevens tournament.

Six Nations - the annual tournament from January through March between the national men's teams of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy.

Springboks - the national team of South Africa.

Super 14 - the annual tournament between the best provincial teams from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Tackle, tackler – The aim of rugby is to prevent your opposition from breaking through your team's defensive line and this is achieved through the tackle. A tackle is completed when a player's ball-carrying arm touches the ground at the same time as an opponent (tackler) has some contact with his/her body, or when one or more opponents hold a player on his/her feet so that his momentum (in any direction) ceases.

Take - a well executed catch of a kicked ball or a lineout throw.

Tens - a form of rugby union played with only ten total players. Each half typically last only 10 minutes but can be longer. Games are almost always played during a tens tournament.

Test - the name typically used for matches between two national teams. The match can also be called an international and is always the full 15 player version.

Tight Five - a common name for all of the front (props and hooker) and second row (locks) forwards. Also known as the front five.

Touch, touchline - the out of bounds line that runs on either side of the pitch. The non-contact version of rugby is also commonly called touch.

Touch judge - an official posted on each side of the pitch to mark the spot where balls go out of touch and to judge kicks at goal. The touch judge is also instrumental in pointing out any serious violence infractions not seen by the referee.

TriNations - the annual competition started in 1996 between the national men's teams of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Teams play each other home and away.

Try - a score of 5 points awarded when the ball is carried or kicked across the try line and touched down to the ground by a player.

Try line - the goal line where the posts are located extending across the pitch.

Tunnel - the gap between the front rows in a scrum or the gap between the two lines of forwards in a lineout.

22 Meter Dropout - the kick which restarts play after a missed penalty or drop goal passes the end goal line or is touched down by a defending player. The ball is kicked back to the original attacking side.

Union – a common name for the form of rugby featuring 15, 10 or 7 players per side. The local, provincial, or national organizing bodies for rugby competitions are also often called 'a union'.

Up and under - a tactical kick which is popped very high and shallow allowing the kicker and supporting players to easily run underneath it for recovery. The kick is intended to put heavy pressure on any opposition player attempting to catch the ball. Also known as a Garry Owen due to the Irish club which originated the play.

Wallabies - the national team of Australia.

Webb Ellis Trophy - the trophy awarded the men's champions of the Rugby World Cup 15s. The tournament began in 1987 and is played every four years. The winners have been: New Zealand 1987, Australia 1991 and 1999, South Africa 1995 and England 2003.

Wing/Winger - either of the two backs wearing No. 11 or No. 14. Each will normally stay on the same side of the back line throughout the match and are typically expected to be the fastest sprinters in the side. Wingers also have key defensive duties helping the fullback cover kicks and counterattacking.

XV - a common identifier for the first fifteen selected players of a club or team. A team can also use XV in their name, pronounced as fifteen.

14 Bibliography

Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, second edition, London: Verso.

Archetti, E. (1997) 'The moralities of Argentinean football', in D. Howell (ed.) *The ethnography of morality*, London: Routledge.

Archetti, E. (1998) 'The meanings of sport in anthropology: A view from Latin America', *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, **65**, 91-103.

Archetti, E. (1999) *Masculinities: Football, polo and the tango in Argentina*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Archetti, E. (2003) 'Playing football and dancing tango: Embodying Argentina in movement, style and identity', in N. Dyck and E. Archetti (eds), *Sport, dance and embodied identities*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Armstrong, G. (1998) *Football hooligans: Knowing the score*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Armstrong, G. & R. Giulianotti (eds) (1997) *Entering the field: New perspectives on world football*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Bale, J. & M. Cronin (eds) (2003) *Sport and postcolonialism*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Barth, F. (1966) Models of social organization, Occasional paper, *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* **23**, 20-34.

Barth, F. (1969) (ed.) *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of cultural difference*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

Blackshaw, T. (2003) *Leisure life: Myth, masculinity and modernity*, London: Routledge.

Blanchard, K. (1985a) 'Sport studies and the anthropology of sport', in W. Umphlett (ed.), *American sport and culture: The humanistic dimensions*, Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press.

Blanchard, K. & A. Cheska (1985b) *The anthropology of sport: An introduction*, Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a theory of practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990) *In other words: Essays towards a reflexive sociology*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990b) 'Programme for a sociology of sport', in P. Bourdieu, *In other words: Essays towards a reflexive sociology*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 156-67.

Brown, A. (ed.) (1998) *Fanatics!: Power, identity and fandom in football*, London: Routledge.

Brownall, S. (2000) ‘Why should an anthropologist study sports in China?’, in N. Dyck (ed.) *Games, Sports and Cultures*, Oxford/New York: Berg, 43-64.

Castoriadis, C. (1987) *The imaginary institution or society*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Clifford, J. (1994) Further inflections: Toward ethnographies of the future, *Cultural Anthropology*, **9** (3), 302-38.

Coakley, J. (1993) 'Socialisation and sport', in R.L. Singer, M. Murphy and L.K. Tennant (eds), *Handbook of Research on Sport Psychology*, New York: Macmillan.

Coakley, J. & Donnelly, P. (eds) (1999) *Inside sports*, London: Routledge.

Coakley, J. & Dunning, E. (eds) (2000) *Handbook of sports studies*, London: Macmillan.

Coakley, J. (2001) *Sport in society: Issues and controversies*, seventh edition, New York: McGraw- Hill.

Crehan, K. (2002) *Gramsci, culture and anthropology*, London: Pluto Press.

Denison, J., & Markula, P. (eds) (2003) *Moving writing: Crafting movement in sport research*, New York: Peter Lang.

Denzin, N.K., (1989) *Interpretive interactionism*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Donnelly, P. & Young, K. (1988) The construction and confirmation of identity in sport subcultures, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, **5**, 197-211.

Donnelly, Peter & Kevin M. Young, (1985) The reproduction and transformation of cultural forms in sport: A contextual analysis of rugby, *International Review for Sociology of Sport,* **20**, 19-37.

Donnelly, P. (2003) ‘Sport and social theory’, in B. Houlihan (ed.), *Sport and society: A student introduction*, London: Sage, 11-27.

Duke, V. and Crolley, L. (eds) (1996) *Football, nationality and the state*, London: Longman.

Dunning, E. (1986) ‘Preface’, in N. Elias and E. Dunning, *Quest for excitement*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1-18.

Dunning, E. & Sheard, K. (2005) *Barbarians, gentlemen and players: A sociological study of the development of rugby football*, second edition, London: Routledge (first published 1978).

Dyck, N. (2000) *Games, sports and cultures*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Dyck, N. and Archetti, E. (eds) (2003) *Sport, dance and embodied identities*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Fasting, K. and Sisjord, K. (2000a) Framveksten av idrettssosiologi som eget fagfelt. *Sosiologi i dag*, **31**(1), 88-94.

Fasting, K. and Sisjord, K. (2000b) 'Nordic Countries', in J. Coakley and E. Dunning (eds) *Handbook of sports studies*, London: Sage, 551-53.

Geertz, C. (1973) 'Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight', in C. Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*, New York: Basic Books, 412-53.

Giulianotti, R. & G. Armstrong (eds) (2001) *Fear and loathing in world football*, Oxford/New York: Berg.

Giulianotti, R. & G. Armstrong (eds) (1999) *Football cultures and identities*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*, Chicago: Aldine.

Goksøyr, M. and Hognestad, H. (1999) 'No longer worlds apart?: British influences in Norwegian football', in G. Armstrong and R. Giulianotti, R. (eds) *Football cultures and identities*, London: Macmillan, 201-10.

Gratton, C. & Jones, I. (2004) *Research methods for sport studies*, London: Routledge.

Gullestad, M. (1984) *Kitchen table society: A case study of the family life and friendships of young working-class mothers in urban Norway*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Gullestad, M. (1996) *Everyday life philosophers: Modernity, morality and autobiography in Norway*, Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in practice*, London: Routledge.

Hargreaves, J. A. (1994) *Sporting Females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports*, London: Routledge.

Hargreaves, J. A. (2000) *Heroines of sport: The politics of difference and identity*, London: Routledge.

Holt, N.L. & Sparkes, A.C. (2001) An ethnographic study of cohesiveness in a college soccer team over a season, *The Sport Psychologist*, **15**, 237-59.

Horne, J., Tomlinson, A. and Whannel, G. (1999) *Understanding sport: An introduction to the sociological and cultural analysis of sport*, London: Spon.

Houlihan, B. (ed.) (2003) *Sport and society: A student introduction*, London: Sage.

Ingham, A. & Donnelly, P. (1997) 'A sociology of North American sociology of sport: disunity and unity 1965-1996', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, **14**, 362-418.

Kellner, D. (1992) 'Popular culture and the construction of postmodern identities', in S. Lash, & J. Friedman (eds), *Modernity and identity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 141-77.

Klein, A.M. (1988) *Little big men: Bodybuilding subculture and gender construction*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Klein, A.M. (1997) *Baseball on the border*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Larsen, T. (1984) 'Bønder i byen – på jakt etter den norske konfigurasjonen', in A. M. Klausen (ed.), *Den norske Væremåten: Antropologisk søkelys på norske kultur*, Oslo: J. W. Cappelens Forlag AS.

MacClancey, J. (1996) *Sport, identity and ethnicity*, Oxford: Berg.

Maher, C., Harker, R. and Wilkes, C. (eds) (1990) *An introduction to the work of Pierre Bourdieu: The practice of theory*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*, London: Falmer Press.

McKay, J., Messner, M.A., Sabo, D., (eds) (2000) *Masculinities, gender relations and sport*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Mentore, G. (2000) 'Society, body and style: An archery contest in an Amerindian society', in N. Dyck (ed.), *Games, Sports and Cultures*. Oxford/New York: Berg, 65-80.

Messner, M.A. (1992) *Power at play: Sports and the problem of masculinity*, Boston: Beacon.

Næss, F. D., (2001) Narratives about young men and masculinities in organised sport in Norway, *Sport, Education and Society*, **6** (2), 125-42.

MacAloon, John J. (1981) *This great symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the origins of the modern Olympic Games*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

MacAloon, John J. (1984) 'Olympic Games and the theory of spectacle in modern societies', in John J. MacAloon (ed.), *Rite, drama, festival, spectacle: Rehearsals toward a theory of cultural performance*, Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 241-80.

Merton, R.K. (1957) *Social theory and social structure*, second edition, Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Mountjoy, T.D. (1996) *"We are the Warriors!": Historical dimensions behind the formation of a sporting phenomenon*, BA(Hons) thesis, University of Otago.

Nauright, J. (1996) 'Sustaining Masculine Hegemony: Rugby and the Nostalgia of Masculinity', in J. Nauright and T.J.L. Chandler (eds), *Making men: Rugby and masculine identity*, London: Frank Cass.

Ness, S.A. (1988) Understanding cultural performance: Trobriand Cricket, *TDR*, **32** (4), 135-47.

Phillips, J. (1996) 'The hard man: Rugby and the formation of male identity in New Zealand', in J. Nauright and T.J.L. Chandler (eds), *Making men: Rugby and masculine identity*, London: Frank Cass.

Reinhart, R. & Sydor, S. (eds) (2003) *To the extreme: Alternative sports, inside and out*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Robinson, V. (2004) 'Taking risks: Identity,masculinities and rock climbing', in B.Wheaton (ed.), *Understanding lifestyle sports,* London: Routledge.

Robson, G. (2000) *'No one likes us, we don't care': The myth and reality of Millwall fandom*, Oxford: Berg.

Sands, R.R. (1991*) 'An ethnography of black collegiate sprinters: A formal model of cultural identity and the identity complex'*, PhD diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Sands, R.R. (1995) *Instant acceleration: Living in the fast lane*, Lanham, MD: University of America Press.

Sands, R.R. (ed.) (1999a) *Anthropology, sport, and culture*, Westport, Ct.: Bergin and Garvey.

Sands, R.R. (1999b) *GutCheck!: A wild ride into the heart of college football*, Carpinteria, CA: Rincon Hill Books.

Sands, R.R. (1999c) *Sport and culture: At play in the fields of anthropology*, Needham Heights, MA.: Simon & Schuster.

Sands, R.R. (2002) *Sport ethnography*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Schact, S.P. (1996) Misogyny on and off the "pitch": The gendered world of male rugby players, *Gender & Society*, **10** (5), 550-65.

Sparkes, A.C. (2002) *Telling tales in sport and physical activity: A qualitative journey*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Sparkes, A.C., & Silvennoinen, M. (eds) (1999) *Talking bodies: Men's narratives of the body and sport*, Jyvaskyla: SoPhi.

Turner, V.W. (1974) *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: Symbolic action in human society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Turner, V.W. (1978) *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture*, New York: Colombia University Press.

Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wheaton, B. (2000) "Just do it": Consumption, commitment, and identity in the windsurfing subculture, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, **17**, 254-74.

Wheaton, B. (ed.) (2004a) *Understanding lifestyle sports*, London: Routledge.

Wheaton, B. (2004b) 'New lads?': Competing masculinities in the windsurfing culture, in *Understanding lifestyle sports* (Wheaton, B.) (ed.) London: Routledge.

Wolcott, H.F. (1995) *The art of fieldwork*, London: Sage.

Wolcott, H.F. (1999) *Ethnography: A way of seeing*, Walnut Creek, CA.: AltaMira.

Wolcott, H.F. (2001) *Writing up qualitative research*, second edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage.