DUO-CHOCOLATE FOOTIE

Everyday Belonging, Ethnicity and the Quest for Team Cohesion in New Zealand Rugby

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Words like 'ethnic groups', 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic conflict', and its related concerns of 'minorities', 'multiculturalism', 'nationalism' and 'national identity', have become common terms in our daily vernacular, and they keep cropping up in the press, in T.V. news, political discourse, casual conversation and social scientific work (Eriksen 2010: 1). During an ethnographic field study of five months in 2012, which focussed on a team of professional rugby players based in Wellington, named the Wellington Lions, it became clear that the sports domain has been affected by this global development too. The anecdote below is part of the research material collected through observation of team training sessions, sit-ins of team (preparation) meetings, travel with the team to all their home and away games, and participation in the preparation and organisation tasks of the training staff.

One evening during my field work study on professional rugby players in New Zealand, I sit down with Bill, one of the players of the domestic Lions team, as well as, the provincial Hurricanes team of the Wellington region. We are on our second 'away-game' trip of the season and it is the evening before an important match against Canterbury, the biggest rival of the Lions team, and a fellow contender for the first place in the competition. We have just left the bustling team room, crowded with happy players and staff members eating the remnants of their dinner, while they watch a live rugby match between two other teams in the competitions, and taken up room in a quiet hotel room for an informal chat. As we talk about the progression of his rugby career, he tells me an interesting story that led to his involvement with the Wellington club. 'Our coach [for the current Hurricanes team] he coached me for the Crusaders as well, so when I was deciding to come back to New Zealand [from a two-year season in Japan] he called me and seeing the way he talked about the Hurricanes and how he was trying to start something new. It seemed like a good decision to come here. Before, they had had a *terrible* year. They had a lot of superstars in their side that apparently were poison to the team...I don't know...have you heard anything about it?' I had picked up something: bits and pieces in hushed tones and whispered voices, from the training staff while we were standing on the side lines of the rugby field at the club. A story about terrible players, a broken team and an unfortunate but ballsy coach. Most of it, however, had been left unsaid.

I shook my head and Bill continued his story. In the 2011 Super 15 season, the Hurricanes team started with a new coach. 'A couple of the guys, like great All Blacks, who were the leaders of the Hurricanes team, they...well apparently it was just terrible. They spoke out, told people to shut up and like when Hammett [the coach] would say at training "we are going to do this", they would just say "ah that's bullshit we're not going to do that". So when

I spoke to him [at the end of the season] he told me that he wasn't going to pick them for the next season.' The superstars in question were Andrew Hore and Ma'a Nonu, and the dismissal caused an uproar among fans, other rugby players, and the media, their removal a surprise to both the (Wellington) community and the targeted players. The statement given by the coach and the rugby club entailed that it was a club decision to take a different direction in the future. The next day, however, news reports announced that sources within the Hurricane environment stated it was due to the behaviour of the players, namely petulance by Nonu and midweek drinking by Hore.[1]

Yet, the debate around Nonu's behaviour went into a completely different, more ethnicised, direction, when former Wellington, Māori All Black and All Black player, Norm Hewitt commented on the Radio New Zealand show *Morning Report* that, 'any great coach can turn experienced players into a great team, and for Hammett it just hasn't happened.' Hewitt believed that part of the reason why this had not happened for coach Hammett was because he 'doesn't know anything about working with cultural players. You have Samoan culture, Māori culture, and he's coming from a totally different world and he hasn't taken the time to understand that...Each one has a different dynamic. There is a different respect, hierarchy and process that happens within the culture. Having to bring all that together, to put that in your team, I don't believe he understands that correctly. I don't believe that he's actually brought that into a mix that has created a good environment, because it's shown in their rugby.' Hammett responded that he was insulted by Hewitt's comments. Despite a lack of further elaboration of why he was insulted, it stands to reason that it was due to the insinuation that, on the one hand, Hammett was a bad coach for not being able to bring a culturally diverse team together on the rugby field, and, the hint that his reasoning for letting Nonu go was racially biased, instead of motivated by individual behavioural issues, on the other.

The anecdote above is characteristic of the place ethnicity has taken up in the public discourse of many countries, namely as a source of conflict. In academia too the emphasis is put most often on conflict. This is not entirely surprising, as ethnicity studies have been heavily

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[1] Sam Worthington, "Tight-lipped Mark Hammet looking ahead" *Dominion Post*, 8 June 2011, accessed 5 April 2013, http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/super-rugby/5115763/Tight-lipped-Mark-Hammett-looking-ahead; Tony Robinson, "Why Ma'a Nonu, Andrew Hore got the boot" *Dominion Post*, 9 June 2011, accessed 5 April 2013, http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/super-rugby/5118752/Why-Ma-a-Nonu-Andrew-Hore-got-the-boot; "Nonu was sacked for undermining Hammett" *Super XV*, 9 June 2011, accessed 5 April 2013, http://www.superxv.com/news/super15_rugby_news.asp?id=30717#.UWlxiTdLE62; "Is Cory next to go?" *Allblacksnews*, 2011, accessed 5 April 2013, http://nzallblacksnews.com/hurricanes/

influenced by Fredrick Barth, and his notion that "[t]he critical focus of investigation [is] the ethnic boundaries that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses." (Barth :15). However, although the conceptualisation of ethnicity, as defined by the boundaries of social groups and the way people maintain these, might have previously helped develop ethnicity studies, it has become a hindrance to further evolvement of research endeavours today. The Barthian focus on ethnic boundaries have essentialised ethnicity. Ethnicity has come to be seen as an expression of a group or a person's essence, which has turned it into a closed and stagnated category (Baumann 1995: 738). This self-inflicted syndrome, unbefitting the nuanced and grounded perspective of anthropologists, has had three effects on the research of ethnicity.

First, the methodological and theoretical focus on groups and its boundaries have made us blind to the intrinsic webs of different kinds of belonging, that ethnicity is but only one off. During my fieldwork, I noticed how the larger team would sometimes break up into smaller units, in which a separation on the basis of ethnic background could be assumed. Furthermore, players and staff member talked about "white and brown boys", "Pākehā and Pacific boys", and "cultural differences in disciplining the body". However, the same people also stated that this team was very inclusive and that they considered their fellow team mates as friends for life, brothers and family. This is a typical example of the way people experience ethnicity in everyday life. Ethnic notions are not omnipresent and only a few people think about them constantly or frame their world solely according to these notions. In daily life, ethnicity "...is an interpretive prism, a way of making sense of the social world." (Brubaker *et al.* 2008: 15). Investigating how people make sense of the world around them, many studies on ethnicity parallel the phenomenon with nationalistic politics, believing that what happens and is plainly visible on local, nation-wide and international political level, must also be true for the everyday livelihoods of the ethnic groups around which these debates are structured (ibid: 6,7). This, however, is not the case.

It is true that social life is often powerfully, though unevenly, structured along ethnic lines and ethnic categories are part of the taken-for-granted framework of social experience. Ethnicity does "happen" on a daily basis, even if such happenings are often invisible. Furthermore, nationalist politics – at local, state wide, and international level – do filter into daily life and is sometimes absorbed, in fragmented fashion, into everyday ways of talking and thinking. However, the salience and significance of ethnicity cannot be assumed; rather we must seek to discover and specify when, where, and how it becomes salient and significant for people in their everyday lives (ibid: 15). Also, and this point is not mentioned in Brubaker

et al. but just as important, this discovery and investigation helps to avoid overestimating the salience and significance of ethnicity in people's daily live in our work. In other words, we can discover and specify *if* ethnicity becomes salient and significant for people at all, especially in the moments we are most prone to assume so.

Second, a focus on the boundaries of ethnic groups has inadvertently drawn our attention to the times in which these boundaries find resistance or are problematised, as these are the times when they are most visible. The most commented upon relations between ethnic groups, or revolving around ethnicity, are those reporting on ethnic contestation, as Cohen already pointed out aptly in 1978. As such, our research has enforced the impression that ethnicity and conflict are inextricably linked. However, for most people, ethnicity will only on occasion come to the surface in a contested or problematic way. As aforementioned, it is mostly political and media sources that explain occurrences in an overly ethicised manner. The anecdote described above is a good example of this. The focus on the boundaries of ethnic groups, and the assumed contestation between different groups, are the result of the idea that ethnicity is similar to a cultural identity (Baumann 1999: 19), which has taken root in many ethnicity studies via the assumption that boundaries of culture coincide with ethnic delineations (Baumann 1995: 726). As culture has come to be equated with nation-states and nationalism politics, ethnicity has found itself at the heart of political, ideological and public struggles of nation-identity making and Othering.

Third, a focus on ethnic groups has helped enforce the categories that we are trying to break down. Much literature on ethnicity is formulated around "groupism", i.e. the tendency to take internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic building blocks of social reality, social conflicts and social analysis. This reading and analysis of groups mixes them with the organisations that claim to speak and act in their name. It obscures the generally low and fluctuating degrees of group-ness around ethnic notions. Also, it accepts the claims of (nationalist) politicians and media sources to speak for groups they claim to represent, and it presupposes that everyone "in" the group feels, thinks and expresses their ethnicity according to the ethnic categories ascribed to the group, or as they are voiced by these organisations supposedly speaking and acting for them. Last, it neglects the context in which ethnic categories take on meaning and the process through which ethnicity "happens" in everyday life, namely as one of multiple and overlapping bonds of belonging (Brubaker *et al.* 2008: 7-9).

Thus, this article does not look at the ethnic belongings of the professional rugby players as a bond with *the* New Zealanders, *the* Samoans or *the* Māori, rather it looks at if,

how, when, and where the categories 'New Zealander', 'Samoan' and 'Māori' matter. The focus is on ethnic categories, as these invite a researcher, to think about processes and relations, instead of the essence of a group. It invites to specify how people and organisations in society do things with ethnic categories, and how these, in turn, channel and organise social interaction, and everyday perceptions, knowledge and judgements. Whereas, ethnicity seen as a group characteristic, leads to questions of what groups want, demand or aspire to, how they think of themselves and others, and how they act in relation to other groups. As a result, it automatically leads to descriptions of the identity, agency, interests and will of a group (ibid: 11), which makes an attentiveness towards the various belongings of people in everyday life analytically impossible. How can people have multiple and overlapping bonds if their belongings are channelled by an ethnically dominant individual and group identity? In sum, the focus of investigation is now turned towards the ethnic categories that define the processes and relations in social interaction, not ethnic boundaries, groups or, in the words of Barth, the "cultural stuff" that defines them.

Furthermore, to done groupist-thinking, this article focuses on the ways in which ethnicity is experienced and interpreted in the social world alongside a range of alternative, non-ethicised ways of seeing and being. As such, it avoids an overethnicised view of social experience, which creates and contributes to ethnicity's endurance and gives it an importance that it might not hold for people. To situate ethnicity in the context of that which is not ethnic, this article looks to the different kinds of belonging, ethnic and otherwise, with professional rugby players in New Zealand as the case at hand.

Belonging, Communication and Communities

Belonging comes from being part of a community. The communities of today are less bounded than those of the (very recent) past. Furthermore, numerous possibilities for belonging have opened up, as these communities are no longer bound by place, but are based on religion, nationalism, ethnicity, lifestyle and gender. Community should be seen as an open-ended system of communication about belonging, which in our current world centres on participation in communication. This is different from communities of in the late twentieth-century, described in the works of Cohen (1985), which centred around symbolically coded messages and served as a form of social integration. In the global world of today, with its many interpretations of symbolic forms and its disappearing delineated boundaries, people in search of community just cannot orient around this form of community alone any more. Communication can fulfil the need for community establishment as it can take on multiple

forms, which is mirrored in the plurality of discourse of belonging, and thus adapt much easier to our world in flux (Delanty 2008: 187-8).

Community today is organised in the form of a network, and like a network it is abstract and lacks visibility and unity. This conceptualisation of 'community' thus follows Anderson (1983) and sees it as a form based on an imagined condition. However, although imagined, this does not mean community is any less real. Quite the contrary, individuals are not placed into communities but situate themselves in a community, often more than one, which gives them multiple and overlapping bonds of belonging. These agentic individuals create the communities by making use of the symbolic resources of society, thus creating new universes of meaning, in the form of identity projects, for their social groups. Yet, while people in modern societies are now able to create new communities to provide them the sense of belonging they need (and can no longer get from society or the state), the global connections that provide them with the means, at the same time also destroys this belonging by demonstrating the impossibility of finality. The new kinds of community are themselves, like the wider society, too fragmented and pluralised to offer enduring forms of belonging. It is up to the individual to create and maintain the communal bonds and give them meaning (Delanty 2008: 187-8,190-192, 194).

The conceptualisation of 'belonging' as participation in communication, and a 'community' as a group of people who actively achieve belonging through communication, based on the work of Delanty (2008), allows for fluidity, multiple communities, multiple belonging discourses and the extension of bonds over larger distances. A point of critique that can be made, however, is that communication in Delanty's work is focused purely on a linguistic exchange. However, communication can include multiple expression, including visual (like tattoos, commercial materials and photograph-based social media, mainly Instagram) and material means (such as cloths, boots, and jerseys). Furthermore, in his work, Delanty does not detail in which ways this linguistic exchange is used by people. Both points will be developed further in this article

Rugby Belonging, and Team Cohesion

Belonging to a community is much more difficult for professional athletes, especially those involved in team sports. In team sports, team cohesion is seen as a central and crucial element in the development of a group of people working together (Stevens and Wickwire 2003). Team cohesion, following Carron, Brawley and Widmeyer (1998), is "...a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency of a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of

its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs." (ibid: 213). To develop cohesion, coaches and other staff members employ team building strategies, i.e. strategies for team enhancement or team improvement (Stevens and Wickwire 2003: 129). The general assumption (both in Sport Sciences and in sport teams) is that there is a correlation between team cohesion and team success. Greater team cohesiveness will lead to greater team success (Carron, Bray and Eys 2002: 119). Therefore, the team comes first, *must* come first, in order to achieve athletic success. When athletes do not place the needs of the team before their own, it is believed that this will threaten the cohesion and thus their success. As can be expected, this places a lot of pressure on the differing bonds of belonging of a player in his daily live, not to mention on his feeling of belonging to the team, as this is the matrix for team cohesion.

When team cohesion is not present, or not present enough, and the success on the playing field of the team is in doubt, the question of what is wrong with the team quickly arises. As in the anecdote above, the answer to this question is either that the coach is not doing a good job or that players are not committed enough. Also, as in the anecdote, more often than not cultural, i.e. ethnic, differences are seen as at the heart of the coach's and/or player's problem, especially in current times where players are drafted from all over the world. With the current developments in mind, this article asks how successful team cohesion can be realised in culturally diverse team sports, like rugby?

The answer to this question can be found in the multiple and overlapping bonds of belonging. Different cultures or sub-cultures have always been part of the sports domain. The colonial expansion of England and their use of sports as an instrument to "educate the natives" of their colonies is a good example of this (e.g. Hokowhitu 2004; Appadurai 2005). Furthermore, elaborating on this example, one can see that the global encounters and migrations of people through sports is also not new (Besnier 2012: 494). The occurrence of "ethnic" problems cannot only be explained through the (post)colonial heritage of sports or the current persistent occupation of ethnicity in daily live, I mentioned before. However, through globalisation processes in the last two decades, the belonging to communities in people's lives have multiplied. People move faster, further and more frequently, both online and offline. They are constantly in touch with each other using internet and mobile phones, and find new or build larger communities through these communication devices. As can be expected, these belongings are also increasingly overlapping in people's daily lives, and professional players are not excluded from these developments. A great example of this is the discussion in the public domain before and during the 2011 Rugby World Cup regarding the

use of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram by the players. These discussions focused in particular on the intrusion of these communities on the players' focus (some would not put their phone down) and the breach of team secrets resulting from players putting their opinions, the team selection, or training manoeuvres on the internet without consent.[2] Similar discussions and bans on the use of these internet communities are taking place in other sports, like soccer and cricket.[3] This knowledge of the multiple and overlapping belongings in people's lives, raises the question of what types of bonds of belonging exist in the daily lives of professional athletes? This article attempts to show how rugby players in their daily life constitute, created, negotiate, shape and choose the communities they belong to, next to the rugby team, and how these various belongings exist next to, fuse or clash with each other.

The last question addresses the place ethnicity does hold in daily life for professional rugby players. So if, how, when and where does ethnicity become salient and significant in the everyday lives of New Zealand rugby players? Within the team-community discourse, the players use labels like 'friends for live', 'brothers', and 'family', as well as, 'white', 'brown', 'Māori', 'Samoan', and 'Pacific', invoking a specific ethnic discourse that relates back to political and cultural discourses.

Together, these three questions will show that people belong to communities on three different levels of social organisation, namely family, neighbourhood-community and nation-state, and ethnicity is invoked within these levels in specific circumstances, irrespectively of groups. Finally, team cohesion is completely depending on the strength of the team belonging and team culture, and this cohesion is established through various means of communication by the club, coach(es), and the player(s).

Ethnicity and Belonging: Team, Family, Community, and Nation-State

It is early spring time in New Zealand and Simon and I walk the busy streets of Wellington to have lunch in one of the city's most popular restaurants. While engaged in small talk, he suddenly recollects an experience during one of his initial years as a staff member of the professional rugby union team.. He tells me about one of his boys, a Samoan player, who would always call him *white chocolate*: 'I didn't really like that nickname. I was getting grey and old, and it was like he was mocking me or something. So one time, he called me that

[2] Paul Easton, "World Cup Twitter Ban for All Blacks", *Rugby Heaven*, 17 June 2011, accessed 17 June 2013 http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/all-blacks/5155515/World-Cup-Twitter-ban-for-All-Blacks

[3] e.g. N.A. "World Cup Football: England Players banned from Twitter", *BBC Sport*, 26 May 2010, accessed 17 June 2013 http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/world_cup_2010/8706043.stm and Reuters, "World Cup players banned from Twitter during matches", *The Guardian*, 16 February 2011, accessed 17 June 2013 http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2011/feb/16/world-cup-twitter

again, I asked him what does that mean? And he explained to me: you're white on the outside but brown on the inside, you get us, you understand us [Samoans].' Simon then realised the nickname was meant as a way to honour him and he felt absolutely privileged the player thought of him like that.

Professional rugby players in New Zealand are athletes who belong to the biggest and most popular sport in the country. This makes them highly visible participants of New Zealand society, in which they serve as role models and the focus of entertainment for fans, sports media and the tabloids. Also, as athletes they belong to a rugby team and club. Furthermore, they are sons, brothers and fathers, participants of local communities, members of a church, and students at colleges and universities. They join the large group of business commuters in and away from New Zealand when they board busses and airplanes for their away games around the world. And they become one of the vast number of global migrants when they, often with their family, move to other cities in New Zealand, Australia, Japan, France, England or Italy in search of economic gain in the form of a club contract. Alongside these bonds, the players also belong to, use, express and maintain their ethnic belongings, without it causing contestation or problems with the other communities-belongings. In fact, more often than not ethnicity only came to the surface in social interactions between the players 'by accident'. This is shown most beautifully in the anecdote above, which centred around Simon, one of the staff members at the Wellington rugby club and an unnamed player in the team.

The anecdote is most telling about the everyday experience of ethnicity in New Zealand in two ways. First, Simon's reaction to the nickname of "white chocolate" is not experienced or framed within an ethnic category, even though he is aware that he is talking to someone with a different ethnic background. It is true that Simon is a 'white New Zealander', or *Pākehā* (as people of European decent in New Zealand call themselves), which makes him part of the dominant ethnic category in New Zealand. And the dominant culture is often experienced as the taken-for-granted culture in and of the state and its particularity is thereby masked. Whereas the minority culture, correlatively, is perceived from without and experienced from within as marked, and its particularity is thereby accentuated. Therefore, ethnicity is experientially more salient for people from minority categories such as Samoan and Māori. And, as a result, their experience of ethnicity is more likely to figure more centrally in their social interactions and conversations with others (Brubaker *et al.* 2008: 19). However, it did not even occur to Simon to associate white with the colour of his skin.

Instead, he perceived it as a remark about the colour of his aging hair. No dominant culture is so dominant that it erases ethnic frameworks, nor are people so politically correct on a (un)conscious level that it seeps into their every thought. This begs the question of how problematic or contested ethnicity in the daily life of people in New Zealand really is. The answer to this question, which leads to the second reason of why this anecdote is telling, is given by the Samoan player. He did not consider Simon as different or one of the them, i.e. white people, but as one of us Samoans. As such, Simon crossed those ethnic 'us and them' boundaries that figure so prominently in politics, media sources and ethnicity literature, which would not be possible or conceivable if ethnicity is indeed so conspicuous or problematic in people's lives as either of these sources like to state.

At the Wellington rugby club, a neutrality towards ethnicity, but also towards age, economic, political, social, cultural and human capital, is pursued. Only a player's abilities on the rugby field, his dedication to the sport and his devotion to the team are seen as important and team belonging is constituted as the most central bond in a player's life, overshadowing all others.

The Life of a Professional Rugby Athlete

The job of a professional rugby player represents a specific occupation that is mostly depends on the athletic body as a means of income. Each day, a player leaves his house to go to work like the rest of New Zealand society. But unlike most New Zealanders, he will spend his day on the grass to discipline his body and play in intensive training sessions, in the team room to discuss tactics and game performance, and in the gym to strengthen and condition his body. He further assists his body performance through special diets and additional supplements in powder and pill form.

Being a professional rugby player comes with various contradictions, perils and uncertainties. As mentioned before, rugby players are in the spotlight of New Zealand society as stars and role models. However, they spend most of their time in the secludedness of club grounds and five star hotels, completely focused on getting ready to play. Furthermore, players spend much time travelling to places all around the world, but rarely see more of a city beyond the hotel and the opponent's rugby field. They are there to play rugby and nothing else. Also, players are very passionate about their belonging to their club, team mates and the city it represents, yet since their job is depended on a contract, they also have to be prepared to pack everything up, transfer to another team and play for them with the same conviction, whenever this is required.

The biggest peril of the job is the high-impact nature of the sport. Rugby is a very tough sport on one's body, which results in many injuries, something that increases exponentially when a player gets older. As a result, the average rugby career is very short, with a peak period of about six years. Within this peak period, a player will try to climb to the highest level possible, i.e. the national team named the All Blacks, and provide himself (and his family) with as much financial security as he can. However, rugby is an uncertain job. Aside from the looming danger of a long lasting or career ending injury, there is a limited supply of contracts available and a large group of players seeking to snare one up.

Playing professional rugby is also very time demanding. As professional rugby athletes for the Wellington Lions team, players compete in the domestic ITM competition from July to November each year, with twelve other New Zealand-based teams. During this time, players are participating in a full schedule of practices and team meetings each day from nine to five. Games are usually played during the weekend, and when it is an away game, this also includes a three-day travelling trip to other cities in New Zealand.

Many players of the Wellington Lions also play for the Wellington Hurricanes team, a team comprised out of the very best players of the whole Wellington province. For these players, personal time becomes a luxury. Their competition, the Super 15 competition, includes not only teams from New Zealand, but also Australia and South-Africa. The competition almost immediately follows the ITM competition, lasting from December until July, and has a similar amount of training and team meetings. The biggest difference between the two competitions is the away-game trips. These trips often last from a week, when they play one of the five New Zealand-based provincial teams, to a month when they play teams from Australia or South-Africa. Generally speaking, the team will fly to South-Africa for two games with one week of preparation for each, and will play a game in Australia on their way back with a preparation time of a week and a half. A full schedule like this does not leave players with a lot of spare time. The only time they do not play rugby is in July and November, when they have a one-month vacation.

In sum, being a professional rugby athlete requires a lot of dedication, which many do not hesitate to give. All for an immense love for the game and an average of €400.000 a year.[4] Yet, rugby sport, the club and its players do not exist in a vacuum, albeit their secludedness from general New Zealand society. They do belong to other communities outside the team,

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[4] This might seem like a lot of money, but it is not. A rugby career, on average, lasts about six years so players only have a very limited amount of time in which they make this kind of money. After their early thirties, when the average rugby player's career ends, they have to find another way to make their living, which has proven to be hard and less-financially secure.

despite an overly present team belonging. These other communities can be categorised into three larger systems of social organisation, namely family, neighbourhood-community and nation-state. Through these community-belongings, ethnicity and ethnic categories also find their way into the rugby environment.

Family and Ethnicity: Biological Bonds and Beyond

Like many western countries, the ideology that underpins the concept of family in New Zealand society is that the family is the cornerstone of society (Oliver 1978: 52). This is reflected in the national policies of the state (e.g. family wage) as well as the position of 'family' for people in daily life, including the players of the Wellington Lions team. Ted, a bulky, muscular boy of 22 and one of the newest additions to the Lions and Hurricanes team, showed this importance in his comment that,

> the main thing that I try to do is like keep [the rugby part of my life] family orientated. Family makes you feel comfortable, or makes me comfortable, and that's how I feel and play my best knowing that my family is okay. Family is a big part of my life.

The notions that underpin this ideology of family-as-cornerstone seems to follow the theoretical work of Comte (1855 and 1968) who stated that families are natural building blocks of society, which serve to integrate the individual and society. Through the family people learn to be social; the family is the 'school' of society (Ritzer 2008: 116). This perception of Comte is reflected well in the central place of family autonomy in governmental policies and public discourse in New Zealand, which regards the care of children as primarily part of the private domain, outside the public and economic spheres, with the role of the state as a residual one, i.e. to intervene only if family responsibility fails.[5]

The ideology of the idealised nuclear family, which essentially refers to the married couple and their children (Segalen 2002: 13), still dominates public discourse in New Zealand (Shirley *et al.* 1997: 300-1), even though everyday reality has proven other existing family-conceptualisation. When Bill, the player in the opening anecdote, talked about family he referred to 'his girls': his wife and two daughters. 'I call home where [my family,] my girls are, so yeah my home is in Wellington right now, that is where my house and my girls are, so Japan that was home before.' For Bill, family thus coincides with the idea of family as a

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[5] *Approaches to Family Policies: A Profile of Eight Countries*, 2001, United Nations, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economics and Social Affairs.
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/familypolicies.PDF

nuclear unit in New Zealand society. However, a quite different understanding is given by Afato.

Afato was born and raised on Samoa until one day, in his early teens, his uncle in New Zealand rung up his parents and expressed that it would be good for Afato to further his education in a school in Wellington. Soon after that he moved away, leaving his parents behind on the island. In the beginning this move had been hard on him. "When I first got here in New Zealand from Samoa I used to cry at night to be honest, no lies, I cry at night and couldn't sleep...I did get used to it." He not only got used to New Zealand and his new situation but also found himself a new family with an aunt and an uncle that eventually took over the role of his biological parents:

> My auntie and uncle, I call them my mum and dad now. My real mum and dad are always in Samoa and I call them mum and dad when I go back to Samoa, but they [aunt and uncle] are the people that brought me here and gimme this. They get me to where I am now and I always appreciate what they doing for me and why I'm here, so I always call them my mum and dad. Like my dad when I first made in the Lions squad, he's really happy. And like every game away he's always travel with me and make sure I'm okay.

Afato's story about his notion of family shows the inadequacy of a conceptualisation of this term as the nuclear family. To circumvent this restricted definition of family, Segalen suggest that we think of family as a domestic group. By a domestic group she refers to a set of people sharing the same living-space. Cohabitation and shared residence is a crucial element in this definition (Segalen 2002: 13). Yet, as Waldis and Byron (2006) point out aptly, we currently live in a world were migration, movement, and the mixing of people has increased dramatically. A modern family situation is one in which lots of persons are separated, divorced and married or never plan to marry and where re-composed couples live in complex family structures: one parent families, a double set of parent families, homosexual parents and a series of half-brother and –sister relations (ibid: vii, 6). Furthermore, people no longer always live under one roof in these modern family situations. The existence of these modern family situations is further confirmed by Afato. He not only mentioned his mum(s) and dad(s) as part of his family but also his aunts and uncles living in the suburb-cities Porirua and the Hutt of the Wellington area, as well as, in various cities in Australia.

The differing meanings of family among the players stem not only from individual experiences but also from culturally infused socialisations. Many players from Samoan and Māori communities discussed similar complex family structures like Afato, which is called *aiga* in the Samoan language and *whānau* or *iwi* (depending on the structural level in the

social organisation) in Māori. These players would tell me stories about brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, and cousins, both in Wellington, New Zealand and other countries in the nearby Southern Hemisphere. They also showed me pictures of the ones they were closest to on their phones, and I would see and meet many of them at home and away games of the team cheering in the stands. Both cultural societies have been build around this particular family structure throughout their respective history, to the point that family and a family-oriented perspective have come to be considered an ethnic trademark of the Māori or Samoa category, i.e. an inherent ideology of their culture and community. Afato emphasises this importance of culture towards family and ethnicity by making the distinction between himself, as a Samoan boy, and white boys in the team when he discussed the possibility of him moving around the world by signing up for clubs in other cities and countries, as some of the player do or had done:

> People are different, like some of the boys wanna move around, definitely like white guys, but I feel like I'm at home [in Wellington]. So every time the people ask question do you think you move to some other place? I say oooh no I always sing for Welly because this is my home close to my family and stuff.

The supposedly inherent family-orientation of the Māori or Samoan ethnic category is not only recognised by Māori and Samoan players, but also acknowledged by white players and staff in the team. At the end of the ITM Cup season, the All Blacks travelled to Europe for their summer campaign against countries like England, Scotland and Italy. One of the players in the team had been picked to join this elite team of rugby players, the World Cup winner of 2011, and the best team in the world according to everyone involved in rugby. The day after the announcement I ran into Simon at the club and asked him how the player was doing, as they were very close and had certainly spoken about the whole event. He told that the player was honoured and a bit overwhelmed by all the attention from reporters and the many congratulations he was receiving from clubs, team mates, fans, friends, and family. Everyone from his *iwi*[6] was sending their congratulations to him from all over New Zealand as well. For 'that is what Māori families are like', Simon explained to me, 'they all join in to celebrate the success of one of their members.'

Ethnicity not only plays a role in the differing family belongings amongst the players of the team themselves, but also when players come in touch with other countries through

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[6] The largest social unit in Māori culture above *hapū* (clans) and *whānau* (extended families). It means 'peoples' or 'nations' and is often translated into 'tribe'. Belonging is based on ancestry and traces back all the way to the earliest Polynesian migrants to New Zealand.

their many travels or migrations as part of their rugby job. Bill and his family spend two years abroad in Japan for his rugby career. When his contract expired at the end of the second season, he did not extend it but decided to move back to New Zealand. He explained that the Japanese club he played for was happy to keep him. However, if they did stay it would have only been for financial reasons. Their daughters liked living in Japan but,

> we do not see ourselves raising our children in Japan. We like New Zealand as a place to bring up the girls, it has good schools, it's close to the rest of the family, and gives them a bit more normality in their lives.

The discussion above shows how complex and complicated family belongings are. The same applies to the networks that are constituted and maintained by the players around this category. Furthermore, it highlights the intrinsic ways in which family, ethnicity and the team come together in the chaos of the players' lives. Even in the secludes of the club, separated physically and symbolically from much of general society, these players still bring this part of society into the club environment through their different belongings. Thus, we can also extent Delanty's point that people chose their belongings individually, and be the responsible party to maintain them. People not only chose their belongings, but once these bonds are part of people's community networks, they do not easily go away again. The strength of someone's belonging should be seen as existing on a curve; the intensity of the networks rises and falls per context, i.e. based on a player's choice one community-belonging will be stronger than the other, but all the belongings are still part of him. The next section delves deeper into how family belongings are communicated, thus extending Delanty's linguistic communication, as a means, by adding visual and bodily communication. However, first, an important final remark, related to the discussion above, must be made.

It might be considered incorrect to 'lump' Māori and Samoan culture together in the colloquy. Each has their own unique history and cultural traits. However, this addressing of the two cultures as one is motivated by my fieldwork observations. During my study, players of both ethnic communities would come together repeatedly. Firstly, they grouped themselves together linguistically. When addressing themselves, other players or matters in the team they preferred to talk about themselves as brown, Pacific or Polynesian boys, instead of Māori or Samoan, This occurrence can be explained as follows: 'Polynesian' refers to people who are from islands in the Pacific, such as Samoa, Tonga, Hawaii, New Zealand, the Cook Island and Easter Island. And while people of each island emphasise their originality and difference from those of neighbouring islands, they also recognise their cultural similarity and proclaim their

shared heritages. Even though it is also excluding non-Polynesians or non-indigenous people, the term 'Polynesian' is concerned more with inclusion than exclusion, and more with similarities than difference (Kuwahara 2005: 7). The same definition and use applies to the term 'brown' and 'pacific' for Māori and Samoan players in the team as well. Secondly, the players grouped together physically. During their 'off' time with and without the team, Māoris and Samoans would go out together for lunch or stroll around the city, sit with each other during coffee and cards, and hang out in their leisure time.

The players are aware that there are differences between Māori and Samoan culture, as can be seen in Afato's discussion of the different Polynesian tattoo styles:

> the two are different, way different, and you can tell they're different. Māori stuff is like Frazer's (a player in the team), that kind of thing (shows a picture with circled patterns) but Samoan is like mine (points to the lines, squares and triangle patterns on his skin).

Yet, their behaviour amongst each other within and beyond the rugby club makes clear that these cultural differences are either ignored or considered unimportant. This highlights how fluid ethnic categories are. Furthermore, it enforces the statement, earlier made in the introduction, that the emphasis put on boundaries in ethnicity literature might be unfounded in the daily experiences of ethnicity in people's lives.

Family belonging is expressed in different ways by the players, for example with the universally known symbol of the wedding ring. The most common and manifest form of communication, however, is the tattoo, which expresses this belonging through visual and bodily communication. Tattooing can be perceived as a type of body modification and it is an active practice of individuals engaging with society. As Foucault (1973 and 1979) has pointed out, society constrains and controls the body, and it socially and historically constructs this body. The tattooed body is also constructed and constrained by society within its meaning system. However, although the tattooed body is embedded in the social system, which reads this body in a particular way, there is also individual agency in the construction and transformation of the body. Except in a few instances, it is the tattooee who decides to be tattooed. So even if tattooing is embedded in the social system, it is the person who decides to engage with this system, either by accepting or rejecting it (Kuwahara 2005: 13). Māori and Samoan players placed *moko* or *tatau* on their arms, either as a sleeve that covered their upper arm, a sleeve that covered their whole arm from shoulder to hand, or as a band on their upper arm. Some players also placed their tattoo on their legs. Their decision to get a tattoo was a

personal one and often coincided with a specific moment in their lives. Ted got his *tatau* when he was sixteen on his birthday because

> I thought I'm of age now, haha! I drew it [myself] I don't want to put something on my body I don't know what it is, you know, the background of it and why I'm getting it.

The uses of these traditional tattoos by contemporary Polynesian people can be seen as attempts to lend corporeal solidity to an individual's commitment to his family, just like in the earlier tradition of tattooing when tattoos where still set with etching tools or chisels and involved a great deal of pain. Furthermore, they are expressions of the wearers belonging to the ethnic community, as well as his or her individuality (Treagus 2008: 190). The claim that is made is that they maintain a connection with the place that they are from, and are attached to their ancestors, family and culture, even when the immigrate, are exiled, displaced, taken away or travelling to different places (Kuwahara 2005: 20). This claim towards family is strengthened by the tattoo designs and their meaning. The patterns promise that the wearer will be at home, by bearing marks of belonging, meaning and identity (Ellis 2008: 33), for mixed in with the patters referring to elements of Māori or Samoan society and culture, the tattoo relates the story of his or her specific individual and family history. Te Awekotuku (2003) describes this in beautiful prose in his discussion of *moko*:

> Ta Moko is the process of inscribing, of marking the skin, of placing the narrative; Moko is the outcome, the finished work, the textured story, the pictorial memories permanently engraved. For Māori, subjecting the body to such trauma is more than the recognition of adulthood, and self, it is the proclamation of that self as belonging – to a particular descent line, family, or kinship network; to a special and unique group, to a community. It is about being Māori in today's world, and creating a visibility that will never ever fade into the tomorrow. (Te Awekotuku 2003: 126).

The claims spoken of by Kuwahara and Te Awekotuku also apply to the players of the Wellington Lions team. For them, the tattoos are about belonging to their (ethnic) family and honouring their roots, as well as, showing their pride in their belongings to their culture and community. One of the players explained to me that he took a *moko* sleeve on his arm because of his mother's Māori decent. He wanted to show that he represents and respects that side of this cultural background that he shares with her. Furthermore, Ted personalised the narrative of his *tatau* by including Celtic symbols with the traditional Samoan patters so as to be able to include his father's British decent.

Some of the Polynesian players extended this tradition to express familial ties through ethnic, i.e. cultural, tattoos by using other symbolic and/or linguistic communication. A

common tattoo design on the players' bodies are calligraphies of their family name. As one of the player explained: 'I have my last name on my chest, that's who I am and represent'. Another player included the name of his daughter and her date of birth on his body. However, the family inscribed on their body does not always have to be alive. One of the boys had the name of his grandmother tattooed on his chest in the symbol of the pink ribbon organisation to both remember his grandmother, who died of breast cancer, and support the pink ribbon foundation. Another player tattooed two rising wings at the back of his neck in commemoration of his deceased grandfather.

The close relation between a tattoo and its expression of family belonging is ethnicised with the *moko* and *tatau*'s strong connection to Polynesian cultures. Furthermore, the patterns and styles have become widely known since the landfall of Captain Cook in 1769, and are appreciated as Polynesian art and expressions of Polynesian culture around the world. In New Zealand, Māori *moko* has also come to be seen by a large majority as not only an expression of Māori, but also of Kiwi culture. To meet the increased demand of non-Māori people for tattoos with Māori designs, a Māori clan initiated the *kirituhi*, which means skin art, to reconcile the demand for Māori designs in a culturally sensitive way. The term and practise have become widely accepted by both Māori and non-Māori parties today. These tattoos bare a remarkable similarity with Māori patterns. However, they lack the specific Māori religious and genealogical patterns. As a true *moko* is considered sacred and misappropriation by non-Māori is seen as a grave offence. A few of the players made use of this Māori expression of family with *kirituhi*. Hardy, one of the younger players in the team, choose to get a *kirituhi* tattoo when he moved to England on a rugby scholarship for his studies, because he wanted to have something of home with him. 'I wanted to have something from New Zealand and such, so I got a Māori family one.' His inscribed genealogy depicts the story of his British New Zealand ancestry.

In this section, the first level of social organisation, according to which the various belongings of the players can be categorised, has been discussed, namely family. The family holds a central place in New Zealand society, although what constitutes as a family can vary greatly per culture. Ethnicity becomes salient and significant as a communication tool of family through ethnic tattoos, i.e. m*oko* and *tatau*. However, m*oko* and *tatau* are not only inscribed expressions of familial ties but, as was mentioned before by Treagus, also of community bonds.

Community and Ethnicity: Urban Segregation and Neighbourhood Socialisation

The sun is beating down on Wellington city, its enclosing warmth and bright blue skies a clear testament that summer is coming. Simon and I are hanging in his office, enjoying the soft summer breeze and the rays of sunshine streaming in through the open window, while we talk about the players and the impressions they gave us. 'Oh the first time I met Fred, I thought "oh what an offensive little bugger" but he actually isn't. He is quite the opposite, well-round, well-connected with himself, but very strong language and views.' Simon continues his story with an explanation for Fred's curious and contradicting social behaviour, exempting Fred from his use of offensive, strong language and views.

> But he's from Taranaki [rural region in another province], so conservative, white middle-class you know? That's where he is from. There is a lot of, what we call, red-neck racist people there. People who don't give a shit about anything but their farming, ruraling, and shooting stuff. That's where he is from, that is his connection...He's probably the one guy [in the team] who came up on the white side only, like without those cultural influences. He would've gotten that through rugby here.

Simon's description of this player, Fred, highlights two important points in regard to topics of ethnicity and belonging.

Firstly, it indicates that 'white' is just as an a diverse category, as one might expect of 'brown'. The latter already became clear in the previous section with the discussion on the fusion of Māori and Samoan in the 'brown' or 'Polynesian' category. Simon classifies himself within the 'white' category, yet he does not see himself affiliated with the white people from Taranaki, i.e. red-neck racist people. He has lived his whole live in a culturally-diverse environment and prides himself on his cultural sensitivity. Something that was also acknowledged by others through the nickname 'white chocolate,' given to him by one of the players.

However, 'white' is the dominant ethnic categories in New Zealand, and this category is therefore much less acknowledged as an ethnic category among the players, as well as general society. Like in most ethnicity studies, the category of 'white' is seen here only as the counterpart of the ethnic Other (Hartigan 1997). In academia, this has led to the constitution of the notion that all whites are the same, which obstinately is not true in the above situation. It stands to reason that similar observations apply to other cases as well. A more elaborate discussion of this diversity within the 'white' category is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this article. Yet, with this anecdote, enough emphasis has hopefully been put on the existence of this diversity to have peaked the interest for further and much needed study of this

phenomenon. Here, it serves as another testament of the various kinds of belongings, ethnic and otherwise, present among professional rugby players, which a coach has to bring together in the creation of one team. In other words, to extent on the comment of the rugby player Hewitt directed at coach Hammett in the beginning of this article, a coach not only has to bring together different cultures, but also differing sub-groups within these cultures. As such, the existence of sub-groups within ethnic categories also gives further testament of the nuanced existence of ethnicity in the everyday lives of people.

Secondly, this anecdote highlights the importance of one's community belonging. The neighbourhood where you live and/or grow up, is more than just a place with a bunch of houses. As Simon's reasoning regarding the behaviour of the player makes clear, someone's community belonging is a part of who you are, influencing behaviour and identity. As such, it can be used as a tool to explain this behaviour, i.e. he acts like such and such, becomes he comes from over there. The players in the team share this notion as well, for they would always begin by telling me in which part of the Wellington area they grew up in and/or currently lived, when I asked them if they could tell me a bit about their background. The message being relayed is clear: "if you want to know and understand me, you can do so through the knowledge of knowing where I live and/or grew up". Next to family, someone's neighbourhood is thus also a determining bond of belonging in the lives of people in New Zealand, among them the players in the team. Furthermore, it is another important factor to take into account by a the team's coach and his staff when they want to forge a strong team cohesion.

Until now, 'community' has referred to a group of people who actively achieve belonging through communication, who's bonds are shared through mediated means and can bring people together without being immediate or clearly visible by its boundaries, to each other, and in its discourse (Delanty 2008: 187-9, 194). In this section, however, a slightly different perspective is taken, which views 'community' as a small-scale environment, in which activities of the inhabitants take place locally and many of their needs are satisfied locally as well (Erikson 2001: 58), like a neighbourhood in a city with its own shopping street, school, church and sport clubs. A community like this is easy to find in the Wellington city area. Although not a capital city that can be compared with metropolises like New York, Paris, London or Berlin, Wellington is a particularly outstretched city with many hills running through it. Both these elements have led to an almost natural constitution of neighbourhood-communities. Furthermore, it is also one of the vastly growing cities in New Zealand, drawing in suburbs and smaller cities into its city boundaries.

The importance of these neighbourhood-communities in shaping the lives and personality of the Lions players can be reduced to two processes, that of socialisation into New Zealand's society through its school education, and of socialisation into New Zealand rugby culture through its local amateur rugby clubs.[7]

The relationship between the people in a neighbourhood and its schools is defined and fostered by the types of schools in that neighbourhood-community and their specific enrolment scheme. Primary and secondary education[8] is provided in three types of schools in the Wellington area: state, private and state registered (former private schools). Both state and state registered schools are government funded, while private schools rely largely on tuition fees. Private schools are, therefore, only accessible to children with a scholarship or financially capable parents. Government funded schools are tuition free but pose restrictions on the enrolment of its students through the geographical defined 'home zone scheme,' i.e. residence in a particular zone gives right of entry to a particular school. As Wellington is a large city, school density is high and the number of schools to choose from are numerous, with each school having its own 'desirability rate.' As a result, property rates have gone up in the neighbourhood-communities surrounding these schools, excluding less-financial capable groups in society while attraction groups with higher capability. With each school serving or attracting a certain social demographic of Wellington society, these education institutions have come to embody the dominant neighbourhood-community. Therefore, the education at these schools no longer only provides socialisation into New Zealand society but also into a certain class. Following Bourdieu and his theory of distinction (1979), it can thus be explained how certain neighbourhood-communities have come to be associated with certain types of behaviour of people.

The social stratification according to neighbourhood in the Wellington area is, of course, not absolute. One of the ways to circumvent the enrolment system or find a place in a different school type, is through a scholarship, such as a rugby award. Almost every secondary school, or college as they are called in New Zealand, has their own college amateur

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[7] Other community-belongings also exist for players within the neighbourhood-community social organisational level, such as religious bonds of belonging. Polynesian players often mentioned the importance of faith and religion in their lives, like Christianity and Pacific Catholicism. Some players would also run into each other in their church. This creates a bond of belonging that they share with each other, while with and without the team, which in turn affects the connections of belonging that exist in the team. With a shared community belonging outside rugby, players a more likely to hang out together at the club This is also how neighbourhood-community belongings come into the club and exist in (dis)harmony with the team belonging.

[8] Tertiary education, or university level, are not neighbourhood-community defined but located in the central city of Wellington. Often players will move to this area into university dorms during their education.

rugby team. Some of them even have a specific division among the age grade groups in an individual amateur rugby club and compete against other rugby colleges, as they are referred to, through a fierce competition. This competition brings exposure and recognition to the school. Therefore, these schools are always scouting for new talents to advance their teams and increase their success in the Wellington college competition. Furthermore, membership of a recognised amateur college team also brings visibility to the student-player, and with it, chances for a continuation of his or her career into the professional rugby scene.

How people view the relationship between educational socialisation, community, rugby and a person's behaviour in daily life finds expression in the case of Sander. This example of Sander was given to me by a close friend of his, while discussing the differences between players and their backgrounds. This friend told me that Sander got noticed for his excellence in rugby and was strongly encouraged to go to a rugby college to play at the highest level. If Sander took the encouragement, he would not only have become a member of an established college team, thus securing a more certain future for himself in professional rugby, but he would also have been able to go to school at a more 'desirable' college. At his current college,

> he would have been one of the few white boys there. There is a lot of Samoan and Māori students. It is a real ethnic blend and it's also, what we call, perhaps one of the more challenging colleges, because it also has gang members and violence and so on, but he choose to stay there. And what he has now, and he doesn't even realise it, is that that culture is now just in there, it's natural in him. And if you listen to him speak, the language he uses, you hear it is very similar [to the way Samoans and Māori speak English]. It's his learning, so it's just in there. And because of that he also has more appreciation for these cultures.

Sander did not take the opportunity, preferring to stay at the same college as his best friends, however other players certainly do. In doing so, they not only change colleges but neighbourhood-community socialisations as well, as they become part of the middle-class community environment in which most of these colleges are located. Furthermore, a change in schools, as the case of Sander shows, can also have ethnical implications. Especially, because in most of the rugby colleges, which cater to a middle-class neighbourhood-community, the 'white' ethnic category dominates. If Sander had taken the encouragement he would have gone from a lower-class ethnically mixed socialisation environment to a white middle-class one. Because he did not change colleges, this has had an effect on his ethnic socialisation, which is expressed in his linguistic communication, i.e. according to his friend Sander speaks English in the 'Samoan and Māori way.'

The close relation between neighbourhood-communities and ethnic socialisation has led various scholars in New Zealand to ponder the question whether New Zealand is following in the footsteps of the United States, in the development of ethnic bounded enclaves or ghetto's. However, research have been unable to prove this existence. Ethnic belonging is urbanely spaced in Wellington, i.e. there is urban segregation of ethnicity in the Wellington city area (Johnston *et al.* 2005). This is the result of two factors. Firstly, people, white, Polynesian and otherwise, give preference to live in areas with groups of their own or similar ethnic belonging. Secondly, economic disadvantages and the spatial separation of the housing market have contributed to urban segregation of ethnic belonging. A good example of this is Porirua where the Wellington government target Polynesian low-income households by building a separate urban area with much lower housing- and rent prices. Today, this area is still mostly populated by Polynesian people and many of the Polynesian players grew up and/or live there. However, no one ethnic group dominates the neighbourhood-communities in the Wellington city area enough to form ethnic enclaves or ghetto's (Poulsen *et al.* 2000: 329, 332, 338, 345). People move, physically and socially, in and out of neighbourhood-communities despite ethnic categories, whether it is to give their children access to a better education or to further one's rugby career. These results prove, again, that ethnic categories and belongings are complex and nuanced, and it is impossible to capture these by looking at ethnicity from a groupist perspective. This was true for to the different interpretations of family of the previous section, and also applies to the non-existing single-ethnicity boundaries of urban neighbourhood-communities in Wellington.

The second process of socialisation in the lives of the players is, as mentioned above, takes places at the amateur rugby clubs. This socialisation often partially overlaps with the socialisation through the education system, particularly through secondary rugby colleges. However, although some of the players start playing rugby due to their enrolment in a rugby college, most of them find their passion for the sport at a much earlier age. Children, mostly boys but also girls, often start playing rugby at a club in their neighbourhood-community at the age of four. These amateur clubs are the grounds where the young players are socialised into rugby culture and prepared for a possible future in professional rugby. Much like the way families provide the player with his genealogical roots, the amateur clubs provide him with his rugby roots. On those fields, a rugby player is first forged. As a result, a player's belonging to the amateur rugby team remains important even after he makes it into the professional rugby scene. Players keep playing for their amateur rugby club between ITM and/or Super 15 competitions, even if it is just a single game of the amateur competition

season. Furthermore, they often go back to their respective amateur clubs to support them in community outreach programs, such as anti-domestic or anti-poverty schemes.

Aside for the already mentioned relation between educational socialisation and ethnicity, ethnic categories or ethnicity related-perspectives were not mentioned by the players in regard to the amateur club rugby environment. This, however, is not surprising. Like the Wellington club, amateur rugby clubs will put much emphasis on team belonging as the most important bond too. And, as with the Wellington club, it can be assumed that the amateur rugby team will face similar difficulties in bringing a group of players together.

Neighbourhood-communities, however, are not only places of socialisation. These communities are bustling places where the brunt of the players' everyday lives take place. In these neighbourhoods, the players find family and friends, they go grocery shopping, go to church, see a doctor, bring up their children, find relaxation in their leisure time, etc. Ted, for example, spends much of his free time by going to a youth group at his church. This youth group is very important to him and he sees it as part of who he is. However, within and beyond the group, people in his neighbourhood-community recognise him not just as Ted but, also as the young Wellington rugby player that they see on television playing rugby every week.

> Oh Ted! Oh oh Ted the rugby player, like that you know, when I'm sitting in church. But I'm still the same who I was before I was a rugby player. When they realise that it's like 'oh sweet'.

Similar recognitions happen to other players as well when they move around in their neighbourhood-communities. When they walk down the street or do groceries at the local supermarket. People come up to them to ask for a photograph, an autograph or a chat. Bill's image as a Wellington rugby player also extends into the class room of his oldest daughter when he brings her to school. Both his children know he plays rugby and see him on television but, they are not really aware of who he is to the outside world. His oldest just joined primary school and when he drops her off she sees how her class mates want to talk to him, have his autograph, give him little drawings and crafts, or say something to her about it.

> It's funny, it's just starting really but she is noticing it a wee bit now. And she knows that I'm just dad but, she's also realizing now that, well, people might actually know who dad is.

It is in moments like these that a player's different belongings come together in their daily lives. They infringe, coexist and clash with each other, as well as with ethnic

belongings, whenever the players are socially interacting with others: Bill, for example, is a father in his family and a rugby player when out and about in his neighbourhood-community. These bonds clashed with each other during his time at the Canterbury rugby club, when he was so busy with rugby that he almost never saw his family. The bonds coexisted during his time in Japan, where he played rugby but also had a lot of free time to spend with his family. Lastly, they infringed on each other when he chose to come back from Japan, where he could make more money as a rugby player, so he could enrol his child at the local New Zealand neighbourhood school. Examples like these can be found among all the players in the team.

The players of the Wellington Lions communicate their belonging to the neighbourhood-community through different means. One of these has already been mentioned in the previous section, namely (ethnic) tattoos. Another means of communication that emphasises someone's neighbourhood-belonging is language. As a close friend of Sander mentioned, he was able to tell in which neighbourhood-community Sander grew up because he spoke English in the 'Samoan and Māori way,' which uses as particular kind of slang. This slang language, spoken by most young Polynesian players, mixes New Zealand English with Māori and Samoan words. For example, the use of the word *uce*, which means brother in Samoan and refers to someone being a Samoan person, is used in greetings: 'W(h)at up uce?,' i.e. 'What's up brother?' A response to this question could be *churr*, 'good.'

The slang is often associated with the 'Polynesian' category, which is why it might seem correct to classify this linguistic expression as an identity marker of this ethnic group, or a way in which Polynesians negotiate Us-Them boundaries. However, it cannot be viewed as such. The slang was mostly used by players in their late teens and early twenties. Therefore, it should be analysed as an expression of youth culture. Furthermore, since people from other ethnic categories use this slang language as well, it is impossible to draw ethnic boundaries around the slang language. Similar to Baumann's case in Southall London (1995), this article therefore views the slang as a communication means of neighbourhood-community belonging, which is socialised through one's education and not through his ethnic belonging.

A third way in which the players communicate their neighbourhood-community belonging is via their rugby belonging, namely through their amateur rugby club jersey. Rugby jerseys are a powerful visual and material tool to communicate team belonging. However, the visibility of rugby sport in New Zealand society and the close relationship between an amateur rugby club and the neighbourhood-community also make them powerful communication tools to express neighbourhood-community belonging. By wearing their

amateur club rugby jersey, people, from their own neighbourhood as well as others, see at a glance which neighbourhood-community this player is from and who he represents on the rugby field.

However, much like Evan-Pritchard's Nuer (1940), people's belonging to a neighbourhood-community is structurally relative and in certain contexts they will decide to choose a larger community belonging over their neighbourhood-community belonging. The players of the Wellington Lions did so with their bond to the Wellington rugby club jersey; a connection that is the same as their amateur rugby jersey but then for the whole city. Ted voiced this most passionately in his description of the jersey's meaning for him:

> Wellington is your roots. It's where you grew up, it's were you were born, or it's where I was born and grew up. It's territory, you fight for your home. You know Wellington and you know the difference between Wellington and Auckland. Like Wellington is way better because Auckland is too busy and the motorways, and all that stuff. And you got the Necky [Taranaki], it's nice waves and all that but too country or whatever. It's *Wellington*, that's our pride, and the jersey is part of that. That is how it is and I hard out believe that.

Other times neighbourhood-community belongings are transcended by direct alignment with an ethnic category. For example, Alama Ieremia, the assistant coach of the Wellington Hurricanes, was able to bring together many Samoan residents of the Wellington area with a Samoan rugby tournament he organised during my field study. He stated that the one-day tournament was '...open to anyone regardless of whether they're Samoan but the idea is to get the PI [Pacific Island] community together...,' and his hope was that his initiative would also encourage other Pacific Island communities to get involved through rugby.[9]

Through the discussion of players as students and members of amateur rugby clubs, this section, on the second level of social organisation, has highlighted the intrinsic ways in which the belonging of a player to his neighbourhood-community is intertwined with the other bonds in his live. Ethnicity was salient and significant here on certain occasions, like the just mentioned Samoan rugby tournament. However, it was not omnipresent, nor more important than other bonds of belonging. Therefore, this article follows the argument of Baumann (1996), and goes against the recurring and perpetual argument made in many ethnicity and neighbourhood-community literature, that tend to treat urban community, culture, and an ethnic categories synonymously. Lastly, it looked at the structural relativity of a player's belonging, switching between neighbourhood-community and Wellington city

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[9]Tony Robson, "Ieremia spearheads the Samoan connection" *Rugby Heaven*, 25 October 2012, accessed 26 October 2012, http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/7858457/Ieremia-spearheads-the-Samoan-connection

through the jersey. However, the jersey and rugby sport not only establish belongings that transcend neighbourhood-communities to city-level but also to the national level.

The Nation-State and Ethnicity: Nationalism, National Identities and Rugby

Another away-game trip, another city, another hotel. This one is situated in the small city of Mount Maunganui, a beloved holiday-spot at the top of the North Island of New Zealand. With the view of the steep, lush mountain, after which the city is named, on one side and a golden sandy beach that stretches on for miles, on the other side, this resort has everyone of our travelling team caught in a feeling of being on holiday. It is a sunny morning and a relaxed calm hangs over the resort. A few of the players are still in their room, probably watching television, while the rest has found something to do outside. A simplified version of a cricket game is taking place in the enclosed patio, right before the entrance gate of the resort. The shouts of the boys evoked by the game are exceeded only by the splashing and laughing of a few other Lions boys in the pool. Suddenly an explosion of laughter on the patio grips everyone's attention: a few boys just came back from a cup of coffee at one of the little cafe's at the promenade along the beach, and unaware a cricket game was being played on the patio in the resort, the first of them opened the gate and was struck right in the face by a flying cricket ball. After a good laugh and a few shouted comments, everyone goes back to what their own business, including me and Bill. While still watching the boys through the glass hotel room doors from our couch, I ask him to continue his explanation of what the rugby jersey means to him. 'Yeah like I was saying, I respect it and all, but I'm [originally] from the West coast on the other side of the South Island, so I didn't grow up in a city where I looked up to a jersey (like the Wellington Lions and Hurricanes jersey). So I don't have that emotion so much with it as some of the guys (e.g. Ted). But the All Blacks, that is a jersey I always looked up to. If I ever play for the All Blacks, I probably will have that sort of emotion I reckon....you know if, haha.'

Bill's comment in this anecdote applies to a large part of the population in New Zealand: all rugby players dream of putting on the All Blacks jersey, and all fans of rugby look up to the All Blacks jersey (i.e. team). The white 'All Blacks' name and New Zealand fern on a black background is a logo that can be spotted anywhere you go in New Zealand: mugs, flags, pens, key chains, car wheel covers, baby clothes, official rugby gear, Addidas gear, mouse pads, lap top covers, and, All Blacks sponsored food brands. The All Blacks name and brand have saturated the everyday life of New Zealand society to such a degree that 'All Blacks' and

'New Zealand' have melted into one single concept, and rugby has become a synonym for New Zealand (and vice versa). In the words of one of the staff members at the club, 'rugby is woven into the fabric of our country.' This interrelation with New Zealand is not coincidental, nor did it happen overnight. Rugby, and with it the national rugby team, have been part of the political and cultural development processes of the New Zealand nation, since the country's occupation by the British in the nineteenth century.

Rugby's roots can be traced back to Victorian England and the English public school of the mid-nineteenth century. Preoccupied with issues of nationhood and identity construction, headmasters of various Victorian public schools turned their institutions into the places where moral manliness was best learned by upper-middle-class young men, and rugby was the activity through which to promote and leaven this quality of character. As a game, rugby was praised as promoting the virtues of unselfishness, fearlessness and self-control. It offered opportunities for struggle and sacrifice, required strength and hardiness, and in the process, it was argued, produced heroes and hearties. This toughness of muscle and toughness of heart were vital ingredients needed for the rising generations of national leaders and imperial rulers. Manly might on the rugby field, it was thought, would translate into fighting the good fight to protect the empire on the battlefield (Chandler and Nauright 1996: 8, 9) This ideology of British team sports, that stressed group solidarity rather than individual excellence and emphasised the ideals of service, duty and loyalty to one's comrades, was later transported from the homeland and readily diffused into societies, such as Australia and New Zealand, via rugby sport as part of the colonial conquest (Saunders 1998: 97). This conquest through rugby sport did not end right then and there. This British ideology was the foundation on which the Empire build the cultural identity and a feeling of togetherness amongst the colonists of New Zealand. Furthermore, rugby sport, viewed as an essential preparation for both character and service in the Empire, was used in twentieth century, as an instrument to assimilate Māori people into the new New Zealand nation, without disturbing the dominant ethnic Othering of Māori in public society (Hokowhitu 2004). This ethnic Othering, or the casting of Māori people as the (perpetual) 'hyphenated' New Zealander in the public domain, through, among others, rugby sport, seems to have now also come to include more recent migrants of the Polynesian island, such as Samoans (Grainger 2009).[10]

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[10] This very short historical overview of the role of rugby during colonial and postcolonial political and cultural processes in New Zealand does not do justice to what has passed. This history is much more detailed and nuanced, and I highly recommend reading the critical works of Hokowhitu and Grainger for a more encompassing perspective.

However, within rugby sports itself, as in most sports, an ideology of neutrality is pursued, i.e. the domain emphasises the notion that only the achievements of the athlete are important and nothing else. This ideology becomes especially apparent in moments when the pursued neutrality of the team, club, or institution is called into questioned. A great example of this occurred in 2010 when a former All Blacks player accused one of the Super 15 teams in New Zealand, the Crusaders, for operating on a deliberate policy of restricting the number of Polynesian and Māori players selected for the team. The Crusaders management was shocked by the allegation and strongly denied it. The matter was put to rest a few days later with the comments of other official rugby organisations and many media documentations that supported the stated non-existence of a racial selection policy by the Crusaders club. However, the damage, so to speak, had already been done as the neutrality of the rugby club is on record and is still used when people want to make a specific point. The rugby player in the opening anecdote, Hewitt, for example also mentioned coach Hammett's involvement as assistant-coach of the Crusaders club in a lateral comment when he clarified why he believed the coach was inadequate in dealing with a culturally mixed team. Although Hewitt never overtly accused coach Hammett for being racist or acting on racist-infused notions in his decision to let Ma'a Nonu go, his reference was read as such within the public domain because of the earlier implication of a racial selection policy at the Crusaders club.

Despite the pursued neutrality within sport clubs and teams, when sport moves onto the national level this ideology becomes publically muddied. As it is swept up by national cultural politics and nationalism, ethnicised Othering becomes a part of it. The national team is a representation of one's nation, an embodiment of its pride and glory, and its character and ability claimed as arbiters of national worth are tested when in sports competition with other nations (Maclean 2000: 257). This is the case when the New Zealand All Blacks meet their neighbour the Australian Wallabies, or their previous colonial rulers, Britain, on the rugby field. Especially during the Rugby World Cup, when it is decided who the best rugby team in the world is. This also applies to other sports and tournaments, like the Olympics or the Football World Cup. In some occasions these ideas of nationhood are so strong that the line between sport and national politics disappears and a whole new game takes the field.

On arrival at the nation-state level of social organisation and closer to the presence of a nationalism politics, one might believe that ethnicity will be more present in people's everyday experiences. After all, a nation-state is conceptualised by most contemporary scientists as a state dominated by an ethnic group, whose markers of identity (such as

language and religion) are frequently embedded in its official symbolism and legislation. Furthermore, nation-states are closely involved with the politics of nationalism. And according to most nationalist ideologies, the political organisation should be ethnic in character in that it represents the interests of a particular ethnic group. Conversely, nation-states draw an important aspect of its political legitimacy from convincing the popular masses that it really does represent them (i.e. the dominant ethnic category) as a cultural unit (Erikson 2010: 119, 121). However, even at the level of the nation-state people's differing daily belongings are still present and here too our nuanced perspective, that sees ethnicity as only one of the many belongings, should not waiver. This becomes most apparent when we look at one of the most ethicised occurrences in New Zealand history, namely the anti-tour protests of 1981.

The protests of 1981 had an intensity and extent that have kept it in the memories of many people in New Zealand. One of them is Simon, who was in his late teens at the time.

> The Springbok tour of '81 split our nation down the middle. So basically the Springboks came to New Zealand and we had riot police on the street, cause half the population didn't want them here, because they chose on the basis of race, so there's no black players. And the other half said 'no, politics and sport shouldn't mix'. If you go search that stuff, you're going to see some pretty ugly, ugly scenes and how anybody wasn't killed I don't know, but that split the nation. So that was my generation and my mum's generation and people are still aware.

These riots ignited by the Springbok tour of 1981 was the result of a building up of nearly sixty years of discontent at the sporting contacts between New Zealand and the anti-apartheid driven South-African nation. This discontent, which started in 1921, was largely expressed as a sense that the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) was effectively importing apartheid into New Zealand by agreeing not to select Māori players for tours to South-Africa, just like the South-Africans, who did not select any black African players in their (national) rugby team. In 1949 voices were raised more loudly against the practice of apartheid in South Africa. By 1970 the anti-apartheid campaign, under the slogan 'No Māoris, No Tour,' was organised around the demand for total sporting isolation of apartheid. Feelings of discontent kept rising until the tipping point was reached in 1981 when the South-African Springboks came over for a rugby tour of New Zealand.

The 1981 tour had come to represent all that was wrong with New Zealand: the arrogance of political leadership, the pattern and effects of colonial dispossession, the maintenance of patriarchal power. But most of all, opponents of the tour saw the event as a representation of an elite that seemed to be endorsing apartheid, open racism, and ethnic

segregation as legitimate. The oppositional campaign, against the New Zealand sporting connection with South-Africa, was potent because of rugby's metonymical role in New Zealand, i.e. rugby's site of national celebration and valorisation, the continuation of a masculine frontier ethos, and/or the outcome of a particular pattern of colonisation (Maclean 2000: 256-7). The glory of rugby was a direct representation of the glory of the New Zealand nation, everything it stood for, and the NZRFU's acceptance of and compliance to apartheid by South-Africa affected the nation's image in the same manner. In 1981, countless people all over New Zealand took the streets to oppose sporting contact with South Africa (ibid: 261-2).

Ethnicity and racism were the pinnacle around which the anti-tour movement of 1981 was build. Yet, even here the nature of the involvement of people was quite diverse and different groups, with their own agenda points, made their voice heard in the protests. The Women's Movement, one of the strongest groups involved, actively pursued feminist goals, like the prevailing dominance of the house-wife stereotype, and, equal opportunities and pay for women at the work place. Furthermore, this group of protesters put the focus of their protests on sexuality, reproductive rights and violence against women (Maclean 2000:259). There was little to no mention of ethnicity or ethnic-related remarks in the linguistic focus of this feminist group. The same can be said for another large groups, which consisted of people opposing the anti-tour campaign. These people joined the protests on the opposite side, proclaiming that sports and politics should not mix. This group included government officials, sport organisation officials, rugby players, and sport fans and their only ethnic-related remark was the, somewhat naive, counterargument they presented to the anti-tour protesters, namely that rugby contact with a multiracial country like New Zealand could function as an example in South Africa and, as such, inspire change for the better.

Only two of the various groups involved in the protests pursued goals of an ethnic and/or racism nature. The first were Māori people, who put a focus on the colonial relations in the country. Māori had played a crucial role in the depiction of New Zealand identity, and white New Zealanders believed that they not only held the best race relations, but also that New Zealand was truly one nation. However, the reality was different. Māori and white New Zealanders lived segregated lives and there was a clear rural/urban divide, with very little to no contact between Māori and white communities. During the anti-tour campaign the Māori protests made clear that the one-nation approach was not true. Furthermore, they were able to turn the focus from oversees racism to racism against Māori at home, which although different in degree was not different in kind from what was happening in South Africa. Their protests created an environment that asked for a more comprehensive assessment of New

Zealand's colonial and postcolonial history, as well as, the position of Māori in late twentieth-century society (Maclean 2000: 259, 265, 267).

The second group were Polynesian immigrants, who brought more attention to the racial immigration policies of the nation-state. Polynesian immigrants had become one of the larger groups travelling to New Zealand in the late twentieth-century. However, due to rising unemployment and increasingly restrictive immigration controls, concerns about Pacific Island 'overstayers' became an issue. These concerns led to deportations, dawn raids on Pacific households by police and immigration officials, and Pacific Islanders being questioned on the streets. However, national immigration politicians did allow the migration of white people from, among other, South Africa. This protest group put a focus on the increasingly racist state policies, and reinforced their cause by highlighting the strong involvement of the government with South Africa, which already was a issue of concern in the public domain (ibid: 272).

The public discourse surrounding New Zealand nationalism and rugby has altered since 1981. However, the relation between the two is still strong, and so is the involvement of ethnicity. As became clear, for example, in 1999 when Adidas used the haka and suggestive images of Māori men in traditional clothing in a commercial on the All Blacks, as part of its marketing strategy in Europe (Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002). Furthermore, the effects of the tour protests on 1981 are still felt today, as can be seen in the official apology of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union given to the excluded Māori players and their families in 2010, and the passionate debate about whether or not this act was appropriate or necessary leading up to the apology.

As Brubaker *et al.* (2008) have pointed out correctly, national politics, nationalism and ethnic-related issues are bound to trickle down into the daily lives of people and influence the ways in which they think about their nation and themselves. However, the discussion of the tour protests of 1981 shows that not all experiences of people are dominated by ethnicity belongings. They still belong to other groups as well, and the strength of these connections determines with which party people align themselves, be they ethnic, gender, or labour-related. This is still true today.

Players almost always put their rugby job and career possibilities before their national belongings. Afato, for example, had been asked by the national Samoan team on various occasions to join their team. Playing on the national level is a great opportunity and considered an honour by many players. However, because Afato is also a New Zealand

citizen under the governmental laws, he can also declare New Zealand rugby status with the New Zealand Rugby Union. This means that, if selected, he can represent New Zealand in the All Blacks jersey. The rumour at the rugby club was that the All Blacks coaches had shown interest in Afato's abilities as a player, which could lead to a possible selection. Once a player chooses a nationality, he can no longer represent another country's national team, therefore Afato had decided to decline the offers from the Samoan team until he knew more about his possibilities with the All Blacks team. The reason behind his decision was that, although he was very proud to be Samoan (a pride he showed with his tattoo stating "100% Samoa"), this pride was trumped by the possibility to play for the world renowned All Blacks. In other words, he chose his rugby belonging over his national belonging. However, the reverse was true when asked about his nationality. Then, he would align himself with Samoa, rather than New Zealand.

The player Fred provides another instance in which this was the case. At the end of the 2012 ITM Cup, Fred and his girlfriend moved to Melbourne, Australia. He had signed a contract with the Australian Super 15 team, the Melbourne Rebels for two years, with a possible extension. The national rugby rules state that, if you have not declared a nationality yet as a rugby player, and you play in a country for three consecutive years, you become eligible as a player for that country's national team (regardless of governmental immigration policies). Fred was taking this possibility very seriously, stating that as a player you have to be pragmatic and take your chances where you can find them regardless, in this instance, of your feelings of belonging to a nation. If he got the opportunity to play for the Australian national team, the Wallabies, he would not hesitate to take it, even though he felt a kiwi. Fred, thus, also put his rugby belonging over his national belonging to New Zealand.

Although Afato had national preference in regards to his ethnic belonging, most players of the Lions team categorised themselves in more than one ethnic category and switched between them based on context. Ted and I once had a discussion about who would sing in the bus during away game trips. He stated that all the brown boys sing, but that he did not mind joining in. 'You don't see yourself as a brown boy then?' I asked, to which he replied, 'I'm a half cast so, there's moments.' Ted had been brought up in a predominantly 'white' community and considered himself more of a 'white' boy than a 'brown' boy. However, he found his belonging to both ethnic categories important and had made great effort to strengthen his belonging to both cultures. This symbioses is most apparent on his body, which is decorated by both a traditional Samoan family tattoo and a stylistic version of the New Zealand country. 'I got New Zealand on my leg cause, you know, this were I'm

from.' As such, Ted switched between the ethnic categories 'Samoan', 'Polynesian' and 'white' based on the context in which he was in, such as above when the boys are singing in the bus.

The switching between national ethnic categories was not only present in the everyday lives of the players within the Lions rugby team, but applies to others in New Zealand too. This is apparent in the current debate surrounding the New Zealand population census and the need for and demand of multi-ethnic responses, as research has shown that people feel strong belongings to more than one ethnic group or state that their ethnic belonging depends on who they are with (e.g. Callister, Didham and Kivi 2009, Kukutai 2003).

The above section on nation-states and nationalism addressed the last level of social organisation that is discussed in this article and focused on the players' bonds of belonging on the national level. The salience and significance of ethnicity is often automatically assumed on this level, as ethnicity and nation-states are intertwined by the Romantic notion that is at the core of nationalism processes. However, the focus on the everyday shows that this essentialist view, often carried out by national officials, politicians and the media, cannot be supported. Belongings can be expressed ethnically, e.g. through national alignment or tattoos, but they do not have to be so, and wanting to play or playing for the All Blacks does not necessarily imply an alignment with New Zealand and/or its culture. Furthermore, even when the application of ethnic categories are the central focus, such as in national census questionnaires, ethnic belongings are nuanced as well. With this knowledge of the multiple and overlapping bonds of belonging in the daily lives of rugby players on the family, neighbourhood-community and nation-state level complete, this article can now turn to the question of how team cohesion can be established.

One Team, Multiple Bonds of Belonging: Establishing the Matrix for Team Cohesion

In the midst of loud laughter, the telling of crude jokes, and explicit stories, one the staff members, sitting next to me in the team circle, leans forward to give me some explanation of the underlying purpose of our get-together: 'Teams don't always work, they don't always come together. Tonight we're going to see if this team will.' One of the coaches' gets up to tell a joke about a meeting he had with someone in a bar. A round of laughter of the whole team, me and the staff member included, and applause follow. After this, Sam continues his explanation, stating that if the boys do not come together here, connect with each other, it's unlikely that they'll come together on the field. After the team circle, in which rookies had

been hazed and players who broke the rules had been punished with an assignment, the players remain in the team room of the hotel, talking and laughing.

Later on in the evening, Sam and I are still engaged in conversation, when he suddenly directs my attention to the people in the team room. 'See?' he asks me, a smile on his face. I look at him, puzzled. He points towards the players, showing me that they are not only still hanging out together, even though this is not mandated by the coaches, but that they also hang out with players outside their usual groups. Something they continued to do from that moment on. Sam and the coaches were happy, the players had found their connection. Furthermore, and somewhat to my surprise, they started to play better on the field as well. The players found their rhythm on the field, their playing style became 'natural' instead of rehearsed, they spoke up more during team meetings and got actively involved in strategy discussions. The group of individual players I had met on the field during my first week had turned into a single entity: a team.

The occurrence in the above anecdote played out in a team room of a hotel during one of the team's away game trips. In hindsight, it proved to be a pivotal moment in the establishment of cohesion amongst the team players, the staff members and the coaches. And although it is difficult to determine whether the moment was taking place consciously or unconsciously, i.e. whether everyone involved was entirely aware of the importance of what was happening, the bonds created with each other that night were strong. So strong that, from that moment on, when they put on their team jersey, the team bond superseded any of the other belongings the players had in their everyday lives. This strong bond is created by three groups within the Wellington Lions organisation: the club, the coach(es) and the players.

The Club

The belonging to a club often starts at a young age for boys, long before they are players. Many of the younger players told me on various occasions about the pride they felt when they put on the Lions jersey, as this had always been the club that they had looked up to growing up. Hardy's words make this very clear when he states,

> I used to be that kid on the other side of the board on the field at the end of home games, waiting for an autograph. I used to sit in my room and look at the posters of all these great Wellington players. I feel real privileged to be wearing the jersey now. To be part of this team.

The importance of the club image is emphasised further in a discussion I had with a few people about the club slogan, in which Simon said: 'Wellington for Wellington is such a great

catch phrase, because it underscores that it doesn't matter where you come from if you commit to Wellington.' Thus, this slogan highlights the importance of one belonging, the team's, over all others, both to its fans and its players. The club thus provides the abstract image of their team, that people can relate to and feel connected to through the club's colours, slogans, and message.

Belonging is not only created between the club and the players through this club image in the outside world, but are also fostered through communication at the club grounds and inside the club house. The most straightforward of these communications is the visual and material message relayed by the club outfit. As in all sports, the Lions team has their own unique club outfit in the colours black and yellow, and bearing the Wellington Lions logo. Furthermore, all the players are given sweaters, sweatpants, beanies, caps and wind jackets – all also with the Lions team logo and name. Every training, meeting, away game trip, and, game, the players all wear the same clothes, are surrounded by the team colours, and adorned with the team logos. As such, it is made absolutely clear which club they play for and, thus, sport community they belong to. Furthermore, by all wearing, or being made to wear, the same outfit, the emphasis is put on the team and its importance over that of the individual player. In other words, when a player puts on his jersey he figuratively covers himself with the team colours and logo through their club representation, and, literally as the tattoos of family, community and nation disappear underneath the outfit. As such, the club clothing of the Lions shows to the players which the team they belong to and binds them together as one group under one name, one colour scheme and one logo.

Belonging is communicated through other means as well, such as the club decorations in the club house. For example, during the time of the ITM Cup competition, the wired gates that provide access to the club grounds are adorned with a big logo of a roaring yellow lion on a black background. Above the lion, the texts 'Home of the Lions' meets every club member who passes through the gates. In the club building several posters are posted on the walls, like the 2012 ITM Cup promotional poster of the club with the slogan 'Wellington for Wellington.' And, lastly, the dressing room is painted in the colours black and yellow, surrounding every one of the players in the club colours whenever they are there.

The Lions rugby club is not only responsible for the image of the team, and the communication of this image to each and every player that becomes a member of this team throughout history, but it also provides the next generation of players. At the Academy, young players in their teens, who were previously part of the amateur club rugby scene, are now trained, educated and socialised in the world of professional rugby. A world that, once the

players are old enough, they all hope to become a part off through securing a place at the Wellington Lions team.

The Coach(es)

While the Lions club is responsible for the abstract concept of the Lions team, the coach(es) are responsible for the actual team, i.e. players, that will represent the Lions club in a particular season. Furthermore, the coach(es) is responsible for the creation a specific team culture, that can help to provide the successful team cohesion so sought after. Yet, the coach cannot exist without the club, and vice versa. The relationship between the two parties is fluid and each play important parts in creating belonging. For example, the slogan mentioned before was created by the coaches and spread through the city by the club. Both the role of the club and the coach(es) therefore need to be recognised in the establishment of team belonging.

The first step in creating a team culture is the establishment of team rules and the team play book, i.e. the team strategy on the field. The Lions coaches had kept these rules very simple:

1) represent this team positively where ever we are and who ever we are with,

2) be on time and be prepared for everything,

3) always do more than enough, and

4) say it honestly, directly and correctly when it needs saying.

These rules were printed out on a large poster, which hung in the team room, and on small business cards that were given to all the players. This constant visibility of the rules made sure players did not forget them. Furthermore, because of the constant reminder, these rules also became inscribed into the team's unconscious mind, i.e. they became part of the collective conscious (Durkheim 1893). The same applies to the play book.

Furthermore, the coaches implement exercises for team bonding. At the Wellington Lions, the coaches used a mini-competition that ran during the whole ITM Cup season. All the players had been divided into smaller teams and during the season they would compete against each other through assignments, ranging from making the best salad for the team barbeque to football matches. For each assignment they were given points, with a prize for the team who scored the most points.

Also, they brought in another type of competition which worked on the basis of team recognition. During the review of each game, the coaching staff would pick the best forward and back player, as well as, a man of the match. The announcement of the winning players at each game would be accompanied by a mash-up of their best moments during the game and

their photo on the wall of team room. The handing out of awards not only brought recognition to players, but honour as well. They were not simply recognised for their hard work, it was celebrated openly with the awards. The players carried this honour with much pride. It held ten times the value of a mere pat on the shoulder.

The celebration of success within the team, whether of one player by the whole team or by a team in the mini-competition, becomes a moment of bounding through its sharedness and the celebratory energy released with it. It is, to put it in Durkheimian terms, a moment of collective effervescence (Durkheim 1912).

Also, the approach of the coach(es) towards the players contributes to the team culture and cohesion. During the ITM Cup season, the Lions coaches had implemented a culture in which they were always very direct in their opinion towards players, the team, the games, etc., and they expected the same from the players. Guided by the mantra of the assistant coach that 'the weakest player of the team is the one who is the quietest', all players were pulled into team discussions and expected to express their opinion. This expectation runs contrary to one the oldest rugby traditions, that bases the allowing of players to speak on seniority. Thus, only the players who have been part of the team the longest are allowed to contribute to team meetings. This break with tradition, that had required some behavioural adjustment but was embraced by all the players, created a more inclusive environment for the whole team, further strengthening the team cohesion.

The role of the coaches of the Wellington Lions had played in the successful establishment of team cohesion during the 2012 ITM Cup was recognised by both staff members and players. Simon summed them up nicely as follows:

> To be fair, I think the coaching staff of this year can take a lot of credit for the culture. So the boys live it but they helped set it. In the reviews I talked about this with the boys. The 'Wellington for Wellington' slogan and the four statements have helped, they're simple checkpoints, just as the playing style. It's all been very simple and the boys loved the way they were playing. Also, the coaches have been really direct, so really honest feedback. The boys have *loved* that, all the boys have loved that. And in those it didn't matter who you are, they have loved that too. So it didn't matter if you're Samoan, Tongan, Māori, white, they all respected that. That came from the review very clearly.

The Player(s)

Once implemented rules of coaches become valued within the team, they often become part of the rugby tradition. These traditions serve two prepossesses. Firstly, traditions form both the basic rules for the team culture, to which players feel they all have to adhere to, and its instrument of punishment. As someone put it most eloquently:

Traditions can be a way of disciplining. You can't smack a mate, cause you got to work together, but you can say "he you know that's not on, we've got rules here." So the penance you know, how you pay for it, can be the tradition of drinking a beer. This is run by the players, not by the management, so players making sure that players conform.

Secondly, the traditions serve as an instrument for the socialisation of new players into the team. As the aforementioned quote makes clear this is done by the players themselves, with the senior boys in the team taking the lead. Within the hierarchical structure of a rugby team, these boys also serve as the leadership group, who form the 'spokesteam' between the coaches and the players.

In the Lions team, there were three socialisation rituals executed by the senior players on three different moments. These three moments should be seen as three stages that lead up to the moment of passing from an outsider to a Lions player, i.e. a rite the passage. The first stage is when a new player enters the team bus for the first time. He has to get up to the microphone to introduce himself and tell a joke. If he does not know a joke, he has to sing a song.

The second stage involves the player having to do a sketch in front of the whole team, i.e. enact or tell about an embarrassing or humiliating experience they have had. The nature and topic of the sketch is given by the senior players and it is up to the new player to present it to the team in the way he wants to. Aside from being a socialisation instrument, the sketch is an opportunity, a space, for the player who wants to make a lasting impression, i.e. to make their mark, earn their spot, and claim a specific position in the team hierarchy. During my fieldwork one player was able to use this opportunity, albeit he did so half consciously, and gave the team a hilarious sketch that immediately earned him his place in the team. Players would describe him as a good and funny guy who was willing to make an idiot of himself for the team. Something that was much appreciated and that spoke of the character of the player and his willingness to sacrifice himself for the team. He had been willing to put his pride on the line with this sketch to make the team laugh. Although this was not voiced as such specifically, his willingness to put his pride on the line correlated with an establishment of trust between the player and the rest of the team, that he would also put body and soul on the line for the team on the rugby field.

The third and last stage towards the rite de passage involves a summoning by one of the senior players to the back of the bus. At the back of the bus the player has to answer questions from the senior players. Like the sketch, the questions that are asked also have to do

with embarrassing or humiliating experiences of the player, but include more general questions about one's childhood as well. To goal behind this ritual is to get to know the player on a more personal level and to 'have a bit of a laugh and entertainment' for the senior players. Having gotten through the last stage, a player's rite de passage is complete and he becomes a full member of the team, with his bond of belonging to the Wellington Lions team firmly established.

Conclusion

In addressing the daily lives of professional rugby players of the Wellington Lions rugby club, this article has looked at the topics of everyday belonging, ethnicity, and team cohesion. Three questions have been at the heart of these discussions, namely if, how, when and where does ethnicity become salient and significant in the everyday lives of New Zealand rugby players? What types of bonds of belonging exist in the daily lives of professional athletes? And how can successful team cohesion be realised in culturally diverse team sports, like rugby?

In common vernacular, trickling down from national political and media discourses, ethnicity is often seen as a main obstacle, a source that causes conflict among people, team mates and otherwise. As the opening anecdote has shown, within sports it is therefore perceived as an obstacle for successful team success. However, the address of the first question, has shown that both perceptions are wrong, As mentioned before, ethnicity is but one among many belongings in the daily lives of players. This article has shown that ethnicity happened on only a small number of occasions. It became salient in the ethnic family tattoos and in the socialisation of players through primary and secondary school in ethnically segregated neighbourhood-communities. Also, ethnicity becomes significant on the level of the nation-state when players get a chance to play for their country as an All Black player or when they go abroad to, for example, Japan. However, this is the extent of the importance of ethnicity in the daily lives of the players.

The second question has highlighted that athletes, like everyone else, have multiple and overlapping bonds of belonging, from family to community-neighbourhood to national level. Players are fathers, brother, cousins and sons. They are socialised into New Zealand culture and rugby culture in their neighbourhood through the educational system and amateur club rugby. Also, they are citizens of the New Zealand nation-state and are part of the country's national history and identity. Among these bonds, a player's belonging to a team is

the most important, as it is the matrix for team cohesion that defines the level of success of a team on the field.

Team cohesion is context-depended and its success the result of the particular coming together of a the players, coaches and staff. It is dependent on the various bonds of belonging, mentioned in the previous sections, of players outside the team, that come together in one context with the players. The overlaps between these individual belongings, as well as, the mixed belongings between players and other team members can have different outcomes per situation: they can co-exist with each other, fused together, or clash.

Furthermore, team cohesion is influenced by each team's, and sport's, own sports culture. The culture of rugby sport is build on the ideology of, as aforementioned, masculinity, pain endurance, and always putting the needs of the team before one's own. This ideology is still very strong and determines the groundwork of each rugby team and its particular culture.

Also, the national culture in which the team and sport are set, plays a role. Just as the other cultural levels that are present in the team brought in by the players embedded in the group do. In New Zealand, as mentioned, communities have a central place in the daily lives of people. The same bonds of community are present in the team and club. The families of players are invited to every home game, the team organises player-and-partner nights out, the club helps players who relocate to play for the team to find housing, a school for the children, and helps wives with finding a new job if necessary. Players who moved to Europe with their families experienced difficulties settling in, because these bonds of community did not exist in the rugby culture of their new team. One of the players told me how at his club in France, wives were not included into the culture of the club, and because he was always at the club or touring, his wife became very isolated and had difficulty making new connections. As a result, both the player and his wife described their experience of their time abroad in negative terms and were glad to be back in New Zealand.

It is therefore difficult to delineate a standard model of how team cohesion can be created. What determined the success of the team cohesion in the Wellington Lions rugby team has been the coming together of a unique set of circumstances. As such, it is also difficult to set out a framework that can be applied to every rugby team or even every team sport. However, the matrix of team cohesion is team belonging and this team belonging is a bond that is established through communication, visually, materially, bodily, and linguistically. The Wellington Lions team jersey is an example of visual and material communication, while the 'Wellington for Wellington' slogan amplifies linguistic

communication. Three factors can be distinguished that play a pivotal role in the creation of team belonging, for every team and sport. These pillars on which successful team cohesion can be created are the club, the coach(es), and the player(s). Successful team belonging depends on the strength of the communication between these three, creating a positive symbioses with the other daily bonds of the players. Together, they form the groundwork from which successful team cohesion can be fostered.

The argument presented here runs contrary to the perspective in much sport studies literature, which sees the coach as the sole party to determine the success of team cohesion. This view turns out to be too narrow and simplistic, and in dire need of revision. Another perspective that needs revision is the approach taken by ethnicity literature towards their central topic of study. Groupist-thinking and an overestimated importance of ethnicity in people's lives have been, and still are, dominating social scientific work. Having been presented with a very contrasting picture during my field work, the insights presented here take sides with the two exceptions in the theoretical ethnicity debate, namely Brubaker *et al.* (2008) and Baumann (1995, 1996). Furthermore, it turns to a differing field of community studies as well, with the work of Delanty (2008), to fill in the gaps. Yet, these works have their imperfections too. The limited, thus modest, hints offered here are to contribute to these discussions, with an emphasis on belonging. Belonging and team cohesion among New Zealand professional rugby players are, however, but one specific piece of the kaleidoscope. The focus and methods of ethnicity research need more elaborate refinement, if it is to escape from its self-destructive path towards a more accurate and apt field of study; a field that reflects the nuanced and intrinsic ways of belonging in today's modern world in flux.

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