



“Follow, follow?”: A thematic analysis of how geographical location, social intensity & masculinity are predictors for ‘casting’ nationality with football

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March 2012

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ABSTRACT

The following research uses principles derived from Tajfel’s Social Identity Theory. It treats the display of national identity as a “category-congruent self-definition” (Hogg, 2006, p.66) and explores this through the presentation of a British national identity with the supporters of Rangers F.C. of Glasgow. Based around research by Abell (2011) and Kelly (2008) this study aimed to discover when an individual casts their nationality in relation to football, if there was a distinction between ‘being’ and ‘feeling’ a nationality and if a Scottish national identity could be utilised at international level. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with seven Rangers supporters from contrasting locations across England and Scotland. A thematic analysis was then conducted on the data based around the principles outlined in Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis concluded that geographical location, social intensity & displays of masculinity were the main themes that predicted ‘casting’ nationality with football. There was also a distinction found between ‘being’ and ‘feeling’ a nationality, which highlights its functionality. This research adds to the literature surrounding the utility of social categories that construct identity. Subsequent research should attempt to further the understanding of how social categories are constructed and how this influences behaviour.

KEY WORDS:	Social Identity Theory	National Identity	Football	Masculinity	Rangers F.C
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Introduction

The Social Self

Social Identity Theory was originally developed by Tajfel in the 1970's. It suggests that a social category such as nationality, political affiliation or sports team provides the individual with a "category-congruent self-definition that constitutes an element of the self-concept" (Hogg, 1996, p.66). Therefore, the individual's identity or identities are then constructed out of many of these category memberships. However, as Hogg (1996) points out social identities are not only descriptive, but prescriptive and evaluative as well (p.67). The functions of social identity are the motivation to enhance one's own social standing and reduce social uncertainty. This causes groups to evaluate out-group behaviours negatively whilst projecting the in-groups behaviours as both distinctive and better (Hogg, 2006, p.111-120), thus distinguishing 'us' from 'them' (Abell, 2011, p.248; Cairns, 2000, p.442; Kelly, 2008, p.87). Such groups can range from just three people (Hogg, 2006, p.111) to whole nations (Abell, 2011) or even along continental distinctions (Mlicki & Ellemers, 1996). Therefore, the individual might emphasize different social categories in different settings or even switch between combinations of them. Thus social identity can be taken as transitory across time, place and social setting.

Adopting Social Identity Theory as a framework, the social category of national identity can be treated as something for the social actor to utilize rather than something objective (Abell, 2011, p.248; Kelly, 2007, p.522). In addition, the interactive nature of national identity means that it must take place between people and be conveyed and constructed in discourse between its members (Abell, 2011, p.247; Wodak et al, 2003, p.22). Russell (1999) argues that football has always been a "potent vehicle for the generation of territorial loyalties" (p.19) and so international football can be one such social category that constructs ideas of nationhood from within its supporters. Abell (2011) found, that in a study of how Scottish and English supporters frame their national identity, that Scottish fans use it as a legitimate expression of their national identity and use this to justify anti-English sentiments, describing England as the "'auld enemy' and significant 'other'" (Abell, 2011, p.251; Giulianotti, 1999, p.30; Kelly, 2008, p.87; McCrone, 2006, p.159). English fans on the other hand were found to be conscious of being labelled a hooligan, xenophobic or racist and so seek to remove themselves from this stereotype (Abell, 2011). Burke & Stets (2009) assert that identity has cognitive as well as affective processes (p.61) and so there are distinctions between 'being' and 'feeling' a nationality as found in Abell's (2011) study. Therefore casting a national identity is subject to a number of interrelated factors and connotations.

McCrone (2006) argues that whilst the Scots have historically defined themselves against the English, English people have a more fundamental confusion with being British (p.159). This highlights the caution required when applying national identity. Kelly (2008) argues it is "more pragmatic to acknowledge a variety of contrasting and sometimes contradictory identities" (p.96). Abell (2011) too found contradictory national identities as the negative English stereotype was also recorded and alluded to a much smaller section of the English football support (p.260-261). Mlicki & Ellemers (1996) found that Polish students could strongly identify with their national group despite acknowledging a national negative stereotype, which may explain how a national identity can be produced from various sub groups (p.12). In this case, the

salience of national identity becomes stronger to facilitate group cohesion whilst differences in other social categories become less so.

Is British a *national* identity?

The political landscape of Britain has changed in relatively recent years. Devolution of political power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has left British identity both questioned and contentious (Storry & Childs, 2002, p.3) with only 20% of the UK population preferring to be described as British (Easton, 2012). Indeed Rose (2001) argues that the idea of 'society' as a single heterogeneous national domain "has entered a crisis" (p.5). Storry & Childs (2002) assert nationality is no longer a powerful force in post imperial Britain and it has been overtaken by global and local identities (p.3). Whatever the case, England's domination of Britain has left the idea of Britishness and Englishness synonymous for some (McCrone, 2006, p.164), especially those who construct themselves as significant 'others'. McCrone (2006) however argues that Britain was not England, but an "imperial identity" (p.163). This may be what the English participants in Abell's (2011) study were resistant to and sought to remove themselves from. Thus a nationality can evoke historical, political, societal and many other social categories dependent upon its context.

Such connotations can blur social representations and cause a hybrid of many social identities into one. For many of the participants in Abell's (2011) study, strong displays of English national identity when mixed with football caused anxieties over hooliganism, racism and xenophobia. Kelly (2007) found that with supporters of the Edinburgh football team Hibernian F.C, that there was "inter-changeability between religion and ethnicity ... with little or no conceptual distinction" (P.524). Cairns & Richards (1988) cite an Irish academics work from the 1930's who "expounded an exclusive notion of Irishness based on 'religion', 'nationalism' and 'the land'" (p.125). Cairns (2000) studied the complexity of the Loyalist identity in Northern Ireland through an anthropological study. He identified sectarian discourses there comprising of loyalty to Britain and the British monarchy, the Orange Order, the Ulster Defence Regiment and Glasgow Rangers F.C. (p.445-446). Loughin (1995) asserts that for Protestant Unionists in Ulster the distinction between ethnicity and British identity is problematic (p.230). Clearly social categories are not merely separate constructs or even varying in their own degrees of strength. They appear to be interrelated, culturally specific and highly complex. In addition, it can be suggested that displays of national identity utilise the connotations as much as the nation being represented. This can, and has, lead to social conflict in Britain such as issues of sectarianism in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Glasgow Rangers

Rangers & Celtic F.C. are the two most successful football teams in Scotland and draw upon a vast support especially in the West of Scotland and Glasgow area. They perhaps typify the 'us' and 'them' relationship with notions of Britishness (1) and Irishness (2) often constructed against each other (Murray, 2000, p.264-284). Because of this they are also, the most closely associated with the dominant discourse surrounding sectarianism in Scotland (Kelly, 2010, p.2). The factors underlying this problematic rivalry are often oversimplified as a battle between Protestants and Catholics but as Cairns (2000) points out sectarianism is a phenomena human in nature and only religious by "semiotic association" (p.438).

This has also arisen out of the synonymous relationship Rangers has had with a Protestant identity (Esplin & Walker, 2008, p.7) and Celtic's identification with Irish Catholicism (Murray, 2000, p.75-97). This conflict has become regularly 'fought out' and publicized not by the churches, but by the two football clubs, their supporters and the media.

The Scottish government have sought to tackle some of the more explicit sectarian expressions through the *Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Bill* which has received widespread criticism for its difficulties defining what is and isn't sectarian (3). This is understandable given the complexity of the social categories involved. In addition, Kelly (2010) argues:

"the press treatment of sectarianism is shown to lack sensitivity to the historical, hierarchical and relational aspects of religious, political and ethnic identities in Scotland" (p.1).

Kelly (2010) also argues that the media vilify sectarianism as a solely 'Old Firm' (Rangers & Celtic) problem by creating an alternative and desirable 'other', which is to be wholly Scottish (p.1 & 14). This has been described as the "media's homogeneity in terms of the 'idea of Scotland'" (Kelly, 2008, p.85). This 'idea' may also have a political application too, as Scotland becomes increasingly nationalistic and sport is easily manipulated as a popular discourse by political groups (Sugden & Bairner, 1995, p.7-12).

The sectarian issue in Scotland poses interesting questions about the complexity of the social categories involved and how they are utilized in opposition to significant 'others' (4). Of particular salience to this research is the presentation of a British national identity, something that is perceived to be inherently linked to both Rangers Football Club and its supporters. In addition, the relationship of the Rangers support to a Scottish national identity and the Scottish national football team may, or may not, reveal shifts in the emphasis and therefore a greater array of attitudes and beliefs. Guilianotti (1999) asserts that the 'Old Firm' are under-represented at Scotland matches (p.35). If a degree of Scottishness can be utilized in an international football setting then this may transcend 'local' and 'other' divisions (Kelly, 2008). In this case, facilitate a unifying presence among Britishness, Irishness and Scottishness. This may alleviate some of the intensity surrounding the two clubs and their supporters. Hogg (2006) proposes this as:

"... the significant future development in social identity research" which "... may furnish a mechanism for defusing intergroup conflict and constructing groups and identities that celebrate diversity" (p.127).

This study aims to further the qualitative work already set by Abell (2011) and others into national identity and the role it plays in constructing social identity with particular attention to football supporters of Rangers F.C.

Research Questions:

1. Following Abell (2011), in what circumstances do individuals 'cast' their national identity in terms of football support.
2. To examine the extent to which Abell's (2011) distinction between 'being' and 'feeling' part of a national identity is present in the data.

3. To examine if Kelly's (2008) assertion that international football can produce a Scottish national identity that transcends 'local' and 'other' divisions is possible.

Methodology

Mason (2002) describes qualitative research as “characteristically exploratory, fluid and flexible, data driven and context-sensitive” and therefore proposes to reject the assumption that all design decisions are made at the beginning of the research process (p.24). This has been kept in consideration throughout the design process and implementation of this study. Any replication or modification of this research should also keep this assertion in mind.

A thematic qualitative analysis was implemented using semi-structured interviews with football supporters of Rangers F.C that reside in both Scotland and England. The broad aim was to deconstruct the idea that nationality forms a ‘fixed’ aspect of an individual’s identity and that it is contextually bound.

Participants

The participants were recruited from small and large populations in Scotland and England. These included Glasgow and the central-western belt of Scotland, Montrose, Colchester & Kendal, Cumbria. This ensured contrasting geographical locations, as was the case in Abell's (2011) study of English & Scottish football supporters (p.250). The western Scottish locations are also the main locations of the Irish Diaspora, which were settled by Irish immigrants, and thus the main areas of Celtic & Rangers support (Rangers supporters’ national identity being constructed in relation to Irish ‘others’). This gave the participants a varying degree of intensity in their football support and the various issues that surround Glasgow and the wider area. The recruitment method involved contacting a Glasgow University to gain participants that were immersed in Glasgow life and this institution will be kept anonymous in line with ethical guidelines (Abell, 2011, p.250; Abell, Condor, Lowe, Gibson & Stevenson, 2007, p.99-100; Kelly, 2007, p.531). Recruitment was also carried out through opportunity sampling of Rangers supporters which ensured heterogeneity in terms of intensity of their football support as well as their age, gender, socio-economic status and political affiliation (Abell, 2011, p.250; Abell, Condor, Lowe, Gibson & Stevenson, 2007, p.99-100). Participants numbered seven in total comprising of five males and two females. All participants were above the age of eighteen in line with ethical guidelines and the ages ranged from nineteen to fifty years old.

The Interview

The context of the interviews took place at the convenience of the interviewees. This varied from their homes or public places such as a bars and cafes (Abell, 2011, p.250; Abell, Condor, Lowe, Gibson & Stevenson, 2007, p.99-100). The interview lasted between approximately 20-45 minutes in total. This was dependent upon the interviewee’s willingness to participate and the requirements of the research questions. All interviews were recorded using a Sony ICDBX112 Dictation Machine and a Blackberry Curve 8520 as a contingency in case of an accidental loss of data. The data was transferred to a HP g6-1014sa 4GB Quad Core Laptop for storage and

transcription. The transcription of each interview was then carried out verbatim by the researcher.

The research aim was presented as '*Attitudes to nationality in relation to football support*' which was to control for any response bias and each participant was encouraged to talk freely after each interview question. The researcher further encouraged any spontaneous talk surrounding the research questions such as 'being' or 'feeling' a part of a national identity, when and why they cast their national identity as British / Scottish / other & if a feeling of Scottishness transcends 'other' divisions in the Scottish participants'. It has been found beneficial to create a preliminary discourse before the interview especially if the respondents have had conflicts with authority to "build rapport and establish trust" (Deuchar & Holligan, 2010, p.19). This was achieved through a variety of natural ways such as generating general conversation at the beginning of the interview by inviting the participant to tell the researcher about themselves (Condor & Abell, 2006, p.455). The researcher also revealed themselves as a Rangers supporter to create a preliminary discourse but did not reveal their national identity, political or religious views and any other social categories. It was hypothesised that this would allow the interviewee to relax and be less guarded about their views which would gather more reliable data.

The interview schedule ran between the 27 December 2011 to the end of February 2012. The interviews were arranged to run as many as possible in one setting to reduce cost. This was especially the case for those conducted in locations furthest away. The consent form (6), de-brief form (7) and interview questions (8) that were used are enclosed in the appendices. The latter of which were designed to follow the research questions and objectives set by the study. The interview comprised of (N=12) questions which covered issues surrounding Rangers F.C. This it was hypothesised would allow the participant to assert aspects of their identity such as nationality in various hypothetical contexts. The interview questions were sometimes addressed spontaneously by the respondent in the course of conversation but still served as a useful framework for structuring the interview.

Methodological Approach

The study conducted a thematic analysis of the interview data, which is defined in detail by Braun & Clarke (2006). Previous research into the professional identity of mental health nurses (Crawford, Brown & Majomi, 2008), gay & bisexual males experiences of diabetes and sex (Jowett, Peel & Shaw, 2011), families experiences of cancer (Douglas, Hamilton & Grubs, 2009) and other studies ground their analyses from this paper. As the study aimed to investigate national identity in football supporters, Braun & Clarke's (2006) paper was consulted as an influential and widely cited source.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6). The research questions dictated these themes and so the analysis was mostly theoretical, i.e. driven by previous research such as the studies by Abell (2010) and Kelly, (2008). However once the research questions had been addressed there was attention given to an inductive approach to allow for a broader discussion of the data collected. In *Using thematic analysis in psychology* Braun & Clarke (2006) discuss the realist approach to thematic analysis, which "reports experiences, meanings and the reality of

participants” (p.9). They further mention that making this approach transparent, in defining it against essentialist methods, is the signature of a good thematic analysis (p.9) This proposal used a realist method.

The analysis of the text was carried out in steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.16-23). Firstly once the transcriptions were complete the researcher familiarised themselves with the data. Interviews were coded along certain themes to mirror those of the research questions. These were being’ or ‘feeling’ a part of a national identity, when and why they cast their national identity and under what circumstances a feeling of Scottishness transcends ‘other’ divisions. However as Wodak & Krzyzanowski (2008) point out whilst there is use for coding it does assume that questions and their answers stay the same across contexts (p.146) and so this was considered when classifying the themes. Once the themes had been coded, the data was re-read and all codes were reviewed. When this had been finalized, the analysis and discussion were completed.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations that arose from this research included issues of confidentiality. Given the intense nature of some of the issues that were discussed confidentiality will be of the utmost importance. The participant’s names were kept anonymous, as were any institutions contacted for sample recruitment. All interviews were coded with an individual anonymous pseudonym, which was given to each participant in order to identify their data. This identification was needed in the event they wish to withdraw their data from the study. Their right to withdraw was addressed through the consent document and they were informed that they may do so before publication.

The participants also had to provide informed consent and be over the age of 18, the consent forms were also kept confidential and destroyed securely. The interview did not put the participant under any stressful conditions as they are discussing a topic that is widely discussed in public, the media and other such domains. The interviews were also arranged to run in daylight hours to allow the participant to return home with minimal risk. The interview data was stored securely in a coded folder by the researcher. Once the interview had been carried out the participant was de-briefed with the de-briefing document enclosed and thanked for their time.

The researcher informed any relevant family members and their tutor of any trips to Glasgow or other locations to collect data so their whereabouts were known in the case of any unforeseen problems of risk. In addition, permission was obtained from the Glasgow University to access facilities from which participants were recruited. This was out of courtesy and to tailor to any legal issues.

Results

The main themes derived from the analysis were based around the research questions already discussed. They were divided into two broad areas with various sub-themes. ‘Nationality’ focusses on what nationalities are present in the data and how they are used. ‘Predictors of Nationality Displays at Football’ looks at the factors influencing the casting of nationality in terms of supporting Rangers F.C. All quotes

from the data included in the analysis contain the interviewee's name and line number in which it appeared. All interviews are enclosed in the appendices and run alphabetically from A-G (Appendix 9).

1. Nationality

1.1 English or British?

The distinction between feeling English and British was found to be problematic for the two English participants. As already discussed 'George' framed his club football support as British but later said "I am . English really" (59). 'Fred' also seemingly unconsciously blurred his distinction between the two:

"P: [2] ... no cos I'm English I know I'm English . I'm English so I'm not pretending to be an Ulster Scot . or Scottish or

I: or Northern Irish?

P: yeah I'm . I'm British . I live in Britain "(138-141).

This poses problems of defining what nationality they feel as a Rangers supporter. This may arise due to the football clubs perceived dual nationality and also how it is in fact an institution of Glasgow rather than of Scotland or Britain per se. In addition, 'Fred' also blurs concepts of ethnicity with Ulster Scots and nationality such as English, Scottish and British.

1.2 Feeling Scottish

The participants who defined themselves as solely Scottish clearly feel that a British nationality holds no personal value for them, this included 'Adele', 'Bob' & 'Ethan'. 'Bob' argued that "British is a bit much because it's . so far removed from what a Scottish culture is" (21-22). 'Ethan' mentioned how he can "understand the whole British thing" but worries about the "lack of Scottish identity in both Rangers and Celtic" (16 & 75). For these participants their 'feeling' of nationality is generally Scottish and homogenous, 'Britishness' is merely utilised in certain hypothetical situations. For example, 'Bob' argues that he would apply a British nationality "to compare yourself to Europe" (177) and so reject the E.U as he doesn't believe the European Union works.

1.3 Scottish or British?

The two participants 'Christopher' and 'Dolly' both were Glaswegians and identified themselves as 'British then Scottish' (5) & (14-16). This was in relation to their support of Rangers. 'Dolly' defines herself quite fervently as British at the beginning of the interview but when asked if she was in England what nationality would she say she replied "aye if I was in England I would say I was Scottish" (223). Therefore, it is problematic to ascertain whether she is 'feeling' or 'being' either of these nationalities as they both serve as personal displays of her identity. This is a very salient example of how nationality is utilised in relation to relative others or as 'Dolly' put it the "whole Jason Manford thing" (219 – also see appendix 5). 'Christopher' too defined himself as British initially but later discussed the Scottish national football team and how if they performed well it would give "everybody a spring in their step" (Line : 158-9). However he seemed to acknowledge a greater loyalty to his club team, "that's your

love" (Line : 151).

The binary between 'being' and 'feeling' a nationality in terms of football and other contexts is hard to decipher. The use of a national identity in a social context is utilised because the individual, it could be argued, 'feels' that the identity being represented best represents them at that given time. This is much more homogenous in international football because nations have definable boundaries. Britain, on the other hand, has a relationship with its comprising nationalities and this allows a degree of unity through the United Kingdom whether this is personally accepted or not. This was found in the data as both English and Scottish participants who alluded to a British nationality also recognized their 'home' nationality as well, albeit in different hypothetical contexts. However, each participant 'cast' their nationality as either British or Scottish in terms of supporting Rangers. The use of a Scottish national identity could be utilised among the Scottish participants as they already identify with each other as 'Scottish' and 'British' Rangers supporters. The predictors of casting a British identity will now be analysed as this was what the most vocal supporters identified with and what the remaining participants alluded to as the 'hard-core'.

2. Predictors of Nationality Displays at Football

2.1 Geographical Location

'Dolly' and 'Fred' justified their British nationality with reference to the practical geopolitical reality:

"the majority I would think wouldn't think about it there just . probably something you wouldn't think just of just British that's just what you are" (Dolly : 51-52)

"but then Scotland's part of Britain anyway so . the Union Jack contains . the Scottish flag anyway" (Fred : 252-253).

This could be down to two different but related factors. 'Dolly' as a Glaswegian lacks the reflexivity that an 'outsider' may be able to engage with and she alluded to this during the interview,

"we wudnae see that coming from Glasgow obviously with you being an outsider . you would see that more "(158-159).

Both 'Dolly' and 'Christopher' as Glaswegians conveyed localised anecdotal evidence in their answers whereas those who have travelled or moved engaged with the issues at a broader level. 'Ethan' refers to Glasgow as a "cauldron" (204) and 'Adele' who is from Montrose states it is "more hard-core down there" (26-27). This implies an element of reflexivity afforded to those who do not live in the more intense geographical areas of Glasgow despite being from social circles who engage with similar behaviours.

'Fred' however spent ten years in Glasgow in his twenties and has lived in a variety of contrasting places. His answer could be down to views acquired in the 1980s when some participants alluded to a mentality that was more readily habituated in the football support, "so engrained into the mind-set from those people" (Bob : 116). Thus, an element of social habituation once within the perceived intense areas of the

Rangers support seems to take place which is both dependent upon geography as well as social intensity.

It could also be suggested that both 'English' Rangers supporters ('Fred' & 'George') utilise their duality of nationality to connect themselves with the football club, as it is in Scotland. 'George' defines himself as "British more than English . definitely" (8) in the context of supporting Rangers but later it becomes more blurred when he is questioned again "me personally it's a strange one because I am . English really . but Britain encompasses the lot " (59). Thus, a British nationality seems to have an application in socially 'connecting' the individual to a social group that is removed from their everyday life. The participants who defined themselves as Scottish on the other hand have a reduced need to do so as they would argue the football team is Scottish and so are they.

2.3 Social Intensity

"if you stay somewhere long enough that's . all you're going to associate with" (Bob : 67)

Social factors and geographical locations are interrelated but not wholly reciprocal in influencing individuals to cast their national identity in terms of football. 'Bob' for example lives just outside Glasgow in a 'Rangers household' and so has the geographical location and perceived social intensity. However he states:

"...there's a lot of parents attitudes influencing their children [...] and I think I'm quite lucky that my Dad wasn't with me" (51-52).

Therefore, the influence of immediate family members for 'Bob' is not as strong as believes others are and this has enabled him to disassociate himself with these behaviours, essentially 'othering' himself. In fact, immediate family was an important factor in socially acquiring behaviours for most of the participants. Paternal relationships and sibling rivalries were two of the most predominant. 'Adele' & 'Dolly' both attribute the relationship with their father as having an important impact upon their support of Rangers (49-50) & (71-73). 'Ethan' mentions that his brother is a Celtic fan and they engage in "a bit of banter" (93-95), and sibling rivalries was also mentioned in anecdotal evidence given by 'Dolly' (103-105). The sibling rivalry aspect differs from that of parental influences in that it has the opposite effect, it competes instead of copies. This 'othering' was also found between Rangers fans themselves who try to distinguish themselves from particular sub-groups.

The three participants who identified themselves as Scottish, 'Adele', 'Bob' & 'Ethan' all alluded to a 'hard-core' Rangers support than they attributed the British nationality to. These participants seem to use a 'Scottishness' to 'other' themselves from the this group and perhaps the negative connotations they bring. 'Ethan' describes himself as a 'middle of the road Rangers fan' and reminisces:

"I was going to a Rangers . and I had a Scotland flag round my neck . and this guy behind me said why've you got a Scotland flag round your neck and I said well . I'm Scottish I've come to Scotland to go to a Scottish football game in the SPL and he said oh well you're a Rangers fan you should be British you should be British" (48-51).

Clearly, some and not others take on the British demarcation, which calls into

question the heterogeneity of a British nationality in the Rangers support.

The 'Britishness' of the Rangers supporters also was found to be constructed in relation to Celtic's 'Irishness' and this adds another distinction in the process of defining in-groups. 'George' elaborates this as lies in history and tradition between the two sets of supporters and "the Britishness over the Irishness" (32) comes from the religious divide was all participants referred to in the data. Other binaries between the two clubs were also present but as 'George' states:

"if there was a flag for the religion I'd think they'd wave that instead of the Ireland flag" (71-72).

This highlights the negative evaluations of out-group behaviours as he tries to delegitimise Celtic fans 'Irishness' and how he believes that the two nationalities of British and Irish are constructed against each other. His 'Britishness' however is justified due to the geo-political reality already discussed. This also demonstrates the blurring of concepts of religion and nationality.

2.4 Gender & Masculinity

Amongst the three participants who identify with a Scottish national identity 'Adele' described her relative passive support for Rangers, geographical location and gender as factors in her non-identification with a British national identity.

"where I'm from I think most people would say Scottish . but then when it's like further down to Glasgow I think a lot of them would say British because they're kinda more hard-core down there" (Adele : 25-27).

"I think it's kinda girl thing as well I don't think girls . care as much as boys about that sort of thing . well I don't anyway" (Adele : 93-94).

Clearly, this reveals the salient factors that influence the casting of national identity in relation to football support. The evaluation that displays of nationality and football support as a masculine endeavour was also found in the other female participant (Dolly : 71-75) who described herself as a "tom boy" during her younger years when she would wear the Rangers football shirts.

Therefore, display of a British nationality in relation to football support seems to be subject to factors of masculine displays, geography and social intensity, which results in the habituation of in-group behaviours. Individuals who display a Scottish national identity seem to 'other' themselves from in-group behaviours that they do not wish to follow and that they described as 'hard-core'.

The use of a qualitative thematic analysis was justified as it was found that an individual's response usually taken as objective, i.e. nationality, is in fact a social phenomenon. It can change over context and time. Thus, it is subject to factors such as demographics, masculinity & family as is the case seen in the analysis conducted. A quantitative methodology that requires a categorical answer would find difficulty in representing this complexity appropriately and the underlying themes present.

Discussion

In relation to the research questions posed, the analysis revealed that:

- Geographical Location, Social Intensity & Masculinity are all predictors for 'casting' nationality with football. (Fig. 1, below)
- Distinctions between 'being' and 'feeling' a nationality were present in the data.
- International football does have the potential to transcend 'local' and 'other' divisions.

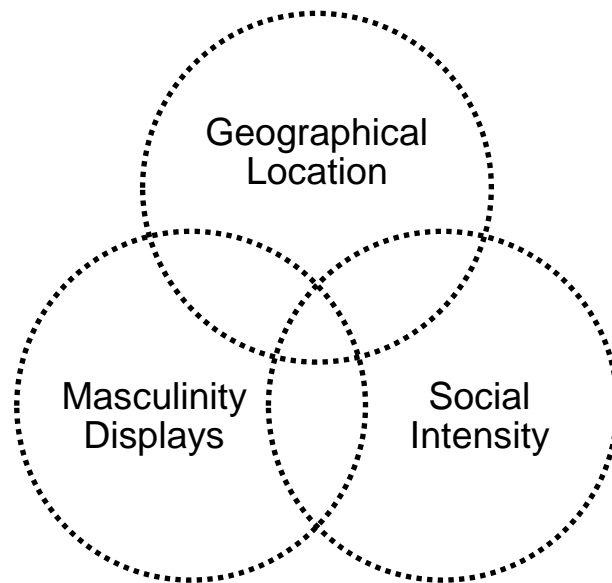


Figure 1: The predictors of 'casting' national identity in terms of football. The star represents an individual influenced by all predictors.

Abell (2011) concluded that displays of Scottish national identity at international level were justified and constructed in relation to English 'others' whereas English national identity at football was deemed to be subject to negative connotations (p.251-262). This research furthers this knowledge to club level football and mirrors some of the findings found in Abell's (2011) work. Displays of a British national identity in relation to supporting Rangers F.C. held negative connotations for three participants who described those who do as 'hard-core'. Four participants justified their British nationality in relation to their geopolitical reality and opposing constructions of perceived 'Irishness'. The predictors of casting a British identity were found to be geographical location, displays of masculinity and social intensity. If one of the factors in this profile was not met then the individual failed to cast their identity as British in terms of football. This has applications to Social Identity Theory. It follows Hogg's (2006) assertion that a social group such as a sports team provides the individual with a "category congruent self-definition" (p.66). In addition this self-definition evaluates in-groups favourably and out-groups negatively (Hogg, 2006, p.111-120). There was also evidence of sub-groups in the Rangers support that

could still 'understand' Britishness whilst asserting their Scottish identity. This supports findings by Mlicki & Ellemers (1996).

Abells (2011) notions of 'being' and 'feeling' a nationality were harder to distinguish. This may have been due to two factors. Firstly the research was aimed at Rangers F.C. supporters and so is not representative of a country but of a city. This allows participants to utilise British as a nationality in duality with their English or Scottish identity much more than 'straightforward' displays at international level. This creates a hierarchy for some fans, as Scotland and England are both parts of Great Britain. As McCrone (2006) suggested the English participants concepts of English and British were sometimes used interchangeably at a seemingly unconscious level. Therefore alluding to what they felt became expansive and problematic. In terms of football support however all participants were quite clear as to what their nationality was in relation to their support of Rangers as this category can elicit a British or Scottish nationality. In the case of other social groups such as political affiliation, the casting of national identity could change. This supports Kelly's (2007) assertion of contrasting and contradictory identities (p.96). It also supports Social Identity Theory in that the social category of nationality was utilised in different contexts and for different reasons (Abell, 2011, p.248; Hogg, 2006, p.111-120; Kelly, 2007, p.522).

The potential for international football to transcend 'local' and 'other' divisions is valid. This research has highlighted the contextual nature of national identity and so those who identify with Britishness have been found to use a Scottish national identity as well. The lack of success for the Scottish national team was found as a factor in the limited support for some which perhaps 'others' them from the teams failings. A more competitive national team may galvanise changes in attitude. In addition, because this research focussed on club football it may have been harder to ascertain the exact 'feelings' of the participant as they being interviewed as a 'Rangers supporter'.

There were problems encountered with participant recruitment and the subsequent interviews that may have had an impact upon the data collected. Firstly, there was the relative inexperience of the researcher in designing and carrying out interviews. Therefore, skills involving interviews were perfected successively throughout the process. In addition, the use of hypothetical situations to elicit when the participant casts their national identity could be subtly flawed. This may reveal answers based on conscious decision making and not unconscious responses based on real-life situations. Burke & Skets (2009) assert that identities can function at a conscious and unconscious levels (p.61).

There was also individual differences in utterance articulation and length that may be due to willingness to participate or educational factors. In addition, questions could be raised about the participants from Glasgow who may have problems with their own abilities to be reflexive with the issues being raised. This may have caused an inside/outside perspective between the participants. This was useful for discussing aspects such as social intensity of the football support but in fact may have created a subtle nuance between those whose answers were descriptive (inside), and those who were prescriptive (outside). Despite this, Burke & Stets (2009) argue that simply identifying with the group is enough to activate similarities in perception and behaviour (p.118). However, it still may be more useful to conduct research into

these two groups separately for greater comparability and more derivative conclusions.

It seems a natural extension to conduct similar research into the supporters of Celtic F.C. The two clubs, Rangers & Celtic, are often described as mutual in all issues that arise. However, this notion may also blind specific nuances between them, or even issues larger in scope. Longitudinally it may be useful to look at issues of maturity or the changing socio-political environment of Scotland. This could reveal how bigger picture issues directly influencing how social identity is constructed. In addition, using the predictors (see figure.1) as a framework it could be beneficial to see how this translates to other social contexts.

Reflexivity

Issues of power in the interviews were inevitable (Etherington, 2004, p.226), this may have produced experimenter, and social desirability biases in the responses given by participants. I aimed to combat this by discussing my support for Rangers F.C. with the participants to create a comfortable social context from which to conduct the interview (Deuchar & Holligan, 2010, p.19). Thus, allowing for a more open conversation. However, my footballing allegiances may have focussed the conversation down distinct routes. It was also difficult to focus on the salient aspects of the study with so many current issues that surround the club and this was especially the case after consulting relevant literature. This could be also down to my relative inexperience in conducting interviews. In addition, the responses given were all relative to the social context of an interview with a white, perceived 'English', male, psychology student and Rangers supporter. All aspects of this either consciously or unconsciously may have tailored both the interviewer and the interviewee's discourse as well as the study as a whole.

Issues surrounding gender and masculinity that emerged through the thematic analysis were not conceptualised beforehand perhaps due to my own unconscious androcentrism. This was probably due to the male domination of sport (Mercier & Werthner, 2001) and the relative small number of female supporters. This also highlights concerns over interpreting female experiences during the analysis.

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