

**After the triumph: an anthropological study into the lives of elite athletes after
competitive sport**

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Philosophy in the Department of Anthropology in the Faculty of Humanities at the
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DECLARATION

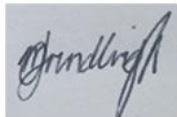
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ABSTRACT

The decision to retire from competitive sport is an inevitable aspect of any professional sportsperson's career. This thesis explores the afterlife of former professional rugby players and athletes (road running and track) and is situated within the emerging sub-discipline of the anthropology of sport. I consider the elite sports culture within which athletes apply their sporting trade and show how the everyday life of elite athletes is shaped by the mass media and a culture of individualism. The elite sports culture informs how athletes perceive their bodies after sports retirement. By drawing on the notion of the sports body as a machine I show that professional rugby players disregard the potential future ailments that they may live with once their rugby careers are over. The importance of social networks established during their sporting careers is also explored with specific reference to the role that schools and universities play in promoting social capital.

The research, moreover, hopes to contribute to knowledge about the afterlife of sportspeople by considering the interconnectedness between elite athlete's private decision to retire from sport and the public representation of their sporting lives through sport heritage practices. The study of sports heritage in South Africa has been a largely neglected and hitherto closed field of study. The study concludes that the material culture of South African former sport heroes enables them to live on near perpetuity, as they become symbolically immortalised through sport heritage practices

Conceptually this thesis draws on the theory of social capital, the body, the notion of symbolic immortality, and the politics of memory and heritage practices. Empirically, sport museums as expressions of heritage are investigated with specific reference to the preservation of South African rugby heritage at the Springbok Experience Museum in Cape Town and an analysis of the Comrades Marathon House museum in Pietermaritzburg. Besides these, I also visited places where the material culture of former South African sport heroes are exhibited. These included the houses of sports collectors, community sport museums, corporate sport museum, sport stadia and sport heritage exhibitions at prominent South African rugby schools and universities. Semi – structured interviews were conducted with former professional rugby players, athletes and sport heritage practitioners. Participant observation at sport events that commemorated sportspeople of the past also substantiate the findings. Primary sources drawn from the South African Rugby Board's archives contributed to the understanding of rugby heritage practices prior to the professional era.

Key words: sport heritage, elite athletes, retirement, material culture, social capital, symbolic immortality, rugby, museums, athletics

OPSOMMING

Die besluit om uit mededingende sport te tree is 'n onvermydelike dimensie van enige sportpersoon se loopbaan. Hierdie tesis ondersoek die lewe na sport van voormalige professionele rugbyspelers en atlete (padwedlope en baan) en is gesitueer in die ontluikende sub-dissipline van die antropologie van sport. Ek betrag die elite sportkultuur waarbinne atlete hulle beroep beoefen en hoe die alledaagse lewe van elite atlete deur die massamedia en die kultuur van die individu gevorm word. Die elite sportkultuur beïnvloed ook die wyse waarop atlete hulle liggame na uittrede bejeen. Deur te steun op die gedagte van die sportliggaam as 'n masjien, toon ek aan hoe professionele rugbyspelers die potensiële toekomstige fisiese gebreke waarmee hulle na hulle loopbane gekonfenteer mag word, ignoreer. Die belangrikheid van sosiale netwerke wat tydens sportloopbane gestig word, word ook ondersoek met spesifieke verwysing na die rol wat skole en universiteite speel in die bevordering van sosiale kapitaal.

Die navorsing hoop boonop om 'n bydrae tot kennis oor die lewe na sport deur te let op die verwantskap tussen die elite atleet se privaat besluit om uit sport te tree en die openbare beelding van van hulle sportlewe deur sporterfnis praktyke. Die studie van sporterfnis in Suid-Afrika is nog grootliks verwaarloos en tot dusver 'n geslote studieveld. Die studie kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat die materiële kultuur van Suid-Afrikaanse voormalige sporthelde hulle in staat stel om tot tyd en ewigheid voort te leef in die vorm van simboliese onsterflikheid soos beliggaam in sporterfnis praktyke. Konseptueel ontleen die tesis insigte van die teorie van sosiale kapitaal, die liggaam, die gedagte van simboliese onsterflikheid en die politiek van herinnering en erfnispraktyke. Empiries word sportmuseums as uitdrukkings van erfnis ondersoek met spesifieke verwysing na die bewaring van die Suid-Afrikaanse rugby erfnis by die "Springbok Experience Museum" in Kaapstad en 'n ontleding van die Comrades Marathon huismuseum in Pietermaritzburg. Hierbenewens het ek ook plekke besoek waar die materiële kultuur van voormalige Suid-Afrikaanse sporthelde ten toon gestel word. Dit sluit in die huise in van persone wat sport memorabilia versamel, gemeenskap sportmuseums, sportstadiums en sporterfnis uitstallings by prominente Suid-Afrikaanse rugbyskole en universiteite. Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is gevoer met voormalige professionele rugbyspelers, atlete en sporterfnis praktisyns. Deelnemende observasie by sportgebeurtenisse waar voormalige sportpersoonlikhede herdenk is, het ook tot die bevindinge bygedra. Primêre bronne van die Suid-Afrikaanse Rugbyraad Argief het eweneens tot begrip van rugbyerfnis praktyke voor die professionele era bygedra.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
ASA	Athletics South Africa
BBRU	Blue Bull Rugby Union
BTK	Berg en Toer Klub
CMA	Comrades Marathon Association
DA	Democratic Alliance
FHC	Football Heritage Complex
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
IRB	International Rugby Board (known as World Rugby as of 2015)
LASA	Legendary Athletes of South Africa
NZRPA	New Zealand Rugby Players Association
PDM	Player Development Manager
PDP	Player Development Programme
PRG	Paul Roos Gimnasium
PSL	Professional Soccer League
PTI	Personal Trust International
SAAAU	South African Amateur Athletics Union
SAARFB	South African African Rugby Football Board (1959 – 1978)
SAB	South African Breweries
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SABRFB	South African Bantu Rugby Football Board (1935–1959)
SACOS	South African Council of Sport
SAFA	South African Football Association
SARB	South African Rugby Board
SARFF	South African Rugby Football Federation
SARFU	South African Rugby Football Union
SARLA	South African Rugby Legends Association
SARPA	South African Rugby Players Association
SARRA	South African Road Running Association
SARU	South African Rugby Union (1966 – 1991)
SARU	South African Rugby Union (2004 – present)
SASAHOF	South African Sport and Art Hall of Fame
SASCOC	South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee
SWD	South Western Districts

TRFU	Transvaal Rugby Football Union
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
US	Stellenbosch University
WNLA	Wits Native Labour Association
WP	Western Province

INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of 14 February 2013, South Africans woke up to the news that the world-renowned Paralympic and Olympic athlete, Oscar Pistorius had shot and killed his model girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp. Twenty months later and after a lengthy court case, Judge Thokozile Masipa found Pistorius guilty of culpable homicide and sentenced him to five years imprisonment. This sentence was appealed by the State and in December 2015 Pistorius was found guilty of murder.

A media frenzy had ensued since the fateful day of the shooting, and Pistorius's image of a successful sportsperson and role model to society became tarnished. Sponsors withdrew their support and Pistorius was forced to sell his R4.5 million home in a luxury private estate in Pretoria in order to defray his legal costs.

His actions irrevocably affected his legacy as a once successful sportsman. Whereas he was once the poster boy for able-bodied and disabled athletes alike, his tarnished legacy now stretches far beyond his feats as an athlete, including the indignity of the University of Strathclyde in Scotland withdrawing an honorary doctorate that they awarded to him in 2012.

Pistorius is not the only successful sportsperson to have fallen from grace. A decade earlier one of South Africa's most successful cricketers, Hansie Cronjé suffered a similar fate. In 2001 Cronjé was found guilty by the King Commission of match fixing and banned from the sport for life. The public was in disbelief that their national cricket captain, and a man who came from humble Afrikaner origins, could have succumbed to earning individual wealth at the expense of the team and the country he represented. Cronjé died tragically in an airplane accident in the Outeniqua Mountains near George in 2002. Cronjé's high school, Grey College in Bloemfontein, erected a memorial wall, where Cronjé's cricket bat is on display – a visual reminder of his personal association with the school and his cricketing legacy.

More recently the untimely death of Senzo Meyiwe, the South African national soccer captain, sent shockwaves throughout the sporting community. Meyiwe was gunned down in Vosloosrus in October 2014.

A provincial funeral was held in Durban's Moses Mabhida stadium, where over 20 000 people braved the rain to pay their last respects and thousands more watched live TV coverage of the funeral. At this event the Minister of Sport and Recreation, Fikile Mbalula, announced that his department would in all earnest establish an official South African Sports Hall of Fame, an

initiative aimed at venerating and celebrating past sports heroes¹. A proposition was also made by the South African Football Association's (SAFA) president Danny Jordaan to charter the Senzo Meyiwa Gunlaw, which would take all illegal firearms to be burnt into a Senzo statue. Jordaan stated that "the statue will stand in front of SAFA House. His statue will remind us that he is the kind of leader we need in the country" ('SAFA plans Senzo Meyiwe statue', 2015). Scandals regarding Meyiwe's personal life emerged after his death, as his extramarital affair with singer and actress Kelly Khumalo cast doubt on the moral persona he presented as a committed Christian and leader of the team.

Pistorius, Cronjé and Meyiwe, although hailing from very different cultural backgrounds, were all professional sportsmen whose actions or dubious dealings within their sporting professions overshadowed their actual sporting achievement. These three individual cases are fitting examples of the role that sports heroes play in South African society, and highlight initiatives that aim to commemorate their legacies. Their demise speaks to how they will be remembered, and more specifically how thousands of professional athletes² who perhaps have not attained the same public reputation as they had, deal with the pressure of being professional sportspeople. The lives of these three men provide an entry point into understanding the pressures that elite³ sportsmen and sportswomen have to deal with and how they experience a life after sport. Their lives also draw attention to the role that nostalgia and social memory play in venerating sports heroes of the past.

Sport in South Africa is considered more than a leisurely past time: it is a serious social phenomenon that has significant political and economic consequences. Archer and Bouillon (1982: 69) refer to the importance of sport as a reflection of society by arguing that "sport is not only a physical activity; it has heroic and mythical dimensions and can be viewed as a story

¹ There is an existing South African Sport and Arts Hall of Fame (SASAHOF). It was the initiative of former Springbok rugby player Naas Botha and was established in 2003. SASAHOF have struggled to get support from the Department of Sport and Recreation and the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) who did not want SASAHOF to be run as a private enterprise. Plans were to establish it at the coastal town of Knysna – a tourist hotspot. It however never materialised and it was decided to move SASAHOF to a more central location, Soccer City in Gauteng. I contacted the CEO of SASAHOF in 2013 while building was underway to make space for the exhibition at Soccer City. The development has however struggled to come to fruition, the result of conflicting interests between the Department of Sport and Recreation and SASAHOF.

² I use the term athletes interchangeably to refer to professional sportsmen and women whose lives' this study is based on. I interviewed former professional rugby players and track/road running athletes.

³ This study is concerned with the experience of elite athletes' retirement from sport. Elite athletes are those, who participate in sport at the highest level of competition. All the athletes interviewed had represented South Africa and considered sport to be their main source of income. Only two former professional rugby players had not represented South Africa.

we tell ourselves about ourselves”. The story of South Africa’s sporting past is one that represents a variety of voices, as the experiences and participation in sports codes across the country by different racial groups were very much determined by the apartheid legislation of the past.

Since the 1980s the study of the significance of sport within the social sciences has steadily increased worldwide. Historians, sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists have become conscious of the nuanced power that sport has to explain issues of politics, economics, culture, migration, gender, sexuality, race, disability, inequality, mental health and competition in society (for selected works see Pope & Nauright, 2010; Giulianotti, 2005; Howe, 2009; Armstrong, 1998; Hargreaves, 1994; Klein, 1991, 1993, 1997; Wacquant, 2004; Dyck, 2000; Alegi, 2004). Sport has a general appeal to a broad base, including sports fans, competitors, administrators, academics, government sectors, development agencies, business, and the general public. Giulianotti (2005:xi) explains that “there is no single reason for sport’s huge cross-cultural appeal. Like love, truth and art, sport is a kind of human medium that conjoins people.”

In the South African context, sport and society have been conjoined in a stratified manner. Politics and sport have developed alongside each other, with Afrikaner nationalism being historically aligned with rugby, especially from the 1940s, and soccer associated with the black working class. It has been plausibly argued that sport is a reflection of the political climate of a country. As Starn (2011: xiv), puts it: “sports hold a mirror to society, no matter whether we like what we see there or not” and Leonard (2012: viii) echoes Starn’s point:

Because sports are one of the most popular and visible aspects of society, they can neither be insulated from nor isolated from broader social currents. To wit, sports are a microcosm of the larger society and provide mirrors to the nature and characteristics of self and of society.

The reflection in the mirror of South African sport and society has been one of contestation and complexity. Complexity reigned in South African society and continues twenty-one years after South Africa became a democratic country. Many of these complexities are underpinned by race, class and gendered discrepancies and can be traced back to the legacies of South Africa’s colonial and apartheid past.

Given South Africa’s complex past, many sport studies in South Africa have focused on the history of specific sports, and the relationship between sport, race and politics (see Odendaal,

Samson & Reddy, 2012; Grundlingh, Odendaal & Spies, 1995; Grundlingh 2013; Desai, 2010; Alegi, 2004; Korr & Close, 2010; Archer & Bouillon, 1982; Jarvie, 1985; Booth, 1998), but very few studies have focused on the lives of individual sporting heroes once they slipped out of the sporting limelight. This study then moves beyond macro-ideological explanations of the significance of sport in South Africa and focuses on individual athletes' experiences within these ideologies.

The competitive nature of elite sports performance and the professionalisation of sport in South Africa have seen sports physicians, psychologists, physiotherapists and nutritionists dedicate their professions to fine-tuning all aspects of an athlete, for peak athletic performance. Giulianotti (2005:104) argues that "professional athletes are segregated into the 'carceral archipelago' of the modern sports club: exercise, diet and rest are rigidly controlled, and each individual is examined by medical specialists for physical flaws and 'character defects'".

This study differs from the biomedical model of athletic performance, as I am not concerned with a positivist or quantified, rational explanation of what it takes to be the best. I am interested in the change in elite athletic identity after functioning in an elite sports culture, which is synonymous with discipline, sacrifice, ritual, travel, competition and elements of narcissism. The rationale for this study then, is to move beyond the immediate successes of elite athletes, and consider the 'afterlife' they experience once sports retirement has occurred.

There are 25 000 professional sportspersons in South Africa, according to Mr M. Moemi, the Director-General of Sport and Recreation South Africa. This figure makes a study of this nature important, because with the professionalisation of sport it becomes crucial to consider how athletes adapt to society, without sport. My study reveals some of the challenges that athletes have experienced and could contribute to initiatives that aim to integrate athletes into a non-sporting lifestyle.

How do elite athletes in South Africa adapt to life once they have retired from competitive sport? And how are the memories and material culture associated with these athletes used within the sport heritage industry? In essence, this study seeks to uncover the experiences that elite athletes have of a post-competitive sports life and to better understand the transition from a heightened athletic identity and lifestyle, necessary for elite sports performance, to a life after sport. It is during times of success on the international sporting stage that elite athletes often rise to instant stardom, and although their fame may bring immediate benefits, such as financial

stability and sponsorships, the question is what lies beyond the medal podiums, the media interviews, the autographs, the public appearances and the lure of material wealth.

The focus of this study is not on the lead up to or the pinnacle of individual athletic success, as one could read any sports autobiography or sports magazine to explore that question, but rather on the personal experience of the change from an athletic identity to a non-athletic identity. I am not suggesting a dichotomy of a strict athletic versus non-athletic identity, but the sacrifices made for a life dedicated to competing on an elite level encapsulate a very specific sports identity (which sees all aspects of life, from education to personal relationships being built around training and competition), which differs from non-athletic forms of personal, social and educational development.

Adler and Adler's (1991) study on the socialisation of male athletes within a college basketball team, revealed their conscious effort to create an athletic identity. These athletes sought sporting wealth and fame, but not at the expense of other social identities. Adler and Adler (1991) suggest that sport competitions and coaching dominated most of their college life, and this 'greedy role' of athleticism often conflicted with an 'academic' role. This notion of 'greed' (greed in terms of time spent training and competing as well as greed for better performances, more fame, money and public recognition) forms part of an athletic identity that would almost certainly be different in a life not dedicated to sports performance.

To illustrate the point that the life and development of an elite sportsperson differ considerably from those of his or her non-sporting peers, consider the case of Joost van der Westhuizen, the scrumhalf for the Springboks during the 1995 Rugby World Cup, and a controversial South African celebrity. He summed up this notion of two contrasting lives accurately by stating that:

The reality is that rugby was the only life I knew. When you first start out, you're playing with your heroes; you become part of a team and for the next ten or twelve years all you know is how to be a sportsman. You do what the senior players do. When they go out, you go out. And you think that's life. But looking back from where I am now... that's not life (Powers, 2011:121).

Van der Westhuizen went through a turbulent post-competitive sports life period. He was diagnosed with motor neuron disease (MNS) and went through a highly publicised divorce from South African pop star Amor Vittone. It is precisely the experiences of adapting to a non-sporting life after competitive sport, and revelations about life after sport such as what Van der Westhuizen alludes to, that I am interested in.

In South Africa, as in many other parts of the world sport success and medal counts are often the main focus of sporting federations, and the adjustment that elite athletes undergo after competitive sport is often neglected by these federations. Fleuriel and Vincent (2009:180) in their study of French rugby captain Marc Cecillion's post sports life concluded that sporting institutions in France have failed to deal with the end of careers for the athletes that they have created. The same trend seems to surface amongst South African sporting federations. Studies of this nature could highlight the experiences of such athletes after careers in competitive sport and pave the way for federations to consider the long-term wellbeing of the athletes they create.

Central to understanding the experiences professional athletes have of life after sport is to probe the relationship between their private and public representations. The notion of private versus public culture is central throughout this thesis as I show how professional athletes' private sporting lives are shaped within a very demanding elite sports culture. Their corporeality, something that is of a personal/private nature becomes a public matter through injury and potential weight gain after sport. Furthermore the social networks and norms of trust and reciprocity, the antecedents of social capital develops in the private space of the training grounds and changing rooms. These relationships, although established between players in their private lives are important for the development of their careers outside of sport. The social networks developed during their playing days contribute to trust and reciprocity for players who commit to business ventures in their post-sport lives.

The interplay between the private and public becomes particularly apparent when considering how athletes of the past are commemorated in sport museums. Museums provide a space for the public to marvel at the achievement of former sport heroes. Gammon (2014) argues that museums enable sport heroes to become heritage and the public representation of their lives, often illicit nostalgic memories of a bygone era. Throughout this thesis the tension between the private and the public representation of professional sportspeople's lives are interrogated.

Besides this, it is equally pertinent to note that sporting figures can also live on in different historical incarnations after their sporting careers. This manifests through memories, nostalgia and tangible and intangible aspects of sports heritage. This dimension forms an integral part of the overall argument of this thesis. *After the triumph* has as its leitmotif the experience elite athletes have of a life after sport on the one hand, and the ways in which the sporting material culture associated with their sporting careers permit them to live on symbolically in the public domain on the other hand.

Some elite athletes for example are engrained in public memory through sports heritage. Professional sportsmen and -women who operate in a very intense elite sports culture become symbolically immortal through memories and nostalgia associated with the material culture that they leave behind. I argue that the symbolic immortality that athletes attain through their athletic feats ensures that their legacies live on in public memory through heritage practices. These legacies are packaged to reproduce the personal afterlives within broader national sporting histories, and are strategically used by heritage practitioners for commercial means. This is especially the case for former Springbok rugby players, whose sporting achievements have become symbolically engrained in the heritage of the sport through the opening of the corporate entity the Springbok Experience Rugby Museum in Cape Town. *After the triumph* probes the complex relationship between memorialisation, personal narrative and broader national ideologies as they manifest through sport. I show how the individual experiences that sportsmen and -women have of sport and a life thereafter are not confined to their own lives only, but that their feats become a symbolically powerful means to reproduce a national narrative emphasising a rather romanticised version of a history of success through sports heritage. To understand the sports heritage landscape in South Africa I consider the politics of memory as it relates to sporting heroes of the past and how their private memories become powerful public representations of the past.

Athletes who have competed as professionals in the sporting codes of rugby and athletics (track and road running) were interviewed. The reason for this group of study is that rugby is one of the few national team sports that has undergone a dramatic shift in becoming fully professional. This means that whereas players could rely on an alternative income during the amateur era, many professional players today are reliant solely on rugby for an income. The question then arises as to how these players adapt to life after professional rugby. Rugby is a team sport and I was interested in understanding how athletes who take part in individual sports experience the transition to a post-sports life. South Africa has produced top class athletes, but how they make a living after sport and experience their retiring from sport is less clear.

METHODOLOGY

The conceptual underpinning of this study is interpretivist. This means that this study is concerned with the social actor's (elite athletes) meanings and motives within the social context of a competitive sports world and their experiences thereafter. Interpretative standpoints, as Giulianotti (2005) argues, can assist in explaining athlete socialisation and cultural identities within sport. An interpretative approach in social research "explores the interrelations of social

action to status, subjectivity, meaning, motives, symbols, context, the self, roles, identities, processes and social change” (Giulianotti, 2005:16). Central to an interpretive approach is that “individuals develop meaningful understandings of their subjective motives, of the actions of others, and of their social contexts” (Giulianotti, 2005:16). In other words, the individual meaning, motives, contexts and identities of the elite athletes and the social change that inevitably occurs with sports retirement are central to this study, which makes an interpretivist conceptual approach enticing.

One of the most significant studies of an interpretivist analysis in sport is Geertz’s (1972) study on Balinese cockfighting, in which he calls for anthropologists to interpret the complexity of social relations as a ‘cultural text’ which is often embedded in human communication and interaction. In reading culture as text, Geertz recommends ethnographers use ‘thick description’, that is describing the latent, rich accounts of human interaction, from which immense meaning can be drawn. Geertz (1973) argues that in order to understand culture, ethnographers should give detailed microscopic descriptions that are based on a complex web of interpretation.

An interpretivist stance as advocated by Geertz (1973) has been critiqued. Martin (1993) argues that the limitation of Geertz’s interpretivism lies in the vagueness of what constitutes a valid interpretation of his theoretical writings. Martin (1993) is of the opinion that Geertz (1972) overlooks the importance of causality.

Even if one restricts social science to the giving of interpretations, causal considerations enter into the specification of the web of meanings of social practices and institutions. If the job of social science is conceived of as including more than merely interpreting the culture, as we have seen it surely does, then causality plays an even more important role (Martin, 1993:284).

Others have suggested that generalisability in interpretivist studies is impossible (Williams, 2000). Denzin (1983:133) claims that “the interpretivist rejects generalisation as a goal and never aims to draw randomly selected samples of human experience”. In other words, studies that take an interpretivist stance do not aim to make broad generalised claims in their research, but rather reiterate that their findings are based on individual experience. The aim of this study is not to generalise the experience of the informants interviewed for the study and the findings made to the experience of all professional athletes who have retired from sport. On the contrary,

the aim of this study is to highlight how their own interpretations of a life after competitive sport are formed.

This study falls within the small but growing field of the anthropology of sport. This field is still in its infancy in South Africa, compared to countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, where scholars such as Armstrong, 1998; Blanchard, 1995; Klein, 1991, 1993, 1997; Wacquant, 2004; Dyck, 2000; Howe 2004, 2009; and Sands, 1999, 2002, to mention a few, have made significant strides in promoting the anthropology of sport through in-depth ethnographic research and theoretical insights.

After the triumph thus follows a trend in anthropological research where fieldwork is conducted 'at home'. There has been a shift in the focus of anthropological inquiry over the past few decades, with a focus on 'people like us', rather than doing extensive fieldwork in exotic locations. This shift has seen studies move away from traditional anthropological modes of inquiry – that is, to study exotic cultures in faraway places – and focus on modern-day societies. Hastrup (1992:118) notes that fieldwork in the postmodern condition is no longer carried out "from the door of one's tent", but instead "ensues out of confrontation and dialogue between two parties engaged in a joint production of selfness and otherness". Anthropologists are therefore turning in increasing numbers to the study of modern societies (Ortner, 2006).

This study is no different, as the fieldwork and interviews took place in an environment with which I am familiar. As a retired elite athlete (South African swimmer) I shared many commonalities and was able to empathise with many of the people interviewed. Anthropologists who 'work at home', in other words, study people who are similar to them in terms of shared experience and history, face the challenge of making the familiar foreign. Klein (1993) faced a similar dilemma during his extensive research among the bodybuilding subculture:

This tension between the cultural unknown and the cultural known is exacerbated for those ethnographers working in their own cultures. To make people (readers) look at their own institutions, perceptions and behaviours at all ethnographically, they must first be made to see these things as culturally exotic; hence the preliminary need for a requisite distance from their own culture before reinterpretation of the foreign-to-familiar stage (Klein, 1993:295).

In addition to extensive interviews and participant observation at sport events that commemorated sportspeople of the past I also visited places where the material culture of

former South African sports heroes is exhibited. I visited the houses of sports collectors, community sport museums and corporate sport museums, and considered the role that rugby played in packaging the heritage of schools, university residences and universities. The research took me to the changing rooms of big sport stadiums in South Africa, to living rooms of individual athletes' houses where their sports memorabilia are on display, to museums at schools and universities where sport features prominently.

I also went on several stadium tours to gain insight into how sports memorabilia are used to promote sport as a form of heritage. The fact that many of the informants would have retired from competitive sport, makes this a study of reflection, memory and narration. Over a period of one year I conducted semi-structured interviews with former professional rugby players, former road-running and track athletes and sport heritage practitioners. All the athletes that I interviewed had participated in sport at an elite level. Most informants had represented South Africa in their respective sporting codes, with the exception of two rugby players who played provincial professional rugby and had not represented the Springboks. For a detailed description of the sporting accolades of the informants see Appendix C.

I also interviewed administrators at the South African Rugby Players Association (SARPA) and medical sport specialists. Interview duration varied from 45 minutes to 2 hours and follow-up interviews were arranged if an aspect of the transcribed interview was unclear. In total 35 people were interviewed: 12 former professional rugby players, 9 former South African athletes, 10 people who work in the sport heritage industry, or who are private collectors of sports memorabilia, the CEO of the South African Rugby Players Association (SARPA), two medical professionals who specialise in sport and a sport psychologist who specialises in sports retirement. The snowball sampling interview technique, where informants were asked if they knew of and could provide the contact details of other athletes who had retired from sport, proved especially useful. A limitation of this technique is that it is not random and selects individuals on the basis of similar social networks (Browne, 2005). The empirical evidence of this study is not based on the accounts of a large group of professional athletes. It is rather concerned with the experience of retirement from professional sport for a selected group of rugby players and athletes. The goal is not to generalise the findings of the study, but rather to show how the interviews conducted with former professional athletes inform the central research question of how professional athletes experience life after sport and how their legacies live on symbolically through sport heritage practices. Full details of the interviews are provided

in Appendix A. All the interviews were transcribed and analysed according to prominent themes that emerged.

I “followed the thing”, and in this case the sporting artefact in considering how the afterlife of the athletes lives on symbolically through material culture. In other words I traced the “life cycle” of sport artefacts by considering where an artefact is first used (in the locker rooms) and then on to where it is exhibited and packaged as a form of heritage. I also spoke to the ex-athletes about their personal collections of sports memorabilia and what these meant to them. Marcus’s (1995) discussion of a multi-sited ethnography was particularly useful in conceptualising a style of travelling anthropology where I witnessed the use of sports memorabilia within different settings. Marcus (1995:106) argues that by “following the thing” when constructing a multi-sited space of research involves “tracing the circulation through different contexts of a manifestly material object of study (at least as initially conceived), such as commodities, gifts, money, works of art, and intellectual property”. I have also followed the lives of retired athletes by collecting secondary sources in the form of stories in the media (mostly newspaper clippings) that report on their current status. I used primary sources drawn from South African Rugby Board (SARB) archives at Stellenbosch University to get a historical understanding of how South Africa’s rugby heritage was preserved prior to the professional era.

An interpretive biography as promoted by Denzin (1989) is especially useful in making sense of the experience that the informants of this study had of a life after sport. Denzin (1989:7) defines the biographical method as the “studied use, and collection of life documents”, which describe turning-point moments in the lives of individuals. The end of a professional athletic career is a significant turning point, where an athlete is faced with a change in identity and daily routine. Denzin (1989) argues that lives are turned around by significant events or *epiphanies* and these events leave permanent marks. The focus of the study was on a particular phase of the informants’ lives – that of retiring from professional sport. I am interested in the life stories of the retired professional sportsmen and women whom I interviewed and in how they experienced a life after sport. Life stories examine a life or a segment of a life as described by the individual in question. It is a personal narrative or a story of personal experience (Denzin, 1989:42). These experiences are situated within a fiercely competitive elite sports culture. Bruner (1984:7) differentiates between a life as lived, a life as experienced, and a life as told. He states:

A life lived is what actually happens. A life experienced consists of the images, feelings, sentiments, desires, thoughts and meanings known to the person whose life it is... A life as told, a life history, is a narrative influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by the social context.

The images, feelings, sentiments and desires that former professional athletes had of their lives within a very competitive elite sports culture and the adjustment they underwent from moving out of such a social context, makes the *life as experienced* the central approach in this study.

Social research of any nature requires an ethical awareness of the consequences of the intended research and this study is no different. I received ethical clearance from the University of the Free State's ethical committee in April 2013 to proceed with the research. All the people whom I interviewed for this study were provided with an informed consent form, either by e-mail prior to us meeting or at the time of the interview, which outlined the purpose of the study (see Appendix B for the informed consent form). In addition to the informed consent form, I verbally explained to the informants the purpose of the research and gave them the option to remain anonymous. Most informants preferred to be identified and were comfortable with the interviews being recorded. I suspect that because many of the informants were recognisable public figures, they showed willingness to tell their story and have their experience of life after sport associated with who they are and their achievements. In other words, if they chose to remain anonymous it could diminish the very personal stories they told about their experience of a life after sport. As a former Springbok rugby player told me, "It has been years since I have spoken to anyone about my battle of life after professional sport, I want you to make sure that when people read this they know this is my story."

A NOTE ON THEORY

The thesis is structured to ensure that the empirical data is interwoven with theory. Every chapter relies on a theoretical underpinning that informs the argument in the chapter, and also enhances the argument of the entire thesis. An underlying theme throughout the thesis is the tension between athlete's private experience of terminating their sports careers and the public representation of their sporting pasts through heritage initiatives. The structure of the thesis moves from the individual experiences of the various informants within a competitive elite sports culture, to understanding the corporeal aspect of the post-sports body. Here notions of masculinity and men's bodies are explored. The social networks that professional sportsmen rely on to secure them an income after sport is a prominent theme that emerged from the

fieldwork. Social capital and specifically the work of Bourdieu (1977, 2006), Coleman (1988, 1994) and Putnam (1990) was useful in exploring the social networks that athletes rely on after sport. I then explore how the achievements of sportsmen and women enable them to achieve a symbolic immortal status through the material culture they leave behind. Lifton's (1976, 1979) theory on symbolic immortality provides an understanding as to why people want to be remembered and how they live on in perpetuity. This paves the way for an analysis of the sport heritage landscape in South Africa, with specific reference to nostalgia and social memory in sport. A case study of the Springbok Experience Rugby Museum in Cape Town and the Comrades Marathon House in Pietermaritzburg highlights the complexity and interconnectedness of memory, nostalgia, heritage and sport.

BACKGROUND TO RUGBY AND ATHLETICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

At first glance rugby and athletics may seem like vastly different sports. For one rugby players operate within a team context while athletics is an individual sport. Secondly rugby has developed within a narrowly defined white Afrikaner sporting culture, whereas athletics is considered a sport that is more diverse and inclusive of men and women of all racial backgrounds. Road running in particular was a popular sport during apartheid, especially amongst the black working classes. The sport required very little equipment or infrastructure and was a leisure activity that athletes of all ages could partake in. The aim of this thesis is not to compare the experiences of these two groups of athletes, but rather to show the similarities that sportsmen and women, irrespective of sports code experience in their lives after professional sport.

Running clubs have historically been supported by the mining industry and state institutions. Athletes were recruited to these institutions by running coaches and scouts. The mines lured working-class black South Africans to the Transvaal in search of job opportunities. Athletic events between mining companies were particularly popular during the 1970s and 1980s and the mines were instrumental in developing talented athletes in what has been termed "the golden age of South African athletics" in the 1980s (Mayer, 2009). Mathews Temane, Mathews Motshwarateu, nicknamed *Loop en val (walk and fall)* for his peculiar running style, Xolile Yawa and Mathews Batsawdi (the first black South African athlete to be awarded Springbok colours in 1977) were black road running athletes who ran world leading times during this era.

An astonishing fact is that when Batswadi first ran with SA touring teams in Europe, in 1974 and 1975, he was working underground at Western Deep Levels, then the world's deepest mine. In 1986, after losing all his possessions including his prized Springbok blazer and his bicycle, during industrial unrest at Beatrix mine, he returned home and withdrew from competitive athletics (Mayer, 2010). Batswadi, now 64, who was known as a “hard drinking bad boy” now lives in his ancestral village in Dikathong (70 km from the agricultural town of Vryburg in the North West Province) and is supported by his younger brother. He has resorted to growing a vegetable garden to sustain himself (Mayer, 2010).

Temane won an unprecedented 17 national athletics titles between 1982 and 1989. He came from humble beginnings as one of seven children from the rural district of Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria. After school he was recruited to Kloof Gold Mine and trained as a professional athlete. It was here where his long-term coaching relation started with Richard Turnbull, the mine’s recreation officer. Temane later moved to Anglo Gold Ashanti’s Vaal Reefs Gold Mine to continue the successful coaching relation he had with Turnbull, who had taken up a position at the mine. Temane’s story of sporting success is typical of a host of other black South African athletes who rose to fame through athletics. Sport and in particular road running offered athletes who came from humble beginnings a lucrative career far from the dusty streets of their upbringing.

Athletics was one of the few sports that during apartheid allowed for inter-racial competitions to take place. In 1957 the South African Amateur Athletics Union (SAAAU) was formed and promoted inter-racial competitions. It would however not be until 1971 that South African athletes, irrespective of race could take part in the same meeting on South African soil. This historic event took place at the Green Point Stadium in Cape Town (Nauright & Parish, 2012:107). With the introduction of television to South Africans in 1975, athletics became one of the most watched and followed sports in South Africa.

Today athletics in South Africa is administered by Athletics South Africa (ASA) and the federation has been fraught with corruption and maladministration. In 2013 ASA was banned by the global athletics organisation, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), for poor governance. The administrative dilemma has affected South African athletics adversely, as major sponsors have withdrawn support. In 2005 ASA lost its sponsor of the Absa Series and Absa South African Senior Track and Field Championships, bringing to an end an eight-year relationship (‘ABSA ends SA athletics sponsorship’, 2005).

Many athletes are reliant on individual sponsorships to remain full-time professionals, whilst others depend on clubs to provide them with the necessary financial support. An athlete like Hendrik Ramaala – winner of the New York City Marathon in 2004 – has committed to compete abroad where there are many more racing opportunities that provide lucrative financial incentives. In South Africa the Comrades Marathon and Two Oceans Marathon are the two premier events where athletes who finish within the top ten can win prize money. The prize money for the winners (both male and female) for the 2015 Comrades Marathon was R350 000. The competitive nature of the race and an increase in international athletes have made this cash incentive an opportunity for a select few. Road running is a sport that has a very small percentage of elite professional runners and those who do train as professionals are reliant on sponsors.

It is a sport that has a vast participation rate, which includes recreational runners and those who train as professional athletes. The team sponsored clubs, such as Nedbank, Mr Price and Bonitas recruit talented athletes to form part of their elite squads. One of the biggest and most successful clubs in South Africa, Nedbank has an elite squad, ‘The Green Dream Team’ whose criterion is to have had a top ten finish at the Comrades Marathon, Two Oceans Marathon or the South African 10 km, 21 km or 42 km Championships. These runners receive monthly retainers to assist with their expenses. Currently there are only 22 athletes who receive financial support from Nedbank to run professionally. The Operation Excellence programme of the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC), is aimed at providing financial support to potential Olympic medallists, and there is currently not a single South African road runner on the programme. Athletes are therefore obliged to train as semi-professionals by balancing work commitments with a demanding training schedule. Elite athletes target races throughout South Africa where lucrative prize money is on offer. Their income is therefore sporadic and dependent on their performance on that particular day. Whereas road running is still a growing sport in terms of the number of professional athletes, rugby has undergone a dramatic shift through the advent of professionalism.

The origins of rugby in South Africa can be traced back to the late 19th century. Rugby, a cultural export of the British Empire infiltrated the Cape Province during this period. Hamiltons was the first rugby club in South Africa and was founded in 1875 in Cape Town. Prominent universities in the Cape were instrumental in developing the game, particularly Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town. The first documented proof of a rugby club at Stellenbosch dates back to 1880, and The University Club was officially founded in 1919

(Grundlingh, 2013: 55). Previously known as Victoria College, Stellenbosch University was founded in 1918 and was instrumental in the development and spread of the game among the *volk*. It has been argued that “Stellenbosch was also the first and, for a while, the only institution where young, predominantly Afrikaner men were concentrated in one place for a reasonable period and where they had sufficient leisure time to indulge in what has been called a game played ‘by young males in a state of hormonal pugnacity’” (Grundlingh, 2013:55).

Annual rugby tours exposed young players in the countryside to the game, and ministers and teachers were instrumental in developing the game in the Cape countryside. Rugby had a strong foothold among Afrikaner communities in the Cape and had a head start over the northern Boer Republics where the game was relatively unfamiliar at the turn of the century. The outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) between the British and the Boer Republics halted the development of rugby. In the North rugby had been played at the Transvaal University College since 1909, but the popularity of the game fluctuated between 1910 and 1919 in the Transvaal province. Whereas rugby was the pastime of students in Stellenbosch, rugby players in the North came from predominantly working-class backgrounds where they had to balance their interest in rugby with work. Rugby was not a game practised only by South Africa’s white population. The history of rugby amongst South African blacks can be traced to the Eastern Cape, where British missionary schools introduced the game to aspiring black rugby players. As early as 1897, the South African Coloured Rugby Football Board was founded, which represented the interest of black and coloured rugby players in South Africa (Odendaal, 1995).

The outbreak of the First and later the Second World War hindered the development of the game in South Africa. The decision of the United Party to participate in the Second World War had a divisive effect on the white community. Some rugby unions (from the Eastern and Western Province) split along pro and anti-war lines and the schism had a rough English-Afrikaans correlate (Grundlingh, 2013:73). The 1930s and 1940s were important years, as Afrikaners had to respond to broad political and social changes. With increasing urbanisation, British imperial influences in the economic and cultural spheres and the spread of capitalism, Afrikaner nationalism began to flourish. Rugby during this time was an extension of Afrikaner cultural identity and the relationship between Afrikaners and rugby had become established (Grundlingh, 2013:61).

By the time the National Party ascended to power in 1948 rugby was firmly entrenched within the Afrikaner psyche. The National Party’s grand scheme of apartheid, based on race in all spheres including sport, segregated South African society. This meant that rugby players in

South Africa were represented by separate associations depending on their race. The South African Rugby Board (SARB) represented the white interests of the game. The South African Bantu Rugby Football Board (SABRFB) (1935–1959) and later the South African African Rugby Football Board (SAARFB) (1959–1978) represented the black interests of the game. The South African Coloured Rugby Football Board (1897–1966) split into the South African Rugby Union (SARU) (1966–1991) and the South African Rugby Football Federation (SARFF) (1959–1991). This split came about as the SARU took a strong anti-apartheid stand and refused to play rugby along racial lines. The Federation, however, aligned themselves with the whites-only South African Rugby Board with the intention to continue playing rugby within their segregated leagues.

The international sport boycott isolated many athletes from international competition. Between 1970 and 1989 as international opposition to apartheid grew, at least nine official rugby tours involving South Africa were cancelled (Grundlingh, 2013:96). The odd rebel tour did take place and the Yellow Pages Cavalier rugby tour that saw a “rebel” New Zealand side play against the Springboks in 1986 has been considered the first move toward the professionalisation of the game. Gary Teichman, former Springbok captain, in his biography notes that the Cavalier Tour was an “expensively pursued” tour. He refers to an internal transfer market that was very healthy and active during the 1980s. The inducement of the transfer market was not necessarily direct payment, but payment in the form of houses, jobs, cars and monthly reimbursements. By the early 1990s, after the fall of apartheid South African sport was reintegrated into the international sports scene. The previously racially determined rugby boards amalgamated and a new unified sporting body, the South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU) was launched in early 1992. The new body under the joint leadership of SARB’s Danie Craven and SARU’s Ebrahim Patel committed itself to the development of rugby across the board and in particular in disadvantaged areas. International rugby tours were also given the go-ahead by mid-1992.

Three years later rugby became a professional sport on the elite levels. Rugby in the era prior to this development was played along amateur lines – or what has been referred to as “shamateurism” – and evolved from being an amateur sport practised by teachers, policemen and farmers to becoming a fully professional sport. Professionalism has radically changed the face of South African rugby. During the initial phase of the professionalisation of South African rugby, some players could combine work with playing rugby. As the demands of the game grew, however, and in order to remain competitive, becoming a full-time professional player

was inevitable. The professionalisation of rugby in South Africa has been likened to a revolution, as it required a total change in thinking, playing and administration (Bolligelo, 2006: 23).

South African rugby had now been catapulted into the global sporting economy, which meant that the players themselves became commercially viable and marketable products for global sports brands. The consequence of this development is that in the professional era of the sport, young players are offered lucrative contracts by franchises from a very young age. The professional leagues that South African teams are affiliated with include the Vodacom Cup, Currie Cup, Super Rugby and the national team, the Springboks. The Vodacom Cup is held annually between February and May and is an interprovincial tournament in which the 14 South African rugby unions compete. The competition is the breeding ground for emerging talent to feed into the higher leagues. The Currie Cup is the premier provincial rugby competition in South Africa and was first contested in 1892. The competition comprises two divisions, premier and first division. It remains a competition where provincial rivalry is fierce. The competition takes place from October every year (after the Super Rugby season has ended). The Super Rugby competition features 15 regional teams from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, with each country providing five teams. The teams representing South Africa in this competition are the Pretoria based Blue Bulls, Johannesburg based Lions, Bloemfontein based Cheetahs, Durban based Sharks and the Cape Town based Stormers. These rugby franchises have become business entities and the respective unions have a commercial arm that is responsible for promoting the rugby brand. These franchises rely on commercial support and obtain major sponsorship rights through companies such as DHL (Stormers), Emirates (Lions), Cell C (Sharks) Toyota (Cheetahs) and Vodacom (Blue Bulls). The impact of professionalism has benefited established unions in bigger cities. The Super Rugby franchises had turnovers of more than R100 million per year in 2004, in comparison to the smaller unions such as the Border Bulldogs in East London with R11.3 million and the Boland Cavaliers with R6.7 million per year (Grundlingh, 2013: 174).

The top accolade of professional rugby in South Africa is to play for the national team, the Springboks. The South African Rugby Union (SARU) and the South African Rugby Players' Association (SARPA) represent the interests of the Springboks and only a small pool of players make it to this level. Only 20 local players were contracted to the Springboks in the 2014 season. Most of the professional rugby players interviewed for this study were former Springbok rugby players. For these players, professional rugby is a high-risk working

environment. Apart from the ever-present threat of injuries which may damage or end a career, the demands of the game is such that life and occupational skills, besides playing rugby, are at times underdeveloped (Grundlingh, 2013:177).

Club rugby in South Africa has been the foundation for the development of rugby talent in South Africa. The Cell C Community Cup (previously the SARU Community Cup) is the premier rugby competition in South Africa for non-university teams and is aimed at promoting rugby on an amateur level. Although it focuses on a less professional approach to rugby, there are players who are considered semi-professionals as they balance their work and rugby commitments.

Professionalism allows players to commit their daily activities to becoming better, stronger, fitter and faster. The conditioning of their bodies on a full-time basis has seen the average size and weight of players in the professional era increase significantly when compared to amateur players of a few decades ago. Former England winger Johnny May, reflecting on the changing nature of the game makes the poignant point:

Each year I think: ‘Blimey, these guys are getting bigger, they’re faster, and they’re fitter.’ A few years ago some forwards could get away with just being heavy and one-dimensional. Not anymore. Everyone has no option but to push themselves harder. I definitely think careers aren’t going to be as long because of the demands we’re under” (Kitson, 2015).

Financial security and an alternative career that professional rugby players can rely on once they hang up their boots has been a concern for both players and the professional bodies that represent them. The South African Rugby Union (SARU), the South African Rugby Players Association (SARPA), the South African Rugby Legends Association (SARLA), together with the Research Unit for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (University of Cape Town) launched a national research project in an attempt to uncover the challenges that professional rugby players experience after retirement. The online survey would be sent to 500 previously contracted professional rugby players. SARPA’s CEO, Piet Heymans, in launching the research explained: “The results of the study will help us comprehend the challenges retired players are facing and to review and possibly adjust our assistance provided to players exiting professional rugby. We want to support and promote sustainable health and wellness among professional rugby players, both during and after their careers” (Heymans, 2014). He also noted that the “feedback we get from players that retire from rugby is that a lot of them battle

depression. They miss the limelight; miss being involved in a team environment, injuries come back to haunt them ... knee and hip replacements, income falls and a lot of them don't adjust" (Marais, 2014).

The first crop of retired professional rugby players has been produced, twenty years after rugby turned professional in South Africa. The research initiated by SARPA is a much needed impetus to understand the transition that professional rugby players undergo on an emotional, financial and personal level. Whereas the survey will elicit valuable quantitative data, this study relies on a qualitative research approach by uncovering the experiences and narratives that ex-professional players have of a life after sport.

In the professional era rugby players have become commodities. They are sold and resold in a very competitive sports market, both locally and internationally. There has been a mass exodus of South African professional rugby players to Europe and Japan, where their earnings are often doubled. This choice is often fuelled by players who are nearing the end of their careers and are in search of a financial injection prior to their retirement from the sport. The favourable exchange rate of the euro and the yen to the South African rand makes the decision to migrate to play rugby overseas very alluring. SARU have a selection policy whereby players can be chosen for the Springboks, irrespective of whether they play locally or abroad. This policy differs from those of the New Zealand and English rugby unions, where players who decide to further their careers outside their respective countries are not considered for the national teams.

This mass exodus of professional players from South Africa has been especially prevalent in the 2015 World Cup year, as players are considering their rugby future and fortunes beyond the global event. It was reported in July 2015 that up to 40 of South Africa's top rugby players have signed contracts with clubs in England, Japan and France (Thormählen, 2015). There are around 600 contracted players in South Africa, earning a salary from their respective unions, and more or less the same number of South African rugby players earning salaries through rugby abroad. A recent study analysed the earnings of rugby players in South Africa and abroad. In South Africa a Currie Cup rugby player with limited Super Rugby experience will earn anything between R500 000 and R700 000 per year. If that same player (with about 20 Super Rugby caps) were to play in England and France he would earn between R1.5m and R2.5m. A player with extensive Super Rugby and Currie Cup experience earns between R1.5m and R2m per year in South Africa. In Europe he would earn R3m to R5m a year. A senior Springbok player playing in the Japanese league can earn up to R8m a year. In Europe a senior Springbok player can earn up to R6m a year. A senior Springbok player in South Africa earns

up to R4m a year – this includes a provincial contract, win bonuses and commercial work (Van der Westhuyzen, 2014).

Although professional rugby players can earn a lucrative salary during their rugby careers, the risk of a career ending in injury is always a concern given the physicality of the game. At the end of the 2014 international rugby season, Springbok captain Jean de Villiers sustained a serious knee injury that side-lined him for months. Commenting on this incident and the mass exodus of players to overseas clubs he explained: “Money is obviously the biggest driver, and getting this injury just reminded me again: your career could be a short one. You want to make the most of it, cash in while you can” (Houwing, 2015). In 2007 a study done by SARPA revealed that 78.18% of all professional rugby players in South Africa were totally dependent on rugby for their income and had no alternative financial sources, and 57.75% had not at all considered what the future beyond rugby may hold for them (Schoeman, 2009:99).

Most professional rugby players retire from the sport due to age, injury or loss of form. As a junior contracted rugby player in South Africa one’s earnings seem infinite, but as the reality of a life after rugby beckons the financial insecurity that these players may face becomes distressing. A survey conducted by the New Zealand Rugby Players Association (NZRPA) amongst 123 past professional rugby players found that the average career span of a professional rugby player is 9 years and the average age of retirement is 32. Forty-six percent (46%) of the players had been unemployed at some stage after retiring – of which 82% were unemployed for a period of 3 months or longer. Forty-seven percent (47%) believed playing professional rugby inhibited their ability to work/study while 53% would have liked more opportunities to work or study (NZRPA, 2011). Professional rugby players in South Africa share similarities with their New Zealand counterparts, as they compete in the same professional league of Super Rugby and are exposed to the same amount of international matches. Van Reenen’s (2012) research into the financial situation of former professional rugby players in South Africa came to a similar conclusion, showing that more than 84% of professional rugby players in South Africa are going to find it difficult to survive financially once they stop playing rugby (Van Reenen, 2012). Former Springbok captain Corné Krige reflecting on his professional rugby career made the following revealing statement in Van Reenen’s (2012:119) book: “I have seen many former players suffer, and there are many more who are still going to suffer. The players are used to money pouring in and, if they don’t spend it wisely, it is very hard when ... the fountain suddenly dries up.”

In a very competitive commercial sports market, rugby franchises have realised the need to offer contracted players a development programme to assist them in adapting to life after sport. These programmes are aimed at educating players about financial matters and provide opportunities for them to do internships or tertiary educational training. SARPA have a full time Player Development Manager (PDM) whose role is to provide career and educational assessment of junior players and assist in the development of players after sport. Most of the bigger rugby unions in South Africa have Player Development Programmes (PDP) aimed at teaching current players basic life and financial skills. The Durban based rugby franchise, The Sharks, introduced an *Impact* programme in 2014 and it is run by retired Sharks player Jacques Botes. The programme is based on the NZRPA's player development programme and exposes young contracted players to alternative career options, or studying options, whilst playing professional rugby. A survey conducted by SARPA in 2013 found that 71% of contracted Sharks players had matric and only 41% were enrolled in a programme to further their education (SARPA, 2013). The same survey found that 83% of rugby players at the Western Province rugby union's highest qualification is matric and only 6% of players have a degree or certificate. Other smaller rugby playing nations have similar concerns about the lack of vocational training of professional rugby players. Fiji, for example, has one of the highest player–population ratios among the rugby playing nations, with nearly 50% of the indigenous male population reportedly playing the sport. Aspiring Fijian rugby players sacrifice formal education in pursuit of their rugby dreams and many serious players exit the education system without completing school (Kanemasu & Molnar, 2014:1383).

In South Africa, the importance of balancing rugby commitments with vocational training has been promoted by Varsity Cup Rugby – the brainchild of former Springbok captain Francois Pienaar, who after securing the sponsorship of First National Bank and Steinhoff International has been able to secure lucrative broadcasting rights for the competition. The inaugural tournament took place in 2008 and the competition provides the opportunity for eight of South Africa's top rugby university teams to compete in a round robin format for the coveted title of Varsity Cup Winners. Matches are played on Monday evenings. In the 2013 season, Varsity Cup teams were required to have 18 full-time students in their 23 man squads. In addition, students needed to have passed at least 30% of their previous year's courses, and all players, even non-students, must have finished high school. No player that has received a senior national cap or has played in four or more Super Rugby games may play Varsity Rugby. This is an attempt to prevent former professional players from returning to university to play rugby

and not necessarily promote their educational careers. As from the 2015 season all of the players in the 23-man squad have to be fulltime students after concerns were raised about the potentially professional nature of the league. The organisers are serious about maintaining the integrity of the Varsity Cup as a student-based tournament. Many of the players who excel in Varsity Cup Rugby are lured to professional rugby unions to further their rugby careers. Varsity Cup Rugby provides the opportunity for potential professional rugby players to balance their rugby careers with studying. Whereas previously players were contracted to rugby unions straight after school, the Varsity Cup competition promotes a sensible approach to furthering one's rugby and alternative career.

This brief contextual background on both athletics and rugby in South Africa has shown how the demands placed on a professional athlete after sport are influenced by the amateur or professional status of the sport. The transition to a life after sport for those who were professional athletes is stark, as the time and commitment spent to compete at the elite level is very different in a life without sport. It is precisely these challenges and experiences that athletes have of a life after sport that this thesis explores.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The disciplinary background of the anthropology of sport is discussed in Chapter One. Thereafter in Chapter Two I examine the pressures that professional athletes operate under as they are immersed in a very demanding elite sports culture. This chapter considers the role that sports heroes play in society and draws attention to the fleeting nature of their fame. The role of the media in promoting the status of sports heroes is explored and it is argued that professional athletes are sealed off from the realities of life, as many of the informants of this study referred to a life in competitive sport as living in a "bubble." The tension between their private lives and the public representation of their lives in the media is also probed.

In Chapter Three I move from a more abstract concept of culture to how athletes perceive their bodies, during and after competitive sport. The embodied experience of a sportsperson is a personal affair, but I show how the public representation of sporting bodies are managed by the athlete's to maintain respectability in the public sphere. In this chapter the idea of the sporting body as a machine is probed, and I show that the physical nature of rugby makes injuries and potentially career-ending injuries a daily reality for professional rugby players. Despite the awareness of possible injury it is argued that very little forward planning is done in terms of how their bodies will be managed once they step out of the rugby limelight. I show

how the injured body in rugby challenges the heteronormative masculine status of players and therefore it is not uncommon for players to play even when injured. The importance of social networks in securing a job after professional rugby is explored in Chapter Four. These relations of trust and reciprocity are formed in the intimate spaces on the rugby fields and locker rooms, but manifest publically in their post-sport lives. The importance of accumulating social capital during the active phase of athlete's lives is analysed with specific reference to educational institutions that promote the development of social capital.

Chapter Five, titled 'Personal to public memories: sport, material culture and nostalgia' considers how athletes become symbolically immortal and contribute to the sport heritage landscape of the country. The heritage aspect of this thesis shows how memories of the past are made public by the display of sporting material culture in museums. The manner in which elite athletes' sporting achievements and memories of their individual feats become part of the sport heritage fabric of the country is addressed. More specifically I deal with how personal memories of sport become powerful catalysts for the recollection of the past and take up a significant position in the public domain through sport heritage initiatives. The role that nostalgia, the material culture of sport and social memory play in remembering athletes of a bygone era is explored. The value and meaning of sports memorabilia are used to show how 'things' that belonged to sports heroes of the past circulate and contribute to their living on in perpetuity in the memory of the public space. Chapter Six considers how South Africa's rugby heritage has changed and become overtly commercial. An analysis of sports memorabilia shows how 'things' that belonged to sports heroes of the past circulate and contribute to them living on in perpetuity in the public sphere.

The Springbok Experience Museum is used as a case study to illustrate the politics of representation in sport museums. Emphasis is placed on how rugby memorabilia used to be a form of gift giving during the amateur era of the sport, but have since professionalisation become overtly commercialised. The contradiction between the intimacy of giving a rugby artefact away to a friend (as is the case at the Choet Visser rugby museum in Bloemfontein) and the public display thereof at a commercialised museum, such as the Springbok Experience Museum is probed. The poetics of representation in the Springbok Experience Museum is analysed with specific reference to the exhibition of the Springbok captain in 1906, Paul Roos, and the contested heritage of the former Coloured and African Rugby Boards.

Chapter Seven is an analysis of the Comrades Marathon House museum. I show how South Africa's running heritage and the memorialisation of South African running greats have been

preserved by runners who have a long personal history associated with the race. Topophilia is used to think through the Comrades Marathon House museum's 'sense of place' and the association runners have with race and the museum. In essence this thesis shows how athletes experience the transition from professional sport to a life after sport, and how the memories and nostalgia associated with the performances have become marketable products within the sport heritage landscape of South Africa. The tension between their private lives and public representation of their sporting careers is a central theme throughout this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE
THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF SPORT AND THE RATIONALE FOR A STUDY ON
SPORTS RETIREMENT BY AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to provide an overview of the development of the anthropology of sport as a sub-discipline within the field of anthropology. In doing so, I show how anthropologists have a unique set of analytical tools to make sense of the social significance of sport in modern-day society. A historical understanding of how sport has become of academic interest situates the findings of the thesis, which deals with the retirement from sport of elite athletes, within broader developments of the field.

There are three objectives that this chapter sets out to achieve. The first objective is to provide a historical overview of how the anthropology of sport has developed as a sub-discipline within the field. This background and contextual information allow me to point to the neglect of anthropologists to investigate sport in South Africa, as such endeavours have been mostly taken up by historians, sociologists and psychologists. This historical overview provides the platform for the second objective, which is to draw on literature that has dealt with sports retirement in other disciplines, and to show how this study differs from what has been done before.

The third objective of this chapter is to show how this study, which focuses on individual life histories of elite athletes, is unique even within most of the anthropological literature on sport. The reason is that most anthropologically informed work has tended to focus on large societal forces, such as colonialism, globalisation, sport mega-events and sport as a means of labour migration. The ethnography of the individual athlete and how the retirement experience is shaped by a very competitive elite sports culture is fresh approach in making sense of sports retirement. In addition to arguing that there is a need for a study on sports retirement by an anthropologist, I contend that this study is significant because it goes beyond a simplified understanding of a life after sport by investigating the manner in which the memories and lives of sport stars are commemorated through tangible and intangible sport heritage initiatives.

1.2 HISTORY OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF SPORT

Tracing the historical development of sport as a site of anthropological investigation, I propose that anthropologists with an interest in sport have carved out a niche market by using sport as a means to understand cultural issues related to nationalism, modernity, the state, citizenship, gender and sexuality. To borrow from Besnier and Brownell (2012:454), “sport is an important realm of anthropological inquiry because it provides a nexus of body, multiplex identities, and multi-layered governance structures, combined with a performance genre that possesses qualities of play, liminality, and storytelling, that enables us to explore the connections among these dynamics in a unique way”. With this broad appeal that sport offers, an overview of the anthropology of sport highlights the manner in which a vested interest in the study of sport has evolved since the discipline became formalised in the late 19th century, owing to scholars such as E.B. Tylor, Branislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas.

The trajectory of the anthropology of sport is traced, using a historical timeline as it allows one to appreciate not only how sport became an important site of study within anthropology, but also how anthropology as a discipline has developed and changed over time. It is within these broader transitions and paradigm shifts over the past century and a half of the anthropological discipline that the anthropology of sport has developed. In order to provide clarity on how sport became of anthropological concern, I have arranged the development of sport as a form of cultural inquiry into roughly two phases.

The first phase covers the late 19th century to the mid-20th century (1870–1950), which will be discussed under the heading, *‘The beginnings’*. During this phase, anthropology and the study of sport were understood in terms of a biological or evolutionary paradigm. The second phase, from the mid-20th to the early 21st century (1950–the present), the period I term *‘Consolidating the field and the anthropology of sport today’*, was when sport was taken up as a significant social phenomenon, worthy of academic inquiry. Dividing the development of the field of the anthropology of sport into two distinct phases is by no means a measure to define certain periods along the lines of strict theoretical or methodological categories, but rather a means to trace themes of change and scholarly works on sport that have contributed to the anthropology of sport developing in the manner it did. These historical time boundaries are fluid and merge with one another. The discipline of the anthropology of sport obviously evolved within a context of political, social and economic trajectories that shaped the role that sport played in modern-day societies. It would be problematic to suggest that the anthropologists in each time phase voiced a unanimous opinion on the place of the anthropology of sport. In other words

although these time periods allow for a neatly bounded conceptualisation of how the sub-discipline developed, it is by no means suggested that these terrains were uncontested, or without conflict. To assume that anthropologists who advocated the study of sport were homogenous, would be misleading. They wrote and came from different contexts, with different conceptual underpinnings.

The focus now shifts to discussing the emergence of sport as a socially significant field of study amongst anthropologists from the late 19th century to the early 21st century.

1.2.1 The beginnings (1870–1950)

In the late 19th century an evolutionist perspective dominated the understanding of culture and occurred within the context of European exploration and expansion. According to Besnier and Brownell (2012:444) “in the early days of the discipline of anthropology, play games and sport were located along an evolutionary continuum from ‘savage’ to ‘civilised’ and anthropologists attempted to record games and sport along with other cultural practices before they disappeared”.

This era can be considered as one of ‘armchair anthropology’, as leading scholars speculated about the primitive world and erected grand evolutionary schemes without ever having to leave the cocoons of their libraries and museums (Barrett, 1996). Those tasks were delegated to travellers, traders and missionaries, who returned to Europe with journals, stories and artefacts of the peoples they encountered (Barrett, 1996:4). Ethnocentrism was the order of the day as there was an assumption that European society was at the centre of civilisation, and any culture that differed from that in Europe was primitive and flawed.

Sport was occasionally mentioned in descriptions of activities in ethnographies and was often of secondary interest (Blanchard, 1995:1). This approach filtered down to the manner in which the meaning of sport was to be understood in relation to those societies studied by anthropologists of the time. Blanchard (1995) notes that sport during this time was understood as game-like activities, with a competitive and physical element and enforced by rules. The founder of British anthropology, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, was one of the first social scientists to recognise the importance of games as a site of scholarly interest. Tylor was a social evolutionist in England from the 1860s to the early 20th century. He was the first anthropologist to take up a position as an academic professor at Oxford in 1896 (Lyons, 2011). Tylor’s (1879) classical article, entitled “The History of the Games” was an attempt to show that games and

the adaption of games can be used as “evidence of diffusion and contact between cultural centres in different parts of the world” (Blanchard, 1995:10).

In Tylor’s other work, entitled “On American lot-games as evidence of Asiatic intercourse before the time of Columbus” (1896) he draws similarities between the ancient Indian game of *pachisi*, and the Mexican game of *patolli*, suggesting that these serve as evidence of pre-Columbian contact between people of the Old and the New Worlds (Blanchard, 1995:11). For Tylor, culture evolved from the simple to the complex and passed through three stages: savagery, barbarism and civilisation (Barrett, 1996:49). During this period sport was treated as a means to analyse broader cultural processes, and although Tylor’s periodic study of play made a valuable contribution to the scant literature on sport at the time, he neglected to generate a theoretical framework to inform future studies on games and sport (Blanchard, 1995).

Ethnographies that focused on sport at the time were scant, but Blanchard (1995) highlights the significance of the work of anthropologist James Mooney of the Bureau of American Ethnology on a Cherokee racket game that was published in 1890. Mooney described the importance of the formal ball game as a community event and the importance of the ball game as a part of Cherokee culture. He also showed how the ball game was synonymous with ritual, mysticism and performance as part of Cherokee culture.

Another scholar, Steward Culin is hailed as making a contribution to the scholarship on sport and games in the late 19th century. Blanchard (1995:13) suggests that Culin’s most important contribution to anthropology in the study of games was his article on games of the North American Indians, published by the Bureau of American Ethnography in 1907. Culin classified and described the games and sporting activities of 225 different native North American tribes, and in so doing contributed to the debate on the origin, evolution and distribution of these games.

Culin was also one of the founders of the American Anthropological Association in 1902. Culin, together with the organisation’s first president, W.J. McGee organised the “Anthropology Days” at the 1904 St Louis World Fair, which was a “scientific” experiment in which the athletic performances of “savages” on display at the fair were recorded for comparison with those of “civilized men” in the Olympic Games (Brownell, 2008, cited in Besnier & Brownell, 2012). Darnell and O’Murray (2008: xvii) note the racial and evolutionary undertones that marked the event:

In 1904 St. Louis, the “tribal games” or Anthropology Days were juxtaposed awkwardly with the third modern Olympic Games. These were grounded in the certainty of Anglo-American racial superiority. The universalism of the ideals of neoclassic revival clashed with non-European entries to the Olympics as well as with the “primitive” anthropological living exhibits.

The living exhibits were designed to illustrate the evolution of humans from “savagery” to “barbarism” to “civilisation”, and attracted almost 3 000 indigenous men and women from all over the world to serve as demonstrators, educators, research subjects and entertainers (Parezo, 2008:59). Parezo (2008:64) suggests that W.J. McGee wanted “to summarize and visualize the science of man” using an evolutionary model that combined biologically based “race-types” with “culture grades” or “culture-stages.” Anthropology’s ultimate goal, according to McGee, was “to trace the course of human progress and classify individuals and peoples in terms of that progress, and thus to learn as much as may be possible of the origin and destiny of Man” (Parezo, 2008:64). The controversy of this experiment assisted in repelling American anthropology from McGee’s evolutionary paradigm and towards the cultural anthropology advocated by his rival, Franz Boas (Parezo, 2008, cited in Besnier & Brownell, 2012:445).

Although anthropometric methods were used at the time to classify people, and the evolutionary scheme was prominent in making sense of cultural difference, it was not accepted unanimously. During the early 20th century, in a response to the evolutionary model, cultural relativism as advocated by the founding father of American anthropology Franz Boas gained recognition

Boas was one of the influential scholars reacting against evolutionism as a means of making sense of cultural diversity. He was associated with historical particularism, which advocated the notion of diffusionism. Barrett (1996:52) notes that “the central idea of diffusionism was that an aspect of culture such as the discovery of the wheel, marital practice, or religious belief tended to spread from one culture to another, eventually becoming integrated into all the cultures in a given geographical area.” Diffusionism also advocated that cultures were collections of elements of ‘traits’ that developed over time through internal development and borrowing, with the latter being the most important (Hammond-Tooke, 1997:21). Culture was therefore not thought of as monolithic, but rather as diffuse and complex. “Diffusionism threw a monkey wrench into the evolutionary scheme, for no longer did it make sense to argue that each culture had to evolve through specific stages in a specific order” (Barrett, 1996:53).

Boas's approach was a refreshing counterpoint to the grand scheme of evolutionists that dominated cultural practices at the time.

Evidently the majority of work on sport at the time was based on racial and evolutionary classification. The event in 1904, the "Anthropology Days" at the St Louis World Fair, was significant as it was supported by leading anthropologists of the time, such as Culin, who maintained that racial and cultural differences could be attributed to differences in sporting achievements. Sport was seen as a means to describe a specific cultural group as either inferior or superior, and was not considered as a means to contribute to the understanding of the variation within cultures as meaningful. This approach meant that sport was used as a classification tool to substantiate evolutionary claims, which was the biological justification of views prevalent at the time. The late 19th and early 20th century was a period in which anthropology as an academic discipline became professionalised. Given the manner in which sport was studied from an evolutionary perspective, one can understand how the study of sport from an anthropological perspective slotted into the dominant theme of evolutionism in the early studies done on sport and games in the early 20th century.

The first half of the 20th century saw only occasional analyses of sport and games appear in the anthropological literature (Blanchard, 1995:14). Of the works published, those dealing with sport and culture included Karl Weule's article on the 'Ethnology of Sport'. Blanchard (1995:14) surmises that Weule argued that the ethnology of sport should have a twofold aim: (1) to trace culture, particularly the sport aspect, back to its beginnings, and (2) to put sport as an item of culture into its proper theoretical perspective. Weule also described the primary sporting events of many primitive societies, and Blanchard (1995) is of the opinion that this is probably Weule's greater contribution, but he is criticised for the explicit racism that informs his view of primitive man.

The ethnographic research of Eldost Best on the Maori in 1924, in which he describes the sport and play activities of the New Zealand group, is also a contribution to the scant literature on sport from an anthropological perspective, as is the British social anthropologist Raymond Firth's article on dart throwing in Tikopia, published in 1931. In 1933 Alexander Lesser published an article on the Pawnee Ghost dance, which Blanchard (1995) hails as one of the best monographs of 20th century American anthropology, dealing with the role of games in the cultural processes of Paiute Indians.

Clearly the published literature on sport in the first few decades of the 20th century dealt with the study of sport being understood as part of the culture of ‘traditional’ societies. Sport was seldom studied as a means to understand the culture of urban, European or American societies during this period. Part of this can be attributed to the fact that anthropological research in the first half of the 20th century was often conducted in the developing world, amongst exotic cultural groups, and it was almost a prerequisite that fieldwork be done in remote settings, where the “other” would be encountered. Momentous historical events such as the outbreak of the First World War and Second World War could also have contributed to sport being considered as of trivial importance in the urban context of a Europe gripped by the reality of war.

From this brief description of the development of sport as an anthropological interest in the late 19th and early 20th century, one can surmise that sport was studied in relation to the dominant evolutionary paradigm of the early stages of the 20th century and that most studies were based on an interest in “the other”, in fieldwork locations far removed from the anthropologist’s daily reality. Dyck (2004:4) notes that “the notion that games and sports might comprise appropriate objects of systematic and comparative anthropological investigation tended to be smothered by a preference for exoticism”. A preference for exoticism, although topical at the time, had diminished within the field of the anthropology of sport as the 20th century drew to an end. Fabian (2007:8) substantiates this point by stating that:

There was a time, when addressed to the anthropological research practice, the answer to the question where would have been: elsewhere. If you were a student of anthropology you would be told to do your anthropology elsewhere; if you were a subject studied by anthropology, the knowledge gained from you would be stored and used elsewhere. Much of this has changed; doing anthropology “here” has become acceptable. An increasing portion of work in our discipline is being done in contemporary societies by native researchers.

This change that Fabian (2007) alludes to has influenced the location of field sites within the field of the anthropology of sport. A plethora of anthropologically informed work on sport done in ‘un-exotic’ settings are today undertaken by anthropologists who are very much part of the culture or sporting phenomenon that they are interested in. The move within the discipline to study ‘the self’ as anthropologically intriguing is highlighted by Clifford and Marcus (1986) in their seminal book, *Writing culture*, which advocates a postmodern position towards the anthropological subject. According to Clifford and Marcus (1986: 23):

Ethnography in the service of anthropology once looked out at clearly defined others, defined as primitive, or tribal, or non-Western or preliterate, or nonhistorical – the list, if extended, soon becomes incoherent. Now ethnography encounters others in relation to itself, while seeing itself as other. Thus an “ethnographic” perspective is being deployed in diverse and novel circumstances.

From this quote it becomes apparent that within the broader field of the discipline of anthropology a definite shift took place, where the “other”, became the “us”. And in doing so, the evolutionary paradigm that dominated anthropological thinking in the late 20th century, which focused on a narrowly defined “other” in terms of being ‘primitive’ and pre-modern, lost its appeal. In terms of how this shift influenced the study of sport is of paramount importance, as sport was no longer a subject of study to inform our understandings of exotic cultures, but became a means to make sense of how sport intersects with the everyday realities of industrialised, ‘modern’ societies.

This shift has enabled anthropologists with an interest in sport to situate themselves within a sporting culture and context with which they may already have much in common. Examples of such works include Brownell’s (1995) work on sport and nationalism in China, Palmer’s (1996) study on the social dynamics of the Tour De France, and Klein’s (1993) study on bodybuilding subcultures. These are a few examples to exemplify the shift that has taken place, and the latter parts of this chapter will focus on literature that has focused on modern sport in urban contexts.

1.2.2 Consolidating the field and the anthropology of sport today (1950 – the present)

If the early period of an anthropological approach to studying sport was marked by evolutionary understandings, then the period 1950 to the present, can be understood as one where the field was consolidated and contested within the broader anthropological theories that emerged during that time. The year 1950 is not a fixed date, but a time frame to hint at developments that occurred in anthropology after the Second World War. Barrett (1996:84) notes that “historical particularism in America and structural functionalism in Britain proved to be remarkably robust theoretical approaches, dominating the discipline up to the Second World War. By the 1950s and 1960s, however, it was clear that anthropology’s theoretical landscape has changed”.

This landscape was appropriated by structuralism, initiated by Levi-Strauss in the 1960s and 1970s in which he “challenged the empirical, positivist tradition, arguing that culture is more like a language or logical system of signs than a biological organism, which had been the

analogy preferred by the structural functionalists” (Barrett, 1996:145). A structural functionalist understanding of sport is founded on the premise that social institutions (of which sport is one) can be understood in terms of their essential functions. Sport can be seen as a social institution which supports other dimensions of the social system, such as law, politics or religion (Blanchard, 1995). For example, a structural functionalist approach to sport would consider sport as a means to an end in that – on an individual level – it could have the function of maintaining a certain level of health, or be used as a means to foster patriotism and national pride on a communal level. On the other hand, sport could be seen as a means of filling the free time of adolescents and through such an approach guide their energies toward ‘constructive’ activities. Bourdieu (1993) picks up on this point by suggesting that sport is an “extremely economical means of mobilizing, occupying and controlling adolescence.” This theoretical approach is often criticised for neglecting to account for conflict and social change.

From a historical perspective the post-World War Two era was one in which colonial empires were disintegrating, and newly independent nations were sceptical of a wave of Western ethnographers, given their historical connection with colonialism, wishing to do research in their independent countries. Kuper (1983:120) notes the growth of scepticism regarding anthropologists in ex-colonies:

The British Social anthropologist is so often an object of suspicion in the ex-colonial countries because he was the specialist in the study of colonial peoples; because by identifying his study in practice as the science of coloured man, he contributed to the devaluation of their humanity.

The process of decolonisation did however create an opportunity to investigate the role that sport served in terms of the association and dissociation of former colonies with the empires (see Appadurai, 1995). Sport was one of the many cultural facets that empires exported during the period of colonisation. Nauright (1997:24) explains that “modern sport emerged in Britain in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, which coincided with its undisputed dominance in world power. The British navy controlled the seas, its shipping tool traded all over the globe. As a result, British sports soon spread to areas of British influence with cricket, horse-racing and varieties of football soon appearing in South America, Africa, India and Australasia.” Sport was a significant part of imperial culture and was used as an important instrument of cultural association and change (Mangan, 1992). Decolonisation had a profound impact, not only on world politics but also on the manner in which sport could be used to

symbolise soft power. For example, ex-colonies took great pride in beating Great Britain at their own sporting exports.

During the period of decolonisation, anthropologists could no longer think of only former colonies as fieldwork sites, but had to turn to their own societies to make sense of how they had perceived themselves in relation to the “Other”. Fabian (2007:11) substantiates this point by suggesting that the recognition of contemporaneity, gained as anthropology was decolonised enabled the discipline to turn its attention to modern societies and to “studying our own societies”.

A new breed of postmodern scholars challenged the epistemological and ethical grounds on which fieldwork had been conducted (Barrett, 1996). Postmodernism, from an anthropological perspective argued that ethnography should be considered as a dialogue, which is complex and out of which meaning and interpretation emerge. As Barrett (1995:153) notes, from a postmodern perspective “culture is regarded as a system of signs and symbols, a complex of meanings, a language – indeed, a text in its own right”. The positionality of the ethnographer and a critical reflection on his or her work as literary texts was a hallmark of postmodernism, which influenced the way in which fieldwork was conceptualised and carried out.

Clearly the mid-20th century marked a change in the manner in which culture was conceptualised by anthropologists. Culture became seen as fluid, multifaceted and immersed in a historical context that shaped it. Abu-Lughod (1991: 470) substantiates the complexity of defining culture by suggesting that “unlike race, and unlike even the nineteenth-century sense of culture as a synonym for civilization (contrasted to barbarism), the current concept allows for multiple rather than binary differences”. The multiple meanings of culture influenced the manner in which sport became considered as a useful vehicle to make sense of cultural variation in modern-day society, as scholars turned to understanding sport in relation to individual and national identity.

Whereas studies of anthropological nature were concerned with traditional sports in the first five decades of the 20th century, the 1950s marked a new interest in modern sports, exemplified by the work of Gluckman (1959) and Frankenberg (1957), both hailing from the anthropology department of Manchester University. This shift in focus on modern as opposed to pre-modern sport is important, as it shows how within the discipline of anthropology the evolutionary approach to understanding culture was questioned and replaced by perhaps more interpretative

and symbolic theories as promoted by influential anthropological scholars, such as Geertz (1972) and Turner (1982) through sport and play.

During the same period the Manchester School of Anthropology gained prominence under the leadership of Max Gluckman. Max Gluckman, the South African born anthropologist, is renowned for his work on African legal systems and the dynamics of local conflict and its possible resolution. Appointed to the chair at Manchester University in 1949 he was instrumental in developing what became known as the “Manchester School”. An avid Manchester United fan he frequently coerced his colleagues and students into attending matches at Old Trafford where their “half-time Seminars” achieved a certain amount of fame in anthropological folklore. His dedication to “the Reds” was such that he was asked to deliver the eulogy on the BBC after the Munich air disaster.

He was also one of the first anthropologists to consider the role that football fandom had on the performance of his home team, Manchester United. In 1959 he published an article in *The Listener*, in which he draws a comparison between the behaviour of the fans at Old Trafford and the performance of the players on the field. Gluckman (1959) surmises that the crowd’s reaction influences the cohesion of a team and can contribute to high levels of anxiety amongst the players, which affects their performance. Gluckman pioneered the study of spectator sports from an anthropological perspective, in making sense of identity, fan behaviour and social conflict as it plays out in English football. His knowledge of football and his public support of Manchester United made him a respected contributor to understanding the dynamics and complexities of football.

Gluckman’s interest in sport trickled down to the influential cohort of students he attracted to Manchester. For example, one of his students, Ronald Frankenberg (1957) did a study of a village in Mid-Wales in which he shows the extent to which a football team symbolises the prestige of a village within a system of villages; and how the managing, running and staffing and financing of such a team can become entangled in the internal divisions and cleavages within a village (Gluckman, 1973). This was of the first work done in anthropology that had considered modern sport to be significant in explaining politics and conflict in modern society. Most of the work that focused on sport prior to the 1950s was concerned with documenting the sporting games of ‘tribal’ societies in an attempt to record these before they died out.

What makes the contribution of Gluckman and Frankenberg so noteworthy is that it wasn’t until three decades later that the anthropology of sport as a discipline and modern sport as a

phenomena became worthy of anthropological study. Besnier and Brownell (2012:446) argue that the result of the modernisation paradigm was that anthropologists ignored sports considered to be “modern” inventions until the shift in the 1980s ended the disciplinary convention of focusing exclusively on cultural practices regarded as pre-modern. In this regard Gluckman’s observations on fan behaviour and sport and conflict was ground-breaking, in that modern sport as a form of anthropological inquiry only really gained momentum in the late 1980s.

Blanchard (1995:23) highlights the year 1959 as particularly significant as an article “Games in Culture” was published by John Roberts, Malcolm Arth, and Robert Bush, in which they made the first systematic attempt to generate a theoretical debate about the role of games and sport in society. Their analysis shows that games of strategy are associated with the level of social organisation complexity. It wasn’t until the 1970s, however, that the seminal article by renowned anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1972) on Balinese cockfighting promoted an interpretative approach to studying sport with “deep” meaning that placed sport at the centre of understanding culture.

Besnier and Brownell (2012:445) note that with that article Geertz turned “functionalism on its head” by stating that the primary function of the cockfight is interpretive, rather than functional, as it was a story the Balinese tell themselves about themselves. The 1970s and early 1980s was a crucial period in which attempts were made to define the anthropology of sport as an academic field, by scholars such as Blanchard and Cheska (1985). During this period, there was a renewed interest in understanding sport as a modern phenomenon rather than focusing on the “traditional” or “folk” sports (Besnier & Brownell, 2012).

A specific event, the launching of the Association of the Anthropological Study of Play in the United States in 1974, contributed to establishing the anthropology of sport as a discipline. A decade later, a conference attracting leading theorists, organised by Korean anthropologist Cho Kang-hui and the American academic John MacAloon prior to the Seoul Olympic Games of 1988, was seminal in advancing sport as a form of anthropological inquiry (Besnier & Brownell, 2012). During this period Blanchard and Cheska (1985) published the first book that defined the field, entitled: *The Anthropology of Sport: An introduction*. Their work was criticised for adapting a biological model to understand the purpose of sport and play. This adaptive approach seemed outdated at a time when scholars were turning to more cultural approaches to understand social behaviour (Besnier & Brownell, 2012). Whereas earlier work in sport from an anthropological perspective dealt with ‘pre-modern’ sport as a means to

understand cultural variation, the 1980s marked a period in which modern sport was placed on the academic research agenda.

Evidently there was a shift in terms of fields of study that seemed appropriate for anthropological inquiry, which marked a break with anthropologists focusing exclusively on pre-modern societies. This shift moved scholarly enquiry away from a focus on pre-modern societies, to an interest in understanding modern society, with which sport intersected in fascinating ways.

Guttman's (1978) book, *From ritual to record: The nature of modern sports* made an important contribution to understanding this shift and the evolution of sport. Guttman's premise is based on the notion that pre-modern sport was associated with ritual, whereas modern sport places an emphasis on achievement and is therefore solidified through records and economic productivity, which moves away from sport as being a form of ritual. The notion that pre-modern sport is a site of ritual and modern sport less so, as a result of secularisation, has been contested. As Rowe (2008:133) argues:

The relationship between ancient and modern sports is not clarified by the ritual-secular distinction (assuming the legitimacy of the distinction). One can concede that modern sport are secular phenomena, clearly separated from modern religious institutions, that they are driven by contemporary commercialization, and that increasingly they incorporate the innovations of modern technology. But we cannot distinguish ancient sports from modern sports on these premises. Ancient sports were equally exploited and supported by the commercial elements of the society in which they were embedded. They too, took advantage of the technological achievements of the day. Secularization is a feature of modern culture (even modern religion has to some degree been secularized) and may have diluted some of the richness of a once-integrated ritual context, but it has not necessarily compromised the essence of ritual liminality, which I argue remains at the core of contemporary sport.

Rowe (2008) thus contests the notion that modern sport is not a form of ritual, and Birrell (1981) has taken a similar stance. Birrell (1981) contends that sport is a legacy of ritual and although the religious meaning of sport activities may have been lost, it still creates new meanings. Gluckman and Gluckman (1977) have however been hesitant to confer ritual status on modern sport, contending that sport does not involve predictable outcomes, whereas rituals do and therefore it is problematic to think of sport as a ritualistic phenomenon. According to

them “despite the importance of rules which control; actions into what might be called formal and conventional patterns, and despite the fact that games embody moral principles, it would be missing essential differences to bring them under the rubric of ‘ritual’” (Gluckman & Gluckman, 1977:241). This contestation of sport as a form of modern ritual has placed anthropologists, who have traditionally been interested in issues of rituals, at the forefront of making sense of sport’s place in modern-day society.

As noted earlier, the anthropological studies on sport shifted from focusing on ‘primitive’ peoples to those living in urban areas, and sport was a means through which to probe cultural and societal matters. To borrow from Besnier and Brownell (2012:446), “western sports in many parts of the world occupy a privileged position in the imagination precisely because of their identification with modernity”. It is therefore surprising that although sport was regarded as a means of understanding cultures, it wasn’t until the early 1990s that the anthropology of sport was taken seriously.

An important contribution that paved the way for the anthropological study of modern sport was a book by Alan Klein, *Sugarball: The American game, the Dominican dream* (1991), which is claimed as paving the way for the legitimisation of the anthropology of sport (Thompson, 1991). Klein (1991) employed anthropological field techniques to show how baseball was a vehicle for American hegemony, but at the same time a means through which Dominican people resisted that hegemony. For Klein, baseball is both an outside influence and a form of resistance (Blanchard, 1995:75). Klein noted the milieu that he as a sports anthropologist entered into in the early 1990s with the publication of his book by stating that, “nobody was doing full-blown, book-length studies of a sport culture until the 1990s. And even the few pieces that were published were usually a side interest to the anthropologist’s primary research. Nobody was investing their career in the study of sport. No one identified themselves as a sports anthropologist” (Klein, cited in Gmelch, 2008:15).

The 1990s till today has seen a plethora of scholarship develop that use sport as a lens to make sense of cultural issues. This current phase, I suggest, has been influenced by a shift in anthropological methodologies and research trends where fieldwork is conducted ‘at home’, amongst the everyday life of people in urban settings, with whom sport intersects in fascinating ways. This shift has seen ethnographically informed work done on issues of gender (Klein, 1993; Bolin & Granskog, 2003), nationalism (Brownell, 1995, 2008; Klein 1991, 1997, 2008; Kelly, 2006), corporeality (Wacquant, 2004; Howe, 2001, 2004, 2009), globalisation (Armstrong & Guillianotti, 1997; Klein, 2006), football hooliganism (Armstrong, 1998), ritual

(Archetti, 1998), children's sports (Dyck, 2012) and introductory texts on the anthropology of sport (Dyck, 2004; Sands, 1999, 2001; Palmer, 2002). Although sport had been studied as a means to understand human behaviour prior to this period by scholars such as Geertz (1972), Turner (1982), Bourdieu (1978, 1988), MacAloon (1984), Guttman (1978), Frankenberg (1958) and Gluckman (1977), it was not until the early 1990s that the anthropology of sport caught up with the approaches outlined by these scholars (Besnier & Brownell, 2012).

Sociologists have also been at the forefront of studying sport. Prominent sociologists have drawn on sport in their work, most notably Norbert Elias's (1982/1939) ground-breaking book on "the civilizing process". Elias was a proponent of figurational or 'process sociology' and his major work, *The civilizing process: State formation and civilization* was written before the Second World War, but only published in English in the late 1970s. His other major work on leisure included the book, *Quest for excitement: Sport and leisure in the civilizing process* (1986), which he co-authored with Eric Dunning. Process sociology views society as comprised of associative webs of interdependent people (Giulianotti, 2005:138). According to Elias (1987:85), figuration is a "generic concept for the pattern which interdependent human beings, as groups of individuals, form with each other". Sport is used by Elias to illustrate the figurational process. Methodologically he argues that sociologists should "perceive ourselves as people among other people, and involved in games with others" (Elias, 1978:121). Social interdependencies ensure that games and sports cannot be conceptually disconnected from the wider social sphere (Giulianotti, 2005:139) Figurational sociology as promoted by Elias and Dunning (1986) has been prominent in studies of football hooliganism in Europe, where the civilising process of sport has been used to understand the behaviour of football fans (see Dunning, Murphy & Williams, 1988, and Dunning, Murphy & Waddington, 1991).

More recently in Europe, a research collaboration between several universities has seen the Football Research in an Enlarged Europe (FREE) project established. Its overall objective is to develop a better understanding of football as a highly relevant social and cultural phenomenon in contemporary Europe. The research strands that the FREE focuses on are those of memory and competition from a historical perspective; feminisation and identity from a socio-anthropological perspective, and socio-political research on governance and the public sphere. The anthropology of sport as a formal discipline has cemented its place in scholarly research through initiatives such as the FREE project, whose "bottom up" approach through ethnographic research on sport, has placed sport and the possibility of studying it from an anthropological perspective at the forefront of research endeavours.

This overview of the literature of anthropologically informed work on sport shows how the discipline took form alongside broader processes within the discipline of anthropology. A historical understanding of how the anthropology of sport has developed enables me to comment on the rather scant literature that is available in South Africa and that has been written from an anthropological perspective. Most of the literature on the anthropology of sport hails from America, Europe and Australia.

1.3 ANTHROPOLOGY OF SPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is a country with great cultural diversity, and sport has been central to an understanding issues of identity and belonging in such a diverse nation. Most of the scholarly work on sport has been undertaken by sports historians, who have studied the manner in which politics, cultural identities and sport intersect. This is not surprising as sport and politics were a debated and contested topic during the apartheid era in South Africa. Black and Nauright (1998: 2) note the symbiotic relationship between sport and politics by suggesting that “it is no longer possible for any serious social commentator to posit a separation between sport and politics”. The South African sports boycott, is one such example that provides the context in which sport, race and politics have intersected since the 1960s.

The international sports boycott, which prevented South African national teams from competing against other countries, was a reaction of the international community to the discriminatory racial laws in South Africa. The sports boycott, which lasted for three decades from the early 1960s to the early 1990s was a means to force the Nationalist Government to succumb to the pressure of growing isolation from the international community. Nixon (1992:75) notes the impact this strategy had on public opinion, as a survey in 1977 showed that white South Africans ranked the lack of international sport as one of the three most damaging consequences of apartheid. Most international federations lifted their boycotts in 1992, after the Nationalist Party had repealed the legislative foundations of apartheid. They claimed that the boycott was successful, in that sport had triumphed over racism (Booth, 2003:491).

It is with this diffusion between politics and sport that many scholars from the social sciences have used sport as a tool to make sense of society. The cultural significance and complexities of sport have been documented by social historians who have focused on specific sports and the cultural ramifications thereof. These works include Black and Naurights’s book *Rugby and the South African nation* (1998); Grundlingh, Odendaal and Spies’ book *Beyond the tryline: Rugby and South African society* (1995); Booth’s book, titled: *The race game: Sport and*

politics in South Africa (1998); Nauright's book: *Sport, culture and identities in South Africa* (1997); Archer and Bouillon's book *The South African game* (1982); Jarvie's book *Class, race and sport in South Africa's political economy* (1985); and Odendaal, Sampson and Reddy's book, *The Blue Book: a history of Western Province cricket, 1890 – 2011*. Aswin Desai has also published two books that have contributed to sport scholarship in South Africa. These include: *The race to transform: sport in post-apartheid South Africa* (2010), and *Blacks in whites: a century of cricket struggles in KwaZulu-Natal* (2002), which he co-edited with Vishnu Padayachee, Krish Reddy and Goolam Vahed. The football historian Peter Alegi has contributed significantly to football literature in South Africa. His publications include: *Laduma! Soccer, politics and society in South Africa* (2004); *African soccer-scapes: how a continent changed the world's game* (2010); *South Africa and the global game: apartheid football and beyond* (2012), edited with Chris Bolsman; and *Africa's World Cup: critical reflections on play, patriotism, spectatorship and space* (2013).

This list is by no means exhaustive, but points to the research that has been conducted on sport from a historical perspective in the past two decades in South Africa. On close inspection of the literature, it becomes apparent that rugby, cricket and soccer, three mainly male dominated sports, have filled the literary landscape on sport. These works, although they provide insightful contextual and background information on the role of sport in South African societies, have often overlooked the individual life stories and histories of the sportsmen and sportswomen who have placed South African sport on the international stage. Such endeavours have been left to writers of biographies, who are often opportunistic in their aim of making a quick buck soon after a sports star has retired. Sports biographies do offer the reader insight into the personal life of these sports stars, but do not go as far as to link those experiences to broader societal issues.

This study therefore differs from most of the literature that has been conducted on sport in South Africa, as I am concerned with the individual life histories of elite athletes as these relate to their experience of retiring from sport, rather than with broader macro-societal forces. That is not to say issues of politics, race and gender do not inform these experiences, but rather that an inductive approach to understanding these experiences yields a personal history of sporting experience. These experiences have been shaped by not only the history of the sporting discipline that they practised, but also by broader historical trends that have enabled them to compete internationally.

In other words, whereas historical literature on sport contextualises the lived history of the elite athletes, I hope to move beyond that in focusing on individual life histories within a competitive elite sports culture. The words of Ortner (2003:277) paraphrasing Karl Marx sum up the approach that I adopt: “history makes people, but people make history” and that this is “perhaps the profoundest truth of social life”. I am therefore interested in the experiences of individuals of retiring from competitive sport within these larger histories of sport and politics in South Africa.

The literature that has been published on sport in South African anthropology is rather limited. An exception to this trend, is Norman Scotch’s work on magic, sorcery and football amongst the Zulu. In 1961 Scotch published a paper titled ‘Magic, sorcery, and football among urban Zulu: a case of reinterpretation under acculturation’ in the *Journal of Conflict Resolutions* (Scotch, 1961). Scotch’s primary research during a two-year stint in South Africa in 1958 and 1959 was concerned with hypertension amongst the Zulu, but in his work on football he considered the intersection between football, sorcery and magic. Scotch (1961:71) found that Zulu football teams employed *inyangas*, or Zulu doctors, to strengthen their own team through ritual and magic to beat the opponents.

Interestingly, one of South Africa’s most influential rugby administrators and players, in the form of Danie Craven (1910–1993), received his PhD in Ethnology (Volkekunde) from Stellenbosch University in 1935, under the supervision of Werner Eiselen (who later became the secretary of Native Affairs, under Hendrik Verwoerd). Craven went to Stellenbosch in 1929 with the intent of becoming a theologian. After obtaining his BA he changed his course of study to Volkekunde and received his Master of Arts, cum laude, in Ethnology in 1933. Dobson (1994:25) notes that an incident that occurred in a Springbok match against Scotland in 1932 – where Craven got a blow to his vocal chords – influenced his decision to defer to Volkekunde. Dobson (1994:26) proposes that the reason for Craven’s move to Volkekunde was his affinity to General Jan Smuts, who visited Stellenbosch and encouraged students to study anthropology to “help find the solution to the native question.”

Craven’s PhD study dealt with racial classification of South African blacks. He was the Springbok captain in 1937/1938 and served as the president of the Rugby Board from 1956 until his death in 1993. He was an influential administrator and known as “Mr Rugby”, in South African circles, and is commemorated in a statue at Stellenbosch University’s sports grounds and through the nation-wide schools rugby competition known as “Craven Week” (‘see Figure 1). A pavilion at the Newlands Rugby Stadium is also named after him. His passion for the

game is manifested in his authoring several handbooks on rugby, and towards the end of his academic life in 1978 he obtained a third doctorate on the origin and evolution of sport. His interest in cultural variety informed his understanding of sport, as Booth (1998) notes that in a speech in 1959 Craven claimed that ‘profound anthropological studies’ showed that New Zealand Maori’s were innately superior to black Africans. According to Booth (1998), Craven never ceased talking about blacks and his mind never escaped notions of ‘different tribes’ and ‘different ways’. It can be argued that Craven’s academic roots in Volkekunde on both undergraduate and postgraduate level, initiated his interest in cultural variation and he considered sport as a useful vehicle to make sense of cultural difference.

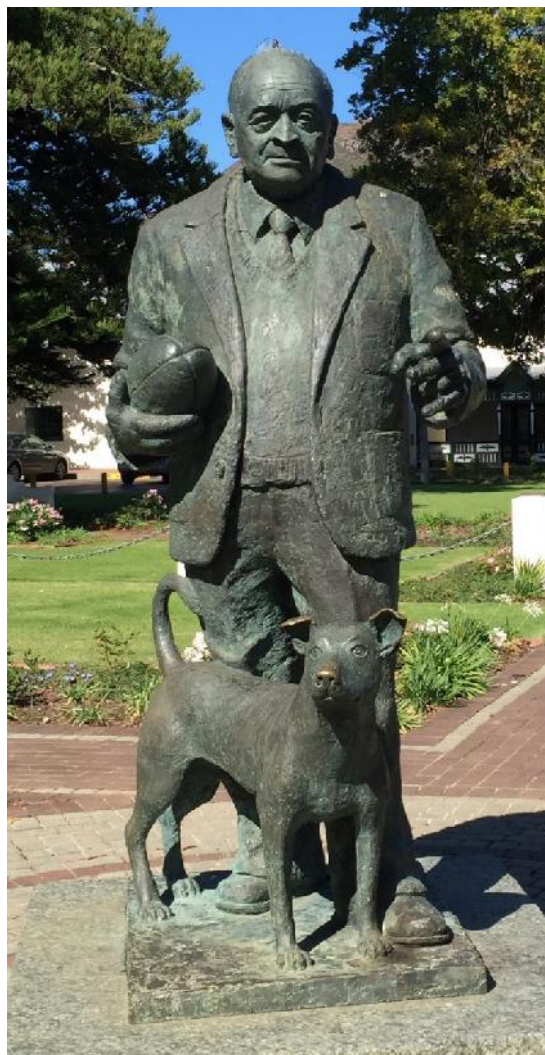


Figure 1. Danie Craven’s statue with his dog “Bliksem” at Stellenbosch University’s sports grounds

Source: Author

Social anthropology, known as Volkekunde, was taught at South African Afrikaans-speaking universities since the 1920s. Volkekunde, as Sharpe (1981:17) notes was an intrinsic manifestation of an Afrikaner outlook on life and fed into the conceptualisation of South Africa's segregate racial policies. Volkekunde supported a racist polity through teaching essentialist, biological and evolutionist notions of culture. It stressed pluralism and relativism and proposed segregation as a way to recognise, encourage and preserve African culture (Booth, 1998). The separate development plan initiated by the Nationalist Party in 1957 was built on the premise that each of South Africa's ethnic groups would develop along its own trajectory, and therefore needed to develop separately, in their specific homelands.

Craven's interest in sport and cultural difference undeniably influenced his philosophy on sport and race, which was often embedded in perceived racist undertones. He is quoted, for example, as saying in 1976 that 'no black will ever wear a Springbok jersey' (Booth, 1998: 25). The Springbok jersey during apartheid was a symbol of Afrikaner, masculine dominance, and rugby was seen as the sport that represented Afrikaner unity. However, to label Craven as a staunch supporter of apartheid policies would be misleading, as his approach to sport and politics was more complex. For example, between 1982 and 1991 Craven became active in organising more than 314 rugby clinics for 88 000 children from all races, with the intention of developing talent in smaller towns across the country to feed into senior teams. Craven saw the value of sport and especially rugby as a glue for communal identity, as he stated at the time that "the rugby ground is only a starting point of an educational process embodying the whole community. Rugby is a communal affair" (Dobson, 1994:224).

He was therefore acutely aware of the underlying social significance of sport, and the unifying aspects brought forth through Craven saw the value of sport and especially rugby indeed becoming a glue for communal identity. Craven's interest extended beyond the actual games to all those watching and playing them, as he was cognizant of the unifying aspects brought forth through sport spectatorship. In 1977 he responded to a letter from one of his admirers, in which he claimed "If only people can realize rugby is a medicine, not only for the players, but for the spectators and when we have Internationals in this country they are in actual fact reunions of thousands and thousands of people. It boils down to this that such occasions take people away from themselves, from the routine work and from boredom and anybody that gets away from himself gets a greater benefit than is generally realized. People in mental hospitals are mainly there because they cannot get away from themselves" (South African Rugby Board Archives, Craven Collection, Box 1.17 Craven to Myers, 13 September 1977). Evidently

Craven was aware of the potential of sport spectatorship to act as a form of “communitas” in which a group of supporters can have a shared experience, which allows them to enter the liminal space of breaking away from the routine and boredom of work, and in return derive benefit from such an experience. Communitas, a term coined by anthropologist Victor Turner (1969, 1982) is an intense community spirit, the feeling of great social equality, solidarity and togetherness, and is a characteristic of people experiencing liminality together. This liminal space, as suggested by Craven, is the medicine that enables people to get away from themselves and serves as a form of camaraderie. For Craven rugby was more than just a sport, it was an experience on an individual and communal level. He recognised the mystical power of sport and related to the game on a spiritual level. This is evident from notes he wrote on the ‘Soul of the Game’, which state the following:

It may sound strange to assert that rugby, or any game for that matter, has a soul. But it has. The soul does not die. Neither does the soul of rugby die. There is only one difference between the soul of man and the soul of rugby... It is the Godliness in man which does not die, for it is part of God. The soul of the game in contrast is the law of God engrained in everything that exists and which has a potency for development which has no end. When that potency is discovered it must be developed and will not develop if incorrectly used (South African Rugby Board Archives, Undated private notes, Box B 1.17, Craven Collection, Stellenbosch).

Clearly Craven was given to reflect on the significance of rugby. As this excerpt shows he related to the game not only on a functional level, but used it as a means to make sense of human immortality. For him the soul of a person and the soul of rugby live on, beyond the earthly world. His fixation with the game on various levels gave him certain ‘fame’ amongst rugby followers.

Craven’s stature as a rugby guru saw him take on the role of mentor and advisor, not only to the elite of the game, but also to young aspiring rugby players. The South African Rugby Board archives have masses of letters from boys who played for their school or provincial team, in which they request from him everything from autographs to conditioning programmes, and from advice about coaching the game to player’s regalia in the form of rugby jerseys and ties. His interest in tracing the evolution of games was carried over to his interest in tracing the personal histories of players. He accumulated detailed kinship charts/family trees of Springbok rugby players, and recorded statistics on biographical details of Springbok rugby players (see

Figure 2 and 3). There are over a hundred files on specific rugby players, in which he recorded their family lineage. He went about collecting family history data of players by sending out an information sheet requesting the family members of players provide information on the players' lineage. His office boasted a map of South Africa on which drawing pins were inserted to indicate the geographical areas from where Springbok rugby players descended.

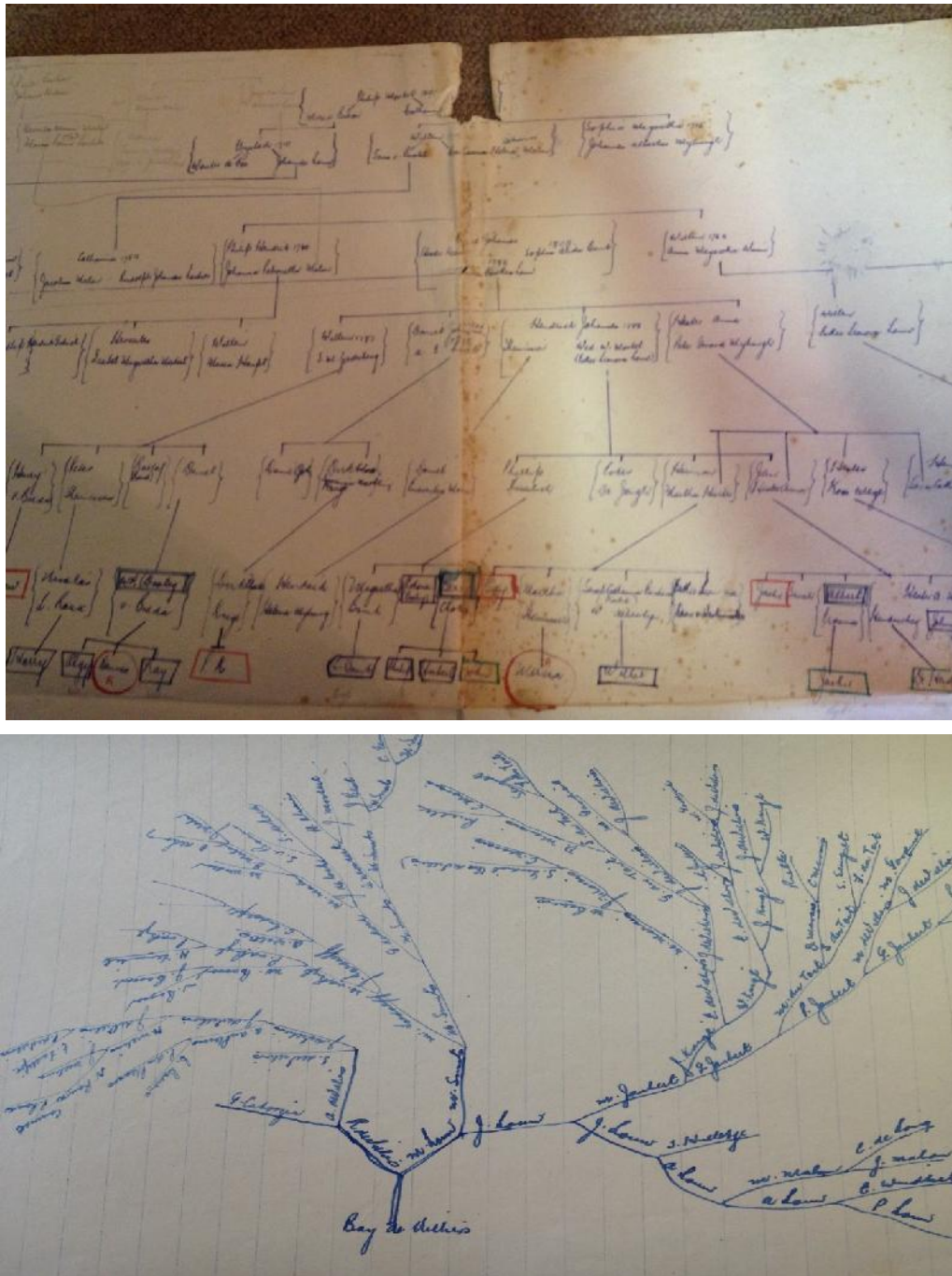


Figure 2. Examples of family trees (kinship charts) of rugby players produced by Danie Craven

Source: South African Rugby Board Archives, Box B 1.17, Craven Collection, Stellenbosch

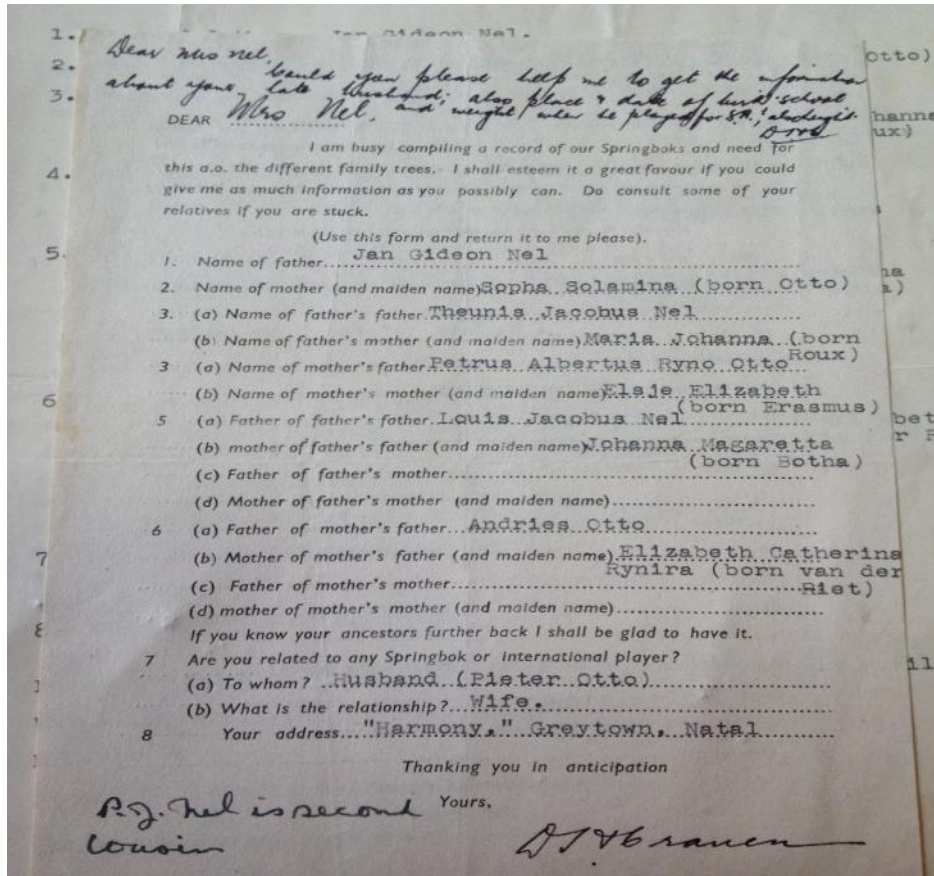


Figure 3. Example of a letter sent to family members of rugby players, requesting information about family lineage.

Source: South African Rugby Board Archives,
Box B 1.17, Craven Collection, Stellenbosch

If one takes into account that the era when Craven did his PhD in Anthropology was one in which the notion of kinship was a prevalent research concern, then Craven's interest in creating detailed family trees and descendent charts of Springbok rugby players can only be a result of his training and application of anthropological skills to sport. Kinship has historically been central to the discipline of anthropology. As Carsten (2004:10) notes, "for the leading figures of early and mid-20th century British Social Anthropology – Brian Malinowski, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Edward Evans Prichard and Meyer Fortes – kinship was central to the discipline. The reason for this was that these authors were attempting to understand the basis for orderly functioning of small-scale societies in the absence of governmental institutions and states. They saw kinship as constituting the political structure and providing the basis for social continuity in stateless societies."

Craven's idea to plot the genealogy of players was probably acquired from his training in Volkekunde and his PhD supervisor, Werner Eiselen, who himself published a survey in 1928 of preferential marriage among the Bantu-speakers in South Africa. In this study Eiselen plotted the distribution of various forms, of preferential marriage, attempting to explain them all as rising out of the practice of *labola* (Hammond-Tooke, 1997:59). Bank (2015) has stressed the importance of masculinity amongst Eiselen's graduate students as almost all of them were men, came from farming backgrounds, went to Afrikaans schools, came to Stellenbosch at a young age and belonged to Stellenbosch University's BTK (Berg en Toer Klub) or Outdoor Society, of which Eiselen was the head or *Kaptein*.

Although Craven's focus in rugby and genealogy was not on a small scale-society per se, he made the connection between family heritage and sport, a connection that was brought about by his training and understanding of anthropology. In a sense Craven's research on the lineage patterns of Springbok teams illustrates his consciousness of how the quality of a rugby player was not only determined by his physical capabilities and skill, but was also informed by his personal history, family lineage, genetic make-up and social conditions that contribute to a high level of athletic ability.

Craven's knowledge and expertise of the game of rugby extended far beyond the technicalities and a general interest in the game, as these examples show how his schooling in anthropology made him acutely aware of the potential of sport to act as a catalyst for an understanding of why people partake in sport and where players come from – which can be considered as a novel social insight, one fuelled by his interest in anthropology.

He applied such anthropological insights, at the time, not only to his personal fascination with the family histories of players, but was also an acute observer during his travels as player and coach. The Springbok Tour to New Zealand in 1937 serves as an example to draw attention to Craven's insight and interest in cultural variations. The tour was dogged with controversy surrounding the question as to whether the Springboks should play against a Maori team.

The Springboks played three matches in Gisborne, Rotorau and Auckland. The team had frequent interactions with Maoris, both on and off the field. Craven, the vice-captain of the Springbok team at the time, made a frank admission after having had frequent contact with Maori players and administrators, by stating that "it is in the South African blood to be prejudiced against natives, because the natives we have are very primitive. It would be ridiculous to compare them with the Maoris. To be candid, we came here with some prejudices

against the Maoris. I am glad to say that prejudice has been removed as a result of our tour to Rotorau where we were able to see the Maori at home and enjoy their genuine hospitality and kindness” (Ryan, 2005:120). He maintained close relationships with some of the Maori families he had befriended during the tour and continued to make private visits to Rotorua to visit them (Ryan, 2005). Craven had obtained his PhD in social anthropology two years prior to the 1937 tour, and his outspokenness about his appreciation of Maori culture and his interest in culture in general, is indicative of Craven’s academic roots in anthropology on both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

In 1988, Craven travelled to Harare with rugby administrator Louis Luyt⁴ to have discussions with the exiled African National Congress (ANC) about the way forward for rugby integration. At the time Craven argued that the route for South Africa’s readmission to international rugby was through Africa.

Dobson (1994:135) maintains that Craven remained detached from politics in the public domain, but that this does not mean that he was not interested in politics. According to Dobson (1994:135), “he [Craven] actually took an intense interest in politics, as he did in all facets of South African life, but his political outlook was naive”. Evidently, Craven’s status as a player and administrator, academic and reluctant political commentator was shaped through his involvement in South African rugby. It would however be an oversimplification to suggest that Craven was overtly racist, as these instances of his initiatives to make rugby a sport playable by all reveal. His interest in sport was not only limited to his role as an administrator and player, as his academic record proves his versatility in applying sport to different disciplines.

In 1964 Craven completed an MA in psychology on sport and personality types. His interest in the psychological aspects of sport was furthered when he completed his second doctorate in psychology in 1973 through the University of Pretoria. His dissertation dealt with games and sport as a supportive therapy in the treatment of chronically hospitalised psychiatric patients. In 1978 he went on to complete another PhD in sport science entitled, *The Evolution of Major Games*. In this research study he traced the evolution of major games or sports to their root of origin. The purpose of his PhD was to compare and synthesise historical data about major

⁴ Luyt was a successful businessman and made his fortune as CEO of Triomf Fertilizers, in the early 1970s. As a former provincial rugby player for Transvaal, and later President of the Transvaal Rugby Football Union (TRFU), he was instrumental in promoting the business interests of the sport in South Africa. He was elected president of SARFU in March 1994 and played a key role in negotiating with rugby unions in the early 1990s, contributing to rugby becoming a fully professional sport by 1996.

games and in doing so find out where these games were played, by whom, and at what historical time. In his work he classified and described what he termed four sport ‘families’ which shared similar characteristics and rules. Those included racket, target, batting and goal families.

Craven had a definite interest in difference and variation across cultures and was interested in how that would manifest itself through sport. He also published a book in 1980 entitled *Die Groot Rugby Gesin van die Maties* (The Big Rugby Family of the Maties), which was a history of the Stellenbosch University rugby team and highlighted the social connections Craven had built up through rugby in the University town of Stellenbosch. He was also a frequent contributor to the sports pages of the Afrikaans newspaper in the Western Cape, *Die Burger* and had published many handbooks on coaching rugby. From Craven’s academic record it becomes apparent that his interest in sport and cultural variation saw him apply anthropological insights into the manner in which different sports developed over time, which probably makes him one of the first South African anthropologists who saw sport as a useful vehicle to make sense of cultural variation. Craven, or Doc Craven as he was known, was the recipient of four doctorates, three of which he completed and one of which was an honorary doctorate awarded to him in 1979 by the University of Stellenbosch.

In one of the more recent biographies on Craven, written by Dobson (1994:20). Dobson anecdotally refers to a typical conversation about Craven that could take place in certain quarters in South Africa, and would go something like this:

“That man Craven hasn’t a brain on his head.”

“But hasn’t he several degrees?”

“Yes, but all in rugby. Hardly an academic achievement.”

“But he’s a university professor, isn’t he?”

“Oh, yes – at Stellenbosch. That’s like being a high school teacher. Anyway, they’re so mad about rugby at Stellenbosch they’d do anything to get the great high priest of rugby there – including dishing out professorships for all sorts of tinpot subjects. He’s probably professor of rugby!”

From this excerpt it is clear that the notion of Craven being a ‘professor in rugby’ and the idea of him having several degrees in rugby and that that is ‘hardly an academic achievement’, trivialises the importance that Craven placed on sport as a means through which to make sense of society and the manner in which games and sport evolved. It does however show how Craven

embodied rugby and immersed himself in the roles of player, administrator, coach and academic. Such statements highlight the probable consensus at the time that ‘serious’ studies are those concerned with issues relating to politics, economics and the ‘hard sciences’, and that sport is the ultimate form of ‘soft science’. Such assumptions have become less prevalent, however, in that there is now a significant scholarship concerned with the social significance of sport. If being a ‘professor in rugby’ was seen in a mediocre light in the 1970s (the decade in which Craven received two doctorates), then Craven’s position as one of the first South African sports anthropologists would be undermined, as he was in fact among the few academics and practitioners of the time who deemed sport as both psychologically and anthropologically significant in understanding human behaviour.

As alluded to earlier the anthropology of sport as a disciplinary field only gained momentum in the 1990s in other parts of the world (America, Canada, Europe), but if one considers the context of anthropologists in South Africa who had a vested interest in sport as a cultural phenomenon, then Max Gluckman (the South African born British anthropologist) and Danie Craven can be considered as pioneers of sport studies from an anthropological perspective.

Anthropologically informed work has however also been done by postgraduate students interested in sport and society in the 1950s and 1960s. Not surprisingly the work done on sport at Volkekunde departments focused on the leisure activities of the African population groups. As alluded to earlier anthropological research during this time focused mostly on understanding different cultures, or “the other”. For example, Hanekom’s (1958) thesis titled *Ontspanning en vryetydsbesteding by die Bantoe van Suid-Afrika*, completed at the University of the Orange Free State, was concerned with the leisure activities of an urban African community in Bloemfontein. Hanekom studied the types of leisure activities that the community practised and the institutions that supported and organised such activities. His findings suggest that sport and leisure during ‘free’ time was practised for health and social reasons as well as being a means to educate the community and to combat crime (Hanekom, 1958:87).

In Natal, Magubane (1963) completed his MA at the University of Natal, and his study was concerned with African voluntary organisations and how they intersect with sport and politics in an urban African community in Durban. His focus was mostly on voluntary soccer clubs and the history of soccer organisations for Africans during that time, and his study was done under the supervision of Leo and Hilda Kuper. More recently, the archival work of Badenhorst (2010) investigates the role players who were involved in organising African sport in Johannesburg from the period 1920 to 1960. Badenhorst (2010:119) suggests that “sport [then], was

organized within a racial ideology as one non-coercive tool of domination to teach the values necessary for successful urbanization and to build bridges between the rural and urban, the ‘tribal’ and ‘detrribalised’ sections of society.”

Examples of more contemporary literature that has been produced by anthropologists on South African sport include the work of Anderson, Bielert and Jones (2004). They take an anthropological approach in showing that an “ethnographic study of South African sport [can be] fruitful for identifying statements of reconciliation and of difference, for maintaining, destroying and substituting boundaries, in order to judge the state of the nation along some continuum of co-operation and resentment, resistance and release”.

Although their main focus to substantiate this claim is on soccer, they also look at rugby and cricket as forms of “whiteness”. Rubin’s (2013) research on rugby in former model C schools shows how rugby has become an “important index of certainty” for white South Africans in post-apartheid South Africa, and Fletcher’s (2010) work on race and racial discourse in South African football fandom shows through ethnographic fieldwork on soccer supporters clubs in Johannesburg that although South African football culture is shaped along a racial divide, it is racially and ethnically more diverse than usually recognised.

Cora Burnett’s extensive research on sport in South Africa, has covered a range of topics, from the influences of socialisation on elite athletes (Burnett, 2006a) to issues relating to the use of sport as a development tool in South Africa (Burnett, 2006b, 2006c, 2010, 2012) and to the cultural dimensions of children’s play and games (Burnett, 2003) and indigenous games in South Africa (Burnett, 2004). She has also studied the impact of football on the socialisation of female student athletes in South Africa (Clarke & Burnett, 2011). Burnett is probably one of the most widely published scholars in South Africa on a range of issues related to sport. Her background in social anthropology informs her work in understanding cultural dimensions related to sport, but none of her research, nor that of any anthropologist doing work in South Africa has dealt specifically with the ‘afterlife’ of elite sportspeople.

This study hopes to fill the literary gap on sports retirement by sketching out the tensions and contradictions within an elite sports culture in South Africa. This study therefore seeks to draw from an anthropological understanding of how people make sense of the experience of retiring from competitive sport and how that experience is informed by the elite sports culture which often dictated the lives of the sportsmen and women of this study. The latter parts of this chapter will substantiate the claim that there is a need for a study on sports retirement from an

anthropological perspective, but in order to make such a claim an overview of the literature that has been published on sports retirement, mostly by psychologists, will be provided.

1.4 RESEARCH ON RETIREMENT FROM COMPETITIVE SPORT: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

Considering that retirement from sport is a holistic experience, meaning that it has a social, physical as well emotional and psychological impact on the retiree from sport, there has been a plethora of literature devoted to understanding the experience of athletic retirement from a psychological perspective. Psychologists are often interested in the emotive factors and in the stressors associated with a transition from one role to another, and in the coping mechanisms used to adjust to a post-athletic life.

Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee (2004:8) note that “in the field of sport psychology the concept of transition was introduced in the wake of psychologists and social scientists interested in the 1970s – early 1980s in how (former) athletes coped with the event of retirement from high-level competitive and professional sports”. The research on athletic retirement from a sports psychology perspective has evolved in different phases. Earlier works used the study of thanatology (the study of death and dying) and gerontology (the study of the process of ageing) to compare the experience of sports retirement to the processes of death and aging.

The ‘social death’ model was also implemented, which implied that athletic retirement is comparable to the loss of social functioning, isolation, and ostracism (Wylleman, Lavallee & Alfermann, 1999). This approach is problematic, as athletes who retire continue to function in different roles in society. This thesis shows how athletes experience a certain death of identity after sports retirement, but that their legacies live on in symbolic ways, through museums and heritage practices.

The use of thanatology involved describing athletic retirement in the series of stages experienced when facing death (Kubler-Ross, 1969). These phases include “denial and isolation, in which athletes initially refuse to acknowledge the inevitability of their career termination; anger, in which retiring athletes become disturbed at the overall changing situation; bargaining, in which they try to negotiate for a lengthened career in sport; depression, in which they experience a distress reaction to retirement; and acceptance, in which retirees eventually come to accept their career transition” (Wylleman et al., 2004: 9). Thanatological models were criticised in particular because of the lack of similarity between terminal illness

and career termination (e.g. Gordon, 1995; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998).

There has been a paradigm shift in the sport psychology literature on sports retirement. Where earlier studies considered retirement as a singular event comparable to social death and experienced in a negative light, contemporary studies emphasise retirement as a process, which may lead to a sense of liberation from sport and considers sports retirement to have both positive and negative connotations (see Jodai & Nogawa, 2012 for an overview of literature related to sports retirement). Coakley (1983:2) suggests that sports retirement can be seen as a transition through which a person leaves the constraining context of work and enters the liberating context of leisure.

Seen in this light, sports retirement is not a singular event, but rather a process of transition – as many sport psychologist scholars have intimated (Koukouris, 1991; Sinclair & Orlick, 1994; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Furthermore, an uncritical understanding of sports retirement as either a death or rebirth is problematic. Stier (2007) suggests that we must not uncritically overdramatise athletic retirement by describing it as ‘death’ or ‘rebirth’. Instead, Stier (2007:108) argues that “athletic retirement should be understood as a transition process, which seldom causes disjunctures or breakdowns in self-identity, but merely rocks it for a limited time”.

Schlossberg (1981) has emphasised the importance of taking into consideration the context and the meaning that the retirement process has for the individual, as well as considering the meaning that retirement has over time. Schlossberg (1981) was concerned with adult transitions in general and Ogilvie and Taylor (1994) have used Schlossberg’s model to apply it to sports retirement, in which they emphasise taking into account personal and situational factors as they relate to exiting from sport.

Further research on sport retirement has noted that a feature that influences the retirement experience is the degree to which an athlete’s identity is immersed in sport, or their self-worth is defined by sport (Marthinus, 2007, Baillie & Danish, 1992, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). It has been suggested that if an athlete’s identity is narrowly defined or “role restricted”, meaning that sport is considered to be a huge defining factor and contributing to one’s sense of self, then adaptation to a life after sport becomes more difficult (Orlick & Howe, 1986, cited in Marthinus, 2007:10).

In the 1990s a lifespan perspective of athletic retirement was adopted, which shifted attention from one particular transition, i.e. sports career termination (Wylleman et al. 2004) to other

development phases in the athlete's life. A lifespan approach situates athletic retirement within the whole sports career of the athlete from beginning to end, and deems it important to consider other transitions that the person experienced. In other words athletic retirement is studied in relation to the whole person development of the athlete and how transitions are faced and dealt with at athletic, individual, psychosocial and academic/vocational level (Wylleman et al., 2004:11). The following model developed by Wylleman and Lavalee (2003) shows the complexity of transitions during a person's lifespan.

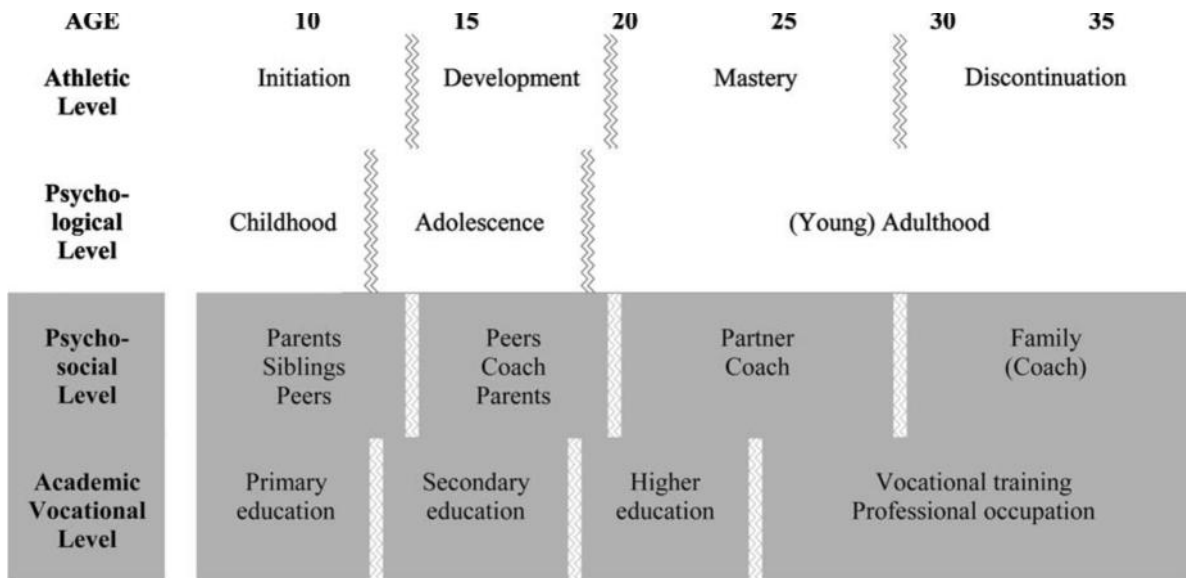


Figure 4. Development model of transitions faced by athletes at athletic, individual, psychosocial and academic/vocational level

Source: Wylleman & Lavallee, 2003

From this model it becomes evident that sports career termination is not a singular event, but influenced by age, vocation and support by family, team mates, coaches and peers, and is experienced within a context of transitions across the lifespan of the athlete. As an athlete ages he/she inevitably goes through a number of transitions, on an athletic, psychosocial and psychological level. In a similar vein, Stumbulova's (1994, 2000) research on career transition amongst Russian athletes has shown how an athletic career consists of predictable stages and transitions, including (a) the beginning of the sports specialisation, (b) the transition to intensive training in the chosen sport; (c) the transition to high achievement and adult sport; (d) the transition from amateur to professional sport; (e) the transition from culmination to the end of the sports career; and (f) the end of the sports career.

These transitions that professional athletes undergo from the beginning of their careers until their life after sport are comparable to the rites of passage that studies in anthropology have shed light on. Anthropologists have historically been interested in rites of passage as they relate to the changes in social status in small-scale societies and as brought forth through birth and initiation rituals, funerals and marriages. Rites of passage, according to Grimes (2000:6) are actions intended to acknowledge or effect a transformation. This transformation is a momentous metamorphosis and a moment after which one is never again the same. The decision to retire from competitive sport is a moment where athletes realise that their daily lives and routines will irrevocably change.

The anthropologist Victor Turner's (1969, 1982) theory on liminality and *communitas* made an important contribution to anthropological theory on rites of passage. The intermediate period that the sportsperson experiences being neither a competitive athlete nor having accepted his or her new role as a non-athlete, relates closely to Turner's description of this phase as being "betwixt and between" during a liminal state. The "liminal self" is one that undertakes a difficult and problematic journey of transformation (Deegan & Hill, 1991). If one conceptualises the transition of retiring from sport as a transformation or a rite of passage that a person undergoes, then the ambiguity and confusion associated with no longer being a professional athlete nor having carved out an identity outside the world of sport become evident. Turner and Turner (1978:249) propose that "during the liminal period, the characteristics of the liminars [person who enters this phase] are ambiguous as they pass through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state".

In other words the transition is marked with a sense of uncertainty, ambiguity and conflict. Victor Turner (1969, 1982) was influenced by the work of Van Gennep (1960) who described the transitional passages in a person's life as rites of passage. Van Gennep (1960) distinguished three phases during a rite of passage: separation, transition and incorporation. If one thinks of an elite sportsperson as one who has dedicated most of his life to training and competition and whose identity is often enmeshed with the sport which he or she practises, then retirement from the sport can be seen as a "liminal state" which the athlete enters. For Turner (1969) this state is characterised by freedom from constraints of social structure, which opens up creative possibilities, and this "antistructure" enables those who experience the same transformation to form an egalitarian bond, "*communitas*". Groups of athletes who have all retired from competitive sport form a "*communitas*" in which they share similar experiences, such as having more freedom from the expectations of social structures, such as clubs, federations and

sponsorships, which may have required of them to act in a certain way. The ex-athlete is then incorporated either into a new social role, in which his or her identity as an ex-athlete is of little significance, or back into the sporting community but with a different sporting status as either a coach or advisor, or in other sport related jobs such as television commentators or motivational speakers.

Turner (1982:25) notes that “the passage from one social status to another is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another. This may take the form of a mere opening of doors or literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas, one associated with the subject’s pre-ritual or preliminal status, and the other with his post-ritual or postliminal status”, For an athlete who has retired from competitive sport this “geographical movement from one place to another” can take the form of no longer being required to be at training grounds or competition venues, but can also be understood in terms of a change in travelling schedule. The preliminal status of an athlete could be one where he/she is required to be at sports venues at specific times, and the postliminal status would accept the fact the he/she now has a different ‘space’ in which to carve out an identity.

From this brief overview of the psychology literature, it becomes apparent that there is a tendency to categorise the sports retirement process within neat stages and models. Although an attempt is made to understand the societal context and holistic development phases that the sportsperson undergoes in having decided on retirement, there is a definite lack of conceptualising the elite sports culture within which this process takes place. An elite sports culture is one where the athlete is bound up in a culture of sacrifice, individualism, social isolation, monotony, travelling, and training and exposed to elements of narcissism.

The media are at the forefront of perpetuating the elite sports culture through endorsements and by commercialising the athlete as a commodity. Elite athletes, who reach the pinnacle of their sports career, are engrossed by sponsorships, expectations, pressure both to perform in their sport and to represent a favourable image to the public. In short, the elite sports culture influences the choice of retirement from sport, which much of the literature in sport psychology overlooks, as its concern is with therapeutic interventions or predictions on how athletic retirement is experienced by athletes.

Also, the models and stages developed by psychology scholars seem to homogenise the sports retirement experience. The role of age in retirement is addressed, but not how gender, race and class influence the athlete’s decision to retire. This is especially significant in the South African

context, where sportsmen and women who come from poor households may consider sports performance as a means to secure an income, and perhaps then prolong their sports career in order to continue to earn an income.

The case of Josiah Thugwane and his story of rising to athletic fame serve to illustrate the importance of taking into consideration socio-economic factors as influencing sports retirement. Thugwane became the first black South African to win Olympic Gold in the marathon event at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. His story is indicative of the significance of sport as a means to climb the socio-economic ladder. Thugwane was abandoned at birth and grew up in a shack. In training for the Olympics he worked as a janitor at a mine and overcame several adverse events, one of them being hijacked and shot in his chin, four months prior to the Olympics. His victory at the Olympics saw him receive R150 000 from the South African Olympic Committee, with which he bought a house in the middle-class suburb of Middleburg. He later started to feel unsafe in Middelburg as many people thought he had won millions, and former neighbours threatened to rob him because of his perceived new found wealth (Van der Merwe, 2010:154). Thugwane then moved to Johannesburg, where he is involved in coaching soccer and athletics. Thugwane's decision not to retire from road running may very well be influenced by the potential earnings he could ensure by winning races, as rumours spread that he had resolved to desperate measures to sell his medal to survive, something he denies (Nchabeleng, 2012). The story of Thugwane highlights how social context and personal background can play into the decision to retire from sport. Sport was a means for Thugwane to earn an income and his success at the 1996 Olympics gave him not only an economic boost, but also the status of a sporting hero.

This study attempts to understand issues that for example Thugwane had to deal with, and such an approach emphasises an understanding of the life history of the informants of this study, as it is lived out and experienced within a very competitive elite sports culture. The experiences they have had within this competitive sports culture are explored, and in doing so an attempt is made to understand athletic retirement, both from the lifespan perspective that Wylleman et al. (2004) refer to, but also from within the elite sports culture in which these athletes operate. In other words the lifespan perspective is useful in providing a development model as it relates to sports retirement, but I suggest that it is essential to consider other social forces and the context within which this transition occurs, of which the elite sports culture is of paramount importance.

In terms of research done on rugby retirement in South Africa, Van Reenen's (2012) book examines how rugby players have used the skills they have obtained in rugby to initiate business ventures in their post-rugby lives. Van Reenen (2012) provides case studies of rugby players who have made successful transitions to post-rugby careers, mostly in business (McGregor, 2012). A shortcoming of the book, however, is an overemphasis on success, as there are numerous tales of professional rugby players who have not stepped into a lucrative business market. Also, as McGregor (2012) notes, of the 30 case studies used by Van Reenen only two of the players are black, which does raise questions about the book perhaps perpetuating rugby as an exclusive white man's social networking opportunity.

Marthinus's (2007) doctoral study deals specifically with the psychological effects of retirement on South African elite athletes. His study is concerned with the manner in which track and field athletes' and road runners' retirement from sport is influenced by athletic factors (such as the voluntariness and gradualness of sports career termination, subjective view of athletic achievement, post-sports life planning and athletic identity) and non-athletic factors (e.g. age and education). His findings suggest that there were no career termination plans in place for the elite athletes once they retired, and that their degree of athletic identity had a significant effect on the retirement process and their post-sports life. He also argues that the more gradual the retirement process, the fewer problems athletes encounter in their post-sport lives.

Marthinus (2007) notes, as do many other psychology scholars (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994; Baillie & Danish, 1992; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2003), that it is important to consider contextual factors, such as age, level of education and level of social development in contributing to the retirement process, but they do not consider the pressures placed on elite athletes to perform consistently within a very demanding elite sports culture, and how this context may influence the sports retirement experience. This is where an anthropological study on sports retirement can be useful, in that it takes into account not only the post-life of the retired athlete, but the culture in which the athletes operated for most of their sporting lives and how that plays into their decision to retire from elite sport.

1.5 WHY A STUDY ON SPORTS RETIREMENT FROM AN ANTHROPOLOGIST?

This study is one of the first studies done in South African anthropology that has focused specifically on the ‘afterlife’ of elite athletes. As opposed to most of the research done on sports retirement in the field of psychology and sociology, this study uses a life history approach to understand the sports retirement experience within the context of the elite sports culture. The obvious question that arises is what skills an anthropologist possesses to contribute to the understanding of a life after sport.

Besnier and Brownell (2012:443) note the importance of an anthropological approach in understanding the role sport plays in society, by contending that “over the past three decades, the important role that anthropological theory has bestowed on the body, modernity, nationalism, the state, citizenship, transnationalism, globalization, gender, and sexuality has placed sports at the centre of questions central to the discipline.” They go on to argue that a distinctly anthropological approach, with its unique research methods, approach to theory and holistic thinking can illuminate important social issues in a way that no other discipline can (Besnier & Brownell, 2012:443).

The anthropologist Bea Vidacs (2006) notes that there has been an increase in the number of works on sport since the mid-1990s. She is however critical of many of the studies, which she suggests yielded predictable results but are thin ethnographically and lack theoretical sophistication. Vidacs (2006:333) argues that “part of the reason for this has to be the narrow focus on sports where the social context is invoked almost ritualistically but depth is lacking on the social, cultural, political and historical aspects of the area in question.” I take up the challenge that Vidacs throws down by considering how social, cultural, political and historical factors inform not only the participation in sport by the informants of this study, but also their decision to retire from sport and how they experience their retirement.

This study differs from most of the work done in the anthropology of sport in that it locates the individual experiences of elite athletes within broader themes that other anthropologists have explored. For example, Klein’s (1991) ethnography on baseball in the Dominican Republic shows how sport plays a significant role in terms of the political relationships between the Dominican Republic and the United States and how baseball is a means to both enforce American hegemony and also resist it. Klein (2006) also shows how baseball is transformed into a global practice and the implications thereof, and Brownell (1995, 2008) uses an anthropological approach to make sense of issues concerning the athletic body and looks into

the manner in which nationalism played into China's hosting the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Bolin and Granskog (2003) are anthropologists who have taken a feminist perspective in understanding the complexity of women's status in sport.

Howe's (2001, 2004, 2009) ethnographies on pain, injury and risk and the cultural politics of the Paralympic movement have also shed light on issues of the body, commercialisation in sport and paralympic sport. Palmer (1996) has employed anthropological methods to explain the significance of a sports event, like the Tour de France. Most of these studies, although very influential have not specifically addressed sports retirement. This is where my study hopes to contribute to the existing literature on the anthropology of sport by carving out a niche market in which the post- sports life of elite sportsmen and women can be understood.

Furthermore, as this study will show, the elite sports lifestyle and the sacrifice and commitment required to compete at an elite level, make the sportsperson that is engulfed in this culture unique and different to mainstream society. An elite athlete does not have the free time to develop socially and emotionally on the same level of his/her peers, as they are often immersed into a lifestyle of precision, dedication, travelling from a young age, and responsibility. To perform in elite sports sacrifice and isolation to train, rest and compete overshadow many other developmental spheres of the athlete. In a sense the elite sports "communitas" can be considered as "the other" in anthropological terms, as the sacrifice necessary to compete at an elite level, makes the elite sports "communitas" a group with distinctive similarities which can be considered unique to the elite sports culture. As Abu-Lughod (1991:470) emphasises:

Culture is the essential tool for making other. As a professional discourse that elaborates on the meaning of culture in order to account for, explain, and understand cultural difference, anthropology also helps construct, produce, and maintain it. Anthropological discourse gives cultural difference (and the separation between groups of people it implies) the air of the self-evident.

This study sets out to show how an elite sports culture, and the discourses perpetuated by the media around achievement, contribute to an elite sports person living a very different life to that of non-athletes. It does so by considering the social, cultural and commercial pressures placed on elite athletes to apply their trade and to present a public image of what their fans and sponsors expect of them.

Part of what makes an anthropological study into sports retirement so enticing is the fact that at the core of the anthropological discipline is the desire to take into account the context and

understand the informant's experience from an emic perspective. My personal history is that of an elite swimmer, which has informed my understanding of how other athletes experience retirement. Anthropologically informed works also emphasise the need to understand the culture and the lived experiences of those under investigation – a focal point that I consider throughout this thesis.

Anthropologists furthermore pride themselves on using analytical skills to make sense of the complexity of people's experiences within their cultural context. As Moore (2004:37) puts it, "both sport and anthropology commonly produce understandings and experiences that depend on local communities but whose significances are best understood when we locate them as embedded in much broader and more complex cultural environments." What makes an anthropological study into sports retirement so valuable is that it situates the significance of sport and for this study the individual life histories of athletes within a complex cultural sporting environment.

1.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides the contextual and disciplinary background in which this study on the retirement experiences of elite athletes is situated. The first objective was to provide an overview of the discipline in which the study falls, namely that of the anthropology of sport. The historical overview has shown how the field of the anthropology of sport has developed alongside conceptual and theoretical shifts that took place within the broader field of anthropology. The early 20th century anthropologists considered cultures to be arranged along a continuum from "savage" to "civilised", and sport was used to validate the biological differences between peoples.

This ethnocentric stance was challenged by pioneering anthropologists such as Boas, who pushed for a more cultural relativist approach to understanding difference. The challenge to adopt a more interpretive approach in understanding the role of culture, and sport within culture, was advocated by people like Geertz (1972). I have shown how the anthropological subject became one who could be studied in urban contexts rather than in exotic places, which was traditionally a prerequisite for anthropological work. This is significant, as sport was no longer studied as it is practised by 'primitive' peoples, but as it intersects with the daily lives of people living in an urban context, as shown by the pioneering work of Frankenberg (1957) and Gluckman (1959, 1977).

The second objective of this chapter was to highlight work that has been done on sports retirement, mostly from the fields of psychology and sociology. From the psychology literature, I suggest that development models for sports retirement have often situated the retirement experience within a narrowly defined context. I contend that it is essential to consider the pressures placed on elite athletes within a very demanding elite sports culture, to understand the retirement process from a holistic perspective. Although many of the authors who have looked at retirement from a psychological perspective have taken into account factors such as age, vocation and development level in attempting to understand sports retirement, an emphasis on the broader societal pressures that elite athletes endure are of paramount importance. As I have pointed out before, the literature on sport from an anthropological perspective is rather scant in South Africa, as most studies have been conducted by historians with a vested interest in analysing the significance of sport and politics in South Africa's isolation years.

The third objective of this chapter was to substantiate the need for a study on the post-sports life of athletes from an anthropological perspective. I have argued that most of the anthropologically informed work done on sport has focused on broader issues such as globalisation, politics and sports mega-events and has not considered individual life histories as they relate to retirement from sport. Also, with anthropology being a discipline that reinforces the importance of taking into consideration the role that culture plays in determining human behaviour, I have argued that what makes this study anthropological is that it sets out to show how athletic retirement is informed and shaped by a highly pressurised elite sports culture, within which the informants of this study operated.

It is within this elite sports culture that there has been an interest in memorialising and commemorating not only the athletic feats of successful sports heroes in South Africa, but also the athletes themselves, through initiatives such as sport museums and Sport Halls of Fame. This study is one of the first to explore the social, political, economic and cultural significance of sport heritage sites and sport museums, in particular in South Africa. I do so by considering the role that intangible heritage, in the form of memories, nostalgia, rituals and songs play in perpetuating the image of the South African sport star, even after retirement. The chapter that follows sets out to analyse the elite sports culture that sportsmen and women dedicate most of their sporting lives to, and in doing so I show how this 'way of life' influences not only the decision of these athletes to retire, but also how they would want to be remembered.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ELITE SPORT CULTURE AND PERCEPTIONS AND PRESSURES OF BEING AN ELITE ATHLETE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Athletes who practise sport as a profession and who sacrifice much of their young adult lives to compete at the highest level, often live a life of isolation, dedication and obsession. To succeed as a professional sportsperson requires a stubborn goal-oriented approach, as the difference between winning and losing in elite sport is determined by marginal measures. Professional athletes are required to immerse themselves in a lifestyle of precision and sacrifice. The life of an elite athlete differs from that of their peers in many respects. Once an athlete has gained fame through sport sponsorships, commercial interests and social demands become part and parcel of their daily lives.

This chapter explores the elite sports culture by considering the kind of milieu that professional sportspeople operate in. Such an analysis enables one to understand the transition that athletes need to make in a life after sport. An understanding of the elite sports culture and the pressures and expectations that professional sportspeople deal with, provides insights into the rituals, routines and experiences that form part of the everyday life of professional athletes. People who excel in sport are venerated and become recognisable in society as a result of the meaning and value that others give to their performance. The role of the media, fans, friends, sporting federations and the national pride that can be conjured up as a result of an athlete's performance all contribute to the status which that person appropriates in society. The specific historical moment in which athletic achievement is attained is also of relevance, as the cultural and national association with athletic achievement resonates far beyond the parameters of the sporting arena.

This chapter aims to firstly explore the notion of sports heroes, and I consider why sports heroes have become such a pervasive part of South African sporting culture. This is done by explaining the importance of mass media in creating the sports hero in South Africa. I then consider the everyday lives of elite athletes and point to performativity, precision and pressures that they need to perform under and how that forms part of an elite sports culture. The question of how fan cultures create the sports hero is also probed. The final part of the chapter considers the elite sports culture as a "bubble" in which the informants of this study experienced their sporting lives, as being separate to 'real life.'

2.2 WHY HAVE SPORTS HEROES BECOME SUCH AN UBIQUITOUS PART OF SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTING CULTURE?

The use of the term 'sport hero' in this thesis is in line with how Hughson (2009) has argued for a sport hero as a type of cultural hero that may be understood according to two distinct yet related categories: the prowess hero and the moral hero. The term prowess hero is a 'doing' hero whose feats are relayed to people by whatever means of communication is used at a given point in history. Their prowess – display of expertness – becomes a matter of visible achievement, a result of increased television coverage of sport (Hughson, 2009:86). The prowess hero is venerated for the aesthetic quality of his or her achievements.

A moral sporting hero is one that exhibits qualities such as bravery, firmness, determination and fortitude. Hughson (2009) argues that these categories are best seen to exist in a symbiotic relationship to sport heroism. In other words sports heroes become heroes because of their athletic achievement, and remain as such because of their moral standards. If the 'moral code' of society is broken through the actions of the sport hero, he/she can quickly lose his/her status as hero and become a villain. The contestation of heroic qualities supports the fractured nature of 'heroism', a quality that Bale (2006: 236) argues is geographically and socially partial. He proposes that it is rarely asked "how heroic one has to be in order to achieve the status of a hero" (Bale, 2006:236).

Barney (1985) has developed a set of standards that can be applied to those perceived to be heroes. Firstly he argues that performance excellence, and in the case of sport physical excellence, are criteria against which a hero is measured. Secondly, the hero should display moral excellence in all aspects of his or her life. This morality is synonymous with acting with honesty, humility, generosity, sportsmanship and self-control. Thirdly, Barney (1985) proposes that one of the key criteria for being a hero is that he or she should use their talents and energies to help those less fortunate than themselves. The fourth criterion deals with theoretical and practical wisdom and requires the hero to act responsibly in their personal lives with regards to money, drugs and gambling. Lastly, hero status should not be bestowed on an athlete in his or her lifetime. Negative aspects of the hero's life often come to the fore after the athlete has been established as a role model for the youth. A passage of time is thought to bring a more objective and balanced perspective of the heroic qualities of the hero (Barney cited in Wann, Melnick, Russel & Pease, 2001:7).

The concept of a hero is elusive and ambiguous. Throughout history there has been a fascination with the role that a hero plays in society. In antiquity the hero was considered to be

a mythical and legendary person who has admirable attributes, such as strength, nobility and braveness (Smith, 1973). It has been suggested that “in classical times heroes were god-men; in the Middle Ages they were God’s men; in the Renaissance universal men; in the eighteenth century enlightened men; in the nineteenth century self-made men. In our own time we are seeing the common man become heroic” (Fischwick, cited in Holt & Mangan, 1996:4). In the category of the common man one can include the sports hero, who through natural talent and extraordinary feats rises to heroic status through sporting achievement.

Note that the hero is almost always portrayed as a man, and within the traditional story of the hero the heroine is not equivalent to the hero, instead the heroine exists in the supporting role to the hero (Capon & Helstein, 2005). The hero is therefore imagined as a muscular male whose feats of courage, which in sport would be exceptional sports performances, are adored and venerated. Capon and Helstein (2005:42) substantiate the notion of heroines playing a supporting role by stating that “women often appear in the heroic narrative as spectators, prizes or victims and serve to confirm the heroic status of the protagonist. Indeed, ‘heroines’ often have secondary roles; they are the victims who need to be saved”. Whannel (2002:45) agrees with Capon and Helstein’s (2005) proposition that women are often portrayed as supporters of heroes rather than being heroic themselves. He suggests that sport has characteristically provided a space for the eradication, marginalisation and symbolic annihilation of the feminine, so that sports heroes often seem self-sufficient heroes – heroes without a need for women (Whannel, 2002). It seems that there is a discourse that homogenises the hero as male in relation to the ‘weak’ female who needs to be saved, and so reinforces the stereotype of the hegemonic masculine dominance in sports representation.

Furthermore, Wann et al. (2001:71) have argued that heroes have specific functions in society. They occupy a role associated with leadership, as people look to them for advice and inspiration. The presence of a hero can prompt admirers to strive for an idealised social order. Those whose traits and values are associated with a bygone era can have a compensatory function, bringing forth a flood of nostalgic memories about the past. They can serve to encourage interpersonal involvement, where social relationships are forged among those who share in the appreciation of a particular sports figure. They may act as motivation for fitness, encouraging fans to participate in sport and exercise activities, and lastly sports heroes often fulfil an economic function, especially for sponsors and franchises for whom their name and association is of great commercial value.

There are South Africa sporting heroes that are associated with remarkable athletic feats. At times, these achievements have considerable symbolic value associated with a sense of nationhood, and at a particular historical moment can reflect broader political and societal concerns of the time. For example, in 1989 Sam Tshabalala became the first black athlete to win the Comrades, after a decade of dominance by Bruce Fordyce. This feat occurred at a time where South Africa was politically tense and his win ushered in a new era of inter-racial competition. Even before this, the early 1980s saw the emergence of a young barefoot runner from Bloemfontein, Zola Budd. Budd captured the imagination of the country when she broke the World 5000m record twice within a period of three years, so much so that many Black taxis were affectionately named 'Zola'. Her career was marked with controversy as she took up British citizenship in order to compete in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and then was involved in a fall which put the much favoured American athlete, Mary Decker out of contention for the 3000m title.

Post-democratic South Africa has witnessed the country's reintegration into international sport with memorable moments and the emergence of athletes who have become sporting heroes. Elana Meyer became the first South African to win an Olympic medal at the 1992 games in Barcelona. The national rugby and soccer teams have had memorable home tournaments by winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations for soccer. Sports stars, such as Francois Pienaar, Mark Fish and Lucas Radebe became household names during the 1990s. The 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta also witnessed the likes of Penny Heyns and Josia Thugwane become national heroes. These are only a few South African sportsmen and women who have become national sporting icons in this country. Examples of their athletic feats allow one to consider why sports heroes occupy a ubiquitous space in South African society.

The year 2014 will be remembered as the year in which one of South Africa's sporting heroes, Oscar Pistorius fell from grace. This after he shot and killed his girlfriend on Valentine's Day 2013. The media interest, both locally and internationally was astounding. The media monitoring group Data Driven Insight (DDI) estimated that in the early stages of the trial in March 2014, news and social media hits reached more than 106 000 unique inserts relating to the Pistorius trial. DDI also measured South Africa's news headlines against the Pistorius trial and found that "nothing can move the media attention [away] from Oscar". The data was compiled from 6.2 million social media platforms including blogs, forums, social networks and commentary, 60 000 global online newspapers, 2 000 South African print publications and 66

radio and television stations (Pistorius trial bigger than the World Cup, 2014). The coverage of the trial on a 24-hour E-tv news channel aroused enormous public interest in Pistorius's fate, as the general public could follow the live events of the trial on a daily basis (see Figure 5 for a cartoon depicting the impact of the Oscar Pistorius trial). Dinner discussions in restaurants revolved around the intricacies of the trial, and the trial became to many a distraction from their everyday lives. The subject of scandal has long fascinated anthropologists and other scholars (Starn, 2011:44). Max Gluckman argued that gossip functions as a mechanism for solidarity and cohesion, discouraging African villagers from going beyond the limits of acceptable behaviour by targeting them for censorious chatter (Gluckman, 1963). Although the scandal over Pistorius elicits much public discourse around issues of morality and law, what is of interest for this thesis is the social position he acquired as a sports hero. An analysis of Pistorius's life and deeds goes beyond the scope of this chapter, but the interest his actions have stimulated does make a probe into the role of sports heroes in society feasible. Such an analysis creates an understanding of the adjustments to be made by sports heroes in their post-sport lives, but also asks what this obsessive public interest in the case tells us about society.

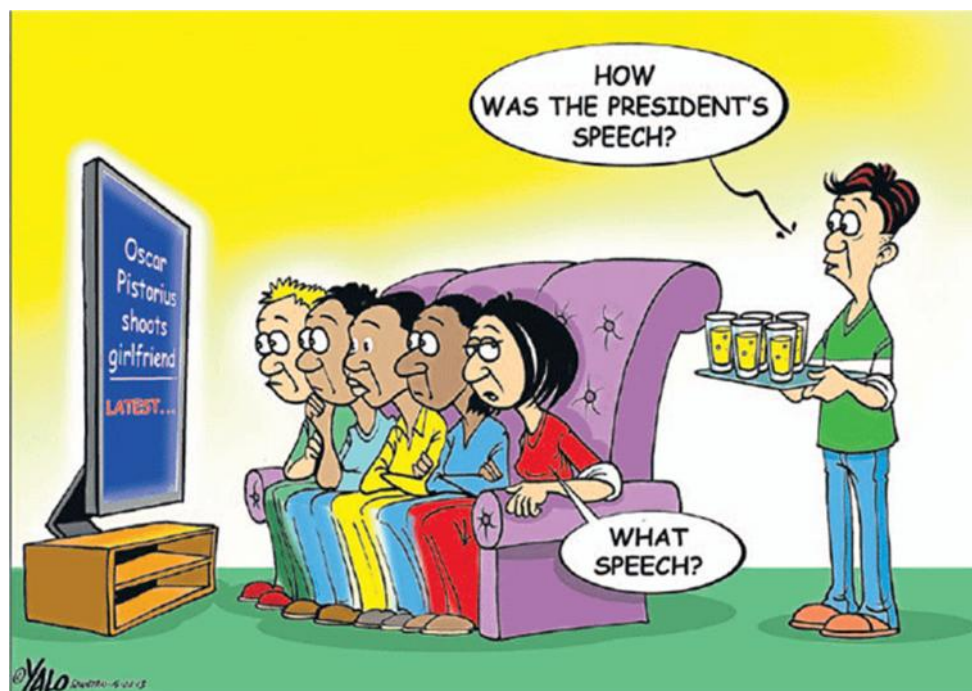


Figure 5. A cartoon depicting the public interest in the Oscar Pistorius trial. The State of the Nation address by President Jacob Zuma was in the same week as the shooting

Source: The Sowetan, 2013

Part of what makes sport such an attractive societal phenomenon to study from an anthropological perspective is that it offers a reflection of cultural values. It provides the

opportunity for what Geertz (1972) has described as a “thick description” of interpreting sport and sports heroes as an extension of South African culture. Maguire (2009:1260) says:

Sport has become a forum in which communal self-revelation occurs, in other words modern sport is a form of surrogate religion and popular theatre in which there occurs the communal discovery of who we are. Sport stadia are contemporary venues in which we can observe champions as heroes and experience the ‘sacred’, moments of exciting significance, while leaving behind the profaneness of ordinary life.

It is worth noting that modern sport developed when sporting pioneers of the 19th century linked sport to Muscular Christianity. It was thought that through sport healthy young men could be cultivated who are unselfish, self-reliant, fair gentlemen and examples of moral excellence, values that society hold dear. Maguire (2009:1261) notes that “sport is a modern morality play that reveals fundamental truths about us as individuals, our societies and our relations with others. Sport then moves us emotionally and matters to us socially.”

Whannel (2002) contends that sport stars – and he differentiates between sport stars as made through the media and sports heroes made through their own actions – are placed in a peculiar position to act as role models. The terms celebrity, hero, star and icon are often used interchangeably, but Marshall (1997:7) notes that “the common thread in these depictions is an attempt to study these new representations of value articulated through a particular subjectivity”. He differentiates between celebrities and heroes, arguing “that a celebrity can be thought of as a general an encompassing term, whereas concepts of hero, star and leader are more specific categories of the public individual that relate to specific functions in the public sphere” (Marshall, 1997:7). The sporting sphere is where sports heroes gain popularity and may become celebrities. The difference between a celebrity and hero is dependent on media exposure.

The celebrity is a person who is well known for his well-known-ess... The hero was distinguished by his achievement; the celebrity by his image or trademark. The hero created himself; the celebrity is created by the media. The hero is a big man [sic]; the celebrity is a big name (Boorstin cited in Andrews & Jackson, 2001:2).

Social scientists have suggested a number of explanations for why and how the cult of celebrity has emerged, the majority of which focus on the shifting social and cultural terrain of modern-day existence (Bolsmann & Parker, 2007:110). Rojek (2001) identifies three main reasons for these shifts, many of which correlate with Whannel’s (2002) discussion on the emergence of

sports heroes in society. The first is the democratisation of society, the second the advancements of mass media, and lastly, the demise of religion. For Rojek (2001) the dissolution of monarchical and religious influences together with a universal inundation of media personalities has led to a new fluidity and re-distribution of power in social life, resulting in celebrities taking the place of previously dominant figures. Sports heroes as representatives of nations embody the values that society value most – bringing people together in a common sense of purpose and values (Maguire, 2009:1260). Maguire (2009:1260) explains how champions are perceived by suggesting that “a champion is said to possess special gifts and exude a certain charisma: they perform ‘miracles’ and achieve the seemingly impossible. They are our modern heroes: symbolic representation of our cultural values and who we would wish to be. Champions are talented individuals but as heroes they are people whose lives tell stories about ourselves, to ourselves, but also to people from other nations.”

Holt and Mangan (1996:5) call for a critical reflection on the role of sports heroes in society by arguing that, “a sport hero is like Hamlet without a Prince, and yet the variety and purpose of sporting heroes are rarely examined. The sporting public are too busy worshipping to reflect on the objects of its fascination and those few whose business it is to take an analytical view have been absorbed in other things.”

In the South African context, sports heroes have replaced previously dominant societal figures. A democratic South Africa has seen professional sport become one of the major arenas from where heroes emerge. The moral fabric of South African society is plagued by a high crime rate, a high dropout rate from schools and on the political front government officials that are frequently under scrutiny for corruption. This creates a condition where sport has become a social setting where admirable qualities such as honesty, hard work, and morality have become attractive for sport fans. Together with an upsurge in new media technologies this has culminated in an athletic sports culture where sports heroes have become a way of representing societal values. Birrell (1981:374) warns that “the so-called ‘hero-worship’ of athletes should not be regarded disparagingly as evidence of modern man’s replacement of religious ideals with secular or even heathen images. The shift does not mark a fundamental change in social values but merely a substitution of the vessel in which they are contained”. In other words, successful athletes have become the mode through which modern-day societal values are displayed, but they have not necessarily become new ‘gods’ in society.

According to Whannel (2002) we live in a time where morality and masculinity are in crisis. It is in this context that sports heroes have become the moral and masculine barometers of society.

Whannel (2002:5) suggests that a prominent public discourse about the supposed crisis in morality developed during the 1990's and has been associated with family break-ups, the growth in single-parent families, rising crime rates and declining educational standards. These developments have made heroes a more apparent part of modern-day society. Masculinity is a relational construct and as Connell (1995:71) has suggested must be understood in relation to femininity as it is “a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture”.

If one accepts the notion that there is a crisis in masculinity and morality brought about by secularisation and a decline of moral authority, then sports heroes have become the “the figures who will epitomise moral correctness” (Whannel, 2002:4). Sports heroes are often assumed to be influential figures; if they are successful and well behaved they are held up as role models, but if their behaviour is regarded as inadequate or morally reprehensible, the concern is raised that they are a bad influence on the youth (Whannel, 2002:8). Their fame is of a fleeting nature, not dependent only on their sporting successes, and their personal lives and questionable actions can quickly alter their heroic status. One of Pistorius's main sponsors withdrew their support the day after the shooting incident, this even before the trial had commenced. The branding of the athlete and their commodified status in society can easily become tarnished (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. A billboard featuring Oscar Pistorius is taken down by workers on the day after the shooting. The billboard was on one of Pretoria's busiest roads

Source: Reuters

Furthermore, someone's heroic status as a sportsperson is not dependent only on his/her actions outside of the sports sphere, but also depends on his/her performance on the field. The nature of sport relies on 'in form', consistent athletic performances. There are always younger athletes challenging for positions in team sports, such as rugby, or up and coming runners hoping to overtake established athletes. Ollie le Roux is an ex-Springbok rugby player who has 54 test caps to his name. After rugby he pursued a career as a chicken farmer in Bloemfontein. It was at a coffee shop in Bloemfontein where I met with Ollie le Roux. Le Roux was renowned for his scrummaging abilities and holds the record for being the youngest prop ever to play for the Springboks. Having weighed 136 kg in the peak of his rugby career, it was a visibly leaner Le Roux that sat across me as our conversation began about his life after professional rugby. He highlighted the fleeting nature of his heroic status:

And then you finish your rugby career and go on with your life. That transition is difficult. You realise you are not always a hero. When you walk off that field, it is all over. The next day the next guy is the hero. Players struggle psychologically to make that adjustment – to think that I am no longer a hero. Today you are up there, tomorrow you are nowhere. This is what people must understand about your identity as a rugby player, you are more than just a rugby player. Your identity is more than just that person who wanted to play rugby⁵.

Sports heroes, I argue, have become central in a South African discourse of achievement. In addition to Whannel (2002) and Rojek's (2001) proposition that a decline in morality, masculinity and religion can be attributed to their marked societal presence, I contend that the media are at the centre of perpetuating a discourse around sports heroes as the moral fibre of society.

There seems to be a double standard if one considers the pressures placed on sports heroes to act in a moral, admirable manner. Sports heroes, through their sports performances assume an identity that is intensely scrutinised by the public and the media. One must bear in mind that sports heroes become heroes because of their athletic feats, not because they are 'good' people or necessarily choose to be exemplars of moral authority. Charles Barkley, the NBA basketball player put it well by stating: "just because I dunk a basketball, doesn't mean I should raise your kids". The so-called crisis in masculinity and morality and the demands placed on sports heroes by their fans, corporate sponsorships and coaches, make it hardly surprising that sports heroes

⁵ Throughout this thesis the wording of interviewed athletes are in italics.

at times falter. The fleeting nature of heroic status and of fame itself resonated in the words of Keith Andrews, a former Springbok rugby player. Keith Andrews won three Springbok test caps and played for Western Province over a 20-year period. Today he is the director of an investment company in Cape Town called Personal Trust International (PTI) after having obtained a BComm in accounting and a postgraduate diploma in tax law. It was at the offices of PTI that Keith greeted me and our discussion took place in the boardroom of the company. After a general discussion on life after rugby he hinted at the fleeting nature of fame:

Things can change very quickly [for a professional sportsman]. I always use the saying, cock today, feather duster tomorrow. Today you are the cock while you're playing, then you're finished, they take you, they pluck you, you're the feather duster.

This metaphor resounds with the 'here today, gone tomorrow' analogy where public adoration and a life in sport can change within a moment. The next part of the chapter takes a closer look at the role that the media play in promoting sports heroes as the cultural fabric of society.

2.3 THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN CREATING THE SPORTING HERO

Most of what we know about sports heroes is based on information that is relayed to us by media sources. The growth and popularity of sport has been propelled by what Whannel (2002) calls the "sporting star system". He argues that "stardom is a form of social production in which the professional ideologies and production practices of the media aim to win and hold our attention by linking sporting achievement and personality in ways which have resonances in popular common sense" (Whannel, 2002:49). The heroic narrative and drama of major sporting events often revolve around three features: separation or departure, trials and victories of initiation, and return and reintegration into society. Athletes who compete in major sports events go into a period of training away from society, travel to the event and in the case of achieving success are reabsorbed into society, to a hero's welcome (Whannel, 2002).

This analysis relates closely to the anthropologist Victor Turner's (1969) work on ritual and rites of passage. Based on ethnographic fieldwork amongst the Ndembu of Zambia, Turner built on Van Gennep's (1960) threefold scheme of *Rites De Passage*. A change in social status coincided with a specific ritual that saw three distinct phases: the pre-liminal phase (separation), a liminal phase (transition) and post-liminal phase (reincorporation). It is during the liminal phase of transition that people experience a sense of togetherness and where the structure of society is briefly suspended. Turner proposed that during the liminal phase, people are "betwixt and between" and experience a profound sense of togetherness or 'communitas'.

It is during this liminal phase that a sense of homogeneity is experienced. According to Turner (1969:82) “what is interesting about liminal phenomena for our present purposes is the blend they offer of lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship”. The liminal phase’s applicability to athletes in training and competition is starkly obvious. The comradeship and togetherness can only be experienced by those who are actually taken away from a structured society and then returned with a new social status, that of a sports hero. Although Turner (1969:113) focused on ritual in traditional preindustrial societies, he argues “that the collective dimension, *communitas* and structure are to be found at all stages and levels of culture and society.” I argue that sport as an expression of culture is a realm where *communitas* amongst athletes thrives. Furthermore sport as ritual is based on an act, the sporting act of training and competing. Grimes (2000:7) highlights the tangible aspect of ritual:

Of course ritual is not really a something that dwells in a literal somewhere. Rites are choreographed actions; they exist in the moments of their enactment and then disappear. When effective, their traces remain— in the heart, in the memory, in the mind, in texts, in photographs, in descriptions, in social values, and in the marrow, the source of our lifeblood.

The media are at the forefront of covering the ‘effectiveness’ of rites. The actions and achievements of athletes are etched in the memory, minds and descriptions the media use to portray them. The final phase of their achievement, the winning finish, the medal ceremony or the celebration, is often the period that receives the most media coverage. The heroic tale of sporting achievement has been covered from the early day of the sporting press through cigarette cards, cinema newsreels, radio, television and video (Whannel, 2002: 46). The heroic deed in sport “has an existence separate and distinct from its circulation, stardom depends on circulation, on representation, on telling, on narrativisation” (Whannel, 2002:47). Heroic status is achieved through a remarkable deed, whereas the celebration of the deed is what creates the sporting star.

Today new forms of media technologies have contributed significantly to the circulation and representation of sporting heroes. Sports fans can now ‘follow’ their heroes on twitter, Facebook and blogs, providing a sense of connectedness with and insight into the personal lives of those they idolise. Moreover satellite television in the form of DSTV has monopolised broadcasting rights, and high definition sport can be watched live over a spectrum of nine DSTV channels. Television coverage is now an indispensable part of modern sport, as are sponsorships and rights marketing (Smart, 2005). The broadcasting rights of sporting events

have become a major source of income for individual sporting codes. In the period 1993–2003 the global sponsorship market grew from \$10 million to \$27 billion and at least two-thirds of the market, over \$18 billion in 2003 is attributed to sport (Smart, 2005:35). Whannel (2009: 216) argues that “sport has been one of the cultural forms constructing, albeit in temporary and often partial forms, a sense of shared national experience.”

In the South African context a strategic partnership between SA Rugby as the professional arm of the South African Rugby Football Union, the television channel Supersport and print media under the name of the Independent Group have made sport big business in the media world. Supersport is responsible for broadcasting all domestic and international rugby matches, including schoolboy rugby and the Varsity Cup. As for other sports, Athletics South Africa (ASA) do not have a contract with Supersport and ironically whereas athletics and road running were among the major televised sports in the 1980s, they now receive very little publicity through television. Only major road running events are televised. The Comrades Marathon Association pay R4 million rand for broadcasting rights to ASA every year. Mark Keohane, a rugby journalist and ex-communications manager of the Springbok team points to the tricky nature of broadcasting rights for rugby:

Supersport, the dominant media force in South African rugby wields the greatest influence on the average punter. Yet they are caught between two worlds: calling the game and selling the game. Their commercial motivation is to sell advertising and satellite decoders. They cannot tell the viewer too often that South African rugby is a circus, as it will have a direct effect on their own product. They have to lure the viewer to the game, rugby is their biggest investment (Keohane, 2004:155).

The continuous coverage of sports events allows fans to watch their sports heroes perform on a weekly basis. Tinley (2012), a former professional triathlete who completed his PhD on the emotional trauma of retirement from sport, argues that a professional athlete’s image is often manufactured and purposely presented to suit the needs of the sports media corporate nexus. A prominent feature of televised sport are the advertisements that use sports heroes to promote specific brands. It is common for commercials to use former and current sports heroes to promote or endorse products. It is through these endorsements that sports fans get constant exposure to their sporting heroes. Often these advertisements bridge the gap between the public persona of the athletes and their private lives. Brands use innovative strategies to reach a diverse spectrum of their target market.

The manufacturers of a commercial body soap, Dove, have used Victor Matfield – one of South Africa’s most capped Springboks, who retired in 2011 and then made a remarkable return to professional rugby in 2014 – as a brand ambassador for their product (see Figure 7). The advertisement relies on his established position as one of South Africa’s most popular rugby players and links that status with different forms of masculinity. Rugby has been linked to overt forms of masculinity (see Rubin, 2013; Grundlingh, Odendaal & Spies, 1995; Booth, 1998). Burstyn (1999) has considered how the sport-media complex, as a gendered entity, generates ideologies of hyper-masculinity. Hyper-masculinity – the belief that ideal manhood lies in the exercise of force to dominate others – is the prevalent ideology of manhood in contemporary society (Burstyn, 1999:192).

Sport reinforces gendered identities (Whannel, 2002: 10). The Dove advertisement of Victor Matfield provides an image of Matfield both on and off the field. Different forms of masculinity are portrayed through this advertisement. The ‘tough’ Victor Matfield is the sports hero on the rugby field, while the ‘caring’ Matfield is when he is with his family. The latter image clearly associated with Matfield is as someone who would take care not only of his family, but also the aesthetics of his family, by using Dove soap. Although this is a simplistic analogy it does point to how sports heroes are culturally framed. Clearly socially determined traits that relate to the intersection between sport and gender are exaggerated by marketing companies in an attempt to reach a broader audience.



Figure 7. Dove advertisement of Victor Matfield fulfilling two roles, those of a masculine rugby player as well as a caring father

Source: *Sarie Magazine*, 2011:15

The narrative of the advertisement clearly draws on Matfield’s ostensible ability to be both a caring father, associated with traits of femininity and a rugged rugby player, associated with more overtly masculine traits. The caption reads: “An authentic, real South African man who portrays the perfect balance of masculinity and care. A man who is truly comfortable in his skin. A man who promises to take DOVE to new heights and new consumers to 2012 and beyond.”

Although Matfield is one of the most recognisable rugby players in South Africa (given the long career he has had with the Blue Bulls and the Springboks and the accolades he has achieved with these two teams), what is important in the Dove advertisement is the somewhat covert message of Matfield as a successful white rugby player. The caption of Matfield as an “authentic, real SOUTH AFRICAN man” seems to suggest that a real South African man is white, one who plays rugby, is a family man and has achieved success outside of rugby in the form of business. Masculinity thrives in this instance. In contrast the BIC razor advertisement of Matfield’s Springbok teammate Tendai ‘Beast’ Mtawarira – a black Zimbabwean born front

rower – draws on overt forms of heteronormative masculinity and race to advertise BIC and draws on notions of race, power and masculinity to advertise the product (see Figure 8). Beast is depicted with his shirt off, muscles bulging and holding a shaving razor – an act reinforcing a specific form of masculinity.

The caption “unleash your Beast” can be interpreted as unleashing contained forms of aggression. Race, although ostensibly ‘hidden’ from the Dove advertisement is reinforced in the BIC advertisement of the Beast and reiterates the stereotype of a hypermasculine identity associated with particularly black rugby players. Burstyn (1999:151) argues that “the ideal of big masculinity, embodied in bulk and muscularity, draws on the historical cultural legacy of men’s culture and the warrior cult. But its hyperlarge ideals are also attempts to assert and symbolize masculinity in circumstances – economic, social and sexual – that seem to diminish and undermine its achievement.” The BIC advertisement of the ‘Beast’ draws on ‘hyperlarge’ ideals of manliness, invincibility and the notion of rugby players as warriors. Pringle and Markula (2005) however caution against an oversimplified understanding of rugby and masculinity. They surmise from their research amongst New Zealand rugby players that “although rugby provided an influential discursive space for the negotiation of masculinities, these negotiations did not result in the simple (re)production of dominating discourses of masculinity” (Pringle & Markula, 2005:472). In other words sport does not consistently or unequivocally produce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinities (Pringle & Markula, 2005). The two advertising examples of Matfield and ‘The Beast’ highlight how race, sport and different forms of masculinity intersect in thought-provoking ways.



Figure 8. ‘BIC Razor advertisement’, 2014

The media are a prime site for the construction and maintenance of the main social discourse that is sport, and sport remains a powerful site for the production of the traditional, hegemonic gender order (Meân, 2010:66). The growth in the range of media outlets, and the vastly increased speed of circulation of information have combined to create a phenomenon that Whannel (2002:206) terms the 'vortex effect' or 'vortextuality.' By this he refers to the idea that various media constantly feed off each other, and in an era of electronic and digital information exchange, the speed at which this happens has become very rapid. He argues that certain sports events dominate the headlines to such an extent that it becomes difficult for columnists and commentators to discuss anything else. They are drawn in, as if by a vortex (Whannel, 2002:206).

Most newspapers in South Africa have extensive coverage of sport and it has become common practice to use ex-sport stars' lives and misfortune as leading stories. Burstyn (1999:105) has traced the relationship between sport, media and masculinity. Writing from an American context he argues:

The influence of sport as a gendered cultural practice and spectacle is a result of its marriage to the communications industries. Because sport sold newspapers and newspapers sold sport, many newspaper owners in the early years of this [the 20th] century began investing in athletes, sport teams and sport facilities, and then in the advertising that promoted them.

In the South African context newspapers and the radio were the media through which sport was broadcast. Television broadcasts only materialised in the mid-1970s in South Africa. Through live broadcasts, sport was now accessible to thousands of South Africans on a daily basis. Notably, South African international sports participation during this time was limited, a result of the international sports boycott. This made local sporting events such as the Currie Cup rugby competition, the Comrades, boxing and athletic events major events on the South African sporting calendar. During a time where international exposure was scarce for South African athletes, athletes could become local sporting heroes, promoted by sponsorship and television broadcasts.

Bruce Fordyce – one of South Africa's legendary Comrades winners, who won an unprecedented nine Comrades titles in the 1980s – hinted at the role that television played in promoting him as a sporting legend. It was at Fordyce's home in the leafy suburb of Parkhurst in Johannesburg that I had arranged to meet with him. I rang the doorbell and a visibly older

and frail Fordyce opened the gate for me. I intended to have an in-depth discussion with him about his ‘glory’ years in the 1980s, but as our conversation progressed I sensed that he, now on the brink of his 60th birthday, was reluctant to speak extensively about those years in which he rose to sporting fame. The conversation veered towards the state of road running in South Africa today, and running is clearly a passion that Fordyce still has today. As CEO of ‘Park Run’, an initiative to organise running races all over the country he is still actively involved with running be that with organising races, doing live commentary or running himself. He completed his 30th Comrades Marathon in 2012. Reminiscing about his fame, he said:

I think one of the major reasons why I became a recognisable sporting figure in South Africa during that time was that the Comrades was broadcast live on SABC. There were many other winners before me that never got the same exposure in terms of publicity as I did. Television played a major role in not only promoting the sport of road running, but also gave individuals, like myself the opportunity to get the recognition we deserved. Sponsorships were vital in sustaining me during those years and the only reason people were sponsoring me was that they wanted their brands out there. Sport, success and television was one way of doing so.

Another athlete to emerge during the early period of television broadcasting of sport was middle-distance ace Johan Fourie. Today, Fourie is an accountant at Alexander Forbes in Stellenbosch, and I had arranged to talk to him at his offices about his sporting life and his adjustment thereafter. Fourie dominated the 1500 m event during the 1980s and his time of 3:33.87, set at the South African Championships at Coetzenburg, was the world’s fastest time over the distance. He explained that television coverage of athletics during this time contributed to his income and gave him public exposure:

Yes, during that time I earned about 50% dividend money. 30% of that money I earned prior to an actual race as appearance fees. Because athletics on television was big those years they would want to secure your appearance by paying you beforehand. All the sponsors then also paid you incentives and a monthly retainer. So if you were a good athlete during that time, you could easily have a good life. Almost better than now. Athletics during those years was at a peak, because there was only one television station and there were 30 events broadcast on television every year. If I would be out for dinner at a restaurant, kids would come and ask me for my autograph. And if you were at a que buying groceries, people would say, ‘Johan come stand in front.’

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) were the custodians of broadcasting during this era. Today, Athletics South Africa (ASA) still have a broadcasting deal with the SABC and not Supersport, the satellite sports channel in South Africa. This means that very few national athletic events get live television coverage, as the SABC regard other sports and specifically soccer, one of the major commercialised sports in South Africa, as a more profitable option. Many weekly fixtures of the Professional Soccer League (PSL) are broadcast live. Furthermore, the extensive coverage of sport on satellite television in the form of Supersport broadcasts has made the choice of televised sports. The publicity that professional athletes obtain through the media coverage of aspects of their private and sporting lives often dictates the public's perception of them.

For example in South Africa a media frenzy developed around ex-Springbok scrumhalf Joost van der Westhuizen's life, covering issues relating to both his private life and his public fight against MNS, a motor neuron disease. Van der Westhuizen was given a 20% chance of survival and has used his status as a rugby legend to establish the J9 foundation, an organisation that raises awareness of the disease. The 'fallen' sports hero stimulates an interest in the fallibility of human life, which sensationalist media reporting thrive on. Boorstin (1992) sketches the temporary nature of celebrity status by suggesting that "the very agency which first makes the celebrity in the long run unavoidably destroys him. Newspapers make and unmake the celebrity."

De Wet Barry, an ex-Springbok rugby player with 38 test caps, emphasised how he censors his own behaviour in public, knowing that any action that is morally questionable may make the headlines. He explained:

Sometimes you just want to drink six beers, without anyone looking at you strangely. You want to be incognito. There is always a little voice telling you to act properly in public, because people know who you are. I can't step out of line, because it might become a big thing, like make the front newspapers or something like that. You really do become public property.

Another ex-Springbok rugby player, Bevin Fortuin – who played for the Free State-based franchise The Cheetahs and earned two Springbok caps – was less concerned with the publicity that went along with his fame. Fortuin comes from the small and predominantly Coloured neighbourhood Blanco outside George in the Southern Cape. After his professional rugby career he had a stint as a politician, representing the Democratic Alliance (DA) as a ward

councillor. He decided to return to rugby in a different capacity, as head coach of the South Western District (SWD) Eagles, a team currently playing in the First Division of the Currie Cup. It was at the home ground of the SWD Eagles in Outeniqua Park that I had arranged to meet with Fortuin. I arrived early and got the chance to see Fortuin in action as a coach. His passion and involvement were apparent as he partook in the rugby drills that the players were doing. After the training session we went to his office, where a visibly bulkier Fortuin spoke nostalgically about his rugby days. He elaborated on his relationship with the media at the peak of his career:

I was always of the opinion that the less you know the better. I don't care. I am done with reading newspapers. Sometimes if the journalists write a positive story about your performance then that is good, but if you read something negative it affects your state of mind and you feel you are not good enough. So I was never really worried about the media or that stories would be published about how we partied. That was your personal life. Although you were always recognisable in public, it never worried me. Till today I believe that just because you played rugby and became this public figure it doesn't mean that you can't have a life outside of rugby. We are humans, we party, we drink, we like women and we swear, just like most other people also do.

The media play a prominent role as mediators of the life of sports heroes and how fans perceive them. The next part of the chapter considers the everyday life of athletes.

2.4 EVERYDAY LIFE OF ELITE ATHLETES

Life for those who compete at the top level in sport is one of dedication, sacrifice, routine and precision. The sporting 'habitus' of athletes is what prepares them on a daily basis. Habitus describes the 'socialized subjectivity' of people, and represents the system of classification that shapes people's practices, beliefs, habits, 'tastes' and bodily techniques (Fowler, 1997, cited in Giulianotti, 2009:156). For Bourdieu, the habitus "expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination" (Bourdieu, 1984:562).

The predisposition of the athletic body is geared to training, control of the body and habit. Bourdieu (1990: 63) elaborates on sporting habitus by arguing that "the habitus as the feel for the game is the social game embodied and turned into second nature". Bourdieu's (1997) analysis of habitus operates within a social field where individuals possess different forms of

capital. For Bourdieu economic capital relates to material wealth; cultural capital to cultural resources like education and artistic knowledge; social capital to social networks across friends, families, workmates and wider circles and symbolic capital to honours, prestige and other valorised accreditation (Giulianotti, 2005:157). Waking up early to train, controlling the amount one sleeps, eats, competes and conditions as an athlete all form part of the habitus of the elite athlete. Blake (1996:23) has suggested that “sport is one of the most important ways that the body’s habitus is learned”. An elite athlete’s habitus becomes second nature and is constantly monitored. Elana Meyer, one of South Africa’s running icons highlighted the strictly controlled habitus of an elite athlete:

To be an elite athlete you need to sacrifice many things. It is only once you have retired from the sport that you realise the tight string that you operated on. You have to control how much you eat, how much you sleep, how much you drink. Everything has an influence on your performance. If you do all these things with 100% perfection then you are going to perform to 100% of your ability. As an athlete you are so exposed. If you are slightly tired, slightly dehydrated or slightly over trained, it impacts your performance.

It is often the habitus of athletes that has developed over years that promotes certain actions, traits and predispositions within the elite sports culture. Howe (2004), drawing on the work of Bourdieu, differentiates between the habitus and disposition of athletes. He argues that “a disposition is an underlying tendency or propensity to act in a certain way and is therefore more flexible than a habit established through rudimentary drills, but is still achieved without conscious thought before action” (Howe, 2004:56). For Meyer then the amount she sleeps, eats and drinks is a disposition that has been socially learned over years of being an elite athlete. Her disposition to know how to control her body for peak performance is as Howe (2004) suggests the embodied ability to put the habitual training together in such a way that it can be adapted to suit any situation. It is only once athletes part with their sporting habitus that they reflect on the type of life they lived.

Many athletes I interviewed referred to how they struggled to adapt after the highly routinised lifestyle they were used to as professional sportsmen or women. The everyday life of an athlete is determined by certain criteria of waking up at a determined time, training for a set amount of time, resting, eating, sleeping and doing it all again the next day. After retirement that routine and regiment fall away. Zola Budd reiterated the demands of being a professional athlete. Budd gained prominence in the early 1980s for both her running feats and her controversial decision to take up British citizenship in order to compete in the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles,

California. Forty years after that Olympic race I met up with the now 48-year old Budd at a running workshop in Stellenbosch. Budd lives with her husband and three children in South Carolina and had come back to South Africa to compete in the 2014 Two Oceans Marathon and the Comrades Marathon. She commented on the pressures of being a public figure:

Your whole life just revolves around achievement and all you think of is your next training session. There is no balance... none. You go crazy if you just run, as a professional athlete you go completely crazy. The year that I decided to run full-time I went completely crazy.

Clearly, athletes who have excelled at the highest level of their sport realise the sacrifices that need to be made to train consistently and remain healthy to compete and perform well. Their sporting habitus is engrained in their daily lives and is enforced by their own self-discipline, but also by the control that their coaches, sponsors and general public have over their behaviour. Although elite athletes do have agency in determining their daily routines, much of their everyday lives are taken up by partaking in sports-related activities. As professional sportsmen and women sport becomes a central feature in their overall identity. Van Heerden's (2012:1) research has shown that with all the pressures associated with elite sport, identity can become blurred with performance and the meanings attached to being an athlete can become all-consuming and unbalanced. It is within this all-consuming lifestyle necessary to succeed in sport that athletes are often considered to be narcissistic and where their individual needs become a central feature in the elite sports culture. The next part of the chapter considers the 'culture of individualism' and how that informs an understanding of a life as a professional sportsperson.

2.5 CULTURE OF INDIVIDUALISM

Athletes are often characterised as being self-centred and individualistic. Modern individualism is associated with the autonomy of the individual, the right to decide things for oneself and to live as one thinks fit (Smart, 2005). It has been suggested that "the individual as an autonomous or self-constituting subject seeking personal development, fulfilment, identity affirmation and/or status enhancement through the exercise of self-interest is closely articulated with capitalist modes of production and consumption" (Harvery, 1989 cited in Smart, 2005:28). A culture of individualism emphasises personal effort, achievement, toughness and strength. These characteristics are akin to those of sports heroes. Sport is an institutional setting where such values are continually re-affirmed. From its inception the

competitive character of modern sport has stressed the importance of individuals giving their best, being strong and brave in pursuit of sporting achievements (Smart, 2005:28). A sense of narcissism, self-admiration and vanity are often associated with top athletes. Johan Fourie explained the individualistic nature of the life of a sportsman:

As an athlete everything revolves around yourself. To succeed you have to be selfish. If you have a girlfriend and you have to run the following day, then she can come visit you, but by 10pm she has to go home, because you have to go to bed. My athletic career was very selfish. Everything really revolves around your needs, your diet, your rest and your training. If you don't perform at an event, you can only blame yourself.

Derick Hougaard, former Blue Bull and Springbok rugby player, suffered from severe depression after a rugby injury forced him into retirement. He battled an addiction to painkillers and sleeping pills and found the transition to a life after sport especially challenging. Speaking to sport journalist Marco Botha, he compared professional rugby to an addiction, where everything revolves around your needs.

The thing that you love the most [rugby] – this addiction – kills you. And it affects people around you, without you even noticing it. It is a selfish place, because nobody really understands what it feels like to be a rugby genius. Let alone know what it feels like to have an injury. You are constantly hoping that you can, just for that last time feed that addiction. Just one more high. At 30 rugby is all you know (Botha, 2013:3).

Sociologist, Peter Callero (2013) has considered how social forces shape our lives. He argues that the culture of individualism is a myth. He shows how symbols, groups, class, globalisation and the mass media are all social forces that challenge individualist assumptions. Callero (2013:280) suggests that “from the moment we take our first breath to the day we exhale for the last time, our life is inextricably linked to the lives of others.”

The notion that “life is inextricably linked to the lives of others” applies to professional sportspeople. There is a perception that to achieve their athletic goals professional athletes have to be self-centred and narcissistic. All Black rugby Captain, and legend of the game, Richie McCaw puts things in perspective. In his autobiography, *The Real McCaw*, he writes:

.... you have to be careful about narrowing your world too much. If you want to get to the top in professional sport, it is easy to develop tunnel vision, seeing the world around you as a means to an end. To some extent that's inevitable because you've got to be selfish, in the sense of making sure that you do whatever it takes to get the best out of yourself

week after week. But there's a danger that soon your whole world ends up inside that tunnel, and you lose your friends from outside the sport who see the world through different frames of reference. I've been fortunate to keep old friends from school and university, who have that outside perspective (McCaw, 2012:168).

Clearly, support from those outside of professional sport is deemed important for McCaw. For those who excel in sport, whether that be individual or team sports, most of the training and commitment occurs on an individual level. But as Eddie Andrews, a Springbok veteran and former Western Province rugby player attests, support is important:

The most successful players are not just successful in rugby, but also in other aspects of their lives. I am of the view that you have to have that balanced approach, then you become a better player. You're not entirely dependent on how well you perform on the field that contributes to your well-being and your value system. You've got other areas that you also got your tentacles in and you've got your family, if it is your work, or if it's your religion. If you've got that sort of balanced approach, that does help you perform better on the field as well.

The support structures that enable the athlete to perform consistently is crucial in the performance process. Their sporting lives, although often individually focused, are inextricably linked to the lives of others. Their social networks developed through their coaches, family, team mates, opponents and fans speak to how although the training and competition of an athlete may at times be done in solace, they very much live within a network of social relations. Chapter Four considers more closely the social networks that athletes rely on once they retire from competitive sport.

2.6 DISCIPLINE AND PUBLIC PROPERTY

Sport has always involved forms of discipline in its regimes of training, but increasingly this discipline is being extended to all aspects of a player's lifestyle – diet, daily routine, sex life and sleeping patterns (Whannel, 2002: 137). This discipline often escapes the confines of the athlete's private life as they become public property. Giles (2000), writing on the psychology of fame and celebrity, has argued that one of the main features of celebrity life is the loss of privacy. He argues that “while fame can create the feeling of psychological distance from friends and family, it can create the reverse effect of feeling there is nowhere to hide” (Giles, 2000:96).

Zola Budd alluded to her loss of privacy. Budd enjoys being anonymous and her life in America provides her with that freedom. She explained how her actions were scrutinised in the public sphere in South Africa. I asked her about what it was like to receive all the media attention as a running heroine in the 1980s, and she elaborated:

In Bloemfontein it can become bad at times, because for example I will go and buy groceries, an 'oom' will come and sneak into my trolley and say "You can't buy that stuff to eat." Or older ladies will come – you know how Afrikaans people can be at times – and pinch me in my waist and say, "You have gained some weight hey?" Then she looks into your trolley to see what you have bought to eat. So at times it does become too personal and that's bad, bad for me and my family. In America at least nobody knows who I am and I enjoy that anonymity.

Elana Meyer, one of Budd's major competitors, went to the extent of changing her physical appearance to escape the demands that the public may make on athletes. She said:

I was actually relieved in a way when I retired. Just to break away from that public life. You know I always used to have short dark hair. Then I decided to grow my hair and colour it blond. People no longer recognised me and that was nice to for once just be a normal person, not someone who people only see as an Olympic medallist.

The surveillance of athletes' behaviour can be analysed by using Foucault's (1975, 1979) notion of the body as an object that is transformed through power relations. An athlete's body and actions are determined through a set of power relations among various actors, be that coaches, doping officials, the fans, friends, sponsors or the athlete himself. For Foucault, power and knowledge are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent. The body is the crucial locus for the modern 'political technologies of power' that examine, regulate and control citizens (Giulianotti, 2005:103). In the context of sport, the body is disciplined through the creation of habit by the repetitive rudimentary drills that are set down by coaches to enhance the player's performance (Howe, 2004:61). Hargreaves (1987: 151) argues that it is in this environment "where a system of expansive discipline and surveillance produces normal persons by making each individual as visible as possible to each other, and by meticulous work on persons' bodies at the instigation of the subjects themselves." These visible bodies of sports heroes are not only surveilled in training, but they have also become bodies surveilled in the public sphere, as the excerpts on Zola Budd and Elana Meyer highlight above. Giulianotti (2005: 117) notes that "the body is no external 'thing', but intrinsic to composing self-identities and relationships to

the outside world.... modern sport connects the embodied self to approved forms of self-identity”. Chapter Three considers how the sporting body is socially constructed and the implications thereof for a life after sport.

2.7 THE FANS

Only when sports are related to matters of deep cultural and personal significance do they become important to fans (Maguire, 2009: 1262). Claiming national allegiance and pride through sports teams can be fleeting, but it does contribute to a sense of camaraderie. Often the cultural and personal significance of sports teams create a sense of ‘community’ amongst fans. Crawford (2004:52) warns that despite this sense of belonging experienced by fan communities, they often remain exclusionary of certain individuals on the basis of class, disability, ethnicity and gender. Crawford (2004:52) proposes that “as many ‘traditional’ sources of community have begun to decline, such as those based on family and local networks, the sense of community offered by contemporary sport becomes increasingly important and evermore a commodity sold to paying fans”.

Sport tourist behaviour research distinguishes between different types of fans. Individuals who have an awareness and attraction to a sporting event or person are regarded as spectators, whereas those who have an allegiance and attachment to a sporting event and person are considered fans (Cho, Ramshaw & Norman, 2015). This differentiation is important when considering the hype that fans can conjure up around an athletic feat of their sports hero and this enthusiasm contributes to the status of a sports hero in society. Sutton, McDonald, Milne and Cimperman (1997) suggest that there are three levels of fan identification: (a) low identification (social fans), referring to a passive relationship to sport; (b) medium identification (focused fans), referring to an association with sport or team-based attraction; and (c) high identification (vested fans), referring to a devoted relationship to a sport or team. Higher identified fans have a stronger sense of attachment to their teams (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). It is the vested fans who frequently attend matches played by their sports teams and who are loyal supporters, despite the form of the team.

Noticeably empty stadiums played to by struggling teams in the Super Rugby competition show the distinction between a fan and a spectator. High identification fans would attend matches, despite the form of their teams. Low attendance rates and empty stadiums at Super Rugby matches have become a matter of great concern for rugby franchise directors, as this translates into less profit. For example, the annual 2014 report of the Blue Bull Rugby Union (BBRU)

showed that there was a 34% drop in match attendance at Loftus Versfeld. This reflected the lowest attendance numbers in 13 years and was a disheartening statistic for a usually successful rugby franchise (Loftus crowds hit record low, 2015). The Blue Bulls failed to make the play-offs in the 2014 and 2015 Super Rugby seasons and lost in the semi-finals of the Currie Cup in 2014.

The cultural and personal significance of South Africa as a nation that has excelled in sport has been one of the major tools used to promote South Africa as an integrated society. Fans contribute to this sense of communality. Sports teams and individual sports heroes of those teams become commodified in representing an ostensibly reconciled South African nation. The hosting of two sporting mega-events since the advent of South Africa's democracy, the 1995 Rugby World Cup and more recently the 2010 FIFA World Cup, were strategically used by government to promote South Africa as a democratic country. Marketing companies seized the opportunity made available through sport to use their brands to promote South Africa as a unified country. South African Breweries (SAB), for example, had an extensive campaign in the late 1990s in which Castle Lager used soccer as a platform to promote their brand. The slogan 'One Beer, One Goal, One Nation, One Soul' was at the heart of one of Castle Lager's major marketing campaigns.

Writing on the relationship between beer and masculinity during this time, Mager (2005:184) argues that:

Sporting arenas became places where multiracial nationalism was regarded as spectacle and Castle Lager, as the principle sport sponsor in the country, was in a position to claim this spectacle for its brand identity. Castle Lager's sponsorship of soccer – recast as football as South African sport re-entered the international sporting arena – provided the opportunity for the brand to configure a new popular masculinity. Football stars were predominantly black, their supreme fit and honed bodies offset by non-conformist hairstyles such as dreadlocks or bleached curls, and the team's colours merged with those of the African National Congress.

Mager has argued that SAB's lager advertisements of the mid-1990s are a clear example of advertising using the emotional power of nationalism. Sports heroes were used as key figures in promoting South Africa as a 'unified' nation, and fans could identify not only with the achievements of their sporting heroes, but also with being part of a successful sporting nation.

As for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Alegi and Bolsmann (2009) have argued that the tournament, the first to be held on African soil, was loaded with political, economic and symbolic significance for a democratic and globalising South Africa. From these two sports mega-events, individual sporting heroes emerged, most notably Francois Pienaar, captain of the Springbok team that won the 1995 Rugby World Cup, and Simphiwe Tshabalala, the diminutive Bafana Bafana striker, who scored the first goal to open South Africa's FIFA World Cup campaign against Mexico. These sportsmen became sports heroes because they rose to fame in a specific sporting context: Pienaar at a time when South Africa's new democracy was fragile and winning the Rugby World Cup was seen as uniting the country, albeit temporarily, and Tshabalala at a time when the world's eyes were on South Africa as the hosts of the event. Tshabalala's goal silenced critics who had questioned the ability of Bafana Bafana to perform at this level after they had only qualified for one World Cup prior to hosting it. Sport has the ability to conjure up feelings of nationalism, be that through hosting sport mega-events or a team winning an international championship. It is through the fans that athletes gain prominence in the public sphere.

Sports heroes are made by fans: Nick Hornby's (1992) book, *Fever pitch*, illustrates fittingly the obsessive nature of fandom (in his case of football in England). In this fascinating novel Hornby uses football fandom as a lens to make sense of everyday life in England. He argues that his devotion to football says things about his own character and personal history. The way the game is consumed seems to offer all sorts of information about our society and culture. It is on such bases that Howe (2004) emphasises the close link between commercial successes and winning. Spectators collectively control the sporting world. Sports heroes are made by spectators.

Marius Joubert, an ex-Springbok rugby centre, hinted at the euphoria that comes through fandom:

I don't think a job will ever give you the same satisfaction as being young, running onto the field with 60 000 people cheering you on or that feeling of achievement when you have scored a try and the crowd cheers you on. I won't experience that ever again. But I mean we had our time, one can't hold onto that forever.

Bevin Fortuin also recalled his memories of the first test he played as a Springbok. It is clear from this excerpt that Fortuin was less concerned about his individual achievement of

representing his country and more concerned about how he would represent not only his home community but the entire nation. He elaborated:

The second test I played was in England. There were 90 000 people. There are so many things that rush through your mind. I thought, wow, here I am, a boy from Blanco is representing his country in front of 90 000 people and people are singing the national anthem of your country. You are so thankful for that opportunity, because it does not come everybody's way. You have such a small chance of becoming a Springbok and there I was a local boy from a small town representing my country. I knew I was not only playing for myself, but for those 90 000 people there and thousands more watching the game on television.

Although sport has been used as a catalyst for temporary experiences of nationhood and nation building, several commentators have been rather sceptical about the role that sport plays in 'uniting' people. Nathan (2012) has considered how sport brings people together and also divides them in the American sporting context. He argues that sport-related *communitas* is a sense of belonging that is often shallow and ephemeral, but can also be deep and long lasting. The long-lasting nature of sporting *communitas* is more applicable to athletes and team mates who have practised and played together for many years and endured difficult circumstance. Writing on sport as a form of *communitas* Nathan (2012:3) observes:

For dedicated fans, it can last for a few weeks if their team is in the midst of an end-of-the-season championship drive. Or it can last for a few hours during a game. Most of the time, though, when the game is over, fans file out and head home or downtown, with only the most minimal sense of connectedness.

A sense of scepticism about sport's ability to have long-lasting nation building effects is also apparent in social commentator Eusebius McKaiser's analysis of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa:

It is not that a big sporting event cannot occasion a sense of national identity and nationhood. It can. But it cannot constitute national identity and it cannot create national identity. The biggest mistake to watch out for, however, is to assume that just because we feel united, the feeling is underpinned by genuine national identity and nationhood (McKaiser, 2010:10).

Clearly fans who attend sporting events often identify with the team they support because of communal or national linkages. Sport's ability to contribute to long-lasting effects on

nationhood is contentious. In South African society sport mega-events may bring about feelings of togetherness and national pride, but outside the confines of the stadium the country is divided along racial, gendered and cultural lines. Structural inequalities cannot be solved by the fleeting and intangible elements of sporting achievement built around nationhood. Nonetheless, sport spectatorship and fandom resonate with Anderson's (1991) 'imagined community'. Fans are central to elevating the social status of athletes within the elite sports culture. They are the ones who request autographs and give the athletes public recognition in their everyday lives, whether that be when they see them in a shopping mall, stop next to them at a robot, or as in Zola Budd's case hassle her when she is doing grocery shopping. Sports heroes only become heroes if the sporting public give them recognition. As I have shown, media coverage of their sporting achievement is a central link between the sports hero and the general public and fans. It is this elevated status in society that many of the informants of this study described as being superficial. The next part of the chapter considers the elite sports culture as a "bubble"; a life that is sheltered from the everyday life of their peers.

2.8 THE "BUBBLE"

The notion of a life separated from others or living in a "bubble" was first coined by Cohen (1977), who traced the lives of expatriate communities. Cohen found that Western expatriates are shielded from contact and involvement with the host society by an "environmental bubble" which reproduces the ecological, social and cultural conditions similar to their home environment. Although professional athletes do not live in unfamiliar places like expatriates do, their lifestyles and the sacrifices they need to make to be in a peak physical condition to perform do require a form of 'separation' from the world. Many of the former professional rugby players I spoke to asserted that they were "shielded" from certain realities. As a professional rugby player your daily training, eating, sleeping and recovery periods are scientifically formulated by the coaching staff. On tours the logistic managers are responsible for the smooth transition from the hotel to the rugby stadium to the airport. The fame and celebrity status of professional sportspeople referred to earlier in the chapter gives them a sense of what Ollie le Roux calls "fake" reality. Le Roux explained:

I was too young. My youth was stolen. We were bullet proof those years, but the players of today are very exposed with social media and things like that. But, as a young man it was a wonderful journey, travelling the world, getting all this exposure. The fans stopping you in malls and on the street for a photo or an autograph. As a young person it was overwhelming and to tell you the truth it was never really reality. You live in world

where everything gets done for you. Your appointments are made by the manager, he deals with your travel schedule. Your coach deals with the fitness aspect and game tactics. The travel manager deals with your baggage. All you have to do is breathe, stay fit and play rugby. Looking back we lived in a 'bubble' and thought we were invincible. Little did we know what life would be when that bubble pops.

Keith Andrews had similar sentiments about the sheltered life of athletes in an elite sports culture.

I think it is the whole sort of euphoria of playing rugby and about being a rugby player. It is a wonderful life, because, you know, when you're a rugby player, most things get done for you. Everything is given to you. You know, wherever you go in the world, five-star hotels, and you arrive at the airport, and you don't worry about your luggage. You sort of get placed in a cocoon, especially from a South African point of view. New Zealand not so much, then France, you know, they're more realistic about that. In South Africa, you're sort of a movie star here. You know?

Marius Joubert, an ex-Springbok rugby player famous as only the second Springbok player to score a hat-trick of tries against the All Blacks, also referred to the 'different' world of a professional sportsman:

My priorities have changed completely. When I was younger I enjoyed rugby and the fame that went with it was great. When I got married and started a family the whole situation changed. I still want to show my kids where I played, but the world that I am in now and the world of rugby are two completely separate worlds.

Anton Leonard shared a similar sentiment to Joubert's. Leonard played two tests for the Springboks, won three Currie Cup titles with the Blue Bulls, was named the Currie Cup player of the year in 2005 and won the Super Rugby Championships with The Bulls in 2007. He retired from rugby at the age of 31, but came out of retirement a year later after being lured back to professional rugby by the Bulls coach Heyneke Meyer, who at the time needed Leonard in the team after a string of injuries to his first-choice players. Today Leonard owns a coffee shop in George, and is the forwards coach for the SWD Eagles. He referred to a life of rugby as severely sheltered:

While you're playing you have no idea of what is going on in the 'outside' world. You live your life as a rugby player in a cocoon and you are the hero. It is only when you step away from that life that you realize what life is about. You are like a silkworm in a

cocoon. All of a sudden when you look from the outside in do you become aware of how sheltered your life was. The team manager packed your bags and sorted out the logistics, the doctor was in charge of your health. Your coach was in charge of your training. It is only when you move away from rugby that you can look back and realize how sheltered your life was and how different it is to what non-athletes do on a daily basis.

These excerpts highlight how athletes perceive their sporting profession to be completely different to life outside of sport. Many of the informants reflected on the difficulty of starting a second career after having been a professional sportsperson. Chris Roussouw, one of the members of the 1995 Rugby World Cup winning team, retired from rugby at the age of 32. He explained that at that age most of his friends who did not play rugby had established jobs. His career spanned both the amateur and professional periods of rugby in South Africa. Although he had business interests while he was playing rugby he found it challenging to start a new career. He elaborated:

I always use this description to explain a life after rugby. You start with a second life – right at the bottom. You start off in the same position as a teller at a bank. You have to gain experience over a couple of years, then you can consider moving up. The fact that you were a rugby player does not mean anything in that situation. I was always aware of the reality outside of a rugby career. I was an entrepreneur while I was playing rugby. But even with that you need to start at the bottom, like a teller at a bank.

It is evident that in the everyday life of athletes they have a sole focus on what needs to be done to succeed in sport. It is only once they step out of this milieu that they realise how sheltered they were as part of the elite sports culture. Joost van der Westhuizen's words accurately capture this realisation:

I was 33 when I found out what a litre of milk and a loaf of bread cost. As a player you're away seven months of the year. Even if you tour in South Africa, you're away from home. The team becomes your family. It's a different perspective. The moment I held my first child, I thought, 'OK what do I do with this?' Only then do you realise there are actually other people in the world too. My kids were born on 16 January 2014 and 7 March 2006. That's when I went, 'Wow this is what life is actually about. Not rugby' (Van der Westhuizen, cited in Powers, 2011:123).

The lives of elite athletes are very much regimented, and entail travelling and competing day in and day out. Many of the informants of this study compared the life they led as professional

athletes to living in a “bubble”. This reference to life as a bubble can only be experienced and reflected on by the athletes once they step out of the elite sports culture that formed part of their habitus for the majority of their young adult lives. The “bubble” metaphor does allow one to consider how the culture – that is the routines, habits, ways of being and rituals – of elite athletes changes once they end their professional sporting lives and move onto new ventures.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has drawn attention to the everyday life of elite athletes. The elite sports culture was probed by considering the role that sports heroes play in society. Sports heroes become a pervasive part of South African society through the media, and this in turn provides the athletes with a platform to fame. The everyday life of elite athletes was considered with specific reference to how their own daily routines are not only controlled and surveilled by their coaches and sponsors, but also how their privacy in the public sphere becomes jeopardised once they have achieved public adoration. I argued that fans play a vital role in giving impetus to the public persona of the sports hero. Finally, the chapter has shown how informants of this study considered their life as a professional athlete to be completely different from their life without sport. The reference to life as a professional sportsperson being a “bubble” was probed and it was argued that the difference in lifestyle can only really be gauged once the athlete steps out of the sporting limelight. The chapter that follows moves away from the everyday life of athletes and considers how they experience their corporeality once they end their professional sporting careers.

CHAPTER THREE THE (BROKEN) SPORTS BODY

Your spine is very important. You get it knocked out of alignment every game. You have to treat your body like a car. You get your tune-ups and wheel alignments (Roger Craig, a running back in American football, before the 1989 Super Bowl, cited in Messner, 1992:61)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the corporeal aspect of sport focusing specifically on the injured sporting body, as injuries and age were common reasons provided by informants for curtailing their sporting careers. Considering that the “the body is man’s first and foremost instrument” (Mauss 1979:104) and the body is the one tool with which a sportsperson ultimately has to work (Howe 2001), an analysis of the post-sporting bodies of athletes is imperative. Sport, as Besnier and Brownell (2012:444) propose, “is a human activity in which the body is the object of the most intense scrutiny: trained, disciplined, modified, displayed, evaluated, and commodified, the sporting body is the focus of not only the person who inhabits it but also spectators, trainers and ‘owners’”. The question then arises as to how sportsmen and women perceive their bodies whilst they are doing ‘work’, that is practising sport professionally, and how they think about their bodies once they move out of the sporting context.

This chapter opens with a description of an ex-Springbok rugby player’s experience of an injured body. Bevin Fortuin’s story offers a vantage point from where to make sense of how the injured sporting body is managed and the impact of injuries on an athlete’s wellbeing. His story allows for an analysis of how the body has been theorised anthropologically. The injuries he sustained enable one to consider the mechanics of the body and the notion of the sporting body as a machine. I consider the long-term consequences of an injured body, as related to the body partaking in a physically demanding sport such as rugby. I also explore how gendered norms regarding bodies inform the process of retirement from sport. I argue that athletes’ bodies are the main instrument that they use in competitive sport and that very little management is done in terms of considering the post-sports body. It is within the elite sports culture that the previous chapter dealt with, that sporting bodies are both produced for consumption by spectators and packaged for consumption through commercial interest during the ‘active’ phase of an athlete’s career. There is however limited forward planning for how the bodies of professional sportsmen and women will be managed and maintained after sport.

What follows is Bevin Fortuin's story of the injuries he had to endure over his professional rugby playing career.

Even before I started making a name for myself, my body had taken a beating. The first operation I had was on my shoulder and that was before I started playing professional rugby. My first game back after the shoulder injury I tweaked my knee and then had to have surgery on my knee. I was out for about three months recovering from that knee injury and returned to play rugby, but then my other knee got injured. Again I was out for about six weeks. At one point I thought to myself "Is this really worth it? Do I really want to continue with this sport?", because every time I recover, it doesn't take long then I am back in the hospital again. But I made a decision that I am going to use the injuries as a motivation and through the years the injuries have come and gone. All rugby players at some point in their career will suffer an injury – that is just part of the game. But it does get frustrating at times to be in pain, hurt and not see your body perform as you know it can. My worst injury was in 2007 when I dislocated my hip in a tackle. I almost died from that injury in hospital. For three months I could do nothing. I had to lie on my back and was not allowed to move. People had to wash me and feed me and I felt so helpless and dependent. Other people were my hands. At the time I was playing for the Cheetah's in Bloemfontein and I decided to come back home to George, just to rest a bit. Then, one evening a terrible thing happened that was in retrospect actually my saving grace. I got a terrible pain in my hip and everybody at home thought I was joking about the pain. My family gave me painkillers, but nothing worked to relieve the pain. I then called our team doctor and told him that I am in so much pain, it was unbearable. He told me to go to the hospital to go check it out. At the hospital the doctors did blood tests and the doctor told me to come back to the hospital the following day to get the results of the test. I remember still telling the doctor "No doc I can't come back tomorrow, I have to go back to Bloemfontein. The Cheetahs are playing against the Lions in the Currie Cup final." He was stern and told me to come back early the next morning, at 8 o' clock. At that point I had spent thousands of rands on my medical bill for the tests on my hip. The next morning, they did a few other tests and then the doctor came in and told me that I am not going anywhere. I then realised that something is seriously wrong. They discovered that I had a blood clot in my lungs. They said it was a result of lying down for an extended period of time for the hip injury. In retrospect, if I had climbed into that car to drive to Bloemfontein, the blood clot could have caused my death on the road. The

doctor told me that I would never be able to play rugby again. Everybody was very worried. The newspapers were leading stories about my condition and even speculating that I should sue the guy that put the tackle in on me that dislocated my hip. But I decided to dismiss those kind of stories, because what happens on the rugby field happens on the rugby field and part of the game is to put your body on the line, and you will get injured. I have always been sceptical about doctors and always tried to prove them wrong by playing with an injured body, but I learned to listen to them. It was only through great dedication and persistence that I came through that injury. I started playing again in 2008, but was never back to my best. You must understand injuries are always in the back of your mind, but when you are in the moment and on the field and an opponent runs at you, the last thing you think about is an injury. All you think about is how to defend. You just think rugby, rugby, rugby and how to perform.

This vignette of Fortuin's injuries during his rugby career points to the knocks that the sporting body takes. Rugby is known for its physicality. The contact nature of the sport places the bodies of rugby players at risk for sustaining career-ending injuries. Bourdieu (1993a) has shown how different sports, and the different uses of the body, represent social class structures. Bourdieu (1993a:354) proposes that sports like boxing, football, and rugby involve a "considerable investment of effort, sometimes of pain and suffering . . . and sometimes a *gambling with the body itself*" that expresses an "*instrumental* relation to the body which the working classes express in all the practices centred on the body" (Bourdieu 1993a:354). He contrasts this with middle-class sports (e.g., walking, jogging, aerobics) that treat the body as an end in itself and generate a "body-for-others". For Bourdieu (1993a) the physical attributions of particular sporting activities and class habitus are inextricably linked. The notion that a rugged sport such as rugby is a working-class sport, where the body is inscribed with pain and suffering, goes back to the game's status in the United Kingdom at the turn of the 20th century. Muscular Christian priests used rugby as a tool to 'uplift' the working classes. Dunning (1971:147) argues that:

The game was regarded as a means of moral and physical salvation, as activities which could help the denizens of the slums to become strong and physically healthy and to develop traits of character which would enable them to improve their miserable lot.

Public educational institutions in the United Kingdom were key in growing the game of rugby amongst the middle classes. They provided the "institutional seedbeds" where the game could develop in a unique environment and where "public morality could be shaped and amended"

(Chandler, 1996:14). In the South African context rugby also emerged as a middle-class sport, and educational institutions such as Stellenbosch University provided the necessary infrastructure and cultural capital to promote the game among students. The game spread to the rural areas through Afrikaans-speaking teachers and ministers (Grundlingh, 2013:56). In the early 1970s, 51% of the provincial rugby players could be classified as white-collar workers, 21% as professionals, 10% as students, 8% as farmers, and under 10% as blue-collar workers (Williams, cited in Grundlingh, 2013:66). These statistics offer insight into the popularity of the game amongst the South African white middle class at the time, but it has to be borne in mind that there were pockets where the game enjoyed a considerable following amongst the working class in places such as Uitenhage and Dispatch in the Eastern Cape, where the white working class applied their labour in the motor manufacturing industry (Grundlingh, 2013:66).

It seems that Bourdieu's (1999) analysis of rugby as a sport where sporting practices are centred on the body, and his point that rugby is a working-class sport because of its instrumental relation with the body, are not supported by the development of the game in South Africa as a predominantly middle-class sport. Cultural variation influenced the development of rugby amongst different classes in South Africa (for an analysis of rugby's class distinction in South African society see Grundlingh, 1996, 2013). Bourdieu's analysis of the stratification of social class through varying 'habitus' (practice theory) in social fields, of which sport is one, has come into question. It has been argued that "one of the deficiencies of practice theory for an anthropology of sport is that it lacks a well-developed concept of culture that can account for the ways in which practices are culturally organised by cultural schemas, myths, symbols, rituals and so on" (Ortner, 2006, cited in Besnier & Brownell, 2012:450). Besnier and Brownell (2012:450) propose that "'body culture' is a better tool than 'habitus', because it considers the anthropological concept of culture to contextualise the body within the local meanings that are significant to the people whose bodies are in question". Brownell (1995:17) defines body culture as everything that people do with their bodies, together with the cultural context that shapes the nature of their actions and gives them meaning. "Body culture reflects the internalization and incorporation of culture; it is 'embodied culture'" (Besnier and Brownell, 2012:450). This chapter, Chapter Three, provides insight into the cultural context that shapes the sporting body. I am specifically concerned with how the injured body within the elite sports context is managed by athletes themselves and how they think about their bodies after sport. An understanding of how class classifies bodies through sport provides the necessary

theoretical background to understand the individual lived experiences of the informants of this study.

Injuries that occur during their rugby playing days may affect the quality of life that athletes have when they retire from competitive sport. This chapter first considers how 'bodies' have informed the work of anthropologists in the past, and then considers the 'afterlife' of the sporting body.

3.2 ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE BODY

Anthropologists have historically considered 'bodies' and embodiment as a central aspect of studying people and relations between people. This despite the fact that it was only in the 1980s that a proliferation of social scientific research, designed to explore the importance of the body in society started to develop (see Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991). Major social theorists, such as Bourdieu (1997, 1984) and Foucault (1977) considered the body vital to their understandings of class and power. Medical anthropologists have also placed the biomedical and cultural body at the centre of understanding issues around health, illness and disease.

Bryan Turner (1991) has argued that the human body has been accorded a place of central importance in anthropology since the nineteenth century. He provides four reasons for the prominence of the body in anthropology. The first relates to the development of philosophical anthropology, and the issue of the body in relation to the ontology of Man Turner (1991:1). Turner (1991) suggests that anthropology has been inclined to ask questions about the universal essence of humanity, because anthropology in the context of European colonialism was forced to address the problem of human universals (of ontology) in relation to variation and differences of social relationships.

The second reason for anthropologists' interest in the body relates to the body playing a central part in early anthropology because it offered a solution to the problem of social relativism. From here Turner (1991) proposes anthropologists became concerned with the relationship between culture and nature, and essentially asked the question "What is man?" Thirdly, Turner (1991:3) argues that the study of the human body was central to Darwinism, which proposes that human beings are essentially part of nature, rather than outside it. Darwinism also provided an account of racial differences. These Darwinist assumptions were contentious and physical anthropology was rather slow to develop as a specialised sub-branch of mainstream anthropology (Turner, 1991:4). Lastly the question of the body as a classification system has been central to the anthropological work of Mary Douglas. For Douglas (1966, 1970), the

principal medium of classification has historically been the human body itself. She argues that the body is a “natural symbol”. Douglas paved the way for contemporary understandings of the physical body moulded by society and culture (Strathern, 1996).

Sport was used as a tool for classification amongst early anthropologists. In 1904 the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Physical Culture at the St Louis Fair staged a series of Olympic contests known as “Anthropology Days” or the “Tribal Games” as the St Louis press dubbed them. The desire of the organisers was to measure human prowess in order to make “scientific judgments” about the “physical value” of races and nations would eventually metamorphose into one of the most controversial episodes in the history of sport (Dyreson, 2008:127). Sport was used as an instrument to measure the different physical attributes of people from dissimilar cultural background and racial assumptions were made based on an evolutionary understanding of humanity. The bodies of people and what they could do were used as a classification tool. Dyreson (2008:131) elaborates:

At the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, the new discipline of anthropometry provided the initial linkage between academic anthropology and athletics. In fact, the so-called science of anthropometry provided a strong connection in the United States between the emerging fields of anthropology and physical culture. Anthropometry supported the foundation for what would eventually come to be known as physical anthropology in the developing new study of humankind.

Sport was therefore central in early anthropological studies of the body as a classification tool. Anthropology also developed a theory of the body, because in pre-modern societies the body was an important surface on which the markers of social status, family position, tribal affiliation, age, gender and religious condition could be publically displayed (Turner, 1991:6). Rites of passage between different social statuses were often marked by ritual transformation of the body (Turner, 1991:6). In contemporary society tattooing has become fashionable rather than an aspect of religious culture, and tattoos are often a mark of social membership within an urban ‘tribe’ (Turner, 1991:6).

Shilling (1993:5) has proposed that in modern society “there is a tendency for the body to be seen as an entity which is in the process of becoming; a *project* which should be worked at and accomplished as part of an *individual's* self-identity”. He argues that “this differs from how the body was decorated and transcribed and altered in traditional societies, as it is a more reflexive process, and less bound up in inherited models of socially acceptable bodies which were forged

through rituals in communal ceremonies” (Shilling, 1993:5). He further proposes that body projects vary along social lines, especially in the case of gender. In other words considering the body as a project has created an element of reflexivity and individuality. To Shilling (1993) the self-project of the body is an area where self-expression is the norm and where economic individualism is allowed to flourish. Hargreaves (1986:14) has argued that:

The body is clearly an object of crucial importance in consumer culture and its supply industries: and sports, together with fashion, dieting, keep-fit therapy, advertising imagery, are deployed in a constant elaborating programme whose objective is the production of the new ‘normalised’ individual.

Tattoos are representations of consumerism and individuality inscribed on the sporting body. Tattoos as markers of social membership have become prominent in professional rugby. The sports body is a site where certain markers of achievement and celebrity style are displayed. This occurs not only through the responsibility that athletes have of representing their commercial sponsors by wearing clothing with the branding of the sponsor on it, but has also evolved into a space where personal body art has become prevalent. It is common to see the bodies of athletes decorated with tattoos that have personal and symbolic meaning for the players. With extensive television coverage of rugby in South Africa, these bodies have become displayed and consumed by spectators. This resonates with Foucault’s (1977) argument that the body acts as a site of both cultural and political manipulation. The athletic body becomes a site that is consumed by fans, and if tattooed, sends out a message about the values of the elite sports culture. The current Springbok scrumhalf Francois Hougaard’s body exemplifies how the sporting body has become a space for consumption and reinforces the heterosexual norm of the masculine sports body. Sport serves as a social institution that is organised around the political project of defining acceptable forms of masculinity (Hargreaves, 1986; Crosset, 1990; Messner, 1992, 2002). A leading men’s magazine, *Men’s Health* ran a story on Hougaard in its March 2012 issue (see Figure 9). The depiction on the cover page of Hougaard’s tattoos and muscular tone represents how the sporting body is marketed for consumer needs.



Figure 9. *Men's Health* magazine with Francois Hougaard on the cover pages, flexing his muscles and displaying his tattoos

Source: Men's Health Magazine, March 2012

De Pauw (1997, cited Howe, 2011:279) makes the significant point that “it is through the study of the body in context of, and in relation to, sport that we can understand sport as one of the sites for the reproduction of social inequality in its promotion of the traditional view of athletic performance, masculinity, and physicality, including gendered images of the ideal physique and body beautiful”). Sportsmen and women are considered as epitomising ideal body types. Although Hougaard's sporting body is used as a commodified body to market *Men's Health* magazine, Maguire (1993) proposes that the flexible sports body can be categorised as a biomedical body, commodified body, disciplined body and symbolic body.

It is within these malleable understandings of the body that this chapter considers 'broken' or injured bodies in sport, and what the implications are of a broken body when athletes retire

from competitive sport. To answer that question a discussion on how sporting bodies are trained within the elite sports culture is required. An analysis of the sporting body as a machine is provided.

3.3 THE SPORTS BODY AS A MACHINE

Howe's (2001, 2004, 2009 and 2011) research on the body, injury and sport forms part of a limited body of ethnographic work that has focused on the body within the cultural world of sport. Drawing on the work of Hoberman (1992), Howe argues that the body can be conceptualised as an engine with a mortal quality. "The body in the context of sports medicine is an object that can be controlled and manipulated, and thus may be understood as a complex mechanical machine" (Howe, 2004:55). Messner's (1992) research on retired professional sportsmen found that the bodies of athletes become the focus of the self in an instrumental way. He argues that "it's not simply that an athlete's body becomes the 'focus of the self', but that the athlete is often encouraged to see his body as an instrument...Physical and or emotional pain are experienced as a nuisance to be ignored or done away with" (Messner, 1992:62). Rugby demands physical intimidation and players literally put their bodies on the line, and injuries suffered during this process are considered to be sacrifices for a greater purpose (Niehaus, 2014:75). Messner (1992:62) writes that "the ultimate extension of instrumental rationality is the alienation from one's own body – the tendency to treat one's body as a tool, a machine to be utilized (and 'used up') in the pursuit of particular ends". Several of the former rugby players I spoke to referred to their bodies in an "instrumental" manner, and injuries were regarded as interfering with their using their bodies as machines in sport. Ex-Springbok De Wet Barry explained:

I had to retire due to injury. In my final game I knew that my body was not in perfect shape, but I knew that it will hold out for the season if I just manage it properly. As it turns out my body could not take it. I put in a big tackle and experienced this warm sensation in my shoulder and knew it was over my body had let me down.

Barry seemed disappointed that his body had not allowed him to continue his professional rugby career. The fact that he "blames" his body for failing him shows how alienated he was from his body.

When bodies become injured in the sporting context they are nothing more than unwanted meat (Howe, 2001). To perform at the highest level requires a sports body to be trained and disciplined, and any glitches in the 'mechanics' of the body can have an adverse effect not only

on the performance of the athlete but also on his/her daily life. The ailing body was one of the major reasons provided by ex-rugby players for their decision to retire from competitive rugby. Conceptualising the sporting body as a mechanical object or an instrument that is trained and kept in peak condition through conditioning and dieting, also draws attention to the consequences when the mechanics of this machine become worn out. Niehaus (2014:68) makes the important observation that on a metaphorical level rugby mirrors central tenants of modern bureaucratic and military institutions that were prominent in the history of Afrikaner nationalism. Drawing on the biographies of three previous Springbok captains, Niehaus (2014) shows how physical training in rugby often resembles military exercises. At a metaphorical level the optimum functioning of the sporting body and the soldier's body is crucial for victory. The micro-world of rugby, Niehaus (2014:78) argues, is a sphere in which Afrikaner men portray themselves as "rainbow warriors" – a term borrowed from the 1995 Springbok captain's biography – and a space in which they lay their bodies on the line in defence of a democratic nation. The bodies of rugby players and soldiers share similarities, as they are disciplined, constantly under surveillance and conditioned to perform, but how these bodies are treated when "broken" is less clear. This analogy of the body as a machine resounded in many of the discussions I had with ex-rugby players. It seemed that they perceived their bodies as infallible, despite their awareness of the physicality of the game. Pieter Muller, a member of the victorious Springbok 1995 Rugby World Cup Team, explained the pressure that is placed on players to return to rugby despite the state of their injury. I met with Muller at the Sport Science Institute in Cape Town. He is still involved with rugby as the manager of an organisation for retired rugby players, called the South African Rugby Legends Association. I asked him about how his rugby career came to an end. He explained:

It was time to end my rugby career. I was 34 and getting slower. The last few years were very tough. As you get older your body takes more knocks and you don't recover so fast as you used to. In my case the injuries started and I couldn't play for three months. And I thought I can't carry on like this. There was no motivation to get fit again. Having said that nobody thinks of the risk of injury while playing. I broke my neck before the World Cup and that gave me a wake-up call to consider what will happen if I can't play rugby anymore. I began thinking about what I would want to do if I could not play rugby anymore. That process was there, but if you play again you quickly lose the reality of an injury. You play that first game back and then you're OK again, so you don't even worry about it. At least when I was injured I was contracted to play rugby, but if you weren't

ready to play in three months, your salary would be halved. So you are forced to recover quickly from your injuries. So one quickly loses sight of the risk of injury when you're back playing again and earning money.

This excerpt shows that even after a breakdown in the mechanics of the body, in Muller's case a broken neck, there is still a desire to return to play again. The financial security of rugby players often depends on their level of fitness and ability to remain un-injured during the season. Sports physician Tim Noakes (2012:205) has raised concern over how rugby players today are overplayed and overtrained. He argues that the provincial rugby franchises pay a major portion of the player's salary and therefore believe that it is their fiscal duty to capitalise on their investments. This results in players being overplayed during the Super Rugby tournament, which puts them at risk of injuries during the end of the year's international test series.

Noakes (2012:205) states that he "learned that the battle for the health of Springbok rugby is not on the rugby field, but in the boardrooms of our provincial rugby unions". Professional rugby players have very little individual choice as to how they are managed, because as professional players they are employees of their respective unions. This means that top players do not have the luxury of choice when it comes to playing a prescribed number of games. Rugby is a structured institution and players have clearly defined protocols and responsibilities. Several players revealed that injuries were almost a blessing in disguise, as an injury would 'force' them to either spend time at home with their families or make the decision for them to end their rugby careers. Chris Roussouw, the hooker of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, elaborated:

Actually that is the best way to end your career, through injuries, because you literally have to be forced to stop playing rugby.

Eddie Andrews concurred with Roussouw's opinion of the need for an injury to keep them away from rugby. He explained:

In certain circles, and certain players that are injured, that are injured a lot, actually appreciate the fact that they are injured because it is sort of the only time that you can have an extended rest. If you are injured you can actually have a rest and if you are married and have children, they always pray for injuries, because then you spend more time at home.

The analogy of the sports body as a machine became apparent as several of the informants spoke about how injuries and pain were not factors that they allowed to enter their embodied

actions on the field. Considering that “our perception of everyday reality depends on the lived body” (Turner, 1991:43), it seems that the lived body for rugby players is always one that is ‘incapable’ of getting hurt. Leder (1990) argues that our bodies are taken for granted and are normally phenomenologically absent from view. It is only through injury and pain that the body becomes a central aspect of care and management. The excerpts that follow show how the risk of injury is often in the back of the minds of players, but this does not deter them from participating in the sport:

If you play rugby you think you're on top of the world. You never think that there is a chance of you getting injured. You're constantly putting your body on the line for your team mates, but the chance of an injury never crosses your mind when you are on the field – De Wet Barry

Injuries are part of the game and as a rugby player you know that. That is why we really push our bodies to be in the best condition to prevent injuries. There is a certain 'machoness' amongst players that almost make injuries a minor part of how you approach a game. You need to be mentally tuned in to the hit and putting your body on the line. If you think about getting injured, you will. As I say it is part of the game. Cowboys don't cry. You carry on. It's just the nature of the beast, hey? – Keith Andrews

The big issue of injuries is serious and one is always nervous about it. But you can't control it. If it happens it happens. It is very traumatic. We had a few guys who had serious injuries and who were playing great rugby, but who could never overcome the injury. If you break your ankle three times it becomes easier to lose your enthusiasm for the game. But if you play rugby you will get injured. I have broken my ankle twice and had a back injury. It is just part of the game. You have to be adaptable. As you are injured you are forced to adapt. But fans lose interest in you – Eddie Andrews

Howe (2004:144) has shown how the different positions in rugby can lead to differing rates of injury. He proposes that in a sport where some players are physically bigger than others, one can expect injury rates to be high. Despite the variation in the injuries of rugby players in different positions, what is clear is that injuries or the inability to recover fully from injuries are among the main reasons players decide to retire from the game. This, coupled with age, was one of the common reasons informants of this study provided for their retirement. Eddie Andrew's description of his decision to retire from professional rugby shows how injuries can dictate that decision.

Ja, well, it was enforced upon me, I think it was injury-induced. I suffered at the time with a lower back injury that resulted in me having chronic nerve impingement in my lower back and, sort of, having that pins and needles sensations down my legs. And every time I used to train and especially the position in which I used to play, it sort of further damaged the cushions in my lower back. I was told that I was born with spinal stenosis. The information given to me was that every person has got about five discs and I've got an extra one, or something. So the space in my lower back is already compromised. And the fact that whenever you're training, there's always the bulging of the disc. And then you have that chronic nerve impingement, which was very painful especially getting out of a car, just tying your shoe laces. Just basically, getting out of bed or even sneezing. After the fourth or so opinion, I then had to make that decision to retire. Or compromise my quality of life, for especially, that is a life post my rugby career.

The prominent rate of injuries in rugby is proven by statistics. Researchers at the University of Cape Town studied the injuries of 152 players from five South African teams competing in the annual four-month Super Rugby tournament in 2012. Doctors recorded 160 injuries in 83 players. During the tournament, 38 of the South African players, or 25%, had multiple injuries that forced them to sit out for more than one day. The vast majority of injuries, almost 80%, occurred during matches, and the rest during training. While playing in the tournament, almost 35% of athletes sustained injuries that prevented them from training or competing for at least eight days. The authors conclude that 55% of all players were injured during the four-month Super Rugby tournament in 2012 (Schwellnus, Thomson, Derman, Jordaan, Readhead, Collins, Morris, Strauss, Van der Linde & Williams, 2014). This data shows that more than half (55%) of players were at risk of getting injured in the Super Rugby tournament of 2012.

A study of rugby injuries amongst South African schoolboys done by Charles Roux in 1987 showed “that the major factor in rugby injuries would be the speed of the game. Evidence for this is (i) the greater incidence of injury among the fast, mobile players playing in the best teams; and (ii) the high prevalence of injuries caused by tackling or being tackled, both of which occur at speed” (Roux, cited in Noakes, 2012:162). With professionalism in rugby promoting a faster game it is hardly surprising that the human body at times buckles under the brutal nature of the sport. It has been shown that there has been a major increase in injury rates since the introduction of professionalism in rugby (Garraway, Lee, Hutton, Russel & Macleod, 2000) and the high levels of skill and fitness of international rugby union players are not

sufficient to offset the greater risk of injury consequent on the more physical and faster nature of the modern international game (Jakoet & Noakes, 1997:47).

Sport, through its role in socialising generations of young men, has played an important role in determining the hegemonic masculinity of society (Klein, 1993). An understanding of how men's sport bodies are valued in society, both when they are playing and once they have retired, sheds light on the complexity of masculinity in the social world of sport, and particularly rugby. The following section shows how the bodies of rugby players are exemplifications of hegemonic masculinity in the cultural world of sport.

3.4 MEN, RUGBY AND THEIR BODIES

Rugby is an arena where gender relations are influenced and reinforced. Rugby, as a rough physical game, has acquired a reputation of being predominantly 'a man's game' (see Nauright & Chandler, 1996; Schacht, 1996; Donnelly & Young, 1985; Dunning, 1986). It is the bodies of rugby playing men that reinforce a hegemonic masculinity – “a dominant notion of manhood, a sense of masculinity that exists alongside others, but because of its 'official' position enjoys a greater status in society” (Klein, 1993:16). Messner's (1992) research on professional athletes has shown that sports heroes are often taken as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity and are required to live up to it strenuously – at what may be a severe cost in terms of injury, ill health, and other constraints on life. Bob Connell, an Australian sociologist and leading theorist on masculinities, has shown how masculinities are fluid and contested. Connell (1995) developed a theory of different masculinities, in which he argues that hegemonic masculinity creates cultural images of what it means to be a real man. Hegemonic masculinity is a condition of ideology that promotes how certain ways of performing maleness seem natural and normal. This form of masculinity acts to sustain problematic relations of dominance within an assumed structure or order of gender (Connell, 1987). There are also three non-hegemonic categories of masculinity: subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinity. These masculinities are developed “outside the corridors of power” (Morrell, 2001:7).

The fact that masculinity is socially and not biologically determined is well recognised (Sabo, 1986; Young & Donnelly, 1985; Connell, 1987; Messner, 1992, 1988). “Masculinity *refers* to male bodies (sometimes directly, sometimes symbolically and indirectly), but is not *determined* by male biology” (Connell, 2002:165). Organised sport is considered “a powerful cultural arena for the perpetuation of the ideology of male superiority and dominance” (Messner, 1988:199). It is however the bodies of sportsmen that perpetuate the gendered order of society.

According to Connell (2002:163), “men’s bodies are addressed, defined and disciplined (as in sport: Theberge, 1991), and given outlets and pleasures, by the gender order of society”. How are male sporting bodies – that often reinforce hegemonic masculinity – perceived when they are injured or no longer represent the athleticism they once held? Hegemonic masculinity as inscribed on the sporting body represents muscularity and elements of narcissism. Klein (1993:242) argues “that men use their bodies defensively”, by which he means “that the body can be consciously constructed in such a way as to give the appearance of hegemonic masculinity to compensate for a vulnerable, weak, sense of man’s self (his nonhegemonic masculine self-identity)”. The bodies of rugby players after retirement, and the injured sports body represent a ‘weakened’ or in Klein’s (1993) words a “nonhegemonic masculine identity” – one that is not as strong, resilient, bulky and ‘invisible’ as it once was. Post-rugby bodies and injuries are a threat to male hegemonic masculine identity. The words of Chris Roussouw echo this sentiment.

It is tough to be injured and even worse to make the decision to quit rugby because of an injury. When you are playing well and performing, you think you are ‘the man’. In a team of rugby players we consider ourselves to be warriors, fit strong and invincible and able to get any woman we want. When you leave the team or can’t play, you almost feel less of a man, because your whole identity and being was determined by your physical shape and the physicality you could bring to the field.

This excerpt highlights how injuries and the ability to ‘play through injuries’ reinforces the hegemonic masculine ideal for rugby players. Schacht (1996:562) reiterates the idea of rugby as a social setting that reinforces rigid forms of masculinity:

Rugby players situationally do masculinity by reproducing rigid hierarchical images of what a “real man” is in terms of who is strongest, who can withstand the most pain, and who relationally distances himself from all aspects of femininity through forms of misogynistic denigration. . . . Rugby, like other sporting events, is literally a practice field where the actors learn how to use force to ensure a dominant position relative to women, feminine men, and the planet itself.

Pain for rugby players appears to be framed in terms of being “man enough to take it” and injuries are in a sense medals that attest to one’s masculinity to be proudly discussed and embellished on in the future. Pain also reinforces relational conceptions of hierarchy and male superiority (Schacht, 1996:557). Messner (1992:74) makes the important point that the

tendency for athletes to “play hurt” cannot be attributed only to the demands of franchise owners, the manipulation of coaches or the competition for positions on the team. He argues that the motivating force that makes it likely that athletes will opt to play hurt is the “internal structure of masculinity.” Rugby-related injuries that are visible are often sources of pride. The clotting of the ear lobes of many front rowers, described as “cauliflower” ears and other signs of injury are often a major source of pride and a symbol of prestige. Roussouw’s description also points to the feeling of being “less of a man” if unable to partake in rugby. The hyper masculine ideals portrayed through the body in rugby are threatened by injury, and players try to distance themselves from feminine forms of manhood. Not being able to play challenges the hegemonic masculine norm amongst rugby players and is a threat to what Klein (1993:267) calls ‘comic-book masculinity’. These are depictions of men in sport that are obviously exaggerated and represent the hegemonic masculine ideal.

3.5 THE BODY AFTER SPORT

Professional sportsmen and women condition their bodies on a daily basis to be fit for peak performance. Athletic bodies for both male and female athletes are often used to epitomise health and an aesthetically pleasing body. A change in the daily routine for professional athletes after sport can cause their bodies to change physically. They may gain weight, lose muscle or be plagued by injuries they sustained during their rugby playing days. I was interested in finding out how these athletes think about their corporeality after sport. The previous section has shown how injuries have played a major role in the decisions of professional rugby players to retire, but how do those injuries affect their quality of life after sport? Several informants explained that although they realised that rugby was a sport in which injuries were inevitable, they never really thought about how those injuries might influence their lives after sport. A medical doctor who specialises in sports-related injuries, and who accompanied the 2008 South African Olympic Team to the Beijing Olympics, explained to me that of the thousands of athlete patients he has treated, many have shown a disregard for the seriousness of their injuries and seldom consider the long-term consequences of an injury. Anderson and Jackson (2013) found that medical doctors are often pressurised to give players the go-ahead to play, despite injury concerns. This is the result of sponsorship pressures and expectations placed on players to fulfil their sponsorship duties, despite injury. The body as a commercial object is of vital importance to sponsors, whereas an injured body that is withdrawn from active participation in sport has a detrimental effect on sponsors, as they seek to promote their brand at any given opportunity.

From my interviews with ex-rugby players it became evident that they perceived their bodies after sport in two ways. First, they were concerned with how they looked physically, and secondly they spoke about how injuries they picked up during their rugby days affected their life after sport. During the active phase of a player's career they are required to condition their bodies to perform on a weekly basis. The conditioned body is central to the athlete's success, and is a major basis of his public identity. Messner (1992:123) argues that the end of an athletic career entails the transformation of the meanings surrounding the body. After sport, and with the decrease in training, their bodies may change. Fortuin spoke about how he experienced the changes in his body after he retired:

After I stopped playing I did absolutely no exercise for five months. I gained weight and wasn't active at all. Then at a stage I made a decision to start training again and to get back into a routine of training. It was like second nature to go the gym. We call it muscle-memory. It was still there. I am a big guy so if I don't train I gain weight. I don't want people to say "Look there is Bevin, look how unfit he is. I can't believe he used to be a Springbok." So yes I do look after my health.

Clearly, Fortuin was concerned with people's opinion about his physique, knowing that he had played for the Springboks. He has an awareness that his social status as an ex-Springbok makes him recognisable in his community. Ollie le Roux also noted how his health has always been important to him. After his rugby career he pursued new sporting challenges to keep fit and healthy. Le Roux was determined to keep fit after he ended his rugby playing career. He explained:

I love expressing my body. And I knew that when I stopped playing rugby I would have to find another sport to practise, to remain healthy. That is why I decided to start playing squash. Squash is the physical game of chess. So after rugby I started playing squash. The game gave me another outlet to express my competitiveness and to remain in shape. Then I wanted a bigger challenge so I decided on the Iron Man. The bottom line is somewhere in the Iron Man you reach a stage where you know why you are doing it. You reach a stage when you realise that you have 14 hours left and you just keep going. It is a very spiritual experience, the same I experienced in rugby at times.

It was important for Le Roux to challenge his body physically, even after he retired from rugby. As a prop he was one of the bigger players on the field, weighing 136 kg at the peak of his career. His decision to compete in squash and the Iron Man Triathlon was a way to channel his

energy and remain fit in his post-rugby life. Other players indicated that they still experienced the consequences of the injuries they had picked up during their rugby careers after they had retired. Keith Andrews elaborated on this point:

I still have a creak in my neck and knee issues. A friend of mine is a surgeon. He said at 60, in ten years' time I'll have a knee replacement, or that type of stuff. You don't really think about the long-term consequences of taking all those hits in rugby. But I can tell you today as a 50-year old that my body has aches and pains, which is a direct result of having played rugby.

For Keith Andrews, his body still experiences the repercussions of having played rugby at provincial level for over a decade. Keith Andrews played for the Western Province from 1985 to 1997, his career spanning both the amateur and professional eras in South African rugby. Whereas he is still cognisant of the injuries he sustained in his neck and knees, there has been concern over the seriousness of head injuries, and specifically concussions that occur during the game, and the long-term consequences thereof. Ex-Springbok rugby player Bob Skinstad has been especially vocal about the dangers of concussion. Writing an opinion piece for the *Daily Maverick*, Skinstad argues:

Concussion is a reality in modern-day rugby. It is, however, not regarded as a potentially life-threatening injury. Players and medical staff concern themselves more with cuts to the eye, knocks to the joints and bruises to the flesh than with extended damage to brain tissue. This is ironic, considering that the brain is the organ all players will have to look to for their livelihood once their on-field talents and physical attributes have faded (Skinstad, 2013).

The IRB have developed ‘Concussion Guidelines’ to ensure that players who suffer concussion are managed effectively in order to protect their long-term health. If a player is concussed medical personnel are required to adhere to a set of guidelines to reintegrate the player back into the game. Research done on retired athletes who suffered from concussion has shown abnormal brain wave activity for years after a concussion, as well partial wasting away of the motor pathways, which can lead to significant attention problems (De Beaumont, Théoret, Mongeon, Messier, Leclerc, Tremblay, Ellemberg & Lassonde, 2009). In the United States, 4 000 former football players filed lawsuits alleging that the National Football League failed to protect them from the long-term health consequences of concussion. In South Africa, SARU have developed a ‘BokSmart’ programme that deals with injury prevention, injury

management, rugby safety, and player performance with specific attention to serious and catastrophic head, neck and spine injuries. The BokSmart National Rugby Safety Programme functions out of three main divisions, the BokSmart Rugby Safety Workshops, the BokSmart Rugby Medic programme, and the BokSmart SpineLine, an emergency helpline for potential concussion, head, neck and spine injuries sustained during a rugby match or practice session. These preventative measures are aimed at minimising the occurrence of serious head injuries in rugby, but the long-term consequences of concussion in players who have played professional rugby are still to be determined. Derick Hougaard, former Springbok fly half was admitted to hospital in May 2015 for brain scans following severe headaches and forgetfulness. Although it is difficult to prove a direct correlation between his symptoms and the knocks he took to the head in rugby he was adamant that his career as a professional rugby player contributed to this state. Speaking to a journalist he said: “This is a result of all the head injuries and physicality that I endured in the rugby field that is catching up with me now. This is probably many former rugby players’ road ahead” (Claassen, 2015).

Considering that rugby became professional in 1996, it is only now that players who have been contracted and who have retired from professional rugby are entering their 40s. The issues they are faced with in their post-rugby lives are varied, ranging from finding jobs to dealing with the psychological aspect of a life without rugby. Injuries, however, remain one of the major factors that fast-tracks their decision to end their rugby careers, and affect their quality of life after rugby.

Chapter Two showed how sports heroes have become a prominent feature of South Africa’s public discourse on achievement. The ailing bodies of such heroes have also become of public interest, and the topic of sensationalist media reporting. The illnesses that some of these heroes have contracted after their retirement draw attention to the ailing body. It is in the public domain that their waning bodies have become visible reminders ‘that even rugby players can suffer ill health’. Of the South African rugby players who have been diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses are Ruben Kruger, Joost van der Westhuizen, André Venter and Tinus Linee. Kruger, who played in the Rugby World Cup in 1995 and 1999, was diagnosed with a brain tumour shortly after he retired from rugby in 1999. He became a camera salesman in Pretoria after he retired from rugby and passed away in 2010 after a long battle with his health. Venter, known as one of the hard men of South African rugby and who has 66 test caps under his belt, was diagnosed with transverse myelitis, a disease of the spinal cord that can cause

paralysis. Venter is paralysed, but has not allowed this to affect his post-rugby career. Today, Venter has a successful computer and printing business in Bloemfontein.

Both Van der Westhuizen and Linee have been diagnosed with a motor neuron disease (MND) that has had a severe influence on their mobility. Sadly, Linee passed away from this condition in November 2014. People with MND's muscles gradually weaken and waste away. MND can affect a person's ability to walk, speak, swallow and breathe. Van der Westhuizen was once known for his lethal attacking abilities on the rugby field. He played 89 tests for the Springboks and scored 38 tries in his illustrious career, spanning from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. In 2007 he was elected into the IRB International Hall of Fame. Van der Westhuizen was one of the blue-eyed boys of the South African rugby fraternity. His private life, however, became the subject of gossip news when he split up with his wife, singer Amore Vitone, after his extramarital relation, a story that made headlines in most mainstream Afrikaans newspapers. It was after this incident that Van der Westhuizen was diagnosed with MND, and public sentiment regarding his status in society has shifted – from being an unfaithful sports celebrity, to an inspiration for those living with life-threatening diseases. He established the J9 Foundation, an organisation aimed at raising funds and awareness for those living with MND. The social networks that Van der Westhuizen had built up during his rugby career and the public support he has garnered, have seen his foundation use rugby events to elicit support for him and others who suffer from MND. The J9 Foundation often has gala dinners and fundraising events, with Van der Westhuizen as the main attraction. Current rugby teams have also rallied behind him. A Currie Cup match between the Blue Bulls and Western Province in August 2014 was dedicated to raising public awareness of the plight of players who live with MND. The Western Province team wore armbands with '#Tinus' on them and the Blue Bulls team wore armbands with 'J9' on them. The public were also encouraged to make donations into the respective trusts that could support these players and others who suffer from this disease. The following chapter considers the social relations that players draw on in their post-sporting lives, but what is of interest in the cases noted above is that their sporting bodies – and the degeneration thereof – have been used as striking images to rally support for research and awareness regarding their condition. An image of Van der Westhuizen's fit and athletic sporting body was used to promote a J9 event (see Figure 10) and images of Van der Westhuizen as an honorary guest at events and rugby matches contrast his body as it once was and how it is today. Figure 11 shows a feature on Van der Westhuizen and Linee in SA Rugby magazine.



Figure 10. A pamphlet using Van der Westhuizen' sporting body to promote a fundraising event for the J9 Foundation

Source: J9 Fun Run, 2014

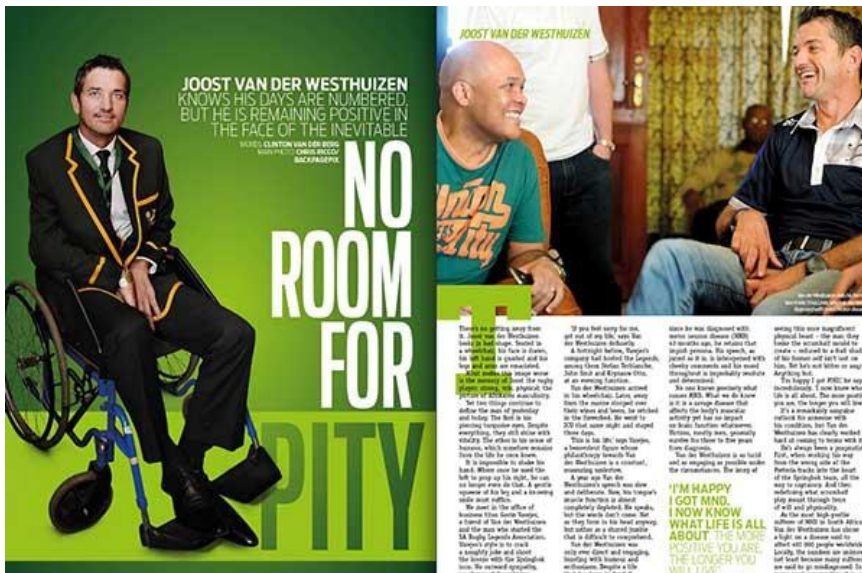


Figure 11. Insert on Joost van der Westhuizen and TinusLinee in the SA Rugby magazine

Source: SA Rugby Magazine, 2014

These two images (Figures 10 and 11) show different uses of the body in promoting Van der Westhuizen's work for MND. Figure 11 depicts a frail Van der Westhuizen in a wheel chair, an image that is in stark contrast to that of his athleticism during his playing days (Figure 10). Clearly his body, both as an athlete and later as a MND sufferer is used as a symbol to provide hope and encouragement to the general public. Van der Westhuizen has this platform to promote his work on MND only because he was at one stage a South African sports hero.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The body is the main 'instrument' that professional rugby players utilise to do 'work'. I have argued that an injury to the sports body is a threat to the hegemonic masculine ideal. The 'broken' body and the long-term consequences of injuries are things that professional rugby players are aware of, but the risk of this aspect of the sport is overshadowed by their will to win and the pressures to perform within the elite sports culture. The bodies of sportsmen are 'natural symbols' to which meaning is socially ascribed, but the ailing bodies of formerly prominent rugby heroes are a visual reminder and drawing card to rally support for a good cause. A study on the post-rugby lives of athletes that does not consider the corporeal aspect of sport would overlook the importance of injuries in dictating the end to a sporting career. I have shown that very little forward planning is done to preserve the wellbeing of injured rugby bodies, this despite the fact that injuries are a major cause of retirement from professional rugby. This chapter considered the physical capital of rugby players within a narrow definition of how it relates to injury. Those who choose a career as a professional rugby player are vulnerable to injury and the gradual attrition of their physique. The physical capital that is at the disposal of rugby players and the manner in which they convert physical capital into an income through social networks is the theme for the chapter that follows. The conversion of the embodied physical capital, that is, the way in which individuals walk, talk, their appearance and taste (Light & Kirk 2001:83) to economic and social capital in an athlete's post-sporting career is explored.

CHAPTER FOUR

BOND OF BROTHERHOOD: SOCIAL CAPITAL AS THE GLUE FOR A LIFE AFTER SPORT

Rugby is not just a sport. It's much more than that. It's really a lifestyle, it's a fraternity, it's a culture, it's a family in its own sense... rugby becomes very much an ingrained part of your life. It's what you do; it's what you know. It's the people – John Eales, former Wallaby captain. Ambassador: Australian Rugby Union (The Australian, cited in Van Reenen, 2000).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Thus far I have dealt with the elite sports culture that athletes perform in, and how their individual bodies are managed during and after professional rugby. I now consider the importance of social networks in supporting rugby players in their post-sport lives. I have moved from a more abstract concept of culture, to the individual within the elite sports culture, to social relations and the consequences of these relations between individuals. I am interested in how the social networks that players build up during their careers are used to support them and provide opportunities for them in their post-rugby lives. After retirement, professional sportsmen and women find themselves in a liminal space, as they are no longer part of the team and the elite sports culture, but have not yet carved out for themselves an identity independent of their sporting careers.

Bourdieu's (1986, 1977) concepts of 'habitus' and 'capital' are particularly useful when considering how the physical capital that players accumulate during their rugby careers is converted into social and economic capital in their post-rugby lives. Social capital – “the everyday networks and social customs that bond and define them and are of benefit to individuals and communities” (Halpern, 2005) – is used as a theoretical lens to consider the importance of social networks for athletes in their lives after sport. The social capital accumulated through the building of social connections made during professional rugby players' careers is often converted into economic capital through the access that it provides to business exchanges. This chapter opens with a description of two fieldwork experiences where the communal social bond built around rugby was especially prevalent. From there I discuss how social capital, and the different forms thereof, have been theorised. The social networks that former professional rugby players draw on in their post-sporting lives do not develop overnight. I show how social institutions, especially schools, universities, clubs and families are crucial in forging and instigating a social bond amongst rugby players. These networks,

often established among the social elite, may provide job opportunities for players after their rugby careers are terminated. Social capital can also be exclusionary and I consider the lives of those players who have operated on the margins and who have been unable to tap into the social networks established prior to their retirement from rugby.

Excerpts from my field notes taken during the course of my research highlight my observations of the communal bonding and social networks that are established amongst rugby players.

Early during fieldwork, I learnt that one of the most successful rugby franchises in South Africa, 'The Bulls' were planning to celebrate their 75-year existence with a weekend dedicated to commemorating and celebrating the history of the union at their home ground, Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria. As part of this celebration the Bloemfontein franchise, the Cheetah's were to play against the Bulls, in a regulation Super Rugby match in April 2013 and the occasion was used as a spectacle to give Blue Bulls players of the past a chance to celebrate their shared history of being affiliated to the union. I decided to travel from Bloemfontein (where I lived at the time) to Pretoria for this event. I travelled with a Blue Bulls supporters club from Bloemfontein to Pretoria, in an 8-seater van, decorated in Bulls regalia. I was the only woman in the bus, and was outnumbered by the mostly middle-class men who explained to me that this was part of their annual pilgrimage to Loftus. After the four-hour drive, we arrived at Loftus and I parted ways with my fellow travellers. It was lunch time and I had a hotdog and a drink in the entertainment area outside the stadium, after which I made my way to my seat in the stadium. As I took my seat an announcement was made:

“Welcome to all the Bulls Fans who have made it to this very special match between these two great teams. We are here today not as individual spectators, but as a community of Bulls supporters. Today we are celebrating the Bulls family. The men who have played for the union over a period of 75 years. We have had some great legends represent our Union and together throughout different generations have become the symbol of our success. These men are part of a very special and intimate group of players who are part of the Blue Bull family. They are like brothers to one another and have shared victories and hardships along the way. Let us remind them of what they mean to us by welcoming them on the field.”

An entourage of ex-players walked onto the field, dressed in blue shirts, with the 75th year Blue Bull emblem embroidered on their backs (see Figure 12). These players represented the eight decades of rugby played at the union. As the announcer read out their names....Naas Botha,

Joost van der Westhuizen, Derrick Hougaard, Frik du Preez, Wynand Claasen ... each player walked onto the field to the roaring welcome of the crowd. After the game I went to a pub situated adjacent to Loftus and I noticed one of the Blue Bull players, Johan Steele⁶ who had walked onto the field sitting in the corner enjoying a beer. I approached him and asked him about his rugby days and what he thought of the commemoration initiative of the day. He explained that he played for the Blue Bulls in the late 1970s and that he had made the trip from Perth, Australia, where he now lives to Pretoria to attend this event. He spoke about the longing he had to spend more time with his 'rugby family' reminiscing about the past, and how the friendships and connections he had made during his rugby career were very important to him. After a long silence, he took a deep breath and said: "Today was very special, very special. The team mates I saw today contributed to the person I am today. As rugby players we shared so many emotions together and went through tough times together. We won the Currie Cup in 1977, 1978 and shared it with Western Province in 1979. We shared rooms, showers, cars, water bottles and put in huge tackles for our team mates. We are genuinely a close knit family. Just being back here at Loftus with them is a very emotional experience."

As I made my way back to the hotel, I thought about the importance that the team and the "brotherhood" of Blue Bulls held for this player. He had travelled a vast distance to attend the events to commemorate the 75 years of the union's existence, and spoke passionately about his "Blue Bull family". The social relations and networks he had established through rugby were still very important to him, even 40 years after he had stopped playing.

A year after this incident, I came across an advertisement for a "Paul Roos Gymnasium Legends Night" (see Figure 13). The event would be held at Paul Roos High School in Stellenbosch, a school renowned for its rugby, and would entail the auctioning off of rugby memorabilia to raise funds for the school's hockey tour to Europe in 2015. One of the main items to be auctioned was Ashwin Willemsse's 2007 World Cup Springbok jersey. Despite the ticket costing a hefty R800 per person, or R7500 per table of 10(the price included a three-course meal) I decided to attend the event, as it would provide a social opportunity where I could witness first-hand the social networks that the organisers would draw on to make the event a success. The event was sponsored by corporate companies that represent the social elite. These included Deloitte, Remgro, Old Mutual, Antonij Rupert Wines and Investec, to name a few. Clearly the business networks that the organisers drew on were well-established

⁶ This name is a pseudonym as the player I spoke to preferred not to be named.

companies catering for the social elite, and those who had a discernible interest in rugby. The evening was marked by a panel discussion between Ashwin Willemse, an ex-Springbok rugby player who is a SuperSport commentator and motivational speaker; Brendan Venter, also an ex-Springbok rugby player, who coached for the UK based franchise Saracens and now practises as a medical doctor in Strand; and Nick Mallet, an ex-Springbok rugby player and coach and now a technical rugby analyst on SuperSport. Other prominent ex-rugby players were also in attendance, including Tiaan Strauss, and the families of current rugby players who could not attend the event. I was one of the few women that attended the event, and most of the tables were occupied by corporate companies that used the event as a form of ‘team building’. The people at my table were doctors, engineers and businessmen, a network of people who were there firstly because they had the capital to attend, and secondly because of their interest in rugby and the opportunity the event provided for them to network with like-minded people. It was a white upper-class affair and we drank the best wine on offer.

As for the auction, Willemse’s jersey was bought for R20 000 by his fellow Springbok team mate, Brendan Venter. But it was Willemse’s motivational speech that ‘wowed’ the crowd. He spoke about his troubled personal history and the obstacles he had to overcome in becoming a Springbok. Willemse, a coloured rugby player who hails from Caledon, a farming town in the Western Cape, was raised by his grandmother under trying socio-economic conditions. He admitted to being a drug dealer at school and “mixing with the wrong crowd”. Willemse explained that one of the main reasons for his development as a rugby player was a friendship he had established with a Springbok rugby player in the era before his own, Breyton Paulse, the diminutive wing, who also came from a small farming town, Ceres, and who played 64 tests for his country. Their friendship and mentorship began after Paulse had visited Willemse’s school, also as a motivational speaker. According to Willemse, one of his teachers introduced him to Paulse as one of the school’s most aspiring players. Paulse made a promise to come back to the school and leave a tog bag filled with rugby kit for Willemse. It was this gesture and interaction, Willemse contended, that had motivated him to develop his rugby talent and to establish social networks and friends from whom he could learn. The social networks he established exposed him to other players and coaches who helped in his development as rugby player, a profession in which he excelled and that allowed for upward mobility within his social class.



Figure 12. As part of the 75th anniversary of the existence of the Blue Bull Rugby Union (BBRU) former Blue Bull players parade around the field at Loftus Versfeld before a Super Rugby game against The Cheetahs in April 2013

Source: Lions Rugby Museum



Figure 13. Photograph taken at the PRG Legends Evening in September 2014

Source: Author

These fieldwork experiences highlight how social relationships and networks built up through rugby matter a great deal. They matter not only on a personal level, as Steele's experience of being back at Loftus showed, but also because social networks are powerful instigators that can potentially secure future benefits in economic and material terms. The PRG Legends Evening exemplified the importance of business networks built up through rugby, since most of the companies that were in attendance had an interest in rugby or knew other people at the event through a rugby connection. Social networks on a micro level were central in assisting Willemse in his rugby career. Such relations are built up around trust, and trustworthiness, features that are central to any successful sports team. Coleman (1988) has shown the importance of social capital in forging trust amongst diamond merchants in New York. Coleman explains how merchants exchange bags of diamonds, often worth thousands of dollars, with other merchants to examine at their leisure. This is done with no insurance or formal agreement. The market is extremely successful and efficient and Coleman (1988) argues that this market can only work because of the closeness and high degree of trust and trustworthiness among the community of diamond merchants (Coleman, 1988 cited in Halpern, 2005:3). A similar argument can be made for 'insiders' in rugby and the social networks that draw on trust and trustworthiness that were forged on the rugby field, but that provide them with job opportunities after rugby. To understand how such relationships are forged, one has to consider the elements of the game that reinforce norms of trust and solidarity – fundamental principles of social capital. Rugby is a vehicle for the development of social networks through camaraderie and solidarity. Although analysing the separation of professional rugby players' lives from the real world in terms of Goffman's (1961) 'total institution' is perhaps overstated, it is undeniable that 'outsiders' are kept on the periphery and 'insiders' form part of a communal bond among the team.

Rugby teams and administrations pride themselves on upholding a public image where the inner dealings of the team remain enclosed. As employees of the franchises and national teams there is a code of conduct that formally reinforces the circumscribed behaviour of players. Through their travels and training they are cut off from wider society for long periods of time. It is during these stages that players get to know each other well. Rituals and initiations that take place as part of team traditions strengthen the relationships of the new players entering the 'bounded' context. The next part of the chapter focuses on rugby as a practice of fraternal bonding.

4.2 RUGBY AND FRATERNAL BONDING

Rugby players share all kinds of spaces with one another: rooms, buses, airplanes, gyms, water bottles, the space in the locker room, and the more physical and forceful space of the scrum. The amount of time and the different settings in which teams prepare together, make it hardly surprising that many players regard the team as a “family”. Anton Leonard, a member of the Blue Bulls team that won the 2007 Super Rugby Championship and also a Springbok veteran, echoed this sentiment:

I think that as a rugby player you actually have a closer relationship with your team mates than your own family at times. You travel with them, share a room, meals and laughs and are away from home often. You go through more highs and lows with your team mates than with your partner, because you are hardly home. I missed the birth of my first son, after being away on tour for six weeks.

Sport is considered one of the main arenas where fraternal bonds are forged, through a collective identity with a common goal to win, and the constant emphasis on operating as a team or a unit (Messner, 1987). A fraternal bond is “usually considered to be a force, link or affectionate tie that unites men” (Curry, 2002:169). Winning is often attributed to the team, rather than individuals within a team. Post-match comments by winning captains are usually predictable, with the captain emphasising the team effort rather than his own accomplishments. John Smit, who captained the winning Springboks in the 2007 Rugby World Cup and played 111 tests for the Springboks, stressed the importance of the team throughout his career. In his autobiography, *Captain in the cauldron* he elaborates on the importance of the team. He recalls how he reinforced the importance of the team during a team bonding event at Smit’s holiday home in preparation for the 2007 Rugby World Cup. He elaborates: “We spoke about how the needs of the team were paramount, and if someone got dropped or injured, it wouldn’t be about how the individual felt, but about what the team needed. We have a good team, we have self-belief, and we have trained well ... the only thing that can stand in the way is individuals putting themselves ahead of team ambition” (Smit & Greenaway, 2009:136). From the interviews I conducted it became apparent that the idea of a team and the cohesion and synergy that stem from a team environment was very important. Chris Roussouw emphasised this point:

As a team of rugby players you realise the importance of collective power. In other words you understand that you are part of a team or a collective and you need to operate in

unison to perform to your best ability. You can't have all players jumping for a line out. The one scrums, the other plays on the wing, the other kicks at goal. That is what makes rugby such a great sport – you have different dynamics working as a collective and that is what makes rugby guys so powerful. We understand that synergy and dynamic.

The idea that there are always harmonious relationships within teams is misleading. Messner (1992:88) encapsulates the antagonism that may be prevalent in teams:

The public face that a team attempts to present to the rest of the world is that of a “family” whose shared goal of winning games and championships bonds its individual members together. But the structure of athletic careers is such that individuals on teams are constantly competing against each other – first for a place on the team, then for playing time, recognition, and “star” status, and eventually, just to stay on the team. Rather than being a purely cooperative enterprise, then, athletic teams are characterized by what sociologist David Riesman called “antagonistic cooperation.” In sport, as Christopher Lasch has pointed out, just as in the modern bureaucratic corporation, “a cult of teamwork conceals the struggle for survival.”

Players compete with each other for spots on the team, and like most social relationships personality differences may challenge the homogenous image that players and managers try to portray to the outside world. Liz McGregor, a journalist who travelled with the Springboks during their 2011 Rugby World Cup campaign and produced a book, *Springbok factory*, from that experience, highlighted the alignments that are forged within the team. She draws on Victor Matfield’s autobiography to illustrate how relations in the team can become strained based on cultural background and preference. Matfield writes about a 2003 incident where Geo Cronjé and Quinton Davids had to share a room on tour. Matfield doesn’t give a reason for Cronjé’s discomfort, but it was reported that he preferred not to room with a coloured player. Cronjé then swapped rooms to share with another white player on the team. Matfield notes that “there are many different cultures in South Africa, and each one tends to band together with its own kind. It wasn’t unusual for the Afrikaans guys in the team to seek out one another’s company, and the players of colour and the English speaking guys did the same” (Matfield, cited in McGregor, 2013:131). This incident has less to do with cultural preference and more to do with ethnic and racial prejudices.

Clearly, relationships within teams vary and are influenced by individual preference, but the image that national teams portray is that of a cohesive group of players who have a common

goal of representing the nation. Within the Springbok team, there are rituals and traditions that reinforce understandings of what it means to be a Springbok. Smit describes the inner dealings of the teams and what happens during a 'Kontiki', an event where a new player is presented with his Springbok blazer and is "capped". After the capping ceremony, the new player has to stand in front of all his team mates and accept the code of conduct, which the coach reads out loud. Established players tell anecdotal stories of past games, and part of a Kontiki is making "the life of the new cap as difficult as possible by giving him ridiculous instructions". These rituals are established to strengthen and incorporate the new player into the "brotherhood" of established players. It is in these everyday experiences of players that relationships are forged and social connections established, the foundation that may provide them with future benefit. Kontikis and similar team events are where social networks are cemented. Social capital is used as an analytical tool to understand how such relationships are maintained, after sport. The next part of the chapter considers social capital as a theoretical concept.

4.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is about social connections and relationships. It is a way of defining the intangible resources of community, shared values and trust upon which we draw in daily life (Field, 2008). "Membership networks and a set of shared values are at the heart of social capital", according to Field (2008:3). Halpern (2005:3) referring to the importance of social networks in daily life argues that:

Societies are not composed of atomized individuals. People are connected to one another through intermediate social structures – webs of association and shared understandings of how to behave. This social fabric greatly affects with whom, and how, we interact and co-operate. It is the everyday fabric of connection and the tacit cooperation that the concept of social capital is intended to capture.

Seippel (2006) defines social capital by breaking the concept down into its constituent parts and defining the words "social" and "capital". In his words "capital is something that might give a future benefit. Capital combined with social then leaves us with social relations of a special kind – containing and, potentially, generating resources – which, in the future, might have implications for actions in and postures towards other social actors or arenas" (Seippel, 2006:170).

This is a very basic formulation of the intricate nature of social capital and it is hoped that this chapter will pave the way for a more in-depth understanding of the term. In colloquial terms

social capital relates to the idea that “relationships matter” and that it matters who you know, not necessarily what you know. Halpern (2005:10) proposes that there are three basic components to social capital. They consist of “a network; a cluster of norms, values and expectancies that are shared by group members; and sanctions – punishments and rewards – that help to maintain the norms and network.” These three components of social capital feature prominently in the social networks available to those in sports teams. Firstly, a network is established between players and management on the same team. These relationships may vary from being team mates to being good friends. Halpern (2005:10) reminds us that “such relationships are not always experienced as positive and can be characterized by dislike and rivalry.” Although as a group sports teams may have a communal identity and goal, individual and personality differences can contribute to friction within a team, and the competition for a spot on the team can cause rivalry within the social networks of the group. Secondly a sports team has clearly defined norms, values and expectancies. Many of these social norms are unwritten. In a sports team these norms may include arriving for practice on time, putting in the required training, and upholding the expectations and ethos of the team. Thirdly, sanctions uphold these norms within a group. These sanctions may be informal, such as punishment for breaking the law, gossiping, a threat of action or embarrassment (Halpern, 2005:11). For sportsmen sanctions are employed if players disregard team protocol and disrupt the synergy of the team. Players may gain a bad reputation or face a disciplinary hearing for their actions, or be left out of the team. These components of social capital contribute to the social bond formed amongst players on the same team.

Key theorists of social capital have been Bourdieu (1977, 1986), Coleman (1988, 1994) and Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000). Putnam’s work in political science focuses on social cohesion in Italy and the United States, while the sociologist Coleman (1988, 1994) uses the concept in investigating educational attainment in American ghettos. Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1986), the French social anthropologist/sociologist, also made a significant contribution in defining and understanding social capital in relation to other forms of capital. I will go on to discuss how these three foundational scholars examining social capital – Bourdieu (1977, 1986), Coleman (1988, 1994) and Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) – theorised social capital and will then apply the concept of social capital to how rugby players tap into these networks after their rugby careers. The link between various forms of capital and the root meaning of capital as a resource are also discussed to provide an understanding of the pliable nature of capital within the social world.

The term 'capital' is usually associated with economics and monetary exchange; however, Bourdieu is adamant that capital is not only an economic term, but can be applied to the social world and manifests in the form of social and cultural/symbolic capital. Bourdieu argues that groups are able to use cultural capital or signs as markers of difference, both signalling and constituting their place in the social structure (Field, 2003:13). The extent to which social and cultural capital can be tapped into depends on the social structure within which one operates.

In an attempt to make sense of social structure and the agents operating in it, Bourdieu used the concept of "habitus", which can be thought of as the dynamic development of a structured set of values and ways of thinking, which in turn provides a bridge between subjective agency and objective position (Field, 2003:13). Bourdieu (1994:170) defines habitus as a property of social agents that comprises a "structured and structuring structure." In other words, one's habitus is "structured" by one's past and present circumstances; it is "structuring" in that habitus helps to shape present and future practices, and it is "structure" in that it is systematically ordered rather than random and unpatterned (Maton, 2008). For Bourdieu habitus brings together both objective social structure and subjective personal experiences: "the dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality" (Bourdieu, 1977:72). The tension between the social structures that shape one's thinking or actions and the subjective experiences of a personal nature within a given social determine the accumulation of social or cultural capital. For Bourdieu habitus, capital and field (social space) amalgamate to form the practice or reality within which we operate. The practice, then, is a space where various forms of capital intermingle and in conjunction with habitus form a realm where social capital can make significant interventions in terms of reciprocal behaviour and future reward or benefit. "Capital becomes objectified as habitus, and is embodied and realized in practice" (Moore, 2008:111). Social capital, however, does not develop in isolation within this "field", but various forms of capitals form exchanges and through transubstantiation present themselves in different forms. For Bourdieu, experiences and perception of the world are shaped by our habitus. "Habitus can be viewed as a set of dispositions, inclinations and schemes of perception with which an individual interprets social situations. An individual's life history of social experiences makes each habitus unique. Nevertheless, people who have similar life experiences tend to develop a similar habitus. Habitus ... refers to the embodied social history of an individual, a durable set of socially constructed predispositions that guide and structure social actions" (Light & Kirk, 2001:83)

Bourdieu (1986) argues that it is vital to understand the role of various forms of capital in the social world in which we live. It is almost impossible, according to Bourdieu, to understand the social world without acknowledging the role of “capital in all its forms, and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory” (Bourdieu, 1986:422). Bourdieu’s analysis of the general logic of social capital and accumulation, as well as its interplay with other forms of capital (Field, 2003), is crucial in attempting to understand social capital conceptually.

Bourdieu supposes that capital can be extended beyond the economic realm and be applied in the social world as social and cultural capital. He argues that “economic capital is at the root of all other types of capital” (Bourdieu, 1986) and under specific conditions can be “converted” into other forms of capital. It is essential to examine the various forms of capital and in doing so “relocate the narrow instance of mercantile exchange away from economics into a wider anthropology of cultural exchanges and valuations of which the economic is only one type” (Moore, 2008:102).

Bourdieu (1986) identifies three types of capital. The first is economic capital, which is associated with and convertible to money and can be manifested as property. The second form of capital is cultural capital that is manifested in style, language, taste, disposition and social taste (Harker, 1984). Bourdieu (2007) argues that cultural capital can exist in three forms: the embodied state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions in the mind and body; in the objectified state in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.); and in the institutionalised state.

The third form of capital and the one that forms the theoretical foundation for this chapter is social capital. Bourdieu (1986:249) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.” Elsewhere he defines social capital as “the sum of resources actual or virtual that accrue to an individual or a group by possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:119).

Johnston and Percy-Smith (2003) suggest that in Bourdieu’s formulation of social capital, the amount of social capital acquired by any individual is determined in part by other forms of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic). Social capital provides the means to analyse how “this particular kind of capital is accumulated, transmitted and reproduced, the means of understanding how it turns into economic capital and, conversely, what work is required to

convert economic capital into social capital” (Bourdieu, 1993b:32). The context and conditions under which social capital can yield advantages, such as trust, reciprocity and future benefit, and the relationships between various forms of capitals are therefore inherent in Bourdieu’s work on social capital.

Whereas Bourdieu’s analysis of social capital stemmed from understanding social hierarchy and the forms of capital that produce inequality, Coleman (1988, 1994) was more concerned with the relationship between social capital and the development of human capital (education, employment skills and expertise). He states that “human capital is created by changing persons so as to give them skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways. Social capital, in turn, is created when the relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action” (Coleman, 1990:304). Human capital as a means to “change” and adopt new skills, and social capital as a means to facilitate action intersect to give rise to the benefits of social capital in the form of trust, obligation and reciprocal relationships. Bourdieu’s understanding of social capital emphasises that privileged individuals maintain their position by using their connections with other privileged people and is therefore a valuable resource. The accumulation of social capital is more nuanced as it is a resource for all actors, individual or collective, privileged or disadvantaged (Field, 2003:28). It is therefore all-encompassing rather than accessible only to a few. Social capital is a particular kind of resource available to an “actor” who acts with his best interest in mind. (Coleman, 1988:198),

Coleman was a proponent of rational action theory, which supports the belief that all behaviour stems from individuals pursuing their own interests; social interaction is therefore viewed as a form of exchange (Field, 2003). Field (2003:21) explains that “rational choice sociology assumes a highly individualistic model of human behaviour, with each person automatically doing what will serve their own interests, regardless of the fate of others.” By conceptualising social capital from a rational action perspective, Coleman was able to grasp why humans choose to cooperate, even when their immediate interest may be best served by competition (Field, 2003). Coleman suggests that social capital develops because actors make a calculated choice to invest it in. Social capital is then a result of actors choosing to invest in certain relationships for self-interested purposes. Coleman (1988:198) starts from the premise that each actor/individual has control over certain interests and resources, and proposes that social capital constitutes a particular kind of resource available to an actor. He goes on:

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social

structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible.

The “productivity” of social capital for Coleman is driven by the accumulation of human capital. He states that “just as physical capital and human capital facilitates productive activity, social capital does as well” (Coleman, 1988:S101). In his earlier work, which focused on youth and education, he defined social capital as “the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person. These resources differ for different persons and can constitute an important advantage for children and adolescents in their development of human capital” (Coleman, 1994:300). Social capital, according to this definition, is important then not only for the realisation of credentials, but also in both cognitive progress and the growth of a secure self-identity (Field, 2003).

Putnam’s (2000:22) distinction between different forms of social capital highlights how a group’s networks can be forged through both bonding (exclusive) and bridging (inclusive) social capital. According to Putnam (2000:22) some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and are inclined to strengthen exclusive identity and homogenous groups. He uses examples of ethnic fraternal organisations, church-based women’s reading groups and fashionable country clubs as examples of where bonding social capital can flourish. This form of social capital thrives amongst like-minded people who share similar interests and come from similar cultural backgrounds. Bonding social capital reinforce specific reciprocity and mobilises solidarity, but can also be exclusionary as people who don’t share an interest in the activity can be excluded and not tap into the networks established in that group. For Putnam (2003:2) bonding social capital is “a kind of sociological Super Glue”. Sport teams are examples of groups where bonding social capital prevails, as it is a group of people with a common goal, common interests in sport and they form a homogenous group based on their identity as athletes representing a specific team.

“Bonding social capital, by creating strong in-group loyalty may also create strong out-group antagonism (Putnam, 2000:23). Social capital networks in these groups are usually dense and exclude those who for example don’t play sport or don’t share in the common goal of the team. This in-group solidarity can of course be challenged by individual team members who do not buy into a homogenous team culture. But this behaviour is the exception rather than the norm. Examples of professional sportsmen who have challenged the status quo of the bonding social

capital prevalent in sport teams are former English cricket captain Kevin Pietersen, who has made a name for himself as one of the “bad boys” of international cricket by often criticising his own team mates and management, and Springbok rugby player Francois Steyn who has voluntarily made himself unavailable for Springbok selection, because of contract disputes.

Networks that are outward looking and include people from diverse social divisions are referred to as bridging (or inclusive) social capital. “Bridging networks are better for linkages to external assets and for information diffusion ... Bridging social capital generates broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrow selves” (Putnam, 2000:22-23). Research by Granovetter has shown that when seeking jobs “weak” ties or bridging social capital that link people to distinct acquaintances who operate in different social circles are more valuable than strong ties or bonding social capital that link people to intimate friends whose sociological niches are similar (see Putnam, 2000:22; Field, 2008:58). Furthermore, bridging social capital is more difficult to create than bonding social capital, as “birds of a feather flock together” (Putnam, 2004:3) Bridging social capital is essential for a healthy public life in an increasingly diverse society, but is the hardest to build. In terms of the social capital that rugby players tap into after their careers, this chapter shows how teams, schools, and clubs are institutions where bonding social capital flourishes amongst rugby players. For their post-rugby careers it remains crucial to extend those networks and consider the importance of bridging social capital – that is liaising with people who come from different backgrounds and who have occupation skills other than rugby – to secure a future. The role of social networks in obtaining and securing economic capital for rugby players in their post-sporting lives are explored. Putnam’s (2000:319) claim that “where trust and social networks flourish, individual firms, neighbourhoods and even nations prosper” has been putative on a micro level, but the role of social capital on a macro level has been contested (see Halpern, 2005:17 and Field, 2008:62).

Shilling (1993) argues that the idea of physical capital is easily grasped by thinking of the ways in which sportsmen and women convert physical ability into income, or the way that models, or even prostitutes, use their bodies for material gain. Although this is a rather stark analogy, it does point to how the bodies of athletes (their physical capital), are the main ‘instrument’ they use and convert into economic capital. But physical capital is not productive if it cannot be converted into future gain. For players who have retired it is no longer the physical capital that is beneficial to them, but rather the social capital that they have developed during their playing days. These networks are developed from a young age through educational institutions.

The next part of the chapter considers the importance of the habitus of athletes, as embodied through the class and institutions they belong to and how that may secure future benefit.

4.3.1 Incubators of social capital in South African rugby: schools and universities

Light and Kirk (2001) have shown that in elite Australian schools rugby produces social advantage, as the connections formed during school enable former players to rise to power in the corporate world. They argue that physical capital gained by dominating opponents in rugby, and from establishing social connections through share participation in sport, is advantageous for the players when applying for jobs in the corporate world. A similar observation has been made regarding the opportunities available for rugby players in South Africa after their careers.

In South Africa, the majority of professional rugby players hail from schools and universities that have a strong historical association with rugby. These schools are incubators, not only for rugby talent, but also provides the platform from where social connections are established through a communal interest in the game. Exclusively black schools have produced very few top players; they tend to come from traditional rugby-playing schools, which are predominantly upper class and predominantly white. In 2012 the South African Rugby Union reported to parliament that the majority of Springboks came from only 1.81% of the total number of schools in the country (Grundlingh, 2013:168). Schools – particularly high schools – are the foundation of rugby in South Africa. According to McGregor (2013:13) the 251 Springboks capped since 1992 come from 143 high schools in the country. Forty percent of them come from just 21 schools. Grey College in Bloemfontein – an all boy’s school with a rich rugby tradition – has delivered more Springboks than any other school. Since 1992, Grey College has produced 22 Springboks. In a test match against Scotland, Grey College boasted ten ex-scholars (see Figure 14).



Figure 14. The ten Springboks from Grey College after the test against Scotland in 2013

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Paarl Gimnasium has produced the second highest number of Springboks since 1992, tallying ten (McGregor, 2013). Both Grey College and Paarl Gimnasium have boarding facilities, which is a draw card for scholars hailing from smaller farming communities in and around Bloemfontein and Paarl and wishing to attend these schools. Rugby is central to the identity of these schools and it is common that second and third generation families are educated at the same institution. The school museums at both Grey College and Paarl Gimnasium display a material culture of rugby as closely interwoven with the history and identity of the school.

The alumni networks of these schools are also vast. Annual reunions are timed to coincide with interschool rugby derbies. In Paarl, the annual derby takes place between the two boys' schools, Paarl Gimnasium and Paarl Boy's High. This event attracts thousands of "old boys" and crowds of 20 000 are common at this event. In 2012, six different Paarl Gimnasium year groups, ranging from the 2007 matric year to the 1992 matriculants, celebrated reunions during the derby (McGregor, 2013:19). Such events built around a communal affiliation with the school, and rugby being the attraction on the day, create the conditions in which social relationships are strengthened. Although talented schoolboy rugby players from working-class backgrounds are attracted to these middle-class schools through rugby scholarships, most rugby-playing scholars come from a similar class background. Writing on the development of rugby as a predominantly Afrikaans middle-class sport, Grundlingh (2013:67) argues that:

The middle class character of rugby facilitated its acceptance as a constituent part of the white, and especially Afrikaner, establishment. Many of the players came from more or less the same background, and shared the same values. To play rugby was a respectable pastime that met with the approval and conformation of wider society.

It is not uncommon for rugby players to attend one of these schools because their fathers or grandfathers were schooled there. The social networks that are established in these environments date back to generations of players within a family having had close ties with the school. The result is that a close relationship is forged with a relatively exclusive group of people, namely those with the cultural and social capital to secure a place for their child notwithstanding the school's strict admission policy. High schools are therefore the incubators of social capital for young players, and it is common for them to be lured to universities near these schools. Grey College and Paarl Gimnasium are feeder schools for Stellenbosch University or the University of the Free State, and this is where these young players go to further their studies and contribute to the rugby teams of their universities. Stellenbosch University was pivotal in the development and spread of the game in the 1930s and 1940s and it became part and parcel of Afrikaner student culture. Today rugby at tertiary educational institutions are run in a professional manner, with the Varsity Cup being the premier event that promotes inter-varsity derbies. It is within the context of high school and university rugby that relations are built up.

Only a minority of these players get a chance to play at provincial or national level⁷, but the social networks that are established through rugby by those who do attend these institutions are key in assisting professional rugby players after their rugby careers. Messner's (1990:102) research on retired professional sportsmen found that "many successful men speak about their earlier status as athletes as having 'opened doors' for them in their present professions and community affairs". Farr's (1988) research on "good old boys sociability groups" also found that sport is the glue in a masculine culture which continues to promote "dominance bonding" among privileged men long after their active sport careers end. "Old Boy" groups and alumni reunions built around a communal identity of rugby and a rugby residence are powerful networking opportunities for old boys. These relationships are indicative of what Putnam

⁷ There were 600 rugby players contracted to their respective Unions in South Africa in 2014. Of those 600 contracted players, only 20 players have national contracts with the Springboks. Realistically only 3 out of every 100 professional rugby players will make it to the elite national level. Messner (1992:45) found that in the United States the chances of attaining professional status in sport is approximately 4 in 100 000 for a white person, 2 in 100 000 for a black person and 3 in 100 000 for a U.S.-born Latino man.

(2000) terms “bonding” social capital, as they are built up around people with like-minded interests and an identity informed by rugby. Bonding social capital creates strong in-group loyalty, but may also create strong out-group resentment.

4.3.2 Social capital at work

Thus far I have shown how important educational institutions are in creating the foundation for social capital. But how are these networks personified in the everyday lives of rugby players after sport?

Putnam (2000:134) argues that “the touchstone of social capital is the principle of generalized reciprocity.” I became conscious of the importance of social networks and the norms of trust and reciprocity that develop from such relationships among rugby players after meeting with two ex-Springboks who went to the same school, played for the same provincial franchise and represented the national team. Their shared ‘habitus’ had been developed through a disposition learned by coming from a similar cultural background embodied through sport. The social capital (the norms of trust and reciprocity) they developed during their rugby-playing days was important in securing a career after rugby. Marius Joubert and De Wet Barry were the centre pair for the Springboks in their 2004 Tri-Nations winning campaign. They have a close friendship and after hanging up their rugby boots decided to go into a business venture together. I met with Barry and Joubert on two separate occasions at the business offices of their Quantec Business Alliance in Tygervalley, Cape Town. Whereas I had previously only seen them in rugby kit, it was quite striking to see them in a completely different realm as businessmen. They were neatly dressed and came across in a professional manner. Both of them spoke about the role that rugby played in forging their friendship and the importance of building on the principles they had learnt through rugby in their business venture. Joubert explained that he had retired from rugby because of a series of injuries he had sustained, and he felt that “it was the right time to move on” considering that he had just married and his wife was expecting a child. He spoke about how it was a natural progression to draw in the people whom he had met during his rugby career to assist when he set up his business. A television programme called SA Rugby Legends aired a story on the business venture of Joubert and Barry. In the programme Joubert explained:

From the beginning we wanted to build a team and use things that we learned in rugby and apply that in our business. We are hard workers, disciplined and are punctual. All these things that you have learned on the rugby field you can transfer to business. There

is a similar context in sport and business. When we started we already had trust in each other. I trusted De Wet when two centres came on to us and De Wet usually had the inside. So there are a lot of trust factors that you have to have in rugby and in business. I know the guys around me, they are good people, I know their character and values and I believe you should surround yourself with good people. Me and De Wet are very fortunate to be in business together and I am looking forward to a long and good relationship just like on the rugby field (Joubert in SA Rugby Legends Show, 10 March 2014).

For Joubert, the relationship he built up with Barry through their shared participation in rugby was vital in his decision to go into business with him. His reference to the fact that he could trust Barry to put in a tackle when defending, and now transfer that trust to a post-rugby career business relationship shows how the social capital established through their school and professional rugby careers is converted into economic capital. In an interview with Barry he shared similar sentiments with regard to the importance of trust:

I always stayed in contact with the guys I used to play rugby with. And now having started a business with Marius (Joubert) you realise how important those connections are. That synergy we had on the field is carried over to our business interest. The fact that you played rugby together and now work together is something special. We can trust each other, because we have learned the qualities of the other person through rugby. It is tough to start a career after rugby and you have to be proactive. You can't ride the wave of being an ex-rugby player in the business world. You need to fend for yourself, because people see you as a businessman, not as a rugby player anymore. Having said that you do try and help players who may need your advice. With the events that the South African Rugby Legends organise, which is mostly golf days, we get a chance to see ex-players and friends and share ideas and opportunities. That synergy is always there.

Le Roux shared a similar sentiment to Joubert's in that the trust that was built up on the rugby field can be transferred into reliable business relations after sport. He explained:

I have only succeeded in my business because of the networks I established whilst playing rugby and the relationships I built up. Two of my business partners also played professional rugby. We are guys who knew that we could develop a good business after rugby. The reason being that we scrummed together against the All Blacks. We put our bodies on the line for a common cause while playing week in and week out. Just like

rugby in a business you go through ebbs and flows, sometimes it goes well and other times you get really worried, it is a lot like the rhythm in a rugby game. If you know you have a business partner who you can trust and see out the difficult times, the same difficult times you saw out together on the rugby field, then you know you can walk a long road together.

Messner (1992:18) argues that sport as a social institution developed “a structure and a system of values that supported the values and world view of upper-class white males”. Historically organised sport, as it developed in Britain and the United States at the turn of the 20th century was used as a means to an end in defining the gender order and by “differentiating men from women and higher-status men from lower-status men” (Messner, 1992:18). Sociologist Bruce Kidd proposes that organised sport during this era was “characterized by rules, bureaucratic structure, the privileging of ‘records’ and the concept of ‘fair play’ [and by] middle and upper class males in the increasingly elitist institution of the public school, the university, and the private club” (Kidd, 1990:31). It is within this historical context that institutions still play an important role in the development of social capital amongst athletes.

The examples provided thus far have considered men from high status backgrounds; those who have had the opportunity to attend schools where rugby and academics are of great importance. It has also focused on those rugby players who have been able to tap into the ‘bonding’ social capital established at these ‘elite’ institutions to support them in their post-rugby careers. But what about those players who come from lower status backgrounds, where the bonding social capital is not as accessible through sport?

Many players who barely finish school and are talented rugby players get fast-tracked into a professional rugby career, without any vocational training to fall back on. If educational institutions are the bedrock for the formation of social capital to develop through rugby, how do players who have not attended these institutions adapt to a life after sport?

A national survey done by the South African Rugby Players Association (SARPA) in 2013, dealt with the educational and careers skills of professional contracted rugby players around the country. The results show that 66% of the players’ highest qualification is matric and only 10% of players are in a possession of a degree. The study found that 44% of contracted rugby players do not know what they will do once they have stopped playing rugby (SARPA, 2013). These statistics confirm that more than half (66%) of contracted rugby players in South Africa have not pursued an education after matric. The implication of this is that the social capital that

is at their disposal is developed within a very narrowly defined context – that of a professional rugby team. For those players who come from a low or working-class background rugby becomes their profession instantly. As one provincial Free State Cheetahs player, talking about his coloured team mate who came from an impoverished background said: “He came to Bloemfontein with a tog bag, and left here with a car.” A Currie Cup player with limited Super Rugby experience can earn between R500 000 and R700 000 a year. This instant wealth is what lures young players to consider rugby as a profession. The problem, however, is that at some stage their rugby careers will end, and it is then that the social connections that they have built up through the sport can assist them in life after rugby.

Their need for decision-making processes regarding vocational training is dismissed as they are already earning an income. Eddie Andrews highlighted the instant financial injection that comes with a professional rugby contract: “One player mentioned to me, when I just started playing professionally, it was a coloured player, and he said to me, that he bought him a car, a bakkie, and then he sold the bakkie and he bought a BMW and I said to him, Why are you doing this? And he said, But we must buy these things for us because we could never afford it in the past.” Clearly the wealth that a professional rugby career can ensure is attractive, but how that wealth is managed is another matter. Journalist Liz McGregor’s (2011:125) conversation with the wife of a prominent rugby coach that was sacked, echoed this sentiment: “The rugby players are essentially boys who have a shot at stardom and into money without being equipped to handle it. They are seldom tutored along the way, and then are often dropped with no support system. It is no wonder many go off the rails and end up in a mess, with their stories trumpeted in the newspapers. Hero to zero is often a tragic ride.”

Messner’s (1990) study on retired sportsmen found that sport was important for men from low and high social backgrounds, but for different reason. He argues that by adolescence and early adulthood, those from a middle-class cultural environment were encouraged to “decide to shift their masculine strivings in more ‘rational’ directions: education and non-sport careers”, whereas those from a working-class background considered success in sport as their only hope of achieving public masculine status. Furthermore, “cars, nice clothes, and other signs of status were often unavailable to these young men, and this contributed to a situation in which sport took on an expanded importance for them in terms of constructing masculine identity and status” (Messner, 1990:104). In other words, men from a middle-class background had the option to further their cultural capital, without sport, whereas men from a working-class background who practised sport professionally considered sport as a means to an end. This

observation has implications for the social networks that they can rely on, once their professional sporting careers come to an end. Eddie Andrews, an ex- Springbok prop who comes from an impoverished community emphasised this point:

I never acquired a tertiary qualification. When I matriculated, I worked as a driver at a liquor company. Thereafter I pursued Club Rugby. Rugby was always something that I wanted to do and to play. Never thought of doing it professionally, though. I literally stumbled upon it. And I was fortunate enough, I mean, if you look at the stats of players in South Africa, very few players from my background get to play rugby on the elite level. I see sport as just another vehicle to communicate the message that you can, irrespective of what circumstances dictate to you, that you can achieve success, especially in my community of Mitchells Plain. You must understand, I come from Mitchells Plain. And people always ask, what it means to me to have been elevated from dire social conditions. In 2004 in Bloemfontein and I played in my first game for the Boks against Ireland. I was crying. And I was crying there because I come from Mitchells Plain. Here you have a Mitchells Plain boytjie representing his country on a national level and playing against Ireland. And that moment is very overwhelming for me. But I appreciated it because it is testament to what can happen if you pursue, I am of the view that if you pursue success, success in everything will pursue you. And doors will open.

Eddie Andrews comes from the predominately coloured neighbourhood of Mitchells Plain on the Cape Flats. The area is infamous for its trying socio-economic conditions, and gangsterism and crime are prevalent. In 2013 it was considered South Africa's worst police district in terms of crime-related incidents, and the 2014 murder rate in this area tallied 158 (Crime Statistics South Africa). Today, Andrews is a councillor for the Democratic Alliance (DA) in Mitchells Plain. He spoke about how he has used the status he had as a Springbok player to get involved in community work, and through those networks moved up and eventually became a councillor. Andrews's 'habitus' was very different from that of Barry and Joubert. The school Andrews went to, Steenberg Secondary School in Mitchells Plain did not have a rich rugby tradition, and it was only after school that Andrews was noted as a talented rugby player. The social networks that are available to the masses of young school boys who attend traditional rugby-playing schools, was not an option for Andrews as a young boy. Although he developed social capital through sport later in his rugby career by playing for the Stormers and the Springboks on a senior level, he never drew on those networks to secure a job after retiring from rugby. Considering that social capital is a resource for all actors, individual or collective, privileged

or disadvantaged (Field, 2003:28), the social capital that Andrews drew on to secure a job after his rugby career did not relate directly to the connections he had made through rugby. Indirectly, Andrews's status as a rugby player did position him within his community as a person who could be trusted in a political role. He said: "I knew rugby would help me cope, the fact that I can't play anymore is not a big deal. Rugby was instrumental in setting up a platform for me now to use as leverage, and I can build on that now as a politician. So the people know I'm coming to politics with a profile already. Which is good." The concluding part of this chapter considers organisations that promote the interest of ex-rugby players.

4.3.3 From trust on the field to trust off the field

In an interview with Chris Roussouw he explained that rugby players are dependent on one another, even after their professional rugby careers are over: "There is a huge risk, in terms of an unsecure financial situation after rugby. That is why so many players rely on each other, whether in business or other contacts they may have that can assist them in finding a job." Roussouw and Le Roux own a chicken farming business in the Free State. These contacts are not only reinforced through friendships, but through organisations that promote the wellbeing of ex-rugby players.

It is therefore important to consider the social groups or the "old boys clubs" that are established to support rugby players after their professional careers have ended. The South African Rugby Legends Association (SARLA) founded in 2004, is the chief organisation to support retired rugby professionals. Members of SARLA played professional rugby for any of the 14 South African rugby unions. This organisation has two objectives: to support the needs and interests of ex-rugby players and to develop rugby at the grassroots level. The non-profit organisation uses the skills of rugby 'legends' to promote the game, through fundraising and coaching under its 'VUKA' programme – a rugby development programme which aims to "uplift individuals, and by extension communities, create advancement opportunities for talented players and create a deeper, broader pool of professional talent" (SARLA, 2014). SARLA employs ex-rugby players to further the interests of the 'legends', who rely on the social capital that was established during their playing days to benefit those players who may be in need. The current CEO of SARLA is Stefan Terblanche, a veteran of 37 tests for the Springboks. SARLA has two regional offices, in Durban and Cape Town, and the 'SA Rugby Legends Classic Springbok squad' takes part in the World Rugby Classic tournament that is held in Bermuda annually.

It was at SARLA's Cape Town offices that I met with ex-Springbok and SARLA's regional manager in the Western Cape, Pieter Muller. Muller was part of the victorious 1995 Rugby World Cup Springbok team. He explained that part of SARLA's work is to use the networks that players have established whilst they were playing and to consider if it could be beneficial for other players to tap into these networks after rugby. Muller explained how there are very few players who approach SARLA for direct assistance if they are struggling in their lives, as "they feel embarrassed to come to us, after they left the sport on top of the world". SARLA does not provide financial bail-outs for ex-players, but does organise fundraisers and golf events that can assist players or promote charities. The organisation also provides coaching opportunities for ex-players at schools through its VUKA programme. Golf days for ex-rugby players are organised by SARLA and this provides an informal occasion where players can rekindle the social connections they made during rugby. Prominent businessmen are often invited to attend these golf days. This provides the opportunities for ex-players to liaise with people outside their immediate work situation and to use their association with rugby as a vehicle to extend their social connections.

SARLA seems to be the 'face' of ex-rugby players in South Africa and uses events that these players partake in as a marketing exercise to show its commitment to social responsibility as an organisation of 'legends'. For example, several ex-Springbok players competed in the ABSA Cape Epic. The Cape Epic is a gruelling eight-day mountain bike challenge that covers a distance of 718 km over rocky terrain in the Western Cape. John Smit (ex-Springbok captain) teamed up with Butch James (ex-Springbok fly half), and Joel Stransky (ex-Springbok fly half) teamed up with Terblanche to complete the race under the SARLA banner in 2014. The publicity that these players get by participating in such an event promotes their status as 'rugby legends' in society and reinforces the commitment they have to fundraising and supporting rugby development programmes.

Annually a SARLA team and an International Legends Team compete at the Cape Town Tens tournament (see Figure 15). This tournament was founded by former Springbok rugby players Bobby Skinstad and Robbie Fleck. I attended the 2015 Cape Town Tens tournament and was struck by the level of competitiveness shown by the SARLA team. At one stage former Springbok scrumhalf Bolla Conradie failed to make a tackle on a lightning fast wing of the opponents, which led to a try. A clearly infuriated Conradie walked up to the winger, grabbed him by his collar and said "I will f*ck you up". The crowd urged him on, but Conradie's team mates gathered around him and tried to calm him down. One would think that the event was

meant to be a social event for former team mates to reconnect, but Conradie's behaviour signalled that he was still wanting to be remembered as a player who is solid on defence and able to play quality rugby. His ego had clearly been bruised and even though he had retired from professional rugby, he did not want to be ridiculed or outpaced. Ultimately such events are another example of how social networks are extended beyond rugby, to their lives after sport. The norms of trust and reciprocity that were built up by playing rugby together are transferred to cement relations between players through SARLA. Although SARLA does not give direct financial assistance to ex-rugby players, it does put people in contact with one another, and allows for opportunities (be that through golf days, partaking in the World Rugby Classics, or attending charity events) to benefit from the social capital at their disposal.



Figure 15. Former Springbok rugby players taking part in the annual Cape Town Tens tournament

Source: Author

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter addressed the importance of social networks amongst professional rugby players. Rugby is an institution where fraternal bonding occurs around the common goal of winning,

and is a sport where friendships and social relationships develop over a prolonged period of time. I have argued that social capital is a powerful resource that is converted into economic capital for rugby players who have to start a new career after their retirement from sport. The friendships and social connections that enable this, do not suffice randomly. Schools and universities are institutions that play a key role in promoting rugby talent and are also the incubators from where social networks can be built around rugby. These networks are beneficial for players if they have limited resources to fall back on after their rugby careers. But social capital can also be exclusionary, as working-class players who do not have access to the “bonding” social capital prevalent at elite rugby schools and universities have to draw on other networks to ensure a career prospect. Ultimately the web of social relations between professional rugby players is relatively narrow, but I have shown that for those who can tap into the social capital available to them, the norms of trust and reciprocity that are developed on the field can be transferred to secure financial security long after their playing days are over. Social capital is important for the livelihoods of professional rugby players, as the capital accumulated allows them to invest in material wealth. Such wealth may be ephemeral, but the intangible aspects of their legacies in the form of memories of and nostalgia for their sporting pasts are enduring. These memories, prompted by the display of the material culture of sport, are the focus of the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER FIVE
PERSONAL TO PUBLIC MEMORIES:
SPORT, MATERIAL CULTURE AND NOSTALGIA

The moustache on his lip is pencil-thin, like the middle path through his hair. Although his friends call him Blokkies, his wife would call him Marais. Ag Kristina Kristina he would think to himself you never would understand. What it feels like to dummy and to side-step with a leather ball in your hand. It's hard to believe this is Blokkies Joubert, a hooker in the Springbok scrum. Because he is old and grey as he sits in his chair in the slanting winter sun. But he made his name in this wonderful game that he played in 1931 – Lyrics from David Kramer's 1981 hit single "Hak hom Blokkies"⁸

This chapter moves on from understanding the individual lives of athletes, and considers how their achievements become embedded in public memory. The afterlife of a professional athlete is a personal experience, but I show how the memories and legacies associated with sports heroes escape the confines of the 'personal' and become a symbolical and powerful means through which sport heritage is promoted. This chapter moves beyond the athletes' experiences of their sporting afterlives and considers how their achievements become powerful catalysts for sport heritage promotion.

I extrapolate the significance of the sporting past and the role of nostalgia in remembering sporting heroes. The material culture of sport and the social experience of sport often evoke feelings of nostalgia, associated for example with a specific team's past achievements. The material culture and the heritage associated with sports heroes enable them to live on in symbolic ways long after their playing days are over. By following the "thing" (Marcus, 1995) or the sports artefact and by drawing on Lifton's (1976) theory of symbolic immortality, the central concern of this chapter is to show the ways in which athletes live on through symbolic means. Such an analysis foregrounds a discussion on the sports heritage landscape in South

⁸ David Kramer is a prolific singer and songwriter and many of his songs engage with Afrikaans folklore. This specific song "Hak hom Blokkies" topped the singles chart for four weeks in 1981 and was a song about Blokkies Joubert, a fictitious rugby player, reminiscing about the Springbok team that toured the British Isles in 1931. The song was written in the same year as the infamous Springbok rugby tour to New Zealand, where political unrest because of South Africa's apartheid policies overshadowed the test matches. Kramer's biography notes that he was not a keen follower of sport, but the song's association with rugby and a bygone Afrikaner era was used for promotional purposes. Kramer publicly presented a copy of the album to the Springbok captain Wynand Claasen and his team before their departure for New Zealand. "Hak hom Blokkies" became the official tour song and ensured a wider awareness of Kramer's work. Kramer's association with rugby and the controversial rugby tour did cause some skepticism among Kramer's political liberal fans, but the song's association with the tour generally counted in his favour (De Villiers & Slabbert, 2011:145-146).

Africa with specific reference to rugby's (Chapter Six) and road running's (Chapter Seven) heritage in the country.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the lounge of one of South Africa's sporting legends, Elana Meyer, I noticed a plaque hanging on the wall. The plaque was meant to be a visual reminder of Meyer's achievement of becoming the first female Olympic medallist after South Africa's re-admission to the Olympic Games in 1992. Meyer was inducted into the South African Sports and Arts Hall of Fame (SASAHOF) and the plaque was in recognition thereof. She was one of the first athletes I interviewed, and our discussion sparked my curiosity about how sportsmen and women of South Africa's sporting past are commemorated, and how they live on in symbolic ways through sporting artefacts, memories and nostalgia.

I asked her about the value that she attached to the sporting memorabilia and what she thought about the initiative of SASAHOF to commemorate her achievements. Meyer seemed nonchalant about that recognition as she spoke about how it is not necessarily the actual "thing" (plaque) that is of value to her, but the memory of the race. She said that to the public the sports memorabilia are a symbolic representation of her, but she would not want to be remembered by the actual clothing/running shoes she wore on that day, but would rather be remembered for what she did and still does for the sport of athletics. Meyer is the founder of Endurocad, an elite running academy.

It wasn't only the recognition that bestowed on athletes through material means that interested me. In my everyday life I was confronted with the material culture of sport in different places and in different forms: from a small second-hand shop in Mossel Bay selling a signed Blue Bulls jersey to the value of R4 400 (see Figure 16), to being asked to buy a raffle ticket that would put me in line to win a signed Stormers jersey for a school fundraiser at a local rugby game, to taking my car in for a service and a signed Springbok Jersey displayed behind the receptionist table, to seeing rugby jerseys enshrined in the change rooms of rugby teams during a stadium tour, to queuing to get an autograph of a rugby player after a match at Newlands Stadium, to sitting in a pub and rugby memorabilia decorating the walls, to attending an auction where a signed Springbok Jersey is sold for R20 000, to visiting sports museums across the country and speaking to people in the sports heritage industry. All these places used sport and the material culture associated with sportsmen and women of South Africa to exchange values and ideas about the past. The question then is, how do athletes live on in public memory through

material means? And why has sport heritage as an industry surfaced in a more organised manner at this particular point in time? What does the need to remember and nostalgise about the past tell us about the present? To answer these questions, a discussion on how athletes become symbolically immortal and the significance of the material culture of sport is vital.



Figure 16. Blue Bulls rugby jersey for sale for R4 400 at a second-hand shop in Mossel Bay

Source: Author

5.2 SPORT, SYMBOLIC IMMORTALITY AND THE POST-SELF

Schmitt and Leonard (1986) and Leonard (2012), drawing on Lifton's (1976) work on symbolic immortality, have applied the concept of symbolic immortality and the 'post-self' to sport legends. By symbolic immortality Leonard (2012:7) means "the ways in which one can live in perpetuity other than in a physical/biological/material sense." This means that despite the retirement of elite athletes, their achievements live on indefinitely in the symbolic sense through initiatives such as 'halls of fame', sports museums, sporting memorabilia, songs and photographs. Symbolic immortality is therefore concerned with the salience of memory. To better understand how symbolic immortality is applicable to sports heroes, what follows is an analysis of Lifton's (1976) theory of symbolic immortality.

Organised sports, especially on university and professional levels, offer a unique arena to study the work of immortalising the self (Vigilant & Williamson, 2003). The work done by social psychiatrist Lifton (1974, 1976, 1979) has made a significant contribution to understanding the

continuation of identity after death. For Lifton a sense of symbolic immortality is essential for mental health, and the realisation of an enduring self and being symbolically immortal is a human quest to achieve a sense of continuity. According to Lifton, the knowledge that we will die forces us to confront and transcend our fears of finitude in symbolic ways, particularly through relying upon various modes of symbolic immortality (Vigilant & Williamson, 2003).

These modes connect us to the past and present, linking us to those who have gone before us and to those who will live on after us and remember our contributions. Symbolic immortality is “a sense of immortality as in itself neither compensatory nor pathological, but as man’s symbolization of his ties with both his biological fellows and his history, past and future” (Lifton, 1976:31). The notion that there is a symbolic continuation over time is particularly applicable to sports heroes who through their identity as successful sportsmen and women continue to live on in a symbolic ways.

Lifton argues that there are five modes of symbolic connectedness or immortality: (1) biological, (2) creative, (3) theological (4) natural and (5) experiential transcendence. The biological mode connects us to our past and future through biological means, i.e. through our family of procreation. This allows us, according to Lifton, to live on through our children, their children and our culture. The second mode of achieving symbolic immortality is through “works”: creative acts, such as artistic work, literature, art and music where the work of the creator of the creative act lives on after his/her demise. This is the category in which sports heroes and their acts can be placed, as their sports accomplishments are often remembered because of the records they set or the athletic skills they possessed and are remembered for after their retirement. The third mode of achieving a sense of symbolic immortality is through the expression of theological or religious imagery. This form of symbolic immortality manifests by transcending death through spiritual attainment. For Lifton (1976) this is a state in which one possesses spiritual power over death in a symbolic sense that extends beyond the limited biological span. The fourth mode is a sense of immortality through nature itself, as a theme of eternal nature: the idea being that nature symbolises eternity, since the trees can be thought of as being on earth for infinity. The fifth form of symbolic immortality differs from the others as it is dependent on a psychic state. Lifton refers to this state as ‘experiential transcendence’ and it can be thought of as ‘losing oneself’ through psychic unity and perceptual intensity. In this mode “the self feels uniquely alive – connected, in movement, integrated – which is why we can say that this state provides at least a temporary sense of eliminating time and death”(Lifton, 1979:26). Central to Lifton’s classification of modes of symbolic

immortality is the idea that the biological body is mortal, but can live on in perpetuity and become immortal through symbolic acts. On an individual level athletes may be concerned with how they are remembered once their playing days are over.

The post-self is “a notion highlighting how individuals are concerned with their presentations and remembrances in history” (Leonard, 2012:16). Central to the post-self is “the idea that individuals reflex, ponder and ruminate on the ‘marks’ that they leave in time and it serves as a linchpin that links the future with the past from the perspective of the individual in the present” (Leonard, 2012: 16-17). This concept is specifically pertinent to elite athletes who retire from competitive sport, as the image and the legacy that they will be remembered for are often associated with their performances on the field as well as the public image they present.

Schmitt and Leonard (1986) argue that there are four features of the sporting world that are instrumental in fostering the post-self: (1) opportunity for role support, (2) engrossment through participation and communication, (3) comparison through measurement and records, and (4) recognition through awards and commemorative devices.

Role support can be understood as support accorded to an athlete based on their role identity. Role identity is one's imaginative view of oneself as one likes to think of oneself being and acting as an occupant of that position (McCall and Simmons, cited in Cortese, 1997). This support can manifest through the support of family, fans or fellow athletes. Athletes become engrossed through participation and communication as the social world of sports provides a stage where people can carve out careers, identify with like-minded people, and become involved in activities through participation and communication. All of this enables the post-self to become a meaningful social object for the individual (Schmitt & Leonard, 1986:1094). The recognition of past sports heroes through awards and commemorative devices is at the core of sport heritage initiatives and sport museum practices.

Through comparison and measurement of records athletes know where they stand in relation to others. Modern sport, it has been argued, counts and measures performances in nearly every imaginable area of athletic competition (Guttman, 1978). The post-self requires that one's act be recognised and remembered, and this will enable individuals to feel that their acts were worth performing (Schmitt & Leonard, 1986:1096). Commemorative initiatives and recognition through awards are a tangible, but symbolically powerful means to engrain the post-self into the history of a sport. Athletic awards may include trophies, medals, Halls of

Fame, and clothing with the date and name of an opponent on it, all forms of the post-self being fostered through commemorative devices.

Leonard (2012:28) argues that “the social world of sport facilitates symbolic immortality and the post self by providing occasions, settings, mechanisms, and processes through which its participants can be remembered, eulogized and endeared”. Sports heroes of the past are often remembered and eulogised in sport museums by the sportswear that they wore during their sport careers. The objects of material culture that they ‘leave behind’ become valuable signifiers of the past and contribute to reinforce their symbolic immortality. The material culture of sport and the display thereof are a catalyst for social memory and nostalgia for bygone sporting heroes.

5.3 THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF SPORT

Anthropologist Daniel Miller (1998:3) argues that the key theories on material culture that developed in the 1980s showed that social worlds were as much constituted by materiality as the other way around. In other words “things” we use in everyday life shape our social world, but the social world we live in also shapes our understanding of things. For Miller (2010:4), “the best way to understand, convey and appreciate our humanity is through attention to our fundamentally materiality”. Studies of material culture have traditionally focused on semiotics – considering the role of objects as signs and symbols that represent us. Through ethnographic analysis of the use of clothes in London and Trinidad, Miller (2010) refutes the idea that semantics is the only way to understand people in relation to things and vice versa. People and the meaning they attach to clothing or things, go beyond an understanding of objects as symbols and force us to think about how people attribute value to things. Miller (2010:13) substantiates the importance of people in relation to objects (in this case clothing):

In both philosophy and everyday life we imagine that there is a real or true self which lies deep within us. On the surface is found the clothing which may represent us and may reveal a truth about ourselves, but it may also lie. It is as though if we peeled off the outer layers we would finally get to the real self within...If you keep peeling off our layers you find – absolutely nothing left. There is no true inner self. We are not emperors represented by clothes, because if we remove the clothes there isn’t an inner core. The clothes were not superficial, they actually were what made us what we think we are.

Miller’s argument has profound implications for the study of a material culture of sport and specifically the material culture of sports clothing. Sportswear is often used as symbolic

representations of sports teams, and commercial interest through sponsorships reinforces the semiotics of sportswear. For example, sponsorship logos on sports regalia are symbols and signs and powerful means of advertising within a very competitive sports marketing industry. Considering that clothes are not superficial, but actually make us what we think we are, then professional athletes' sense of self is enhanced by the clothes they wear, and not necessarily by the symbolism that is of corporate interest.

The Springbok emblem embroidered on the rugby jerseys of national players is a symbol of national pride to many people. It isn't the clothing itself that is of significance, but what the emblem allows the players to think of themselves. For Springbok rugby players the tradition and history of the game is reinforced through capping ceremonies, where senior players inform debutants of what is expected of them both on and off the field. Former Springbok rugby player De Wet Barry confirmed this:

Every boy dreams of becoming a Springbok. I did too and I was one of the lucky few to have been able to pull the Springbok jersey over my shoulders. As players we know the national pride and emotions that go hand in hand with having that jersey awarded to you. But that jersey is more than just a jersey. It becomes part of who you are as a person and the values you show in your everyday life and dealings with people.

The material culture of sport is of course not confined to sportswear only, but sportswear and jerseys in particular are common sporting artefacts displayed in sport museums. Sport historians have argued that the material culture in sport includes notably: playing equipment, venues, training equipment and sport medicine technology, sportswear, prizes, symbolic artefacts (flags and mascots), performance measurement technology, ephemera and detritus (discarded tickets stubs etc.) and memorabilia (Hardy, Loy & Booth, 2009:129). The importance of material culture in interpreting the sporting past has found new impetus, with Borish and Phillips (2012:466) arguing that "historians, including sport historians, for the most part ignore the evidentiary and historical value of utilizing the theory and practice of material culture studies". They propose a more in-depth study of the material culture and written manuscripts, thing and words, objects and books created by past men and women that will yield a new and profounder interpretation of sport and history (Borish & Phillips, 2012:466). Reilly (2015) has also argued that little is understood about the value and role of sporting heritage and she reiterates the importance of research on the historical study of sport and material culture.

The museological use of the material culture in sport relies on the association with an individual or team. The sportswear items of famous athletes are often the main focus of exhibitions in sport museums. The number of jerseys that professional rugby players receive from their respective franchises has increased dramatically in the professional era of the sport. During the amateur era rugby players had a training kit and a game kit and the jersey worn during matches would be washed and used again the following weekend. In the professional era sponsorship demands dictate what jersey is to be worn.

I visited the locker rooms of the Blue Bulls at their home ground at Loftus Versfeld and spoke to the heritage officer whose role is to oversee the collection and cataloguing of the material culture of the Blue Bulls. I was told that Super Rugby players who represent the Blue Bulls receive four jerseys per match. One for the pre-match period when players have lunch together and relax, one for the pre-match warm-up, a match jersey for the first half, and a spare one for the second half. This means that if a player were to play in four Super Rugby matches per month he would have a total of 16 jerseys at his disposal that could potentially be used as sports memorabilia. Former Springbok hooker Keith Andrews's career spanned both the amateur and professional eras of rugby in South Africa. He explained how times have changed with regards to rugby kit:

When I played for Western Province during the amateur days we had our girlfriends and wives wash our jerseys after every match. They used bleach to get rid of the stains of our match day jerseys. We had one jersey and that was it. By the end of the season you could see that the jersey was "finished". Nowadays, with big sponsors printing their logos on jerseys players have to wear different gear at different events. It is not uncommon for them to have cupboards at home filled with all their rugby kit.

The quantity of the sportswear is obviously not the deciding factor as to whether it will be of value in a sport museum or not. The value of sports memorabilia is determined by both the athlete who wore it, and by the cultural and historical significance of his achievement. Francois Pienaar's 1995 Rugby World Cup jersey, for example, does not represent only him as the team's captain, but is renowned for its association with Nelson Mandela, who wore a replica of the jersey on the day the Springboks beat the All Blacks. It therefore, although uncritically, symbolises ideas around social cohesion, democracy and a unified country.

It seems that a 'magical' element is often at play when the actual sportswear and the heritage associated with a specific team enable athletes to perform beyond expectations. The legacy of

the Springbok jersey, for example is steeped in tradition, ethos and attitude. The symbolism of the Springbok jersey for the few professional rugby players who have become Springboks is associated with honour and bravery. Max Gluckman famously argued that if you wear a uniform, you behave like the person who usually wears that uniform. In other words if players earn their first Springbok cap, they believe that they have the ability to perform on the rugby field and follow in the footsteps of those players who have come before them. The sportswear is not the only tangible aspect of heritage, however, the athletes themselves have also been conceptualised into heritage objects – a form of living heritage.

Gammon (2014) has highlighted the commoditisation process of the sporting hero that reframes them into heritage “objects”. In such instances it is not only the sportswear that the athlete wore that becomes a form of heritage, but the athlete himself. White (2013) reflects on the cultural significance of Cathy Freeman’s achievements at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games⁹:

If we understand heritage as a process that constructs meaning about the past, then the construction of Cathy Freeman at the Sydney Games is illustrative of this process. It was, essentially, a visual construction of heritage based upon her body, her movements and the setting (White, 2013:166).

The feat of the athlete and the sportswear that he/she wore during the event are both powerful representations of sport heritage. It is the actual sportswear, however, that is displayed in museums and which ensures the continuation of an athlete’s legacy, either after he/she retires from the sport, or when he/she dies. Terrett (2012) has written on the “triple presence of sportswear” in sport museums, and argues that sportswear is omnipresent on the paintings, postcards, stamps, pictures and more generally on all objects where an individual is shown or represented. The focus of sportswear in this form is not particularly on the clothes, however.

A second type of museological display relies on the sporting garment and its association with the person who wore it. Such representations often highlight the achievements of famous sport stars, and as Terrett (2012:51) argues “reinforces the cult and fame of the champion.” For example, the Springbok Experience Museum in Cape Town (Chapter Six provides a more detailed analysis of the museum) displays the rugby jerseys of influential and successful past Springbok rugby players to promote the successes of the team. The museum has several rugby

⁹ Cathy Freeman is a former Australian sprinter who won the 400m race at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. She made headlines as the first Australian of aboriginal descent to excel as a professional athlete. Her victory at the 2000 Olympic Games initiated public discourse around issues of race, culture, nationality, sport and gender.

jerseys on loan from players. The jersey that Francois Pienaar wore during the 1995 Rugby World Cup, and the boots that Joel Stransky wore when he put over the decisive drop goal to beat New Zealand by three points, are displayed at the Springbok Experience Museum (see Figure 17). These examples show how the sportswear associated with these sporting heroes has wider significance than just the clothes worn on the day by the players. The symbolism of the sportswear is associated with elements of triumph, inclusivity and a “united country” under the Springbok jersey as personified by Nelson Mandela also wearing a replica of Pienaar’s jersey on the day¹⁰. Terrett (2012:51) argues that in such exhibitions the sportswear disappears behind the athlete and is only seen with its links to him or her.



Figure 17. The 1995 Rugby World Cup Exhibition at the Springbok Experience Museum displaying the No 6 jersey that Springbok captain Francois Pienaar wore. The boots that Joel Stransky wore when he kicked the drop goal that ensured a Springbok victory are also on display

Source: Author

The significance of sportswear becomes even more central when it is the very topic of an exhibition (Terret, 2012). Such exhibitions rely on the evolution of specific sportswear and

¹⁰ For a critical discussion on the euphoria that swept across the country following the Springbok victory in the 1995 Rugby World Cup see Chapter 5 ‘Explaining euphoria’: The 1995 Springbok Rugby World Cup victory and its impact’ in Grundlingh, A. 2013 *Potent Pastimes: Sport and Leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*. And Grundlingh, A. & Nauright, J. 2010. *Worlds Apart? The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup*. In P. Alegi & C. Bolsmann. (eds). *Africa’s World Cup: Critical reflections on Play, Patriotism, Spectatorship and Space*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

depict how sportswear has changed in relation to the game's development, but also show how branding and cultural values have influenced the functionality of certain sporting garments. A sports jersey is often the sole object used to immortalise a sports icon in a Hall of Fame, but sports jerseys have become common forms of display in sport museums too. For example, the Springbok Experience Museum has an exhibition showing the evolution of the Springbok jersey and jerseys worn by coloured and African rugby teams of the past. The exhibition is interactive. The visitor can choose on an electronic screen the year that a team played and then a light illuminates the specific jersey, while a short video of a player wearing that jersey during a game is shown. Sportswear in this instance shows the change in both the Springbok emblem used to represent the team, and also introduces the role that sponsors and branding have played in influencing the aesthetics of the jerseys.

Sportswear in museums not only allows for a visual experience, but also draws on sensitive and emotional aspects. Many of the locker rooms of rugby franchises in South Africa have memorabilia of noteworthy former rugby players up on the walls. The memorabilia are used as a reminder to current players of those who have come before them. They are also used to 'psyche up' the players, as they realise that their motivation is steeped in a heritage represented by players of the past. In the locker room of the Cape-based rugby franchise, the Stormers hangs the Western Province (WP) jersey of Percy Montgomery, who played for the Stormers and was one of the first players to play 100 tests for the Springboks (see Figure 18a). The display reminds more recent team members of where their place is within the longer history of the franchise.

In the locker rooms of the Pretoria-based rugby franchise, The Bulls one is reminded of the symbolic immortality of former players. A sign that creatively uses the past reads: "Great heroes have walked this path. What footprints will you leave?" (*Groot helde het al hier uitgestap. Hoe lyk die voetspoor wat jy los?*) (see Figure 18b).



Figure 18a. The rugby jerseys of Springbok and Western Province fullback, Percy Montgomery. This display is in the corridor leading from the WP locker rooms onto the field

Source: Author



Figure 18b. The sign encouraging players to follow in the footsteps of players who have come before them

Source: Author

The symbolic immortality that players prior to the current crop of players have attained, is apparent in the pertinent reminder of the heroes' footsteps in which they follow. These examples show how the legacy of past players is immortalised by the use of sports memorabilia. Both Montgomery's jersey and the sign in the Blue Bull locker room remind current players of those who came before them, which is indicative of the symbolic immortal status of players of the past.

5.4 THE VALUE OF SPORTS MEMORABILIA

Part of my fieldwork entailed travelling across the country to interview people who have collections of sport memorabilia. I visited the houses of sports collectors, community sport museums and corporate sport museums, and considered the role that rugby played in packaging the heritage of schools, university residences and universities. I went on several stadium tours to gain insight into how sports memorabilia are used to promote sport as a form of heritage. All these places rely on the material culture of sport to convey ideas around success, identity and the history of each institution.

It was on one of my first visits to a community rugby museum in Bloemfontein – the collection of the former South Africa and Free State manager, Choet Visser – that I became aware of the importance that the memorabilia had for Visser's family and the institution he was affiliated with. His family became custodians of the collection after his death in 2005. Chapter Six shows how South Africa's rugby heritage has shifted from smaller community-oriented museums to corporate museums, and I draw on the Choet Visser Rugby Museum to illustrate this.

All of the memorabilia in Visser's museum had been donated to him by players with whom he had built up a relationship through his rugby involvement. Although he would collect rugby memorabilia in the form of pins and photographs for himself, all the jerseys were given to him by rugby players with whom he had made an effort to form a friendship. His role as a former Free State and Springbok manager within the closely knit Free State rugby circles, and the work he did to preserve the heritage of rugby all contributed to players feeling that they wanted a place where they knew their rugby gear would be treasured and their legacy preserved. Visser was named as 'Bloemfonteiner of the year' in 1994 for his successful business interests in the furniture industry and the role he played in promoting rugby in the province and preserving the heritage of the sport. The rugby memorabilia in his museum are displayed in a double room, on the bottom floor of where his daughter lives in Bloemfontein. She explained that the entire collection will be donated to the University of the Free State to catalogue and preserve when

they move out of the house. The value of the memorabilia is therefore directly linked to Visser's personal history and affiliation with the University of the Free State. Although the sporting artefacts are of great nostalgic value to those who knew Visser, the collection is also a reminder of Visser's 50-year affiliation with the University of the Free State. He was the honorary president of the University of the Free State rugby club and accompanied the 'Shimlas' – as the University of the Free State rugby team is known – on all their overseas tours. In the early 1990s Visser stipulated that the contents of the museum should be donated to the University of the Free State when his children and grandchildren could no longer administer it. He was quoted at the time as saying, "I will not sell the museum, not even for R20 million. I have had a wonderful affiliation with Kovsies since 1939" (Van Eck, 1991). The monetary value of the rugby memorabilia in Visser's museum is therefore of little significance to him and his family. Rather, it is the legacy he leaves through the collection of sports memorabilia that promotes his symbolic immortality.

However, it is not only the sporting memorabilia that is of nostalgic value in Visser's museum. The museum itself was the venue for the wedding of one of Visser's good friends, sports commentator Gerhard Viviers. Years later Visser decided to auction off a framed photograph of Joel Stransky's winning kick against the All Blacks in the 1995 Rugby World Cup, in a bid to raise money for Viviers who was suffering from ill health and needed financial support (De Klerk, 1997:2). For Viviers the nostalgia of the museum was intertwined with his personal history and not dependent only on the actual sports memorabilia that are exhibited. The museum and the value of the artefacts in the museum are inextricably linked to who Choet Visser was and how he wanted the museum to be a haven for his friends and fanatic supporters of rugby.

Although the case of the Choet Visser Rugby Museum shows how the material culture of sport is not simply linked to financial capital, there are instances when the value of memorabilia is explicitly used to generate capital. I provide an example of a rugby auction I attended, where a Springbok rugby jersey was sold for R20 000. The event in question was the Paul Roos Legends evening held at a prominent rugby school in Stellenbosch. In Chapter Four I referred to the importance of social networks in the organising of this event, but here I am more concerned with highlighting the value of sports memorabilia. The event was organised in a bid to raise funds for the Paul Roos hockey team who were to travel on an overseas tour. The main sponsor was Investec Specialist Bank and tickets cost R800 per person, which included a three-course meal and unlimited wine. The items to be auctioned were not restricted to sports

memorabilia, but also included wine, hospitality packages, paintings and test rugby tickets. The main draw card, however was the auctioning off of the 2007 World Cup winner's jersey of former Springbok winger Ashwin Willemse. The jersey also had the entire team's autographs on it and Willemse's World Cup medal would be auctioned off together with the jersey (see Figure 19). Willemse was the master of ceremonies for the night and together with former Springbok coach Nick Mallett and former Springbok rugby player Brendan Venter took part in a panel discussion on the state of rugby today.



Figure 19. Ashwin Willemse's 2007 Rugby World Cup winning Springbok jersey and medal on auction at the Paul Roos Legends Evening

Source: Author

A professional auctioneer auctioned off the items and the bidding for Willems's Springbok Jersey and medal started off at R10 000. A number of interested bidders took part in the bidding, and the jersey was eventually sold for R20 000. Later on that evening the Springbok

Jersey of the current Springbok fullback, Willie le Roux, was auctioned off for R16 000. Willie le Roux is a former pupil of Paul Roos Gimnasium. Several other items were also sold ranging from bottles of boutique wines to a Springbok supporters tour to Twickenham, to Karoo hunting trips and deep sea fishing trips.

A fieldwork experience in June 2015 at a public breakfast with current Springbok captain, Jean de Villiers also shows the monetary value of sports memorabilia. De Villiers was invited by media group MEDIA 24 to attend a business breakfast at the Lagoon Beach Hotel in Cape Town. Tickets to attend the event cost R300. De Villiers made time in his strict rehabilitation schedule, recovering from a potentially career-ending knee injury, to converse with former Springboks turned sport commentators Breyton Paulse and Toks van der Linde on a public platform. Most of the discussion revolved around his injury and whether he felt he would be able to return to form before the 2015 Rugby World Cup in England. As the event drew to a close a Springbok jersey signed by De Villiers was auctioned off (see Figure 20). The bidding price started at R10 000 and the jersey was sold to a keen businessman for the amount of R20 000.



Figure 20. Springbok captain Jean de Villiers signing a Springbok jersey that was auctioned off for R20 000 at a fundraising breakfast

Source: Author

In contrast to displaying sports memorabilia in museums, sports memorabilia are auctioned off at fundraising events with the aim of accumulating capital. The bantering among the people (mostly men) about raising the bidding price created an atmosphere of competitiveness that had to be backed up with money. I got a sense that the bidding was not necessarily done for the

item itself, but for the bragging rights that went with buying the item. It was about egos, not the memorabilia themselves. The value of the memorabilia that were auctioned off was therefore enhanced financially by the competitiveness between the elite who could afford to pay R20 000 for a sporting artefact. In such instances the nostalgia attached to the sporting artefacts becomes overshadowed by the monetary value and status of those who buy them. It was reported in October 2015 that Francois Pienaar's original no. 6 Springbok jersey that he wore during the 1995 Rugby World Cup final has an estimated worth of R 1 million (Cronje, 2015).

Another collector who has spent thousands of rand on his rugby collections is Theo Guesteyn, Guesteyn owns a private rugby museum that is housed at the luxurious De Zalze golf estate in Stellenbosch. One has to make an appointment with Guesteyn to gain entrance to the museum and no entrance fee is charged. A unique feature of the museum is that most of the memorabilia were bought by Guesteyn over a period of 50 years. There are pictures of him posing with famous rugby players from whom he bought jerseys. He explained that his collection grew from the childhood fascination he had with rugby memorabilia. As a young kid he used to collect cards with his favourite team's players on them and from there his obsession with collecting rugby memorabilia grew. Guesteyn spoke about how difficult it had become to acquire new memorabilia in the professional era of rugby. According to him players have realised the monetary value that their jerseys can accumulate and have turned towards auctioning off their jerseys for goodwill, rather than selling them to private collectors. The use of rugby memorabilia to gain financial capital has therefore made it difficult for private collectors, who previously used their connections to receive the memorabilia as gifts, or as in Guesteyn's case to buy the memorabilia. It is difficult to pin down how rugby memorabilia become valued in monetary terms, as people are inclined to have their own personal reasons why they would pay exorbitant amounts of money to buy memorabilia. What is less contentious is the fact that memorabilia associated with sport are a powerful means through which to unlock the memories and feelings of the past. The role that nostalgia plays in reminiscing about sports heroes of a bygone era is a direct result of the use of sports memorabilia to expose such feelings. Nostalgia and in particular its emotionality has increasingly fascinated anthropologists (Agne & Berliner, 2014:1).

5.5 SPORT, NOSTALGIA AND SOCIAL MEMORY

Individual and collective memory are a key characteristic of intangible heritage (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). The packaging of memories have become big business within the heritage

industry. Rassool (2000:10) argues that in the South African context “a new framework for memorialisation has begun to unfold which seeks to construct forms of observance, remembrance and commemoration which would be a 'symbolic acknowledgement of our neglected, marginalised and distorted heritage'. New monuments have begun to emerge, new national museums have begun to take shape, and new national heritage trails are being planned.” These initiatives, Rassool (2000: 8) argues, are built around dominant discourses on cultural ‘diversity’ in which culture is effortlessly constituted by a “traceable purity or demonstrable authenticity”. Notably, most if not all of these monuments and museums are conceptualised along essentialist assumptions of culture, and aim to represent the overlooked heritage of South Africa’s past from a political perspective. It has also been argued that heritage work in South Africa should not be confined to museums, but explored in “wider arenas, where ideas about tradition, patrimony, and authenticity are debated and defined” (Peterson, 2015:2).

The heritage potential associated with sport has been largely left untapped and public sport museums have only recently surfaced, with the opening of the commercially oriented Springbok Experience Rugby Museum in Cape Town in 2013, and the planning underway for a Blue Bulls Rugby Museum in Pretoria. Preserving the heritage of other major national sports has proved an uphill battle. The proposed Football Heritage Complex (FHC) (that would have included a museum and a Football Hall of Fame), was meant to come to fruition during the 2010 FIFA World Cup at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban. This initiative to preserve the material culture of football in South Africa never took off, as it was never met with the necessary financial response at local and national level.

Sport is a social world that is continuously producing experiences, for both the athletes and their fans. Sports heroes and their deeds are culturally and historically determined and the sporting artefacts they leave behind elicit memories of the past and draw on nostalgic recollections. Emotional and sensitive memories of the past are often evoked through sporting artefacts in museums. It is therefore essential to consider the role that social memory and nostalgia play in eulogising past sport heroes. In sport, nostalgia has been conceptualised along the lines of personal, collective, armchair and commercial nostalgia. Gammon (2002) argues that an emerging feature of sport tourism is the commodification of the past with particular reference to wish or fantasy fulfilment.

Gibson (2004:157) coined the term sport nostalgia tourism to refer to visits to sports halls of fame, sport museums and sporting venues. Although this definition has been widely used within sport tourism literature, it has been argued that there is a wider utility of nostalgia within

the context of sport tourism (see Weed & Bull, 2004; Fairley & Gammon, 2005; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2006). According to Fairley and Gammon (2005:186) “nostalgia sport tourism need not be generated solely from fixed monuments and artefacts, but also from social experience”. In other words, the experience of visiting sporting sites and interacting with sport artefacts, as well as the artefacts themselves are instigators of nostalgic recollections. According to Fairley and Gammon (2005:187) “nostalgia sport tourism is not entirely concocted of sport-related attractions but represents a diverse and complex area of study that can be broadly categorized into nostalgia for place or artefact (object based) elements as well as nostalgia for social experience (group-based) events”. It is the social experience of the sporting past, experienced by groups of people with a similar interest (in this case sport) where nostalgic recollections can become meaningful representations of a bygone era. Boym (2001) argues that nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory.

Nostalgia can be defined as a yearning to relive a past period (Holbrook, 1993). Fairley (2003:287), drawing on the work of Holbrook and Schindler (1991) defines nostalgia as a preference (general liking, positive attitude or favourable affect) towards objects (people, places, experiences or things) from when one was younger or from times about which one has “learned vicariously, perhaps through socialization or the media”. Boym (2001) differentiates between two types of nostalgia: the restorative and the reflective. Restorative nostalgia, she argues, stresses *nostos* (home) and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. This form of nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia thrives on *algia* (the longing itself) and on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging. Restorative nostalgia according to Boym (2001) protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt. Sports nostalgia that is based on material culture often draws on reflective nostalgia, as sport artefacts elicit a longing back to the days when the sport was practised a certain way, or they reinforce a longing for how things were.

There is also a differentiation between personal and collective nostalgia. Drawing on the work of Davis (1979), Snyder (1991:230) proposes that nostalgia is part of a collective memory that people have towards symbolic objects (physical things, objects, or events) from the past. Nostalgia can also be a private subjective feeling about the past that is unique to that person’s biography (see Davis, 1979:122-124). One school of thought maintains that individuals cannot experience nostalgic feelings if they have not lived through that period, and that nostalgia relies on memory of a specific experience, be that real or imagined. Others argue that memories that

generate nostalgia are not dependent on living through a specific period, but that events and the associated meanings can be learned through the passing on of stories which have a nostalgic appeal (Fairley & Gammon, 2005:183). Nostalgic recollections of sporting events are based on both having lived through a specific sporting experience and being told stories about sporting legends of yesteryear. Snyder (1991:231) argues that we experience collective nostalgia through the media and because sport receives a considerable amount of media coverage, it lends itself more readily to nostalgic yearnings. Televised sports' flashbacks to events of an earlier era and the commentators who define and interpret historical sport events contribute to a collective nostalgia that is experienced even by people who weren't part of that generation.

Similarly, sport museums permit the visitor to experience an individual recollection of the past as well as share feelings that are based on a collective nostalgia about a sports event or person. People who look at displays in sport museums often share feelings that are held in common with others (Snyder, 1991). These feelings can be based on a generation of sport fans who have similar recollection of the past. Nostalgia is a significant mechanism whereby generations are identified and "in the world of sport different generations cultivate their own distinctive repertoire of nostalgia" (Davis, 1974 cited in Snyder, 1991:231).

David Kramer's hit single "Hak hom Blokkies" serves as an appropriate example of how collective nostalgia through sport can have a generational appeal. The song is based on the fictional character of Blokkies Joubert, hooker in the Springbok team that toured the British Isles in 1931. Kramer's biographers suggest that Kramer was less interested in historical accuracy than in the associations the tour allowed him to exploit (De Villiers & Slabbert, 2011:143). These associations were based on a particular generation of rugby players and supporters. Nostalgia undoubtedly played a role in the composition of the song, but it has been noted that Kramer achieved an important distance from the song by associating it with the aged and forgotten figure of Joubert. Nostalgia is not so much the motivation for the song, but the subject. Joubert is entirely fixated on the past, with nothing for him in the present. All he can do as he sits in the weak and unconsoling rays of the 'slanting winter sun' is to 'drift back to the old days', and back to his time with 'the *manne*' (De Villiers & Slabbert, 2011:143). The lyrics also draw listeners into a longing for an era when things were simpler and the game of rugby seemingly uninfluenced by politics. This specific chorus underscores the point:

Ja ons ouens was rof in die ou dae, but we played a gentleman's game. But it's all been spoiled by politics, it's never going to be the same. So he drifts back to the old days as he hears the *manne* call. They say hak hom, hak hom Blokkies, Blokkies hak daai ball.

De Villiers and Slabbert (2011:143) argue that for Kramer the song was also personally meaningful as the tour belonged to the era of his father's youth, the time that Barnett Kramer's household settled in the Boland town of Worcester and bore some relation to family accounts of the good old days. This was also a period before the word 'apartheid' became an obstinate fact of life in South Africa.

"Hak hom Blokkies" shows how the nostalgic appreciation of the sporting past can have a collective appeal for a generation of people. The song was released in 1981, 50 years after the 1931 Springbok tour to the British Isles, and was popular not only for the generation of players and supporters who lived through the 1931 tour, but also the children of those who through the song could imagine how it was to play rugby during that era. This points to how the collective appeal of sports nostalgia is not only dependent on those who lived through a sports event, but that nostalgia can also be experienced on an individual level, even by people who did not physically experience that era. Music is a salient way of reminiscing about a bygone era, as the lyrics draw the listener to imagine what it must have been like to live during that era.

Another popular song by Afrikaans singer Laurika Rauch immortalised the 1962 try of Marnetjies Roux against the touring British Lions team, in Bloemfontein. The main chorus of the song ends with the lyrics '*Onthou jy nog die drie van Marnetjies Roux*' (do you remember the try of Marnetjies Roux?). This refers back to the remarkable solo try scored by Roux, securing a 34-14 win over the British Lions. This try became engrained in the collective memory as an iconic moment. Grundlingh (2013:71) argues that the symbolic value of the try can be seen in relation to a surge of Afrikaner nationalism, fuelled by the banning of the ANC, a bolstering economy and the Springboks beating their arch rivals, the British through an extraordinary solo effort by Roux. Rauch's song deals with a desperate farmer who has to deal with drought and hardship on a farm, and the only solace he finds is in his nostalgic yearning back to a bygone era when there was enough rain for his farming endeavours to prosper and the Springboks were winning. Both Kramer and Rauch, through the creative use of lyrics elicit nostalgic feelings based on individuals and their rugby pasts.

Nostalgia is also a catalyst for social memory. Several scholars have argued that memory is culturally and socially constructed through membership of a group, kinship or religious class (Halbwachs, 1992; Connerton, 1989). For Halbwachs (1992) private memory is understood only through a group context; these groups may include families, organisations, and nation-states. For sports heroes and their fans their recollection of the past is established through

groups and within the subculture of an affiliation to sport. The question then arises as to how people construct a social memory of the past?

Connerton (1989) proposes that societies remember through inscribed transmissions of memories, or what he terms “incorporated” practices. He argues that the past and recollected knowledge of the past is conveyed and sustained by ritual performances and that performative memory is bodily. This means that an incorporated practice, for example a smile, handshake or words is the foundation for social memory and is of vital importance. Most studies of memory as a cultural faculty focus on written or inscribed transmissions of memories through written records, photographs and print. Connerton’s argument is that bodily social memory is an essential aspect of social memory and it is therefore what we do to remember (the rituals, visits to museums, commemorative ceremonies) that informs social memory. Interpreting social memory through incorporated practices in the world of sport means that the bodily practice of visiting sport museums, or watching sporting clips of the past with friends and family, and the interaction between the visitor and the sporting artefact at sport heritage sites reinforce the social memory of the sports person or event.

A comparable argument has been made with regard to heritage as a mode of representing the past (Chapters Six and Seven provide a more detailed account of sport heritage as displayed in sport museums). The interpretation of heritage depends on social memory and the experience that people have when visiting heritage sites. For Smith (2006:44) heritage has to be experienced and it is not a ‘thing’, but rather a “cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present”. In other words the actual institution of sport museums, sport stadia and places of sporting significance are not inherently meaningful, but it is the bodily practices and rituals that occur at these places that are of significance. The ritual of commemoration helps to “patch up the irreversibility of time” and it is through the institutionalisation of nostalgia that museums, heritage foundations and memorials are established (Boym, 2001). Such institutions do not emerge randomly, but as Pierre Nora (1989) suggests: memorial sites are established institutionally, when the environments of memory fade.

Memories of sport events or sport heroes are not only significant because of the results of a particular game, but are evoked through sport that relate to broader historical and cultural meaning. Returning to the example provided by the lyrics of Kramer’s song “Hak hom Blokkies”, the lyrics tell us little about the outcome of the Springbok tour to the British Isles in 1931. That seems irrelevant, as the nostalgic recollection is based on a broader appeal that

is created through rugby and the life of the fictitious character, Blokkies Joubert, who now as a resident in an old age home longs back to his rugby past. His memory of the tour is based on the memorabilia displayed in his room, but also by the people who informed it. The lyrics substantiate this:

He sits there in the afternoon sun, his memories come and go. He clearly recall Bennie Osler and Boy and Fanie Louw. Yes, there they stay with the rest of the team, in the photograph on the wall and if you ask him he will show you where they signed on his rugby ball.

The lyrics communicate a longing back to a past that was simpler, where rugby was ostensibly uninfluenced by politics and where the ideals, rules and language represented a simpler version of life. Although these recollections may be based on a romanticised version of the past and become mythologised, it does relate to heritage being a powerful instigator of social memory and nostalgia. According to Ramshaw and Gammon (2006:232) “the process of creating and establishing a sporting heritage also propagates particular myths about it in order to create a sense of order and identity”. For example, Birley (1999) has shown in his analysis of the social history of cricket in England that ideals, language, rules and location are intertwined with English identity and is also part of its heritage. He argues that cricket heritage in England celebrates and even legitimises class divisions, gender disparity and middle-class notions of leisure.

A similar argument can be made with regard to the relationship between rugby, Afrikaners and nationalism. The nostalgic appeal of rugby for a generation of Afrikaans men is not based on the game itself, but rather on the broader significance of having lived through a political era where rugby was an extension of the Afrikaner’s cultural identity. The game represented ideals that fit within a narrow definition of what it meant to be a white Afrikaans man. It is proposed that “generally the playing of rugby is an enactment of hegemony, a display of ‘kragdadigheid’” (Lewis, cited in Black & Nauright, 1998:10)¹¹. Rugby was constructed as a “white” sport and became a distinguished symbol of Afrikaner masculinity and racial pride. On the complex relationship between culture and sport, Black and Nauright (1998: 10) observe that in South Africa:

¹¹ ‘Kragdadigheid’ is an Afrikaans word that can be loosely translated as ‘forcefulness’.

...sport traditionally played a prominent role in reinforcing rigidly distinct racially, or racially based communities. Rugby, in particular became intimately tied up with Afrikanerdom: “Rugby had a symbolic significance which predisposed Afrikaners not only to play it but to identify with the game, in such measure that to some extent they have transformed it in their own image.”

Rugby as an expression of heritage allows for reflection and recollection of the past. A generation of Afrikaner men associated the game with a broader cultural ideal of a bygone era where political control was in the hands of Afrikaner Nationalists. The question then arises as to why sport heritage initiatives that draw on nostalgic recollections of the past have come to the fore at this particular moment in time in South Africa. The answer lies in the antecedents of nostalgia that draw on a recollection of a romanticised version of the past during a time of anxiety, discontent and fear in the present. Aden (1995:21) argues that “nostalgia indicates individuals’ desire to regain some control over their lives in an uncertain time”. Others have argued that nostalgia erupts when there is a sense of being “uprooted” (Relph, 1976). In the South African context rugby, and its historical association with Afrikaner nationalism has become a powerful means to unlock nostalgic recollections of the past. Ramshaw and Gammon (2006:237) sum up the myopic role of nostalgia in sport accurately:

Nostalgia by its very nature, only includes a particular form of memory; it constructs positivistic personal or collective recollections of the past as a buffer or antidote to the present. Nostalgia has present purposes (just as heritage does), but nostalgia cannot alone encompass the many sites and experiences related to the sporting past... Heritage allows for forms of memorialization and celebration that recognizes suffering, anguish, inequality and hardship of predecessors, whereas nostalgia attempts to locate a ‘golden age’ of sport or a period that holds great sporting significance. Nostalgic recollection is deeply melancholic; it seeks a past that may never have existed, and cannot exist again.

Rugby was closely aligned with Afrikaner nationalism and Afrikaner identity during the latter part of the 20th century. Afrikaners lost political influence with the changing of the guard in South African politics in the early 1990s. Their cultural identity that was once synonymous with power had to be reinvented in the new dispensation. Not surprisingly, rugby for many Afrikaners became a vehicle through which the past could be recollected. Nostalgia and particularly nostalgia associated with rugby brings some form of stability in a politically and economically uncertain period. Davis (1979:107) highlights the origins of nostalgic reactions. According to him:

Nostalgic reactions originate in perceived threats to continuity of identity in the context of present fears, discontents and uncertainties, when identities have been badly bruised by the turmoil of the times.

An Afrikaner identity that was once firmly aligned with the State and cultural activities – of which rugby was one – promoted a sense of community amongst Afrikaners. The uncertainties that have accompanied the shift in political and cultural influence that Afrikaners used to wield in both the political and rugby administration spheres are disseminated through nostalgia and alleviated through sport heritage initiatives. The collective identity of Afrikaners has been mediated by rugby heritage and the nostalgia around it.

Although rugby has a nostalgic appeal for a generation of Afrikaner men, it would be misleading to assume that the rugby past can only be understood in terms of a collective nostalgic longing. Timothy and Boyd (2003) argue that heritage exists in “scales” where a common or shared heritage can be on a global, national, local or personal scale. Heritage need not only exist on national or international levels, but may also include heritage of communities, families and individuals (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2006:231). Many of the ex-rugby players I interviewed spoke about their personal recollection of their rugby days, and their nostalgia was based on their personal histories, rather than general nationalistic yearnings for a bygone era. This in a way is a corrective to the view that sporting heritage must always carry a wider import; it also has a comforting and re-affirming personal function.

For example, former Springbok centre Marius Joubert explained that the rugby memorabilia that he kept were a tangible reminder of highlights in his rugby career. It was of personal significance to him because the nostalgic appeal of these memorabilia was based on the meaning he could relay to his son. This meaning was based on the idea that anything is achievable if you commit and work hard for it. For Joubert then his symbolic immortality through rugby is based on both the material artefact and the value it would have for his children. Lifton (1976) refers to this as biological symbolic immortality in that we connect past experiences with the future through our children. They become extensions of our own creative world, or in Joubert’s case his achievements on the rugby field. Joubert’s nostalgia for the sporting past is based on an intimate relationship with what he would want his son to know about the past. Sports heroes of the past therefore achieve a symbolic immortal status, through both their own perceptions of their mortality and the material culture that are visual reminders of a sports hero or event of the past.

Nostalgic recollections and memories of South African rugby are of course not only confined to the rugby played by white Afrikaners. The material culture and heritage associated with the black and coloured rugby unions have been used to tell the story of the often overlooked linkages between rugby and politics. Rugby was used as a tool to promote anti-apartheid rallies, especially by the South African African Rugby Football Board (SAARFB) and the South African Rugby Union (SARU), who under the banner of SACOS demanded that there be “no normal sport in an abnormal society”. The material culture, memories and nostalgia associated with these players and teams have been used in more recent sport exhibitions to demonstrate the plight of black African and coloured players during this era. The exhibition concerning Errol Tobias – the first coloured player to start in a test for the Springboks in 1981 – at the Springbok Experience Museum epitomises the personal nature of sports heritage. Tobias also has a personal collection of rugby memorabilia at his home. The next chapter provides a more detailed analysis of the politics of representation in the Springbok Experience Museum, but it is useful at this point to show how nostalgia and memory intersect for living sports heroes.

At the opening of the Springbok Experience Museum, several former Springbok players from the historically white, coloured and black federations were invited to attend. Tobias was one of them. An entire section of the exhibition is dedicated to his achievement of becoming the first coloured Springbok. Tobias was clearly proud of his achievements, as he hovered around this section of the exhibition, giving autographs and having photos taken with visitors to the museum. I asked Tobias how he felt about the recognition he now received, almost three decades after his playing days. He explained that it was the first time that he was able to bring his children to a place where they could see and learn who their father was. For Tobias the nostalgic recollection of the past, based on his rugby achievements, was an influential lesson in the present for his children. Tobias was proud that his role in breaking down racial barriers in sport had become immortalised in a museum. This points to how heritage and the material cultural, used to promote the sporting past, become a powerful medium through which nostalgic recollections of a bygone era can be relived, not only on a national or international level, but also on a very intimate personal level.

5.6 POLITICS OF REMEMBRANCE

Heritage is contested in terms of ethnic association. Sporting memories obviously also reflect some of these tensions although they are not as politically overt. Memorials as an expression of heritage have come under immense scrutiny within a changing democracy such as South Africa. Public statues of prominent figures of South Africa's colonial and apartheid legacy have come under threat from students on campuses where these historical figures are immortalised¹². This was especially the case on the campus at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in April 2015, when a group of mostly disillusioned black students called for rapid social transformation at the university. The statue of the British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes was at the centre of what became known as the #Rhodesmustfall movement. This movement aimed to remove the Rhodes statue from the university premises, as students argued that it was a reminder of his colonial and racist policies, but moreover was a symbol of the perceived lack of transformation at UCT. UCT's president of the Students Representative Council argued that the #Rhodesmustfall movement was "a struggle against a system that is hegemonically white, patriarchal and heteronormative" (Mahapa, 2015). After much debate UCT's council voted in favour of the removal of the Rhodes statue.

This incident elicited debate around history and heritage and the value of memorials in a democratic country with a history of oppression and violence. Most statues erected during apartheid were meant to celebrate the achievements and influence that a political figure had on South Africa's political landscape. The debate around Rhodes and his legacy as a white, British colonialist, businessman, mining magnate, and politician raises questions around the ethnocentric character of memorials. Does the legacy and symbolic immortality that is produced through material culture, and especially memorials and statues, allow for cultural variation? The example of the Rhodes statue would suggest that the symbolic immortality of Rhodes was largely appreciated by those who benefited from his economic legacy (most notably the Rhodes Foundation, and the premises of UCT which Rhodes donated to the University as part of his philanthropic motives).

In post-apartheid South Africa Rhodes' symbolic immortal status has been challenged by black students on the UCT campus and used as a gateway to address their grievances. Rhodes, as one UCT student put it, "is symbolic for the inevitable fall of white supremacy and privilege on our

¹² Other statues that were either defaced or vandalised after the #Rhodesmustfall campaign included the statue of Ghandi in Johannesburg; the statue of Paul Kruger in Pretoria; the statue of Louis Botha in Cape Town; the statue of Marthinus Pretorius in Pretoria and the defacing of King George V at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

campus”. An argument can be made that the theory of symbolic immortality is ethnocentric and fails to account for cultural variation. The Rhodes statue debacle highlights this possible critique of symbolic immortality, as the ways in which one can live in perpetuity other than in a physical/biological/material sense, through memories and memorials can be determined by those who are in power at a particular historical juncture and those with the cultural capital to drive such initiatives. The mostly black students who led the #Rhodesmustfall campaign felt alienated from the heritage that was displayed through the Rhodes statue at UCT and made demands for a reflection of a heritage that incorporated their histories within South Africa. Some students staged a ‘sit in’ at the Bremner building on UCT’s campus and unofficially renamed it Azania House, reflecting their perceived association with the struggle heroes of the past.

The demand for the removal of the Rhodes statue shows that the legacy of Rhodes (that of an imperialist, white ruler) resonated very little with the present needs of students at UCT. In other words his symbolic immortality as represented by his statue at the UCT campus was seen as an impediment for the current needs of black students on campus. Heritage is of course the strategic use of the past for present day purpose, but the Rhodes memorial debate shows how the symbolic immortal status of those cast in stone can be a site of contestation. Memorials dedicated to South African sporting legends have gone unscathed, perhaps because sport is deemed by some as trivial compared to ‘serious’ politics.

In South Africa memorials and statues commemorating sports heroes of the past are scarce. In Britain, for example, there are over 100 statues dedicated to sportsmen and women (Hewitt & Lloyd, 2013). Exceptions to this trend in South Africa are the statue of Craven at Stellenbosch University’s sports grounds depicted in Chapter One; the statue of the ‘unknown’ player outside Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria; the bronze statue of the founder of the Comrades Marathon Vic Clapham outside the Comrades Marathon House in Pietermaritzburg; and the memorial dedicated to Hansie Cronjé at his former high school, Grey College in Bloemfontein (see Figures 21a, 21b and 21c).

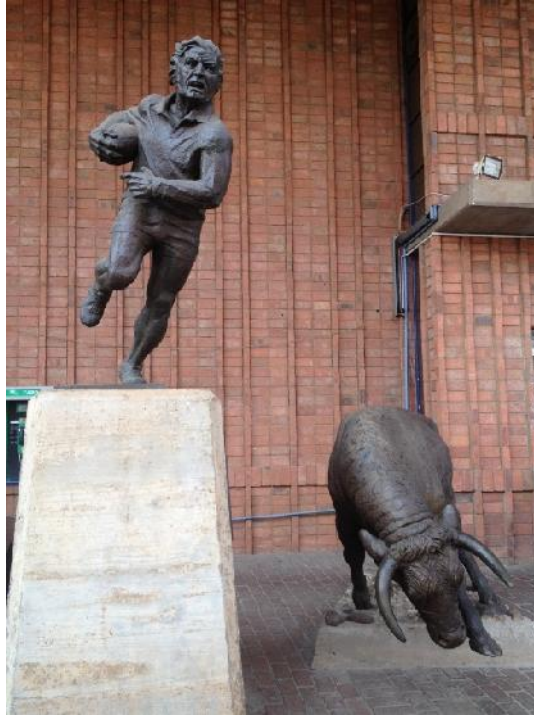


Figure 21a: The statue of the unknown player at the main entrance of the Blue Bulls home ground, Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria

Source: Author



Figure 21b: Statue of Vic Clapham, founder of the Comrades Marathon in 1921 outside the Comrades Marathon House in Pietermaritzburg

Source: Author



Figure 21c. The memorial wall at Grey College in Bloemfontein. This photograph shows Hansie Cronjé's bat and a plaque dedicated to him

Source: Author

These three forms of sporting commemoration highlight the historical significance of individuals within their respective sporting codes. Although the symbolic immortality associated with cricketer Hansie Cronjé is in dispute after his involvement with match-fixing, the point is that the symbolic immortal status of former South African sporting heroes is incarnated through both the material culture of their sporting days and memorials or statues that are erected in recognition of their influence on the sport. These different modalities of the tangible aspect of sporting heritage were initiated by interest groups with a cultural, social and political agenda who wanted to ensure that these sporting heroes are remembered. The symbolic immortality that they attain is of course shaped by those who have the cultural capital at their disposal to initiate such forms of memorialisation, but as has been argued in the Rhodes statue debacle, the symbolic immortal status of a person is a contested and complex terrain where ethnicity, language and cultural affiliation play an important role.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The South African sports heroes of yesteryear are remembered by the material culture that they left behind. Sports memorabilia are a powerful reminder of the significance of former South

African sports heroes' achievements within a particular historical period. The preservation of the material culture associated with sport allows them to gain a symbolically immortal status. The value of sports memorabilia varies and is used for different purposes. This may be to generate money, as the Paul Roos Legends evening showed, or have personal significance for private collectors. Furthermore the nostalgic appeal of sports memorabilia is not confined to sport alone, but sport memories often act as a catalyst to remember a time that was of personal or national significance. As the lyrics of Kramer's song, "Hak hom Blokkies" has revealed, the nostalgic appeal of sport is not confined to only those who have lived through a momentous sporting event, but the narrative and nostalgia can be passed down from generation to generation through music and stories. Nostalgia is therefore a powerful political and social phenomenon and sport is a potent catalyst for nostalgic recollections.

An inquiry into the material culture of sport allows one to consider the relationship between sport and heritage. By drawing on two very different sport heritage initiatives I now consider the different 'uses' of sport as a form of heritage. What follows first is an analysis of a museum that is dedicated to preserving the heritage of South African rugby. Thereafter I consider the intangible and tangible aspects of heritage as it is manifested in one of South Africa's premier road running races, the Comrades Marathon.

CHAPTER SIX

SHOWCASING THE SPRINGBOKS: THE COMMERCIALISATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY HERITAGE

One of the measures how well a culture works is how well one generation passes its stories onto the next ... Places help people tell stories (Borer 2008:196).

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The interpretive and experiential qualities of heritage have increasingly become the focus of contemporary studies on heritage production (Gammon, 2010, 2014; Ramshaw, 2010, 2011; Smith, 2006; Park, 2014). Sport as a form of heritage has been considered as an especially relevant social setting where the experiential qualities associated with heritage can manifest, whether through intangible means (for example, songs, rituals or superstitions associated with a sports team or venue), or more tangible means (by visiting sport stadiums, sport museums and sport Halls of Fame). This chapter is concerned with the tangible aspects of South Africa's rugby heritage as they are portrayed in community and corporate rugby museums. The South African Rugby Union (SARU) has made a significant contribution to the preservation of South Africa's rich rugby heritage by opening a modern interactive rugby museum at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town on Heritage Day, 24 September 2013.

The Springbok Experience Museum serves as a case study to explore the commercial nature of sport heritage preservation and production in the country. The Springbok brand has historically been associated with white national identity (Nauright, 1996), but through SARU's active marketing campaign the association with that particular group has been strategically diminished and the brand has now become a symbol of a highly successful sports team recognised nationally and globally.

This chapter deals with the complexities of how the representation of South Africa's rugby heritage has changed. It considers the ramifications of the professionalisation of rugby in South Africa, with a specific focus on how the rugby heritage has become commercialised and strategically used by SARU to solidify the Springbok brand through sports heritage. The representation of rugby heritage in the men's game in South Africa is explored. Women's rugby, although important has yet to develop a heritage comparable to that of mainstream rugby. I analyse rugby heritage within a broader heritage discourse, which has tended to neglect sport as a form of heritage. The museum as an expression of heritage is analysed, with specific reference to the changing nature of museums and what they 'do'.

Considering that heritage initiatives are closely aligned with economic and commercial objectives, this chapter shows that South Africa's rugby heritage has not always been preserved with a commercial goal in mind. Rather, in the amateur era of the game rugby museums espoused an intimate, personal association with rugby memorabilia, mostly in community or private rugby museums. With the inevitable tide of professionalism sweeping through South African rugby, SARU has been able to market South Africa's rugby heritage as a commodity which showcases the Springbok brand in a very competitive sports market.

6.2 HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS IN MOTION

Most heritage initiatives in post-apartheid South Africa tend to memorialise and commemorate leaders or events of South Africa's political past. Murray (2013:29) notes that in the early 1990s "an estimated 97 percent of all cultural heritage sites recognized by the National Monuments Council (NMC) in South Africa reflected the cultural values and significant experiences of white citizenry. The remaining 3 percent covered the cultural heritage of all other population groups combined, much of which was included under San/Khoi [Bushman] rock-art sites." The democratically elected ANC government has tried to redress the imbalances in the production of heritage sites of the past. The Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) launched a national Legacy Project, which entailed commemorating "neglected or marginalised" heritage (Marschall, 2006a:174)¹³. Heritage initiatives in South Africa have also been important for economic reasons, attracting tourists to destinations that showcase South Africa's unique social and political heritage.

Heritage is a fluid concept that is continually being social constructed (Gammon, 2014; Ramshaw, Gammon & Waterton, 2014; Ashworth, 2008; Hill, Moore & Wood, 2012). An argument in scholarship on heritage studies is that heritage is an active process of making memory and meaning. In other words, heritage is something we do and experience, and can be understood as "the practice that occurs at places rather than just the place itself" (Ramshaw, Gammon & Huang, 2013:20). Ashworth (2008:11) argues that heritage is not "an object or a site but ... a process and an outcome; it uses objects and sites as vehicles for the transmission of ideas in the service of a wide range of values and understandings". In other words, heritage and the consumption of heritage is an active process; Lowenthal (1998:23), quoting a British custodian, notes: "it is not that the public should learn something but they should *become*

¹³ In 2002 the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) divided into separate departments; the Department of Arts and Culture and the Department of Science and Technology.

something”. It is also not necessarily the behavioural aspect that that enables visitors to feel connected to a heritage site, but rather the emotional aspect of performance (Bagnall, 2003). Heritage is a product of the present, which uses the past – whether relics, history or memory – and constructs it for the requirements of an imagined future (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge., 2000; Lowenthal 1998; Ashworth, 2008; Ramshaw, 2011).

Museums are one expression of heritage. They are physical places for the display of material artefacts, but their roles and functions have changed – from offering static representations of “how life once was”, to becoming a form of entertainment, with interaction becoming a key element of the museum experience. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998:138) highlights this shift by noting that “museums were once defined by their relationship to objects: curators were ‘keepers’ and their greatest asset was their collections. Today, they are defined more than ever by their relationship to visitors”. Hall (2006), drawing on the work of Pine and Gilmore (1999), contends that museums have become part of an ‘experience economy’, and their dual role has become both to entertain and engage museum visitors.

The experiential economy relies on four features: education, entertainment, escapism and aestheticism. The Springbok Experience Museum adheres to all the elements of the ‘experiential economy’, as it is designed to teach/educate visitors about South Africa’s history through rugby as well as entertain through active displays and individual involvement in the ‘Springbok Trials rugby skills zone’. It also offers a form of escapism from everyday life for the visitor. This is done by drawing on a strong narrative of the successes of the Springbok team; these successes, albeit fleeting allow the visitor to be distracted from the turmoil of everyday life.

Portswood House, the Victorian style building that houses the Springbok Experience Museum, has Table Mountain resplendent in the background with the harbour below, and the displays themselves are designed for a pleasurable aesthetic experience. Hall (2006:78), elaborating on the pitfalls of the ‘experience economy’, writes:

The key danger in the experience economy is the “commodification trap”– the disillusionment of customers because things stay the same. In sharp contrast with service economies, the drive in the experience economy is toward customization, creating the impression that every experience is unique and has been developed for the individual alone.

This is particularly apparent in the entrance foyer to the Springbok Experience Museum, where visitors can take individual photos of themselves that are then superimposed onto a Springbok team photo. This attraction gives the visitor a unique opportunity to feel that he/she as an individual is symbolically part of the display.

This chapter shows how the Springbok Experience Museum slots into the 'experience economy'. In doing so the nature of rugby heritage collection and preservation, from small, intimate collections to large public commercial collections has changed. This shift has occurred within global changes in museum practices, a trend that scholars have termed 'New Museology'. New Museology emphasises the political, ideological and aesthetic aspects of museums and "intensifies the subtexts and the present-centred nature of showcasing objects of the past" (O'Neill & Osmond, 2012:30). Sharon MacDonald (2006) untangles three salient aspects of the New Museology. First, museums and their objects are not fixed, but rather shift with changing contexts. In other words, they are "situational and contextual, rather than inherent". Second, visitor and public perceptions of museums and their contents are also changeable, with multiple meanings that are often independent of curatorial intent. Third, New Museology considers museums as going beyond their educative and instructive role to "include mundane or market concerns" such as entertainment and commercialism. The Springbok Experience Museum evinced all these trends in New Museology. The words of SARU's CEO, Jurie Roux, at the opening of the Springbok Experience Museum echoed this view: "People can forget their traditional ideas of what museums are like – the Springbok Experience will be completely different. It will be interactive, digital and immersive as well as displaying some incredible artefacts in telling rugby's South African story" (Dolley, 2013:6). The change in museum practice allows for reflection on how the politics of representation manifest within these trends of New Museology.

Several scholars have contributed to an understanding of the growth and consequences of heritage initiatives in South Africa (see Rassool, 2000; Witz, Rassool & Minkley 2001; Meskell, 2012; Coombes, 2003), but the study of sport as a form of heritage has yet to be explored academically in the South African context. Recently studies on sport heritages have increased in Europe and the United States, with the work of Gammon and Ramshaw (2007), Reilly (2014, 2015), Hill, Moore and Wood (2012), Herzog (2013), Phillips (2012), Gammon (2014) and Ramshaw, Gammon and Waterton (2014) at the forefront of researching the relationship between heritage and sport. There is considerable scope for studying the way in which sport heritage has been preserved and commodified in South African sports culture.

6.2.1 Sport heritage

It is not coincidental that one of South Africa's national days, Heritage Day, was selected by SARU as the day that would mark the opening of the Springbok Experience Museum in Cape Town. Sport, in particular rugby, has long been promoted as a form of South African heritage, most recently by SARU's 2012 brand and marketing campaign 'Our Honour, Our Heritage' (see Figure 22). In this marketing campaign rugby in South Africa and the South African national rugby team, the Springboks, marketed themselves, their sport and their achievements very explicitly as a form of heritage. SA Rugby marketing manager, Sarah Mundy, at the time explained the rationale for linking heritage to rugby in their campaign:

It is important to South African rugby that we continue to grow the game of rugby in South Africa through education and experiences. Our new campaign aims to give spectators more opportunity to feel 'part of the Springbok team'. This will ensure that the Springbok honour and heritage continues to be passed down from generation to generation (Mundy, 2012).

Underlying this campaign is the message that rugby – something that most South Africans can associate with and appreciate – is somehow part of the national heritage of the country. More importantly, it is a cultural pastime that can be (and has been) passed down from generation to generation. This notion resonates with Borer's (2008) point that a measure of how well a culture 'works' is how stories are transmitted. The Springbok Experience Museum is a place where such stories can be told and retold.

Since South Africa is a diverse nation stratified along cultural, social, political, racial and economic lines, this initiative is aimed at homogenising rugby as a form of heritage that many South Africans could associate with. Of course, this is a simplistic approach and in reality the spectatorship and following of the national team varies, but the 'Our Honour, Our Heritage' campaign does allow one to consider sport as a form of cultural heritage. Accordingly, it provides a vantage point from where to make sense of sports heritage and in particular the heritage that rugby sought to convey with the opening of the Springbok Experience Museum.



Figure 22. The Springboks lining up before singing the national anthem, with SARU using this opportunity to showcase rugby as a form of South African heritage

Source: SARU, 2012

Sport heritage attractions are creators of both cultural and economic capital (Ramshaw, 2011:1). Sport heritage has been classified by Gammon and Ramshaw (2007:13) into four categories. First, tangible immovable sport heritage refers to spaces and places that have particular relevance to the sporting past; these are usually physical structures, such as stadia. Second, tangible movable sport heritage, incorporate objects, chapters and tangible experiences that are not necessarily spatially rooted, for example sport museums and halls of fame. This form of sports heritage has the displays and artefacts as the source of heritage and they (the sports memorabilia and artefacts) can be easily moved for sport exhibitions or displays.

The third category is intangible sport heritage, which may include rituals, traditions, chants, memories and nostalgia that are associated with sport. The fourth category is that of goods and services; these include retro apparel and services with a heritage element. An example of this is the commemoration of the first Springbok tour abroad in 1906, when a centenary Springbok jersey was manufactured in 2006. Before 1995, during the amateur era, the Springbok jersey was a treasured chapter, only bestowed on those who earned it. Today it can be the possession of anyone who wants it and can afford it. Cashman (2006), writing on the branding of Australian cricket culture, has made a similar observation regarding sports commodities. This points to how the ‘democratisation’ of the game has fed into the commercial nature of rugby apparel in the era of professional sport.

At this point it would be worth briefly considering the preservation of the material culture of South African rugby federations that did not form part of the predominantly white South African Rugby Board. The Springbok Experience Museum is dedicated to telling the unabridged story of South Africa’s rugby heritage by emphasising previously overlooked

histories of the coloured and black rugby boards. The material culture of these organisations often formed part of personal collections of players and administrators. Curators for the Springbok Experience Museum travelled across the country to request specific items to be loaned to the museum for display from ex-players of the coloured and black African boards. The Springbok Experience Museum provides a platform for memorabilia that would have been in the possession of individual players and treasured in a private capacity to be publically showcased and appreciated. SARU's museum and heritage manager, Dr Hendrik Snyders, explained the difficulty in acquiring documents or memorabilia that related to the South African coloured and black rugby boards. According to Snyders, many of their documents had been discarded or destroyed in an attempt to prevent government officials from following a paper trail regarding their anti-apartheid activities. Exhibitions that draw on the history of SACOS-affiliated non-racial rugby structures are often used within a broader narrative exemplifying South Africa's struggle history.¹⁴ Examples of such exhibitions include the sports exhibit at the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, the exhibit on non-racial sport at the South End Museum in Port Elizabeth and the Department of Sport and Recreation's mobile sport exhibition.

Other sporting codes in South Africa have struggled to acquire commercial support for the preservation of their material culture. Leading football historian Peter Alegi's (2006) proposal for a Football Heritage Complex (FHC), which would have included a football museum and a hall of fame hosted at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban, never came to fruition. Despite their best intentions, the moral support for the FHC never met with corresponding financial support at the provincial (or national) level (P. Alegi, personal communication, 23 September 2013). Other forms of football exhibitions have considered the role that sport played in marginalised communities. Rassool and Slade's (2012) analysis of a football exhibition, 'Fields of Play' at the District Six Museum in Cape Town, also looks at the complex history of District Six through the lens of football. Whereas other sports codes have struggled to find financial backing for the preservation of their heritage, the Springbok Experience Museum's realisation can be attributed to the culmination of capital investment by SARU for the preservation of South Africa's rugby heritage.

¹⁴ The South African Council on Sport (SACOS) was the first non-racial, multi-sport organisation to consolidate and co-ordinate support for a non-racial struggle against apartheid in sport.

The focus of this chapter now shifts to the way that South Africa's rugby heritage has changed from being embodied in community rugby museums to corporate museums. But first the context in which the professionalisation of the game occurred needs to be explored.

6.3 PROFESSIONALISATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY

Professionalism has radically changed the face of South African rugby. During the amateur era of rugby in South Africa funding ensured the financial wellbeing of provinces and clubs, but the most important commodity, the player, was bypassed (Grundlingh, 2013). The administrator and president of the South African Rugby Board (SARB), Dr Danie Craven, was strongly opposed to players being compensated financially for their services. He considered professionalism in Rugby Union to be the "cancer that will kill it" (Partridge, 1991:108) and was quoted as saying that "when the actual thrill of winning is not enough, and you must have cash incentives, then it is time for me to move out of rugby" (Partridge, 1991:108). Schoeman (2009) notes that before the formalisation of professional rugby in South Africa, players had been remunerated behind the scenes and "match fees" were often paid under the table by the unions.

The mid-1990s saw rugby become fully professional at the elite level. This development was fuelled by the interest Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation (NewsCorp) showed in acquiring sole television rights for screening the southern hemisphere competition between provincial franchises in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia (today the competition is known as Super Rugby) as well as international matches between these countries. In 1995 NewsCorp clinched the deal worth US\$555 million over ten years (Grundlingh, 2013:157). South African rugby had now been catapulted into the global sporting economy, which meant that the players themselves became commercially viable and marketable products for global sports brands. The consequence of this development is that in the era of professional rugby both players and South Africa's rugby heritage have become overtly commercial.

6.4 THE CHANGING FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S RUGBY HERITAGE

It is worth considering the different manifestations of sport museums when looking at how the representation of the South African rugby heritage has changed. Phillips (2012:6) developed a typology of sport museums that is revealing about the way in which community rugby museums and the Springbok Experience Museum were conceptualised. Phillips's (2012) typology lists four exhibition types of sport museums: academic, corporate, community and

vernacular. Although typologies do have limitations in terms of the characteristics they include or exclude, Phillips's (2012) typology is useful in understanding the scope of sport museums.

An academic sport museum is often a high-profile institution with the purpose of mediating and bringing together different viewpoints on a particular sport's history. Academic sport museums often have professional museum curators, academics and designers who create the exhibitions. Corporate sport museums share certain characteristics with academic sport museums in that they employ professional curators and include an educational element in the museum experience. With regard to purpose and funding, these two museum types differ and this is relevant to the Springbok Experience Museum. Phillips (2012:11) appropriately describes the purpose of corporate sport museums:

In relation to purpose, corporate sport museums are artefacts, objects and material culture in a museum-like setting to communicate the sport's history – its development, its iconic moments, its memorable games and its superstars – with the objective of influencing public opinion and as indirect advertising for the sport as a commodity in a competitive market place. This emphasis is directed toward creating a favourable image and branding the sport as desirable product for fans, the media and corporations.

The third category of sport museums that Phillips (2012) refers to are community sport museums. These museums are “similar to academic and corporate sport museums in terms of the material culture they display, but differ in terms of size, knowledge, source and funding” (Phillips, 2012:14). They are developed by people who have an interest in the history of a particular sporting code and displays are developed on a smaller scale. Schools, clubs, universities and private collectors often have an informal curation approach in preserving sports memorabilia.¹⁵ “A common theme underpinning such collections is direct links to relevant communities, communities that may be defined by geography, religion, gender, work and school affiliations” (Phillips 2012:15).

¹⁵ Examples of private rugby memorabilia collectors include Swys Joubert's (former Northern Transvaal player) collection, much of which is currently housed at the Ellis Park Museum in Johannesburg. The Guesteyn private rugby museum in Stellenbosch is housed in the 6-roomed basement of Guesteyn's house. Interestingly, he bought all the rugby memorabilia that he has collected. A collection of rugby memorabilia is also on display at the home of Barry Naudé, a merino sheep farmer in Hanover in the Karoo. The Blue Bull Rugby Union (BBRU) also has a temporary exhibition on the history of the union at their home ground at Loftus, Pretoria. The exhibition was part of the 75th anniversary celebration of the Union. A museum dedicated to Dr Danie Craven is also housed at Coetzenburg Stadium in Stellenbosch.

The final museum type that Phillips (2012) refers to are vernacular sport museums. These museums share characteristics with academic, corporate and community sport museums, as they also house collections of sporting artefacts. Their setting differs, however, as the artefacts are displayed in restaurants or bars. The use of sports memorabilia in this instance is for decorative purposes, or to associate the restaurant or bar with a specific team.

The Springbok Experience Museum is a corporate museum, as the whole museum experience is packaged to expose the visitor to the successes of the Springbok brand. South Africa's rugby heritage has, however, not always been preserved with commercial intent. During the amateur era of South African rugby community museums were the bastions of rugby heritage and they were often developed around the prowess of individual rugby players or administrators. I contend that a sense of intimacy prevailed in community rugby museums and that with the professionalisation of the game, corporate museums have used South Africa's rich rugby heritage as a commodity to showcase the successes of the Springbok brand.

6.4.1 Community rugby museums

South African rugby heritage was memorialised mostly in community sport museums and on a private level during the amateur era of rugby. Prominent rugby schools, such as Paul Roos (Stellenbosch), Paarl Gymnasium (Paarl) and Grey College (Bloemfontein) have school museums or archives in which rugby features prominently. Similarly, traditional rugby-playing universities such as Stellenbosch University (SU) and the rugby-playing residences such as Huis Abraham Fischer, better known as Vishuis, at the University of the Free State (UFS) and Wilgenhof (SU) have a material culture in the form of small museums reflecting rugby's association with the university residence identity. Many of the representations in these private institutional museums reflect on players who have excelled in rugby on a provincial and national level, and there is a strong identification with rugby as a drawing card for students to attend traditionally strong rugby schools and university residences.

On a visit to the small rugby exhibition at Vishuis I am told by a third-year, black rugby player for the residence (who hails from a strong rugby school, Dale College in the Eastern Cape town of King William's Town) that one of the major reasons why he chose to come and study at UFS and live in Vishuis is that "there is a great rugby culture here [at Vishuis]".

He showed me through the small museum, where portraits of players are displayed, including those who played professional rugby for the local rugby franchise, the Cheetahs, and those who went on to represent the national team, including the likes of Springbok front rower Ollie le

Roux, and the current Cheetah wing, Raymond Ruhle. The University of the Free State (Shimlas) rugby club house also has a considerable collection of rugby memorabilia dealing with players who have attended the university and represented the Springboks. The club house serves as a space where the legacy of past players and the successes of bygone teams are commemorated. This form of memorialisation, albeit on a small scale and developed in accordance with an identification with a specific residence, tertiary institution, town and province, speaks to the value of a rugby heritage for rugby-playing students, but more importantly alludes to the fact that these forms of ‘informal’ sport heritage collections form the backbone of South Africa’s rugby heritage collections.

Another example of a local sport heritage initiative is the Choet Visser rugby museum in Bloemfontein. This museum boasts the largest private rugby collection in South Africa (Du Plessis, 1994). It opened its doors in 1974 and is the collection of Free State rugby union and Shimla manager in the 1960s and 1970s, Choet Visser. Visser also acted as the South African manager of touring teams, which included the 1972 English team, the 1974 British Lions, the touring All Blacks of 1976 and the World Team of Willie-John McBride, who visited South Africa in 1977 (Du Plessis, 1994). This museum is dependent on donations and is housed in a suburban area in Bloemfontein; no entrance fee is charged. The museum is a collection of rugby memorabilia that was donated to Visser by friends, players and rugby administrators. At the entrance to the museum is a sign quoting Visser that reads: “I am not a collector. Every piece my museum is a personal keepsake. Friends have to give it to me with a personal message. Only then does a rugby souvenir qualify for the museum.”

Clearly there is a personal attachment to the rugby artefacts in this museum, as Visser wanted the memorabilia in the museum to reflect a personal relationship with those who donated the rugby regalia. In other words, the intention and rationale of the museum was never commercial, but depended on the willingness of rugby players and administrators to give him their rugby gear as gifts to be displayed in the museum. Visser’s son-in-law, Nico du Plessis who showed me through the museum, elaborated on the difficulty he had in obtaining memorabilia from rugby players in the professional era:

The museum is getting less and less [sic] gifts, why, because the guys are keeping their jerseys, pants and boots, and what do they do then? Their benefit year, they sell it. Everything revolves around money, there you have it.

The Choet Visser rugby museum was able to thrive in the amateur era in sport, where the value of rugby jerseys and memorabilia was associated with a sense of loyalty and association with a person, in this case Visser. The memorabilia donated to him by players was a personal gift. The idea that a sporting artefact needs to have a personal connotation associated with it to make it truly authentic was a trend in community rugby museums of the amateur era in South African rugby. The authenticity of the museum experience at Choet Visser's rugby museum is associated with the donated memorabilia by people whom he knew, as well as the personal relations he built up with touring teams to Bloemfontein. Visser considered the museum to be a place where friendships could be forged and suggested that the rugby players of Bloemfontein needed something like his museum with its large living area where they could relax and talk rugby (Du Plessis, 1994). Visser also personally entertained touring teams visiting Bloemfontein.

Visser's daughter, Veronica du Plessis, explained that the museum had a bar area that was named 'Choet's Drinking Parlour' and touring teams, among them the 1974 British Lions team, came to the museum on Sundays after the match to informally socialise with their opponents. Visser built up a close friendship with Willie-John McBride (who captained the 1974 British Lions visiting team). This trend of post-match socialisation seems to have waned in the professional era. The words of former Springbok prop, Keith Andrews, echo this sentiment:

"During that time [the amateur era] there was a great deal of male bonhomie: beers, *braais* [barbeques], and late nights were common. But under professionalism and all the public exposure, the focus has shifted to regeneration and that sort of thing; players hardly get to know their opponents off the field" (Van Reenen, 2012:223). Visser's museum and the opportunity it provided for players to forge friendships off the field evokes the intimacy and personal association players had with him and what he did to preserve rugby heritage.

A similar argument can be made for the rugby collection of former Transvaal player, Swys Joubert. His collection is housed at Ellis Park and was renamed the Lions Rugby Museum in 2013. The sporting artefacts in the museum are an accumulation of Joubert's interest in preserving the material culture of not only the Lions franchise, but also that of the national team, the Springboks. Many of the jerseys donated to Joubert have messages of personal gratitude written on them and were gifted to Joubert. A specific jersey of long time South African rugby referee André Watson highlights that the fact that the donation of memorabilia was not based on monetary value, but rather was a reflection of a friendship they had formed over the years (see Figure 23).



Figure 23. The referee jersey of André Watson, donated to Swys Joubert thanking him for his friendship

Source: Lions Rugby Museum, Ellispark

The practice of writing letters to influential players and administrators, requesting rugby memorabilia from them, also serves as an example of the personal nature and intimacy associated with rugby memorabilia during the amateur era of rugby in South Africa. The SARU rugby archives housed at Stellenbosch University have hordes of letters addressed to the influential player, administrator and scholar of rugby, Dr Danie Craven. Many letters sent to Dr Craven from avid rugby supporters and players, request him to send them signed rugby memorabilia, including ties, jerseys, socks and photos. Craven responded to all these letters meticulously. One such letter, from a young rugby fan from Montagu, written in July 1977 reads:

Dear Dr. Craven. I am a great rugby lover and am obsessed with rugby. I collect all rugby memorabilia that I can get hold of. I have written to you before to ask if you could send me memorabilia, like rugby emblems, rugby jerseys, rugby photos and rugby books. I play for our schools' under 15 team and we have not lost a match this season (South African Rugby Board archives, Box 1, 9 Butler to Craven, 11 July 1977).

Craven responded to this letter by sending the fan a Springbok emblem. Another letter, from Mr Johan Coetzer from Brandfort reads:

Because I regard you as the best scrumhalf who has ever worn the Springbok jersey, I would appreciate it if you could send me a rugby jersey, or sweatband, or kneeband, or ankleband, or a few rugby socks that you would want to get rid of. I will appreciate it very much because it will be of the first memorabilia that I receive from you to add to my collection (South African Rugby Board archives, Box 1, 9 Coetzer to Craven, 19 July 1977).

There is a sense of intimacy associated with such requests and many of the letters reflect a personal affiliation his supporters had with Craven, although they never met him. This points to my argument that in the amateur era authentic rugby memorabilia had to be donated, either from the players themselves or administrators, while the professional era of rugby has seen rugby memorabilia become commodified and a product consumable to those who can purchase it. The value of the authentic artefact can be extrapolated even more.

The authenticity of artefacts on display in museums and how the authentic contributes to the tourist experience has been explored by Martin Hall (2006). Anthropologist Edward Bruner (1989, 1991) has considered how tourists make sense of the representation of 'authentic' in African tourist contexts. According to him tourists are quite satisfied with their own society and they are not necessarily seeking an authentic experience elsewhere (Bruner, 1991:240). Bruner's research focuses on cultures on display, where power and representation often determine how people are represented. In contrast to the idea of the authentic not being the main drawing card for tourists, MacCannell (1973) has argued that the quest for authenticity is a prominent motif of modern tourism. In terms of the sporting artefacts on display in sport museums, the authentic jersey, trophy or medal does add to the experience of seeing and valuing the original artefact. Some museums go to the extent of using "athletes as artefacts" (Ramshaw, 2010) to promote the authentic experience. In such instances athletes are observed as they train and can interact with the museum visitor.

Most of the original artefacts in the Springbok Experience Museum are on loan from other private collections or from the players themselves. The Springbok jersey worn by the Springbok captain John Smit during the victorious 2007 Rugby World Cup final in France is on display at the Springbok Experience Museum. The jersey has all the signatures on it of the team that won the World Cup, and this undeniably contributes to the value of the artefact. If a

replica Springbok jersey of the 2007 Rugby World Cup were to be on display, it would almost certainly not have conveyed the meaning of what it must have been like to play and win in that jersey.

Another example of the significance of local level rugby heritage of a specific rugby playing individual, who holds a unique place in the South African rugby psyche, is Marnetjies Roux. In 1962, in a test against the British Lions, the Springbok centre Marnetjies Roux scored a remarkable solo try. Grundlingh (2013:71) situates Roux's claim to fame within the broader social and political context at the time by suggesting that "it was a try that was destined to become engraved in the collective memory as an iconic moment. It echoed further than the stadium; symbolically it could be seen to represent a triumphalist nationalist movement moving into full swing with the banning of the African National Congress, an economy rapidly picking up steam and then to crown it a brilliant try by Roux against the British."

Although Roux's try is deeply embedded in the memory bank of South Africa's rugby history, what is of importance for this chapter is that Roux immortalised his achievements in material culture by opening the Marnetjies Roux rugby museum, in his home town of Victoria West. It is yet another example of South African rugby heritage being preserved on a community level and built around the rugby prowess of one man. The museum was a tourist attraction for the small Karoo town, and housed photos, trophies and memorabilia from his rugby playing career. What is of interest is that the value of his rugby memorabilia came to the fore when Roux and his wife relocated to Cape Town in 2013. Most of Roux's rugby memorabilia were auctioned off with the move, a process that Roux at the time described as being an emotional one (Jansen, 2013:10). Roux's decision to auction off his rugby memorabilia speaks to the monetary value that can be attached to South Africa's rugby heritage in the era of professionalisation.

6.4.2 Preserving rugby heritage in the professional era: the Springbok Experience Museum

On a bright spring day in September 2013 the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town saw the launch of one of the latest tourist attractions to the city. The 23 million visitors who annually pass through the Waterfront now have the opportunity to delve into South Africa's rich rugby heritage (Dolley, 2013: 6). SARU spent two years building up to this day, which saw the opening of South Africa's most expensive sport museum. The Springbok Experience Museum, as noted on their advertising pamphlet, is dedicated to "telling South Africa's story through the eyes of its most powerful sport". Entrance to the museum costs R50 per adult and R30 for children and pensioners.

The opening of the Springbok Experience Museum was marked with the current Springbok team in attendance and autograph hunters, young and old, queuing to get a glimpse (and perhaps an autograph) of their rugby heroes (see Figure 24). The current team, management and coaching staff were neatly dressed in suits and ties, representing a clean-cut professional image of the team which was to face Australia that coming Saturday in a Tri-Nations clash. The excitement was palpable as young fans almost flattened the railings where the team had congregated before they entered the new museum. But the day was more than just a chance for rugby fans to get a glimpse of the current Springboks. Behind the current players were former Springbok captains, representing the historically white, coloured and black South African rugby federations.



Figure 24. Springbok hooker Bismarck du Plessis signing autographs for avid fans at the official opening of the Springbok Experience Museum on Heritage Day 2013

Source: Author

The museum itself is impressive, with the 800 m² double-storey venue catering for both rugby fanatics and those with a general interest in the sport. It has various features from an interactive ‘Springbok Trials Rugby Skills Zone’, where one can mimic the movement of players on the field and ‘try out’ the physical skills that the Springboks themselves master on the field, to a digital and interactive retelling of South Africa’s rugby past on the second floor. One is taken on a journey ranging from rugby’s arrival in South Africa during the colonial era in the late

19th century, to the Springbok tours in the early 20th century, to the political turmoil of playing rugby during the apartheid years. A concerted effort is made to represent South African rugby's fractured history by commemorating and venerating all players who excelled in rugby, as well as by including the previously overlooked histories of the black and coloured rugby leagues. As SARU president Oregan Hoskins put it: "Our new rugby museum will embrace the past. We want to celebrate South African rugby in all its diverse histories, as well as shine a spotlight on its troubles and turmoil and its growing pains" (Dolley, 2013: 6). But the museum experience is also a celebration of the successes that South African rugby enjoyed on the rugby field over a period of a hundred years. The 1995 and 2007 Rugby World Cup victories stand out as memorable achievements that venerate the players, captains and coaches who contributed to those victories.

The 'rhythm' of the museum tour is designed to allow the visitor to experience a complete narrative in terms of rugby's origins in the country up to the present day. Significant episodes are chronicled, from separation to integration, from colonialism to apartheid and to post-apartheid, culminating with Mandela's involvement in the 1995 Rugby World Cup. The museum tour concludes with a short film entitled *Match day in South Africa*, depicting rugby as a game ostensibly played and appreciated by all. This romantic narrative resonates with what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998:51) has termed the "museum effect ... where not only ordinary things become special ... but the museum experience itself becomes a model for experiencing life outside its walls". The grandeur of the museum was recognised internationally, when the Springbok Experience Museum was shortlisted for an international museum award at the annual Museum and Heritage Awards in the United Kingdom in May 2014.

The Springbok Experience Museum replaced a smaller, less commercial museum that was originally situated in the restored Josephine Mill building opposite the Newlands Rugby Stadium. The original museum was the brainchild of Craven, who after he had become the president of the South African Rugby Board in 1956 began systematically collecting photographs of all Springbok teams and their opponents in test matches since 1891 (South African Rugby Board Archives, Museums Matters, Box 5.1, 1987). The memorabilia were kept at the South African Rugby Board's boardroom, which was opened to the public in 1971. In 1997 the memorabilia were moved from this venue to the ground floor of the Sport Science Institute (also adjacent to the Newlands Rugby Stadium), which marked the opening of the South African Rugby Football Union Rugby Museum. Entry to both these museums was free.

Newlands Rugby Stadium has a rich rugby heritage associated with Western Province rugby and the Super Rugby franchise, the Stormers. Gammon, Ramshaw and Waterton (2013:120) propose that “like many contemporary heritage constructions, sport heritage is imagined largely within the parameters offered by its tourism potential and output”. The Springbok Experience Museum’s location at the Waterfront does speak to the tourist market that it hopes to tap into.¹⁶ Had the museum been constructed at the Newlands Rugby Stadium, where there is already a rich regional rugby heritage, it would have almost certainly catered for a smaller group of people, such as those who are rugby fanatics and interested in the rugby heritage of the country.

SARU’s strategic communications manager and project director for the Springbok Experience Museum, Andy Colquhoun, explained that the rationale for the Waterfront as a location for the Springbok Experience was both a practical and an operational decision in that the old museum had to be refurbished and the Waterfront was considered to be a place where a large spectrum of people could get the chance to appreciate South Africa’s rugby heritage. Investing a considerable amount of financial capital in the development of South Africa’s rugby heritage could not have been a decision that SARU took lightly. The backroom politics of such a decision, however, are inaccessible as the inner dealings of the board remain confidential. An innovative marketing strategy has also been employed by SARU, in which a symbiotic commercial relationship has been forged with other enterprises in the Waterfront. On entering the museum, visitors receive a pamphlet indicating that a free Castle Draught can be received, on presentation of a Springbok Experience Museum ticket, at one of the waterside restaurants (see Figure 25). Rugby’s association with beer has an intriguing history, fuelled by both sponsorship and consumption. Mager (2010), writing on the relationship between beer, sociability and masculinity in South Africa, notes that historically, “White-beer drinking sociability became central to the very spirit of rugby” (Mager, 2010:7). Heritage in this instance of advertising the Springbok Experience Museum, becomes more than just heritage. Rugby’s alliance with one of its sponsors, Castle, literally spills over into a relationship where both heritage and beer can be consumed.

¹⁶ The Waterfront was conceptualised to showcase Cape Town’s ‘heritage’ along commercial lines. Worden and Van Heyningen (1996:222) highlight this by stating that ‘The Waterfront dominates media and public perceptions of commercial and tourist triumphs in Cape Town.’ This observation is important when taking into consideration the rationale of SARU in choosing the Waterfront as the site for the Springbok Experience Museum. Considering that the Waterfront was developed along commercial lines, it can be argued that SARU saw an opportunity to tap into such commercial ventures by exhibiting South Africa’s rugby heritage as a commodified product through the Springbok brand at that specific venue.



Figure 25. Advertisement for the Springbok Experience Museum, indicating that a free Castle Draught beer can be consumed at the restaurant Quay 4

Source: Author

The location of the Waterfront for the Springbok Experience Museum broadens the range of people who can be exposed to South Africa's rugby heritage. International tourists, local tourists and Capetonians who happen to be at the Waterfront for a day out may just decide to visit the Springbok Experience Museum as part of the activities offered at the Waterfront. It seems that in deciding to consolidate the South African rugby heritage at one of South Africa's major tourist attractions, the Waterfront, SARU actively took the opportunity to showcase this heritage and the Springbok brand as a commodity. According to Dr Snyders, promoting the Springbok brand was one of SARU's main objectives. He explained:

The Springbok emblem is one of the most marketable emblems in the world. It is regarded as one of the most successful brands too. The Springbok Experience Museum gives us an

opportunity to showcase the Springboks in a different way and by doing this we keep it [the Springbok brand] in the public eye.

The CEO of SARU, Jurie Roux, hinted at the commercial and marketable value of the Springbok brand when he addressed the crowd at the official opening of the Springbok Experience Museum: “People talk about a museum; this is not a museum, this is an experience of the most powerful rugby brand in the world, this is the Springboks.” SARU’s initiative to preserve and display South Africa’s rugby heritage is therefore linked to sport heritage and the Springbok brand’s popularity worldwide, and seen as an opportunity to lure tourist to the venue to get a glimpse of South Africa’s rich rugby heritage. Furthermore, SARU’s decision to look at international best practice in sport museums and identifying the UK-based company Mather & Co as design partner, indicate the importance it placed on representing South Africa’s rugby heritage as a professional product. Mather & Co are also responsible for the exhibitions at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, the Wimbledon Museum in London and the National Football Museum in Manchester. There was great dissatisfaction among the two local design companies who were side-lined when SARU decided that the experience and efficiency that Mather & Co could bring to the final museum product were of the utmost importance. SARU, in responding to a letter of complaint from the local companies, issued a statement saying: “The Springbok is a world class brand and deserves a world-class museum and we would be failing our supporters and the Boks if we were to compromise on a project that we’ll live with for years to come” (Dolley, 2013:6). Evidently the conceptualisation of the museum from the beginning was to be used together with South Africa’s rugby heritage to further the interests of SARU as a business and the Springboks as their brand.

A specific feature that points to the Springbok Experience Museum as having commercial interests at heart is the overt branding exercise that concludes a tour of the museum. Prior to exiting the Springbok Experience Museum one can walk through the Springbok Experience Store, which sells everything from babygros with the Springbok emblem on them, to biltong, bottled water and the latest Springbok jersey (sold at prices that range from R600 to R800; US\$50 to US\$70). Whereas academic sport museums are less overtly commercial, corporate sport museums such as the Springbok Experience Museum package the museum experience in terms of developing and advertising the Springbok brand. SARU’s CEO, Jurie Roux, emphasised the importance of the Springbok brand in conceptualising the museum by stating that the museum is “all about the brand and building the brand and it is a wonderful brand” (Roux 2013). In September 2015 *Tripadvisor* (a popular traveller’s website) listed the

Springbok Experience Museum as one of the world's best tourist attractions. Two years after the official opening, the Springbok Experience Museum had welcomed 80 000 visitors (Germishuys, 2015).

6.4.3 Politics of representation: the Paul Roos exhibition

Sport museums are heavily nostalgic, on both a personal and collective level. Phillips (2012:11) notes that “nostalgic sporting exhibitions that market specific sports as corporate brands often minimize or ignore controversial, contested and potentially divisive issues as well as marginalize a great deal of cultural, gendered and political social context” South Africa's racially segregated past has made the politics of representation in South Africa's rugby history an especially delicate matter. The politics of representation and the challenge of representing South Africa's fractured sports history in one space were highlighted by Colquhoun:

We wanted to look at it as a rugby story, not as a racial story per se, and then tell the story as it happened, side by side. We've got display cabinets with the white trophies and the coloured trophies from the earliest times together in the same space for a big spread of rugby projection. It tells the story of the spread of rugby amongst the communities and it is a parallel line development because of racial segregation. So, the white rugby developed along this line, but next to it black rugby was developing at the same time. Maybe half a step behind, but it was developing as quickly. So we took a conscious decision to put everything in the same space. When we were developing it [the museum exhibitions] with our copy writers who were from overseas, and they were getting their heads around this complicated South African landscape, I kept saying to them we're going to have a tagline. It's going to say, "The Springbok Experience – it's complicated." That would be apt as a tagline, though, because that's what it is.

Colquhoun's analysis clearly points to the intricacies of rugby within the context of South Africa's history of colonialism, segregation and apartheid. The Springbok Experience Museum, one can argue, has tried to show the inequities of the apartheid side of rugby through various displays, including frank accounts of overseas boycotts of Springbok tours. But the issue of historical representation is slightly more complicated than this. Despite its valiant attempts to be even-handed, lurking behind its overarching message of a superior brand is the primary, if unspoken, premise of the historical achievements of rugby as a pre-eminently Afrikaner game.

What is largely left unsaid or muted is that the game had for a considerable period also emitted a particular image associated with triumphant Afrikaner nationalism (Booth, 1999). The narrative of the past and the sporting brand would, of course, be severely diminished and distorted without any reference to the growth and popularity of the game amongst Afrikaners. However, it seems that no attempt has been made to address the nationalistic dimension or at least problematise it. The heritage motive, in this instance as in so much else in the country, has sugar-coated history with a thin commercial veneer designed to make it palatable to an increasingly consumerist-oriented society. The nationalist layer in the Springbok Experience Museum remains hidden from view, perhaps conveniently forgotten, as if no consequence in the glitzy, supposedly neutral world of revived sport entertainment.

Furthermore, Liz McGregor (2013) has picked up on the notable omission of Louis Luyt and his role in guiding South African rugby into the era of professionalism. She argues that Luyt's abrasive personality could have led to his being 'airbrushed' out of the museum display. Luyt was responsible for the then president Nelson Mandela's appearance in court in 1998. Mandela had to defend his position pertaining to the inquiry into maladministration in South African rugby. Elected as president of SARFU in 1994, Luyt was responsible for the current distribution of power in SARU, reducing the number of rugby-playing unions from 23 to 14. Luyt's omission from the museum can be considered part of a broader narrative of dislocating rugby from its Afrikaner roots, as evinced in the Springbok Experience Museum.

An analysis of the Paul Roos exhibition points to the 'de-ethnicised' representation of the game's association with Afrikaners. This is the case despite the fact that rugby was historically closely associated with Afrikaner nationalism. One of the breeding grounds for this development was Stellenbosch University. Formerly Victoria College, in 1918 Stellenbosch University became the first independent Afrikaans university. Rugby at Stellenbosch University became "part of a cluster of cultural symbols closely associated with resurgent Afrikanerdom" (Grundlingh, 2013:55). Paul Roos was a prominent and influential Stellenbosch figure and a precursor of this development. It would not be until the 1930s and 1940s that rampant Afrikaner nationalism became associated with rugby, but the Paul Roos generation of players, steeped in the gentler Cape variant of Afrikaner nationalism, unwittingly prepared the ground (for a discussion on the variation of Afrikaner nationalism during this period see Giliomee, 1987). A closer analysis of the exhibition on Paul Roos at the Springbok Experience Museum shows the overlooked linkages between Afrikanerdom and rugby.

The first statue in the museum is that of Paul Roos (see Figure 26). His statue is painted in white, almost indicative of his 'identity-less' image. The caption of the Paul Roos exhibition reads:

Being a devoutly religious man he refused to travel on Sundays, but loved to play rugby so much he regularly cycled a 140-mile round trip to his Saturday matches in Pretoria. He was an excellent player, making the 1906 Springbok team selection despite not being at the trials, such was the confidence in his ability. Roos was considered one of the most influential and powerful forwards in the game. His strict principles and neutral leadership also led to his teammates choosing him as their captain for the first overseas tour, which they won convincingly.

Although this anecdotal description gives the visitor an insight into his rugby identity and personal character, little is known of how his Christian beliefs tied into broader Afrikaner cultural principles at the time and how this might have fed into his stature as 'captain diplomacy'. The connections between the state, religion, Afrikaner identity and individual rugby players' role in promoting political principles are overlooked, or perhaps even suppressed, in his exhibition. Hence one remains ignorant about his broader cultural and ideological identity. This form of ethnic expression is uniquely captured in a postcard reflecting the 1906 Springbok tour to Britain, with Roos straddling a Springbok as focal point. Significantly the wording was in an early form of Afrikaans (see Figure 27).

Figure 26. Statue of Paul Roos at Springbok Experience Museum

Source: Author

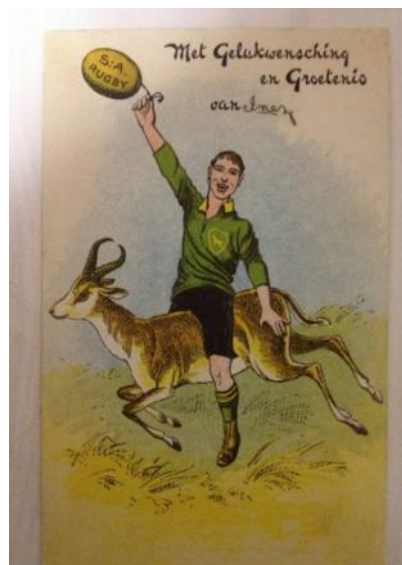


Figure 27. Paul Roos postcard of 1906 Springbok tour to Britain

Source: Private collection

From the exhibition itself visitors would not realise that Roos had distinct Afrikaner roots, dating back to his birth as a farmer's son, at Rust en Vrede in the Stellenbosch District of the British Cape Colony in 1880. He was a keen supporter of Afrikaner language and culture and

as an educator was destined to have Paul Roos Gymnasium in Stellenbosch named after him in 1941 (Allen, 2013:572).

Today Paul Roos Gymnasium remains a fertile ground for young rugby talent and the game itself remains a vital part of the school's identity. Rubin's (2013) research has explored the relationship between rugby and male identity in South African schools. Roos's legacy is preserved in the school museum, where his Springbok blazer is considered to be one of the treasured objects on display. Roos's captaincy against the British in 1906, and his identity as an Afrikaner, are of broader significance. His personal history as an advocate of the Afrikaans language and culture, and his role in ostensibly reconciling Boer and Brit on the rugby field, encapsulate the broader association that rugby had with Afrikaners, a relationship that would intensify in years to come.

The complexity of museum representation as it intersects with issues of culture and historical moment becomes apparent through an analysis of the Paul Roos exhibition. This also points to the historical significance of 'airbrushing' out important cultural linkages between sport and society in the increasingly commercialised sports heritage landscape.

6.4.4 “When jerseys speak”: contested heritage at the Springbok Experience Museum

The way in which the silences, discrepancies and divisive issues are dealt with in sport museums has been a topic of concern among sport historians (Vamplew 1998; Moore 2012; Adair 2012), and the exhibitions of the coloured and black rugby boards at the Springbok Experience prove no different.

South Africa's racially segregated past has made the politics of representation of South Africa's rugby history an especially delicate matter. Although SARU made a concerted effort to commemorate the marginalised and neglected heritage of black and coloured rugby players, there are still those who feel that their rugby heritage is not truly represented in the Springbok Experience Museum. This was particularly apparent when at the opening of the Springbok Experience Museum the former captains of the white, black and coloured rugby unions were invited to attend the event. Each captain's name was called out, and somewhat embarrassingly to the organisers, when the names of the coloured or black captains were called out, there was hardly any acknowledgement from the crowd. I could not help to hear a middle-aged Afrikaner man murmur, “These players were not Springboks.” Former SARU captain Salie Fredericks who attended the event relayed his discontent to a journalist:

I was very disappointed to find that none of those guys [the Springboks] knew of me. I had a feeling that I never really existed, yet rugby was my life for many years. It is not the first time that I've been invited to an event for past and present players, and it is not the first time that players that I have played with felt like total strangers. I had hoped that by going along with projects such as these it would be unifying ... I still hear that players who played for their national teams were not good enough to be Springboks and that is why we had no media, like radio and television, or why records were not kept (Gibbs, 2013:1).

This development was not a vindictive act on the part of the crowd, but rather shows how packaging heritage in broad brush strokes under the historically white symbol of the Springboks is problematic. Despite SARU's best intentions to represent South African rugby heritage in its entirety, the politics of representation proved more complex. This shows the difficulty of packaging heritage as 'show business'. One of the intentions of the Springbok Experience Museum was to tell the untold story of black and coloured rugby in South Africa, yet the material culture to tell the story with proved difficult to find.

The artefacts in the Springbok Experience Museum that represent the history of the South African African Rugby Football Board (SAARFB), the SACOS affiliated South African Rugby Union (SARU), and the South African Rugby Football Federation (SARFF) (aligned with the South African Rugby Board) are minimal. Dr Snyders hinted at the 'over representation' of the South African Rugby Board's memorabilia. According to him:

The South African Rugby Board of Danie Craven and the Springboks associated with that board had the opportunity to play tests against New Zealand, England, France and so on. So it is assumed and it is true that there is a lot more memorabilia associated with the Springbok jersey. To tell you the truth, that memorabilia is more than 80% that we have in the museum collection. There are trophies, badges, jerseys, and ceramic plates, anything under the sun. While for the South African Football Union, the South African Rugby Union and the South African Rugby Football Federation that is not the case. So when trying to conceptualise the Springbok Experience Museum we were confronted with a critical gap in the record. This is the difficulty in trying to make jerseys speak, when you simply don't have as many jerseys to tell stories with.

It is not that remembrances of these rugby boards do not exist, but rather that the memorabilia are not readily available. Ramshaw (2011:5) argues that "sport heritage is a globally

disseminated and consumed commodity, and the values and objectives can change depending on who is consuming the heritage”. In this instance SARU were the architects determining the heritage to be consumed in the museum. In an attempt to fill this crucial gap in the record (in terms of the material culture of the African and coloured rugby boards that is available to display at the Springbok Experience Museum) SARU had to manufacture a displayable heritage for these bodies.

Prior to the opening of the museum, 40 former captains from the former white, coloured and African rugby boards were invited to a ceremony at the Waterfront. The captains’ handprints were captured in special moulds to be used later in a permanent exhibition at the museum (see Figure 28). SARU president Oregan Hoskins said the ceremonial capturing of the handprints of living national rugby union captains – pre- and post-unity – was a symbolic unifying of those traditions. According to him:

There is no better way to link the past with the present than take a piece of the past – in the shape of the captains’ hand prints – and place them into our present and future by capturing them for posterity and installing them as part of our Springbok Experience (SARU launches Springbok Experience Museum, 2013).

Among those casting their handprints were Des van Jaarsveldt, the oldest living captain of the old South African Rugby Board Springboks, as well as Austen van Heerden, the oldest living captain of the former South African Coloured Rugby Football Board, and Bomza Nkhola, the oldest surviving captain of the South African Rugby Board (SARU launches Springbok Experience Museum, 2013). A critical analysis of this initiative shows how divisive issues related to the heritage of coloured rugby in South Africa were overlooked. The Springbok Experience Museum, one can argue, has tried to show the inequities of the apartheid side of rugby through various displays, including frank accounts of overseas boycotts of Springbok tours. But the issue of historical representation is more complicated than this. Despite SARU’s valiant attempts to be even-handed, lurking behind its overarching message of a superior brand is the primary, if unspoken, premise of the historical achievements of rugby as a pre-eminently Afrikaner game. Using the past for present day purposes is complicated and not as simple as SARU’s management would propose.



Figure 28. The handprints of the former white, coloured and black rugby captains displayed on the lawn outside the Springbok Experience Museum

Source: Author

At the back of this is the fragmented past of coloured rugby, divided along political lines of their own. The South African Rugby Federation (SARFF), established in 1959 in the Western Cape, aligned itself with the white South African Rugby Board. Their apathetic position to politics in sport was criticised by the more politically driven South African Rugby Union (SARU, not to be confused with post-democratic SARU), who in 1973 was one of the founding members of the anti-apartheid sports body, the South African Council on Sports (SACOS). SARU organised their own competitions and refused to be associated with the South African Rugby Board of Dr Craven. SARU's main objective was to boycott Springbok rugby in an attempt to show that they were not willing to be used as political tokens on the rugby field, and would only compete internationally once all South Africans, irrespective of race had the vote. They considered coloured players that operated outside of SARU as 'sell-outs' and 'tokens'. Their slogan was "no normal sport in an abnormal society" and they were adamant that sport could be used to showcase the racial inequality brought forth by apartheid. The Federation, on

the other hand, were less politically driven and its slogan was “Where rugby is, we play.” Errol Tobias, well known as the first coloured rugby player to play for the Springboks in a test match against Ireland at Newlands in 1981, and aligned with the Federation, writes in his autobiography about the friction between the SARF and SARU:

The SARU supporters would remind me that I am good enough to play for the white people, but not good enough that they would go to the extent to give me the vote. I would always encourage them to continue with their cause and wished them well. We all knew that the vote and equal rights was the only way forward in South Africa, but just as their approach wasn't wrong, so too what I did wasn't wrong ... Till this day I have no regrets. I feel exactly the same as I did then. I was a sportsman, not a politician (Tobias, 2015:28,48).

The symbolic display of the handprints of former captains of both the SARF and SARU was perhaps relevant for representing a ‘unified’ heritage for present day purposes, but the very different political agendas of these two groups are opportunely overlooked in this display.

6.5 RUGBY HERITAGE AS A SIGNIFIER OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Underlying much of the visitor's experience to the Springbok Experience Museum, is a narrative that suggests that the Springboks do not represent themselves only, but are representatives of the entire nation. The tour of the museum concludes with a short movie, titled *Match day in South Africa*, in which rugby players from recreational level to national level and across gender and age are represented playing and enjoying the game. The slogan “the Springboks play every day” concludes the movie, suggesting that every South African is symbolically part of the national team's success. Heritage is often viewed as representing and articulating forms of collective identities, especially on a national level (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000), and as Howard (2003) suggests is considered as essential in maintaining and creating individual and group ideas. Smith (2006), however, contends that these heritage identities are not passively consumed by those who visit heritage sites but that they are actively negotiated, accepted or indeed rejected.

Although many heritage initiatives, and sport heritage initiatives in particular aim to bring forth a sense of communality through sport, the visitors to the museum are active agents in shaping their own experience of how they relate to exhibitions, and whether or not they buy into a sense of nationalism through sport is highly individualistic. Ramshaw (2011:5) highlights this point

in proposing that “sport heritage is a globally disseminated and consumed commodity, and the values and objectives can change depending on who is consuming the heritage”.

The use of sport as a form of heritage, and its association with a sense of patriotism and collective identity is not unique to South Africa, or the Springbok Experience Museum in particular. Gammon’s research (2007) found that sport heritage sites in England are fundamental in constructing particular ideas of national identity. SARU’s ‘Our Honour, Our Heritage’ campaign and the Springbok Experience Museum can be considered as one in which a sense of cohesion and support through one’s national team is conjured up.

Furthermore, there exists a notion, put forward by Lowenthal (1998) that heritage initiatives come to the fore when there is crisis within a particular culture, and that through solidifying the past in the present, by preserving and conserving selective aspects of the past, a sense of stability is achieved.

However, the development of the Springbok Experience Museum at this particular point in time has less to do with rugby heritage as coming to the fore during a particular crisis in South African society, and more with showcasing the democratisation of South African society through the lens of rugby heritage. In other words it is a celebration of sorts. Marschall (2005:103), writing on the fusion of heritage, tourism and identity in South Africa, notes that “since the advent of the post-apartheid period, the country has been fascinated – if not obsessed – with the identification, celebration, evaluation, reassessment and, not least, commodification of heritage”. The type of heritage Marshcall (2005) refers to is that of monuments and memorials of political significance in South Africa, but sports heritage has largely been overlooked as something to celebrate and commodified in the broader South African heritage landscape.

South Africa’s rugby heritage at the Springbok Experience Museum is told through the lens of turbulent periods during the isolation years, but the exhibition is designed to end on a ‘high note’, that of celebrating inter-racial sport and rugby success on a national scale. This is apparent from the fact that the museum experience ends with the short movie *Match day in South Africa* referred to previously. SARU’s strategic communications manager, Andy Colquhoun explained the rationale for the movie:

Initially they wanted to shoot artefacts and have them revolving, and telling stories around the artefacts, with more visuals..... I said no, people have been around the museum, they don’t want to see that, so what I wanted to do is finish off with a movie

that tells a story that basically says rugby is a game for all South Africans, played by all South Africans, and underline the subliminal message that it is the way it always has been and is the way that it is today... and we get people applauding at the end of the movie.

Clearly the aim of the movie is to elicit a sense of patriotism and camaraderie through supporting the national team, the Springboks, as it is suggested that “rugby is a game for all South Africans, played by all South Africans” and “the Springboks play every day.” Although the perception that SARU is trying to convey in advertising rugby that it is a game played by all South Africans and is somehow part of the social fabric of all South Africans, irrespective of race and gender; the facts speak otherwise: 60% of all rugby-playing high schools are in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, the provinces where black and coloured people historically favour rugby over soccer (McGregor, 2013:139). This means that the participation rate in rugby in these areas is skewed.

Ironically, the majority of players in the professional Springbok team hail from a small group of elite rugby-playing schools, not necessarily situated within these geographical areas. Considering that schools, especially high schools are the breeding ground for future South African rugby players, it is significant that the 251 Springboks capped since 1992 came from only 143 high schools, and forty percent of them come from just 21 schools (McGregor, 2013:13). These 21 schools are historically “white” schools where a strong rugby tradition exists. Grey College in Bloemfontein (in the Free State) has produced the highest number of Springboks (22) since 1992, followed by Paarl Gimnasium (10) in the Western Cape town of Paarl.

What this trend speaks to is the fact that rugby development at school level is still very much concentrated in the urban former model C schools (see McGregor, 2013). Talented black rugby players while still at school are lured with scholarships to traditional rugby-playing schools. Examples of black players who received rugby scholarships and went on to represent the Springboks include Siyabonga “Scara” Ntubeni (born in East London, schooled at King Edward IV in Johannesburg), Siyamthanda “Siya” Kolisi (born in Zwide, Port Elizabeth and attended Grey High School in Port Elizabeth), and Gcobani Bobo (born in King Williams Town and attended Dale College Boy’s School and Rondebosch Boy’s High School). This trend alludes to the fact that, although the majority of schools that play rugby are situated in the Eastern and Western Cape, there is just a small percentage of black players coming through the ranks from schools in the Eastern Cape. Furthermore, from 1994 to 2005, in terms of overall Springbok test caps awarded, 149 went to black players and 747 to white players. In terms of

percentages it means that only 16,6 % of the Springbok test caps were allocated to blacks. The point is that rugby in South Africa, although projected by SARU's heritage initiative as a game played by all and for all, remains very much an endeavour played by a small percentage of South Africa's population in the elite echelons.

Several scholars have warned against sport heritage representations that fall prey to a romanticised notion of community and identity, or to use Anderson's (1991) term, an 'imagined community'. "Sport museums have also been criticized for offering a partial history, one which encourages nostalgia and celebration, rather than objectivity" (Godfrey, 2012:178). Vamplew (1998:271) suggests that "artefacts (at sport museums) are too often displayed without sufficient explanation". Kidd (1996) has also noted that sport heritage sites are often "unabashedly partisan and popular" and can promote mythologies, rather than critical narratives. Although the Springbok Experience Museum makes a concerted effort to retell the unabridged history of South African rugby, there are elements of the museum that are specifically geared towards conjuring up a highfalutin sense of national unity through rugby.

As shown, the rugby playing demographics and statistics speak otherwise. The game, although having undergone major transitions on an institutional and managerial level, is not yet a fully representative sport as there are still very few black South African rugby players coming through the professional ranks. In other words SARU's use of rugby heritage as a means to conjure up feelings of national belonging and patriotism is useful for marketing purposes, but when digging deeper into the games participation rates it becomes apparent that it is still a game played and appreciated by a relatively small percentage of the total population.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The Springbok Experience Museum has contributed to South Africa's rugby heritage becoming explicitly commercial. The argument put forward is that the nature of South Africa's rugby heritage has changed – from a focus on relatively small-scale community-oriented rugby museums to the development of large corporate rugby museums. The intimacy associated with community museums has diminished as corporate museums have recognised the commercial viability of rugby as heritage in the professional era of the sport. This shift has seen the rugby heritage becoming a valuable marketable commodity in which an experience of a brand (in this case the Springbok brand) is used to tell the story of South African rugby. A notable lacuna in the Springbok Experience Museum is the representation of the South African rugby story as somewhat detached from its association with Afrikaner nationalism. Despite exhibitions

depicting Afrikaners' association with apartheid policies, there is no direct reference to the game forming an essential part of the Afrikaner's cultural and ideological biography. The politics of representation in museum exhibitions were probed with specific reference to the 'manufactured' heritage of the former African and coloured rugby boards. Ultimately, in the professional era of South African rugby, both rugby's heritage and the story of South African rugby are closely aligned with one of the biggest rugby brands in the world, the Springboks. This points to the delicate and complex relationship between rugby, heritage, identity and commercialisation in an era of professional sports in South Africa. The next chapter considers a sport museum dedicated to the Comrades Marathon, and I show how in contrast to the Springbok Experience Museum the Comrades Marathon House espouses a traditional approach to the display of sporting artefacts. An analysis of the gifting of the running memorabilia highlights how legends of the race live on symbolically through the sporting artefacts on display at the museum.

CHAPTER SEVEN THE COMRADES MARATHON HOUSE AS HERITAGE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

It was an annual routine: the 16th¹⁷ of June, mid-winter, the alarm set for a 5:30 am wake-up call to watch the start of an athletic event on SABC TV, an event that most people would prefer to watch from the comfort of their sofas at home. Perhaps I am not the only person that has a fascination with a race that epitomises the endurance of the human spirit on a physical, emotional and spiritual level. The race in question is the premier road running race on the South African athletic calendar, the Comrades Marathon – the world’s oldest and largest ultra-marathon event. Thousands of runners, men, women, elite athletes, amateurs, elderly, young athletes, black, white, coloured, Indian, Russians, Zimbabweans, Namibians, Brits, Germans, athletic, un-athletic line up in the early hours of the morning, exhaling warm air that dissipates among the crowd to form a large cloud of anticipation. Several runners are jumping up and down nervously to warm their muscles, before the gun sounds for what lies ahead. The elite runners are hoping to achieve the accolades of a top 10 finish, that elusive gold medal and a great cash incentive. The club runners are hoping to achieve the bragging rights for a silver or bronze comrades’ medal, or the “green number”. One commentator, writing on the Comrades Marathon in the early 1990s summarised the heterogeneous nature of the race:

It is in reality three different races on the same day. Leading the field of more than 14 000 are some 50 highly trained athletes who contest the individual and team honours.... Then follow those, just as well trained but with less of nature’s athletic gift, who strive mightily to win silver medals that are awarded to those who complete the course in under 7 and a half hours. The third ‘race’ is for the great majority of men and women whose only ambition is to reach the finishing line before the pistol is fired at 5:00pm (*The Comrades story*, n.d).

Those who have completed the race can proudly associate with the distinguished group of people who can claim that they have a 90 km road race as part of their running repertoire; a feat that runners return to complete year after year. The history and meaning of the race to both those who compete and those who are supporters along the winding route between

¹⁷ From 1963 to 1994 the race was run on 31 May, Republic day. This public holiday was scrapped in 1995 by the newly elected ANC government and the race date was changed to 16 June, Youth Day. In 2007 the race organisers controversially changed the race date, after political pressure enforced by the ANC Youth League argued that the race distracted attention from the actual meaning and significance of the day, which was to commemorate the youth that died in the 1976 Soweto Uprising.

Pietermaritzburg and Durban (the direction alternates every year), is steeped in personal significance to those who can claim to have run the comrades. The race also has a historical narrative embodying South Africa's political past. South Africa's road running heritage, and in particular the heritage associated with the Comrades Marathon is preserved at the Comrades Marathon House.

The Comrades Marathon House in Pietermaritzburg is used as a case study to explore the heritage of the race. Whereas the previous chapter showed how South Africa's rugby heritage has become commercialised, the Comrades Marathon House offers a captivating contrast where commercialism (in terms of road running heritage) has been undermined and the heritage of the race maintained by a group of "old boys" at this community sport museum. This is largely a result of a genealogy of runners who have a personal vested interest in the museum and their involvement in the race itself.

This chapter is structured into four parts. First, I provide a brief introduction of the history of the Comrades Marathon, highlighting significant moments and runners who have contributed to the legacy of the race. Second, I explore the significance of the Comrades Marathon House as the place where the race itself is organised from, and a place where runners have the opportunity to relive their Comrades Marathon running experiences. The historical and personal affiliation of runners to the Comrades House Museum is probed, with specific reference to the sense of place, and bond between people and place. This distinctive 'love of place' that Bale (1994:120) referred to as 'topophilia', describes the affective ties of people to the material environment. Topophilia is used to show how the Comrades Marathon House's location and association with the race is embedded in the memory of the race itself and the personal memories that ex-runners and current runners have of the race.

The third section draws on anthropological literature on gifting, to make sense of the social values that underpin the donating of running memorabilia to the museum. Most of the running memorabilia in the museum were donated by runners. This chapter considers how this form of gift-giving, the donating of running artefacts, allows runners of the past to be etched in public memory, through the exhibitions at the museum. The value of the gift is explored with specific reference to the relationship between the runner who gives and the museum that receives. The final section of this chapter considers how the heritage of the race escapes the confines of the actual museum and lives on in intangible ways. The Comrades Marathon as a form of intangible heritage is explored with specific reference to how certain traditions of the race have remained intact.

7.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COMRADES MARATHON

The Comrades House is a museum dedicated to preserving the heritage associated with the Comrades Marathon. The history of the race and the museum are intertwined. This introductory section of the chapter provides a brief history of the Comrades Marathon, highlighting significant events and memorable moments. An overview of the race history points to the role that the Comrades Marathon Association (CMA) played in establishing the Comrades Marathon House and highlights the value of male camaraderie (born out of the atrocities of the First World War) in organising the event. The founder of the Comrades Marathon was Vic Clapham, a South African soldier who returned after the First World War. His vision was to pay tribute to those soldiers who had died during war. The first race took place in 1921 and Williams (2000:16) argues that Clapham's "vision for the race was not a conscious start of a tradition, but an expression of a value." The race was organised from Clapham's home in Pietermaritzburg (Figure 29). According to Williams (2000:16) the "foundation of the road race between Durban and Maritzburg was about remembrance, about healing, about ordinary men wanting to give dignified expression to something too big to say in words...". The founders of the Comrades Marathon consciously considered the race to be for the 'ordinary man', not the athlete – the infantryman, not the officer (Williams, 2000). The Comrades Marathon is till this day considered to be a race that is inclusive of all. The race has become as much of an elite level race, as a race for the 'ordinary man'.

The inaugural race saw 34 runners set off on a chilly Pietermaritzburg morning. Many of these runners were infantrymen from the First World War who had served in South West Africa (Williams, 2000). Sixteen runners completed the first Comrades Marathon, with Bill Rowan, the official, first victor of the race. The 1920s saw the first Comrades Marathon hat-trick, with Arthur Newman winning the race from 1922–1925. Born in Somerset, England in 1883, Newton had been a member of the English athletics club. Cameron-Dow (2011:19) argues that Newton was the first runner to use the Comrades Marathon as a vehicle for political demonstration. He was a farmer in the then province of Natal and had suffered significant financial difficulties, which he blamed on the local labour force. Newton was aggrieved by the perceived lack of government sympathy and used the marathon as the platform on which to vent his frustration.

In the 1930s the Comrades Marathon was dominated by four-time Comrades Marathon winner Hardy Ballington, and it was in this decade that Wally Hayward, who was to become a legend of the race in his own right, won his first title in 1930. This decade also witnessed the first

black man to complete the Comrades Marathon, albeit unofficially. It would not be until 1975 that people of all races and women were officially able to partake in the race. The Second World War interrupted the organisation of the Comrades Marathon, as no race was held between 1941 and 1945.



Figure 29. The home of Vic Clapham, from where the first Comrades Marathon was organised in 1921

Source: Comrades House Museum

In 1950, 1951, 1953 and 1954 Wally Hayward won four titles in a row. He opted out of the 1952 race as he represented South Africa at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. To cement his status as a true Comrades legend he completed the down run in 1989 at the age of 80. Hayward's running career spanned a 60-year period. His first race was as a 21-year old in 1930 and he completed his last race as an octogenarian. The history and legacy of the Comrades Marathon is often built around the achievements of individual athletes, and their memorabilia that are displayed at the Comrades Marathon house link the race's history with key 'heroes' over the decades.

The second half of the 20th century saw the race undergo significant changes. The number of entrants had grown significantly and by 1969, 800 runners had entered the race, placing an ever-increasing burden on the traffic officials to ensure the safety of runners.

The Comrades Marathon grew substantially in the 1970s, both in terms of number of participants and who were allowed to compete. The race numbers increased from 865 entrants in 1970 to 3 410 at the close of the decade in 1979. Laxton, Cotterel and Williams (2000:63) argue that the marked increase in the popularity of the race can be traced to broader political and societal concerns regarding sport at the time. South African sport had been boycotted because of its apartheid policies, and this form of isolation had starved the sporting public of an opportunity to watch competitive international sport. Considering that there was little outside the country in terms of sporting events, local events like the Currie Cup and the Comrades became fortunate beneficiaries of the isolation period (Laxton et al., 2000:63). It was also during this decade that in 1975 television was introduced in South Africa, which offered the race organisers an opportunity to cover the race live and reach broader audiences.

Laxton et al. (2000:63) succinctly point to the role that television had in promoting the race:

People could now witness the epic struggles of runners in the comfort of their living rooms. Many armchair enthusiasts were inspired to the point of making life-changing decisions about running the Comrades themselves, for the race was about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It lured people to carve their own piece of history on the Old Main Road.

There was a push by the race organisers to make the race inclusive for the majority of these ‘ordinary’ people, with pressure growing to allow women and blacks to compete in an official capacity. This placed the race organisers in the precarious position of having to provide separate but equal amenities (in accordance with apartheid legislation). Cameron-Dow (2011:179) argues that the country’s racist laws were in direct conflict with the ethos of the Comrades Marathon, but the race was still subject to the laws of the country. Despite the tension of government policies regarding racial segregation, in 1975 the Comrades celebrated its Golden Jubilee and for the first time in the Comrades Marathon’s history the race was opened to people of all races and women. Vincent Rakabele became the first “official’ black athlete to win a Comrades medal, when he finished 20th in the 1975 race. It was also during this decade that another legend of the Comrades would emerge in the form of Alan Robb, who in the 1970s scored a hat-trick of wins.

The 1980s stand out as the golden decade of the Comrades Marathon. This was a result of the increased media coverage and publicity that the race received, but also because of a blond, long-haired Wits University running machine, Bruce Fordyce. Fordyce won the Comrades a record nine times (from 1981–1989) and with his humble nature and dogmatic political stance against apartheid, won the hearts of millions of South African liberals. The 1981 Comrades Marathon was especially laden with political significance as the uneasy relationship between sport and politics became a public spectacle. The apartheid government had announced that the 1981 Comrades Marathon would form part of the celebration of Republic Day. Many students at English-speaking universities, who were traditional opponents of apartheid, disapproved of being associated with nationalistic celebrations through their participation in the race. Many decided to boycott the race, while others made a visible protest by wearing a black armband, a symbol broadcasting their anti-apartheid stance (Cameron-Dow, 2011). Fordyce, in solidarity with his fellow runners, also wore a black armband showcasing his political disapproval of the apartheid regime. Cameron-Dow (2001:4) recalls the tension at the start of the 1981 race:

Bruce Fordyce's arrival, shortly before the gun, elicited a particular hostile reaction. As one of the race favourites he was singled out as the arch-enemy of the event which meant so much to him. Many could not understand that a gentle protest against the government's attempt to gain respectability by abducting an annual event, which was in clear conflict with the policies of racial discrimination, was in fact a defence of the great race and the principles which made it so great..... In addition to the boos and catcalls which greeted other protesters, Fordyce was pelted by tomatoes thrown by a fellow runner.

Despite these distractions Fordyce won the 1981 Comrades Marathon and would cement his place as one of the Comrades Greats throughout the 1980s.

At this point it would be worth considering how the club running structures influenced the calibre of runners who could partake in the race. Road running participants in races all around the country grew exponentially in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Mayer (2009) argues that the emergence of a group of world-class South African distance runners during this time can be attributed to the regular competition opportunities and prize money that was offered for road races. Under the auspices of the South African Road Running Association (SARRA), which was more business-like and less rigid and politically conservative than the South African Amateur Athletics Union (SAAAU), road running thrived (Mayer, 2009:135). The increase in world-class road runners during this period can also be attributed to the opportunities gold mines provided for black talent to train and compete, and obtain much-needed sponsorships,

notably from the South African Breweries. Mining companies such as Goldfields, Anglo American, East Driefontein and other mines on the Highveld recruited athletes from rural areas to represent them. Badenhorst and Mather (1997) have explored the links between culture, leisure and social control on South African gold mines. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) organised sport and leisure activities on the mines and were the driving force behind organised sport. In spite of management apathy towards recreation on most mines, miners continued to participate in sport and recreation largely through their own initiatives (Badenhorst & Mather, 1997:48). Sport played a significant role in “what made up mine culture” (Moodie, 1994:21). According to Badenhorst and Mather (1997:488), leisure and sport were used as part of the gold mining industry’s attempted cultural strategy to control and ‘retribalise’ migrant workers. They argue that the Chamber of Mines’ experiment in using recreation as a tool for ‘retribalisation’ had failed and the strong encouragement given to sport in the post-1950s period suggests that it might not have abandoned attempts to use recreation to control miners.

Xolile Yawa is one of the distance running talents who emerged out of this era of road running in South Africa. He hails from Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape and was recruited after matric to work for and run at President Brand mine in the Free State. Yawa worked as a sports and recreation officer at the mine. Yawa won an unprecedented nine SA 10 000 m titles, including six in a row from 1985 to 1990, and two SA half marathon titles in 1986 and 1988. Today Yawa is the co-owner of Carecure, a hospital management company active in four provinces, and he recently started a project, the Legendary Athletes of South Africa (LASA), which caters for the social welfare of former athletes, coaches and officials.

It was at the Carecure offices in Bloemfontein where I met with Yawa to talk about his experiences of life after sport and to gain insight into the running culture at the time when he competed. As president of LASA, Yawa is still very concerned with the fortune of runners once they end their running careers. He explained the role of mines in grooming the athletes of his era:

The mining industry was central to road running in South Africa. They had this art of grooming sportspeople, not athletics only, you know. If you go to rugby, you will find that there were Springboks, you know, black Springboks and we were the black Springboks coming out of the mining industries. So these runners who achieved in races became famous with their peers. Athletics in the mining industry was big sports. And everybody would come watch events. There was this big competition between the mining

companies, you see? President Brand, President Steyn, this one and that one, and that one and this one. And then there were fierce competition that were taken. There was great rivalry, equal to Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates in soccer. The mines used us as a marketing tool as well. Athletics helped the mines. If I went back home to the Eastern Cape, people would have seen how well I performed for the mines and they also would want to be recruited there. You see? And it would then be that kind of marketing strategy. It worked both ways.

The mines thus played a central role in training athletes of that era. The mines had top coaches and the structures in place to hone some of South Africa's most talented runners. State institutions, such as the South African Police Service, the South African Army, universities and private sponsors such as Rentmeester created a climate that was conducive for developing exceptional athletes. The current club running structures for elite runners have moved away from state institutions and are now supported by commercial sponsors, the prominent ones being Mr Price, Bonitas and Nedbank.

By the early 1990s South Africa's political landscape had changed drastically. On 2 February 1990, President F.W. de Klerk announced that Nelson Mandela would be freed and the ban on the ANC was lifted. This shift in politics would inevitably affect all sectors of society, including sport. South Africa was readmitted to the international sporting scene and this meant that a wave of international athletes ventured to compete in the Comrades Marathon. South Africa started its route toward transformation and by April 1994 the country had its first democratic election. The Comrades Marathon would also adapt to the drastically changing South African society. Sam Tshabalala became the first black South African to win the Comrades Marathon in 1989 in the down run, and he paved the way for the race in the new dispensation. It was during this decade that athletics in South Africa became fully professional. Athletes were now lured to compete for monetary reward. By 1995 the Comrades Marathon Association introduced prize money on a structured basis, with the men's and women's winners collecting R45 000 and cash prizes going down to 10th place (Laxton et al., 2000). The influx of international athletes contributed to the women's race being dominated by foreigners toward the latter stages of the 1990s.

The Comrades Marathon in the 21st century has witnessed an increase in professional and elite athletes competing for top honours. The race itself has undergone significant changes, as sponsorship of the race and athletes has become a major contributing factor in the organizing of the race and luring athletes with lucrative prize money. The winner of the 2015 Comrades

Marathon earned R375 000 and the event had 22 370 entrants. The actual date on which the race is held has also changed, from 16 June to the first weekend in June, this after the ANC Youth League proposed that the race distracted attention away from Youth Day celebrations.

The focus of this chapter is on the Comrades Marathon House, a museum dedicated to preserving the heritage of the race. This brief history of the race allows for an analysis of the meaning and significance of the Comrades Marathon House. The Comrades Marathon House is a community sports museum, and has personal meaning to runners who have run the race. The next part of the chapter considers the Comrades Marathon House, as a place where the race's heritage is exhibited. Particular reference is made to the strong network of people, both runners and administrators that have invested time and energy into preserving the race's history at this specific museum.

7.3 THE COMRADES MARATHON HOUSE

The Comrades Marathon House at 18 Connaught Road, Pietermaritzburg is both the venue from where the race is organised and a museum that exhibits the race's history. It is the only museum in the country that is dedicated solely to road running and entrance to the museum is free. The museum is registered as an NGO and the content of the museum is determined by the Heritage and Traditions Committee of the Comrades Marathon Association. Bob Lambert, a member of the Comrades Marathon Association executive committee for 22 years, was commissioned as a result of the growth and popularity of the race to find suitable accommodation for the Comrades Marathon Association. Prior to the acquisition of the house, the race was organised by the Comrades Athletic club since 1921, and later by the Comrades section of Collegians Harriers Athletic club. Meetings took place at the homes of various committee members, but because the need arose to store valuable Comrades equipment and memorabilia, a decision was made to acquire separate premises. The first Comrades Marathon Association headquarters were above the Alexandra Road Supermarket (*The Comrades story*, n.d.).

In the mid-1980s, Mick Winn, a member of the Comrades Marathon Association, travelled to the New York City Marathon to compare that marathon's organisation to that of the Comrades. The idea of a Comrades House was developed from a house that the organisers of the New York City Marathon used to exhibit the heritage of the race and to organise the race from. By 1985 the Victorian style house in Connaught road was bought and after two years of restoration,

the Comrades House was officially opened on 16 March 1988. It is estimated that the restoration of the house cost R600 000 (Crawford, 1988:9).

The running artefacts in the museum were collected by a group of well-known runners, in particular Alan Robb, who travelled across the country to obtain memorabilia. The museum has a wide selection of personal memorabilia that are associated with the Comrades, as well as a comprehensive set of pictorial boards covering the entire history of the race since its inception in 1921. The pictorial boards were developed by Barry Varty, a devoted Comrades runner and administrator. A detailed scale model of the route, designed by Mrs Margaret Dedekind, is one of the main attractions of the museum. Here visitors to the museum have an opportunity to interact with the display by highlighting milestones along the 90 km route, with an audio clipping detailing each section of the route (see Figure 30).



Figure 30. A detailed scale model of the Comrades Marathon route, exhibited in the Comrades Marathon House

Source: Author

Trends in ‘New Museology’ have focused on museums as spaces where objects on display are not fixed, but shift with changing contexts. The visitor’s perceptions of displays are also malleable and museums have become places of ‘edutainment’, with interactive displays becoming key to the visitor’s experience. The Comrades Museum’s only interactive display is that of the scale model. Most of the exhibitions rely on the visitor’s existing knowledge of road

running in South Africa. The curator of the Comrades Marathon Museum, Sian Theron, elaborated on the fairly 'traditional' nature of the exhibits: "You'll see that the displays haven't changed much at all for the last 30 years, since the museum was conceived. So it is very old-school. And it does focus on legends. The guys that have won five to nine times, who've really done amazing things in the race."

The Comrades Marathon House is a community sports museum. Phillips's (2012:15) analysis of sport museums indicates that "the common themes underpinning these [community sport museums] sporting collections are direct links to relevant communities, communities that may be defined by geography, religion, gender, work and school affiliations". The Comrades race and Comrades museum prides themselves on being major attractions in Kwazulu-Natal, and the museum serves as a 'home' for runners of the race. It is a physical place where memories of the race can be relived for the 'community' of runners who have completed the race.

The museum is therefore what Gammon and Ramshaw (2007) would refer to as a tangible immovable form of sport heritage, as it is a place that has particular relevance to the sporting past, but it also serves as a place of intangible sport heritage, as the meanings, memories and nostalgia associated with the race can be relived there. Bale (1993:55), writing on football stadiums and their sense of place, argues that "sport in its modern form, and archetypically football in its modern form, provides what is arguably the major focus for collective identification in modern Britain and in much of the rest of the world". He goes on to argue that "collective identification, especially when coupled with success, makes people feel better and engenders a sense of place pride" (Bale, 1993:57).

The Comrades Marathon Museum, one might argue, serves as a place where collective identification of road runners takes place. For those runners who have completed the gruelling race the Comrades House is a tangible place where their pride associated with the race can be relived. Considering that the Comrades House is one of the venues from where the registrations take place prior to the race, it is here where the anticipation and origin of the race experience lie.

What then is the relationship between runners who have run the Comrades and the Comrades Marathon museum? Sports geographer John Bale (1994), drawing on the work of Tuan (1974), has used the term 'topophilia' to describe the affective ties that people develop with the material environment, to capture their distinctive 'love of place' (Bale, 1994:120). Bales's (1991) work focuses specifically on football stadiums in Britain, but there is a correlation between sports

‘topophilia’ – as Bale (1991) analyses it for football stadiums – and that of the Comrades Marathon House. Bale (1991) uses five metaphors to explore the public meanings of football stadiums. First, the stadium is a ‘sacred place’, where a sense of spirituality is experienced by those fans who frequent it. It can take the form of a quasi-religious ritual, an example of which would be the scattering of the ashes of deceased fans following the 1989 Hillsborough Stadium disaster in Sheffield, in which 96 Liverpool fans were fatally injured. Football fans brought offerings of memorabilia and flowers to stadiums in both cities (Taylor, 1991 cited in Giulianotti, 2005:122). Second, the stadium may be a place that is visually pleasurable and therefore be a place of ‘scenic’ qualities. Third, the idea of the stadium as a ‘home’ for players offers a psychological advantage to visiting teams. Fourth, the stadium may be a ‘tourist place’, a form of heritage where visitors can learn about the history of the stadium and memorable events, through stadium tours. Fifth, the stadium may represent local pride; the team constitutes “a focus for community bonding and the source for ‘reconstruction’ of some former *Gemeinschaft*” (Bale, 1991:135). Whilst these five factors can contribute to a sense of affiliation with a place, Bale (1994:145) notes that a sporting landscape may also possess negative emotional meanings, known as ‘topophobia’. He argues that the ‘sounds and smells’ of particular sport settings may lead to hostility. These hostilities often spring from class-based factors, where residents of wealthier suburbs can object to lower social classes using ‘public’ spaces for sports purposes. Negative perceptions of sport spaces can also include anxieties over safety in poorly lit areas (Giulianotti, 2005).

With reference to Bale’s (1991) use of the concept ‘topophilia’, I argue that the Comrades Marathon House elicits similar positive affiliations with a sporting place to those indicated in Bale’s analysis of football stadiums. First, the Comrades Marathon House is a ‘sacred place’ where revered memorabilia of the race are preserved, and where particular rituals take place prior to the race. For example, at the official opening of the Comrades House in 1988 one of the coveted artefacts was the ‘bullhorn’ that Vic Clapham used to start the first Comrades Marathon with in 1921. Vic Clapham’s son, Doug, was photographed posing with the ‘bullhorn’ at the museum’s official opening. This gesture is indicative of how the history and the material culture associated with the race are preserved by an intimate group of people whose personal histories are intertwined with the race. It also points to the significance of preserving material artefacts that are of sacred value in terms of the race’s history. The words of the current curator of the Comrades House museum, Sian Theron, highlight how some of the superstitious beliefs of runners play out at the Comrades House Museum:

Many runners make a point of it to come register at the Comrades Marathon House [rather than any of the other registration venues]. They believe that by visiting the museum, and having a chance to look around at the significance of the race over a long history, gives them that drive to also become one of the many who have finished the race. The ritual of coming to registration and going through the routine of waiting in line to collect the race number, chatting to the fellow runners, and reminiscing about past races all contributes to their preparation for the race. It is almost like a sacred space that they need to enter and for some that superstition will determine the success of their run.

Several scholars (Gammon, 2004; Fairley, 2003; Redmond, 1973; Snyder, 1991) have extended the idea of a ‘sacred’ sports place to include travelling to sport events as a form of secular pilgrimage. “The annual ritualistic escape from the mundanity and predictability of people’s *ordinary* lives, to a place not governed by the usual constrictive societal and temporal rules, has been equated with a quasi-religious experience” (Gammon, 2004:32).

Gammon (2004:41) further argues that “some sport sites (whatever the category) will provoke intense feelings of awe and wonderment, similar to those experienced by pilgrims at religious sites. However, it would be misleading to propose sport as a new form of religion. It would be safer to conclude that sport can (especially with regard to fandom) offer similar functions to religion such as invoking a sense of belonging, purpose and consolation”. This tentative proposition that sport and religion have commonalities, espousing a sense of belonging, can be attributed to the Comrades Museum as a ‘pilgrimage’ site. Thousands of runners travel from across South Africa and the world to partake in the race. The museum is one of the many sites that runners associate the race with and they all have a common purpose of finishing the race. Furthermore, the nature of the actual race – running from one city to the other – also resonates with the idea of pilgrimage, which in its simplest form can be understood as a journey to visit a destination which holds some form of personal or collective meaning (however profane) for the traveller (Gammon, 2004:31).

Several runners I spoke to referred to their desire to run the Comrades as a feat they wanted to achieve because of specific emotive and symbolic reasons. The physical, emotional and mental aptitude required to complete the race is often driven by a desire to complete the race for “something bigger than themselves”. Alan Robb’s 2013 Comrades Marathon race shows how the race embodies much more than just the physical act of completing it. Speaking to a journalist Robb explained that the race would be an emotional one as he would be running it

entirely in memory of his late wife, who had passed away a few days before the 2012 race. He explained:

I am nervous that something could go wrong, because I have 39 hassle-free years behind me, and excited because it is a big milestone in my Comrades career. There will certainly be a lot of sadness on the day, because Merle [his wife] will not be there. She was always on the finishing line waiting for me. This year will really be in her memory. I will probably be running in her wedding ring (Carnegie, 2013:8).

Robb is one of many runners who consider the race to be steeped in personal meaning. The race as a form of solitude resonates with Turner's (1973) notion of *communitas*, where like-minded people who are away from their usual environment experience a sense of togetherness. In this liminal state of anti-structure, where normal rules of social engagement no longer apply, runners feel the 'spiritual' relief of achieving something for a purpose bigger than themselves.

The second factor contributing to a sense of affiliation with a sporting place, according to Bale (1991) above, is its visual attractiveness. In this regard, the Comrades Marathon Association took great pains to ensure that the Comrades House would be visually appealing. The restoration of the Victorian-style building was done by Wynand Claasen, an ex-Springbok rugby player and himself a Comrades runner. The detail attended to in ensuring an aesthetic appeal went to the extent of acquiring one of the last old-fashioned lamp posts from the Pietermaritzburg municipality (see Figure 31).



Figure 31. The Comrades Marathon House in Pietermaritzburg, with the lamp post in the foreground

Source: Author

On completion, the Comrades House received a PBA Building Award in recognition of outstanding architecture and craftsmanship in the aesthetic use of clay brick. The property was also formally listed as a national monument. These initiatives directed at a pleasurable aesthetic experience when visiting the museum are in line with Bale's (1991) analysis of sport places and how they contribute to a bond between people and place.

As for the third element that Bale (1991) mentions, from the layout of the museum and the social events that are organised from the museum, it is evident that the Comrades House acts as a 'home' for runners. A pub area was established on the ground floor and was initially used for monthly social evenings. Although the Comrades House does not offer a distinct advantage for local runners, it does serve as a beacon of familiarity for those who return to it prior to a race.

In the fourth place, the sport museum as a 'tourist place' is particularly applicable to the Comrades Marathon House. The museum is affiliated to the provincial KwaZulu-Natal Museum Services and receives a subsidy from the province every year. Foreign athletes who compete in the Comrades Marathon are taken on a tour of the actual running route and of the museum prior to their race. This Comrades Museum is not only an attraction for runners who have run or who intend to run the race. The fact that the race is embedded within the broader politics of South African society, makes the museum visit an educational opportunity for runners and non-runners alike. Theron echoed this sentiment: "The museum caters for everyone as Comrades is a South African race and belongs to the country as a whole. It is perhaps more resonant with the runners as they either have or are aiming to run the race." Comrades runners may have a vested interest in the race itself, but the museum also speaks to the dynamics of the race's history in South Africa's segregated past. The museum as a tourist destination has been probed by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998). She argues that museums have become 'destinations' within the tourist industry:

Tourism needs destinations and museums are premier attractions. Museums are not only destinations on an itinerary: they are also nodes in a network of attractions that form the recreational geography of a region and, increasingly, the globe (1998:132). Heritage and tourism are collaborative industries, heritage converting locations into destinations and tourism making them economically viable as exhibits of themselves. Locations become museums of themselves within a tourist economy (1998:151).

The Comrades Museum as a 'location' from where the race is organised and a physical place where memorabilia associated with the race are displayed, has become one of the many tourist destinations in Pietermaritzburg. The influx of runners to the museum, especially building up to the race, is apparent. Approximately 5 000 visitors frequent the museum annually, 4 000 of whom come to the museum over the race weekend. The economic injection that the region receives as a result of hosting the race is remarkable. The 2000 Comrades Marathon had a record number of 24 800 entries and it is estimated that Comrades runners and their supporters poured R300 million into the economy that year, spending approximately R150 million in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas alone. It was also the first year that an international television network, Sky TV would broadcast the race ('Economy gets R300 million boost from the Comrades', 2000:5).

Regarding the fifth element inspiring a love of place, the museum elicits local pride and a form of communal bonding in the week leading up to the race, as an estimated 4 000 runners conglomerate at the museum. With international athletes dominating the Comrades in the past decade, the museum serves as a reminder to South African prospects of what can be achieved, and in turn is a space for communal affiliation around nationhood. The spectatorship of up to 502 000 people in the 2000 race, mostly from the local community, indicates the local support that runners have from fans who line the route (Comrades a huge economic boost, 2000:8). The 2015 Comrades Marathon was especially successful from a South African point of view, as the winners in both the men's and the women's race were South African. Caroline Wostmann became the first South African to win the women's race in 16 years.

Considering that 'topophilia' refers to the positive relationship between people and place, the museum can also be a stark reminder of failure for athletes who return year after year to try and finish the race. 'Topophobia' or negative emotions associated with the museum or landscape resonated clearly, as ten time Comrade Finisher Jason Reed explained:

Yes, I have been to the Comrades Museum. I must be honest with you, I usually get really nervous heading there. The reason being that the place represents so many memories I have of the race. The sad part is I didn't finish my first Comrades, because I suffered from cramps. So, when I went back there the next year, all these emotions rushed back and created some doubt for me as to whether I would be able to finish it this year.

Most of the running memorabilia in the museum were donated to the museum by athletes or family members of athletes. An 'agreement of donation' contract is signed between the

Comrades Marathon Association and the donor. The previous chapter showed how rugby memorabilia were usually donated to community museums during the amateur era of the game. This form of 'gift-giving' is also apparent in the Comrades museum. The next part of the chapter considers how the anthropological concept of 'gift-giving' may inform an understanding of the significance of gifting race-running memorabilia.

7.4 THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GIFT OF THE RUNNING SHOE

Sport museums often exhibit sport stars that have cemented their place in sporting history. Balthi du Plessis, the heritage consultant and exhibition designer for the planned Blue Bull rugby museum at Loftus, explained the importance of building an exhibition around a sporting icon. He elaborated:

You can't sell a sport. One can try to sell soccer, or rugby or athletics. But no one is really interested in the sport. People are interested in sport through an association with a person or a team. Interest is stimulated if you can attract attention to an individual who excelled in sport, heroes from the past. As one delves deeper into that specific heroic figure from the past, one can create new sport heroes and that can trigger a nostalgic attachment to that person. That is actually what you sell. You don't sell Loftus museum as the stadium's museum. You sell it as the field that Frik du Preez scored a try on, or the field that Victor Matfield won the Super 14 on. That is what you sell. It is all connected to the individual. A successful museum experience is always on a personal level, never on a generic level. The most important common denominator is the association with an individual.

Many sport museums use the sporting apparel of sport stars to elicit an association with the individual athlete. The exhibition dedicated to Bruce Fordyce highlights how his memorabilia are used to represent the symbolism and ethos of the race's association with the individual (see Figure 32).



Figure 32. Bruce Fordyce Exhibition at the Comrades Marathon House

Source: Author

The Comrades Marathon was dominated by Bruce Fordyce in the 1980s and he is considered to be a legend in terms of the race’s history. Fordyce has completed 30 Comrades Marathons, winning the event between 1981 and 1988 and again in 1990. The exhibition dedicated to him in the museum has two pairs of running shoes. The caption reads “The vest and shoes worn by Bruce Fordyce from 1980–1984, when he ran for Wits.” The caption for the second pair of running shoes on display reads, “Running shoe worn by Bruce Fordyce during the 1983 Comrades Marathon. He lost a toenail during the race, hence the front cut away.” The artefacts in the background include a biography of Bruce Fordyce, titled: *Bruce Fordyce: Comrades King*, written by John Cameron-Dow, and an award bestowed on him by Wits University as sportsman of the year in 1981. These artefacts, and the detailed description of the shoe Fordyce wore in the 1984 race all point to how the exhibition at the museum uses an individual to celebrate the race’s heritage. The detailed description of the loss of Fordyce’s toenail enables the visitor to associate with him, not as an immortal running machine, but as a human, a person who shares characteristics with the ‘ordinary’ man. The Comrades is therefore not a generic event with faceless people, but the museum has used specific icons to create an association with the race through an individual, in this case Bruce Fordyce.

The curator of the museum, Sian Theron, explained that the museum is for many athletes an embodiment of the race and the ethos of the race. They therefore want to contribute to the legacy of preserving the material culture of the race, by donating many of their personal running memorabilia. The gifting of sports memorabilia allows for an analysis of the social dynamics of giving and receiving of sports memorabilia for museum purposes.

Exchange relations have historically been a core interest for anthropologists. One of the earliest classical studies on exchange was Malinowski's work on the Trobriand Islands and his discussion of the Kula ring in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). Malinowski was concerned with showing how Trobriand Islanders engaged in exchange in recognisable and sensible ways, as independent, calculating transactors. Mauss (1969) did not share Malinowski's utilitarian view that exchange in the Trobriands is like exchange in industrial societies, rational and interested transactions by independent individuals (Frow, 1997:121). Mauss' (1969) is concerned with social identifications and understandings of people, objects and social relations. He differentiates between two types of exchange: gift exchange and commodity exchange. One of the most influential ways of thinking about the pattern of relations between people has been through the opposition of the gift to the commodity (Frow, 1997:102). Mauss considered gifts and commodities as characteristics of different types of societies: those of 'archaic societies' and industrial societies, dominated by class and the division of labour. Although Mauss considered gifts and commodities as characteristics of different sorts of societies, they can also be considered as two kinds of relations coexisting (Carrier, 1991). Gift exchange was associated with societies where kinship relations and groups dominated. Transactors in these societies have relations and obligations to one another. Gift transactions are associated with the giver, the recipient and the relationship that defines them (Carrier, 1991:121). Commodities are associated with industrial societies, where commodity transactions involve self-interested, independent individuals who may not have long-lasting links or obligations. In commodity transactions objects are private property defined in terms of use and exchange value, and the identity of the transactor is of little importance (Carrier, 1991). The Maussian view of gift relations considers exchange in terms of (1) the obligatory transfer of (2) inalienable objects or services between (3) related and mutually obligated transactors.

By 'inalienable objects' Mauss refers to the idea that gifts "are to some extent part of persons" (Mauss, 1969:11). The gift generates and regenerates the relationship between the giver and the recipient. The inalienable object as a gift is particularly relevant to the donating of sports memorabilia as gifts. For example, the value of the running vest and shoes that Fordyce wore

in the Comrades is determined by the person who wore it and the context in which he achieved fame. The memorabilia are therefore an extension of his persona, his achievements and how he as an individual has become representative of the Comrades Marathon. For Mauss (1969) the object given possesses a 'personality', therefore a person presented with an object receives part of the giver's personality. This *Hau* or 'spirit of the gift' demands a form of reciprocity.

Mauss's (1969) theory of *The Gift* can be applied to the giving, receiving and reciprocating of running memorabilia. First, the giving of the running shoe, vest or medal is an extension of the athlete, and the first step to building social relationships. Second, considering that the Comrades Museum is dependent on donations of sporting artefacts, they are obliged to receive the gift; that is, accepting the social bond. In return, and as a form of reciprocation the museum exhibits contributes to athletes of the past being venerated for their achievement and becoming symbolically immortal, through the artefacts on display. The 'symbolic capital' that is bestowed on the athlete is therefore an extension of his/her achievement and fixed in public memory.

Hyde (2009) has extended the 'spiritual' dimension of gift giving by considering how creativity contributes to the value of the gift, in a world dominated by commerce. Using the artist and artwork as his main proposition, he argues that creativity and the labour invested in creating the artwork, as a gift, go beyond monetary value. Hyde's main argument is that art is essentially a gift and not a commodity, because the creativity required to produce art, is not of monetary value. If one considers the actual work/labour that athletes perform to be able to compete at the highest level, one can argue that this form of sacrifice leads to creativity, be that through running tactics or training methods. This 'creativity' or labour can contribute to the success of the athlete, and in turn contribute to the value of the running artefacts that are donated.

Gift exchange, as Mauss (1969) defines it, is an obligatory transaction between close-knit people who have stable social relationships, between "related and mutually obligated transactors". Mauss considered the gift to be a social fact, because it is pervasive across societies, but also because it concentrates attention on social relationships and because it constitutes those relations (Sykes, 2005:63). The donation of running memorabilia to the Comrades Museum occurs within a group of runners who share a particular group status and have cemented relations, based on their involvement and achievements in the Comrades Marathon. Most of the running memorabilia in the museum are authentic and the personal belongings of individual athletes, yet they are willing to give away the material culture of their personal running achievements. Alan Robb, who dominated the race in the 1970s and who has

completed 40 races, donated some of his gold medals to the museum for display. His exhibit also includes the clothing he wore when he won the 1978 Comrades Marathon in a record time. The *Liverpool* hat and red running shoes and socks were a trade-mark that Robb was recognised by (see Figure 33).



Figure 33. Running attire of Alan Robb, as exhibited at the Comrades Marathon House

Source: Author

Why would athletes give away their running memorabilia that are a reminder of their achievements of the past? The ‘symbolic capital’ that these artefacts reflect contributes to athletes of the past being cemented in public memory, and through this gesture they achieve a sense of symbolic immortality through their exhibitions. The reciprocity of ‘the gift’ is therefore able to promote the legacy of these athletes for generations to come.

Mauss’s (1969) distinction between gifts and commodities highlights the idea that gifts are a transaction between people who have established social relationships, and the exchange of commodities between independent transactors. The Comrades Museum relies on the gifting of memorabilia by athletes who have forged close relationships with the Comrades Marathon Association. The products, or commodities, that are sold at the museum are all souvenirs, associated with the race. Whereas the Springbok Experience Museum tour concludes with an opportunity to buy Springbok-branded commodities, the Comrades Museum is less overtly

commercial. Most of the Comrades merchandise on sale is sold over the race weekend to athletes who compete in the race.

The running memorabilia of legendary athletes are not the only mode of heritage. Gammon (2014) proposes that sporting heroes can be equated to forms of both tangible and intangible heritage. He explores the commoditisation process of the sporting hero that reframes them into heritage ‘objects’ and argues that living sporting heroes can be considered as a form of living heritage. The idea that heritage can be alive is not new, but the suggestion that a living individual can be a tangible object has had little coverage in the literature (Gammon, 2014:5). Intangible heritage is often associated with living people in the form of rituals, music or language that is preserved. The living sports hero’s personal sporting history and achievements are an intangible quality that they carry with them, but Gammon (2014:6) reminds us that sports hero status and the depiction of heroes are culturally framed. “Heroism is always measured and re (evaluated) against the societal values of the day” (Gammon, 2014:2). Moreover, the significance of their achievement is often socially determined. Gammon elaborates (2014:4-6):

Heroes then are culturally formed and situated. The interpretation of courage, skill, achievement and any other related criteria is socially determined, as is the extent that such achievements are valued and nurtured. They represent a cultural ideal that people wish to protect, celebrate and ultimately emulate ... The living hero then is a conduit to the past; one who embodies the extraordinary achievements and experiences that so many admire and look up to. They are producers of both intangible and tangible heritage through both the recording and marking of their accomplishments as well as through the collection of related personal sporting paraphernalia.

The context in which Bruce Fordyce rose to fame in the 1980s is important if one considers why he has achieved legendary status. The 1980s was a politically volatile period in South African history. The country was sealed off from international trade, through economic sanctions. The sports boycott disallowed South Africa to partake in major international sporting events. On a local level, the country was declared in a State of Emergency in 1985, as increasing popular resistance grew against the apartheid state and violent township protests persisted. The political coercion used by the government to associate the Comrades with Republic Day festivities in 1981 backfired, as many runners distanced themselves from and publically showed their disapproval of apartheid. Fordyce was at the time studying at the Wits University, an institution renowned for advocating democratic principles. Fordyce’s decision to wear a

black armband in the 1981 race as a symbol of his anti-apartheid stance, together with his consistent performances in winning the Comrades throughout the decade, culminated in him being considered as one of South Africa's iconic sport heroes. Fordyce's status as an iconic South African is apparent, as he was included in the book, *They shaped our century: the most influential South Africans of the twentieth century*. The list of 100 people included in the book was decided by an online survey run by South African media giant, News 24. If sport heroes, as Gammon (2014) argues can be forms of tangible and intangible heritage, then Fordyce's exhibition at the Comrades Museum (tangible aspect) and the work he does to promote the Comrades race as Media Liaison for one of the biggest running clubs in South Africa, Nedbank, and by giving motivational speeches and organising races, the intangible aspect of his heritage points to him as a living form of heritage.

Considering that the depiction of the sports hero is culturally framed and socially constructed, Fordyce's legacy as one of the Comrades greats and his role in mentoring other athletes had to come under scrutiny. In 2004 the then president of Athletics South Africa, Leonard Chuene, accused Fordyce and Nick Bester (both of whom were in senior positions at the Nedbank Running Club) of being 'greedy' and opposed to transformation in the sport ('ASA must decide on Comrades, Two Oceans', 2004). Athletics South Africa's (ASA's) chief executive, Banele Sindani, told Parliament's portfolio committee on sport that South African marathon clubs are "killing the development of poorer runners and middle distance athletes" ('Athletes hit back at "incompetent" administrators', 2004:4). Fordyce and Bester sought legal action against the comments made by Chuene and Sindani. ASA are in dire straits and have lost big sponsorships as a result of boardroom battles, resulting in them being temporarily suspended by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). The 'attack' on Fordyce does point to the temporality of his fame and status as a hero. Whereas his living heritage is based on his running accomplishments of the past, this scuffle highlights how his role in his post-sporting life has come under question, despite his public status as a legend of the race.

Returning to sport curator Balthi du Plessis's proposition that a museum experience is designed around an individual or an association with an individual, the issue arises of the authenticity of the living sports hero. If living sports heroes, as Gammon (2014) argues, are part of the heritage landscape, why do they have such an allure? Ramshaw (2010) has explored sport museums as spaces where 'living' heritage is one of the main attractions. He argues that "a key feature of the contemporary sport museum is the presence of athletes, either in describing their athletic achievements or, in the case of some sport museums, actually plying their trade." Turner

(2014:24) argues that “the desire for the authentic – to reach the core of the personality, to find out what ‘they are really like’ – is fundamental to the sports fans, as to the film fan.” The living athlete as an attraction at sport museums has yet to be used as a drawing card at the Comrades House, but there is little doubt that the desire to see the actual runner or hero can be an attraction in sport heritage initiatives.

The exhibits at the Comrades museum are however not only concerned with those who have won the race and acquired a legendary status. Some individuals are commemorated for their role in challenging the status quo of South African society at the time. The Comrades Marathon has always operated within the broader fragile South African political landscape. Women and blacks were only allowed to complete the race officially as late as 1975. South Africa’s racial history and the role that the Comrades Marathon played in breaking down racial barriers was apparent, as black runners had competed in the race, albeit unofficially, as early as 1935. To commemorate the involvement of black runners in the race, the Comrades Museum unveiled a plaque in 2005, dedicated to all men and women of colour who completed the Comrades Marathon prior to 1975. Ashworth (2008) has argued that heritage is not finite, as we create it as we need it and discard it when we do not. The commemoration plaque dedicated to Robert Mtshali, the first black man who completed the Comrades Marathon in 1935, highlights how significant occurrences in the race’s history have become important for present day purposes. Heritage in this instance has been created to showcase the diversity of the race within a present day democratic South African society.

Not surprisingly this form of remembrance was built around the achievement of an individual, Robert Mtshali. The caption on the plaque reads: “Inspirational early pioneer, Mtshali was the first black man to complete the Comrades Marathon unofficially in 1935” (see Figure 34).



Figure 34. Plaque commemorating Robert Mtshali at Comrades House

Source: Author

Another plaque dedicated to Bernard Fridman, a ‘coloured’ runner, highlights how individual athletes are used to represent the race within South Africa’s history. Fridman ran the Comrades Marathon unofficially in 1974 in protest against discriminatory policy. In 2010 he was awarded a silver medal, “symbolising a free, fair and just Comrades Marathon”. The medal is displayed in a plaque dedicated to Fridman at the Comrades Museum. These forms of commemoration show how individual athletes are used to create an association with the race, the museum and the broader South African politics of the time. This points to the tangible (the actual plaque of Fridman) and intangible (the memories and myths associated with the race) forms of heritage associated with the Comrades. The final part of the chapter considers the intangible aspects of heritage associated with the Comrades Museum.

7.5 COMRADES HERITAGE ON THE STREET

One of the many traditions of the Comrades Marathon is the practice that the winner of the race carries with him a letter/scroll from the mayor from either Pietermaritzburg or Durban (depending on whether it is the ‘up’ or ‘down’ route) (see Figures 35a and 35b) . This tradition had formed part of the race proceedings since the marathon’s conception. This mode of intangible heritage associated with the race has been passed down from generation to

generation of winners. Poria, Butler and Airey (2003) have argued that heritage is about the interaction between the individual and the object and not about the particular attributes of the object itself. Although the actual scroll as an object represents the symbolic well wishes between the two cities, it is the actual act of carrying the scroll over the finish line that is of intangible value. Ramshaw (2014:266) reminds us that “heritage can occur almost anywhere, at any time, and be inscribed to anything”. Samuel (2012) highlights the multiple personas that heritage can adopt. He hints at the ephemeral and intangible aspects of heritage by arguing that “heritage is a nomadic term, which travels easily, and puts down roots – or bivouacs – in seemingly quite unpromising terrain ... it sets up residence in streets broad and narrow, royal places and railway sidings, canalside walks and town hall squares. It attaches itself to astonishing variety of material artefacts” (Samuel, 2012:205). Smith (2006) has argued for an understanding of heritage that moves away from its persistent association with sites, buildings and material objects, and to understand it rather as a cultural process. Drawing on her work amongst Waanyi women in Queensland, Australia, Smith (2006) shows how the heritage project associated with these women was based on ‘something living’. She shows how heritage was located in the experiences and the performances of these women, not the historical site itself. This means that heritage is a relational idea; it is about how individuals and groups actively take up positions in relation to sites, events, histories and buildings.

Heritage becomes “a way of knowing and seeing” (Smith, 2006: 52). The Comrades race as “a way of knowing and seeing” is truly embedded in the experience that runners have of having completed the race. The heritage of the race is therefore not confined to the tangible aspect of the Comrades Marathon Museum, but disperses to the streets and takes on a living memory in the life of the runners themselves. A ritual that epitomises the intangible aspects of the race’s heritage is a tradition where before the gun sounds for the start of the race, a rooster crows. This ritual has a history dating back to the 1948 Comrades when a local runner, Max Trimborn, could not contain his nervous energy at the starting line, so he cupped his hands and made the sound of a rooster crowing. Trimborn has continued with this tradition, sometimes dressing up as a rooster. By the time of his death in 1985 Trimborn’s crowing had been recorded, and to this day the Comrades Marathon starts with “Cock-A-Doodle...Go” (Burfoot, 2007).

The distinction between intangible and tangible heritage is often futile, as “all interpretations of place are human constructions, and no heritage value is therefore completely ‘tangible’” (Deacon, 2004). The Comrades Marathon’s heritage is a ‘travelling heritage’ as runners carry with them their own memories and meanings associated with the race. Specific points on the

route are significant mental markers for runners and evoke specific memories of the experience of previous races. ‘Polly Shorts’, a hill on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, has become famous for its association with the Comrades Marathon. Polly, as it is known amongst the runners, is about 2 km long and is particularly steep, stretching 8 km before the end of the race (when the race is run from Durban to Pietermaritzburg). This particular hill forms part of the running ‘talk’ when preparing for the Comrades. The incline of the hill is such a challenge that many runners, apart from the elite, have to walk. The hill itself is therefore an aspect of tangible heritage, as it is a physical place where one can drive along, but the intangible aspects in terms of the stories of pain, triumph and camaraderie that runners endure kilometres before the end, form part of an oral history that is passed down generations of runners.

A prominent aspect of the Comrades Marathon are the spectators that line the 90 km stretch between the two cities. People often line their driveways with camping chairs and cooler boxes to cheer athletes on the route during the day. This support, I argue, forms a ubiquitous aspect of the race’s heritage. The chatter and support amongst the spectators annually forms part of the landscape of the running route. The point is that the heritage of the Comrades Marathon is not innate, rather it is the meanings, memories and associations – in other words the living aspect of the race – that has made the Comrades Marathon one of the premier road running events in the world.



Figure 35a. 2014 Comrades winner, Bongmusa Mthembu, with the scroll from the mayor in his left hand

Source: SuperSport



**Figure 35b. 1947 Comrades Winner, Hardy Ballington, with the scroll from the mayor
in his left hand**

Source: Cameron-Dow, 2011:210

7.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has considered the heritage of the Comrades Marathon as it is preserved in both tangible and intangible ways. Topophilia is used as a lens to consider why runners have an emotional attachment to the race and the heritage of the race. Specific exhibitions dedicated to Bruce Fordyce and to Robert Mtshali point to how individuals and their running achievements are used within a cultural and historic context to create a meaningful museum experience. Running memorabilia as a form of gift relations are explored and I have argued that social relations between the donor and the museum are strengthened, as the symbolism of the running artefact ensures that the legacy of the athlete is symbolically engrained. The Comrades Marathon's heritage lives on in intangible heritage ways, as the route and memories associated with specific markers on the route all contribute to the race being a living form of heritage.

CONCLUSION

The central concern of this thesis was to present a grounded anthropological understanding of the transitional dynamics of a select group of elite sportspeople as their sporting careers come to an end from actual physical participation. This process was investigated on several levels: the participation of elite sportspersons from the perspective of embodiment; a focus on social networks and symbolic immortality acquired during participation in elite sport, and by considering the material culture and memorabilia as manifested in sport heritages practices in South Africa.

Although these dimensions may perhaps at first glance seem, as disparate themes, my analysis elucidates the importance the ‘after life’ of athletes not only in the private sphere, but also draws attention to the centrality of public representation in reflecting upon sporting careers through the medium of heritage. The thesis intentionally considers the afterlife— especially its symbolic or cultural dimension, rather than the more narrowly defined retirement of elite athletes in South Africa during the contemporary period.

The narrative that runs through this thesis is the differential impact of sport experienced at various stages of the elite sportsperson’s career, as well as a combination of continuities and discontinuities through training regimes, bodily stress, the fluctuations of networks and in the case of some a symbolic afterlife in terms of heritage. The findings of these themes are integrated within each chapter and also extrapolated more widely as part of the overall argument.

It highlights for the first time in South African anthropological literature how sporting culture is perpetuated and how an individual’s sporting career can be extended in a different guise. This adds significantly to and links up directly with the other dimensions of a sportsperson’s career as explicated in this thesis. Whereas the afterlives of elite athletes have been conceptualised as an individual decision in most research done on this topic (see Wylleman, Lavalley & Alfermann, 1999; Stambulova, 1994, 2000), this study bridges the gap by showing how the end of a sporting career is a holistic phenomenon with significant ramifications in terms of athletic bodies, social networks and memories associated with the sporting past.

The analysis is refracted theoretically by drawing on notions of masculinity and embodiment, social capital, symbolic immortality, and topophilia. I show how the injured body in rugby challenges the heteronormative masculine status of players and therefore it is not uncommon for players to play even when injured. The need to play, even when injured, relates to the desire

for symbolic immortality. Furthermore peer pressure which emerges through social networks also contributes to players playing hurt. Howe (2004) and Hoberman's (1992) conceptualisation of the sporting body as a machine is used to understand the complex meaning of injury and risk for players.

Social capital and specifically the work of Bourdieu (1977, 2006), Coleman (1988, 1994) and Putnam (1990) is useful in exploring the social networks that athletes rely on after sport. An analysis of the importance of educational institutions demonstrates how rugby players construct social networks as a form of capital that can be drawn upon in their lives after elite sport. Interpretations based on first-hand observations of celebratory events, such as the 75th anniversary of the Blue Bulls Rugby Union and the Paul Roos Legends Evening show how fraternal bonding and relations of trust are key in the afterlife of players.

The way in which the material culture associated with bodies enable athletes to live on in public memory is interrogated through the lens of symbolic immortality. Lifton's (1976) work on symbolic immortality was particularly valuable, as athletes are concerned with how they will be remembered when their professional careers end. An inductive approach was utilised as it became apparent that many former professional athletes shared a concern about the salience of sporting memory – a central concept in symbolic immortality (Leonard, 2012).

Following from this sport heritage representation manifests itself in complex ways as a counterpoint to the commercialized Springbok Experience Museum I briefly discuss the Choet Visser Rugby Museum in Bloemfontein, where a personal intimate sense of gift giving is promoted and the Comrades Marathon House in Pietermaritzburg where not only do the artefacts themselves have symbolic meaning, but the actual place where these artefacts are housed has deep symbolic significance for former runners. Unlike the Springbok Experience Museum the Comrades Marathon House caters for athletes and former athletes themselves, rather than the tourist market.

Bale's (1994) notion of topophilia, is used as conceptual lens to interpret the dynamics between people and place at the Comrades Marathon House. These three cases show the complexity of sports heritage production in South Africa, and point to the politics of representation when it comes to displaying the past. Major themes that emanated from this study were that of nostalgia, memory, commercialism and the significance of the material culture of sport.

The centrepiece of this study is rugby because it is the most branded sport in South Africa. The new Springbok Experience Rugby museum is the most expensive sport museum in South

African and follows a global trend in the commodification of sport. Chris Hedges (2009), in his book *Illusions of Empire*, argues that “the celebrity is the vehicle used by corporate society to sell us [these] branded commodities, most of which we do not need.” Celebrities humanise commercial commodities (Hedges, 2009:37). This creates a “culture of illusion” where illusion, can replace reality and where celebrity worship banishes reality (Hedges, 2009:22). The commercial “personalizing” of the world leads to oversimplification and gross distortion (Hedges, 2009:37). Others have argued that “we have embraced the hero epic [and] that it doesn’t even matter if you actually have the experience as long as you can associate yourself with it” (Napier, 2006: 87).

This need to be associated with the sporting celebrity has created a demand where people want to see, touch and perhaps meet their former sporting heroes. The idea of the sporting reality being an illusion of our obsession with sport heroes facilitates an almost seamless slide into the commodification of sport which has shaped the manner in which South Africa’s rugby heritage is preserved. The sporting celebrity and the commercialisation of their achievements in sport museums (in particular the Springbok Experience Rugby Museum) contribute to the illusions we have of the sport industry. These illusions can also have a personal element as Hedges (2009:19) observes: “celebrities are portrayed as idealized forms of ourselves. It is we, in perverse irony, who are never fully actualized, never fully real in a celebrity culture”.

In tracing the relationship between sport and anthropology the thesis started with a disciplinary overview of the anthropology of sport and then showed how the field moved away from an evolutionary understanding of culture to a more diffused approach where culture is understood as malleable and relative.

I showed how the anthropology of sport was promoted by South African born anthropologist Max Gluckman in the 1950s, during a time when sport was not yet considered as a distinct topic of study by most anthropologists. The significant contribution that Dr Danie Craven made to understanding rugby as a reflection of South African society is analysed by drawing on archival sources from the South African Rugby Board Archives. His academic roots in “Volkekunde” informed his understanding of sport and culture. Craven’s interest in rugby and how that intersects with his interest in anthropology have not been made explicit within scholarship on sport and anthropology in South Africa.

Having established the disciplinary background I considered the elite sports culture within which informants of this study described their experiences of retiring from competitive sport.

This entailed looking at specific aspects of the role of sport heroes in society, and incorporating the role of the media in representing the image of professional sportsmen and women. Following Whannel's (2002) argument I proposed that sport heroes have become a ubiquitous part of South Africa's discourse of achievement, as they are promoted as role models to the youth who, many believe, are in a state of moral decay (as manifested by a high dropout rate from school and an increase in teenage pregnancies).

Culture as a central concept of anthropological inquiry has been utilized to understand the complex meanings that athletes attribute to their athletic performance. The relationship between culture and ethnography has been contested (see Clifford and Marcus, 1986), but this study demonstrates the value of conceptualising culture as the shared lived experience of elite athletes within a very demanding sporting context. Their everyday lives are regimented and controlled by both their training and eating regimes (bodies). The pervasive influence the media has of their public portrayal is central in shaping their identity. The elite sports culture is a double-edged sword. It elevates athletes to status of heroes in society, but can also be the vehicle of their demise (as was shown through the Oscar Pistorius case).

Pisk (2012:11) convincingly argues that "modern top-level athletes consciously or unconsciously bet on survival by immortal fame." Interestingly, the fleeting nature of fame was expressed by former Springbok rugby player, Ollie le Roux. He alluded to the heroic status of his careers as "fake", "and isolated from the realities of the "real" world. Some athletes (Elana Meyer) went to the extent to change her physical appearance (she cut her hair short and dyed it blond) to escape the demands of being famous. These interpretations of the elite sports culture show the fragmented realities of what it means to be a sports hero in society. It also contributes to an important strand in the anthropological study of sport that questions the 'realities' as is represented through the medium of mass media. The elite sports culture dictates how sporting bodies are conditioned, which makes an analysis of how elite athletes perceive their bodies a crucial component in answering the main research questions of how elite athletes adapt to life after sport.

The notion of the elite sport person's life as a "bubble" is addressed, as their daily routine revolves around dedication and sacrifice to perform in the sporting arena. The elite sports culture is also a sphere in which professional athletes become public property. This is especially the case for Zola Budd, who feels that her life in America, where she is not as well-known as in South Africa, provides her and her family with a sense of shelter from the demands of the public. Although her fame was achieved almost 30 years ago, her legacy and controversial

running career still stimulate the media's interest. It is within an elite sports culture that fans become instrumental in elevating the sports hero to an icon.

Through extensive television coverage of sport, and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, sport fans can stay up to date with the athlete's preparations and personal life (depending on what he/she chooses to share on the platform). It is from within this elite sports culture and the pressures and perceptions of being a sports hero in society that athletes make the decision to retire from sport. This transition has an impact not only on the daily routines of athletes, but also on how they perceive their bodies after sport.

The (broken) sports body, injuries and risk were central themes that emerged from my research. I showed that professional rugby players perceived their bodies as machines, and any glitch in the mechanics of the body was ignored. All the rugby players interviewed experienced a career threatening injury and most of them decided to end their rugby careers because their bodies could not recover quickly enough to play again at a competitive level. A central theme that emerged was how athletes felt alienated from their bodies. Rugby players came to accept injuries as an inevitable part of their work. This is most clearly apparent in the assertion of one player, that he did not allow the fact that he was temporarily incapacitated, as the result of a spinal cord injury to affect his post – rugby career.

Notions around heteronormative masculinity as embodied by rugby players who were injured showed that injuries are a threat to the hegemonic masculine traits that often form part of a rugby player's perception of manliness. This was particularly the case for a former Springbok front rower, who felt that the injury he sustained "made him less of a man." Considering that professional athletes become more passive after their sports retirement, I found that they are acutely aware of the representation of their bodies in the public space.

The body, as a historical site of anthropological investigation was interpreted through the lens of injury in sport. Whereas Rubin (2013) conceptualises rugby bodies as sites for "violence", this study shows how injuries were deemed an inevitable part of their work. A study on the embodiment of athletes is a novel approach within anthropological scholarship in South Africa. Athlete's afterlives are however not only concerned with corporeality but also with the shared experience of injuries and disappointment of losing which created important friendships and social networks, especially among rugby players – a sport that apart from golf, carries the richest financial rewards for the largest number of participants in South Africa.

My study of the networks that professional rugby players drew on to secure income after sport was provided. The conceptual underpinning relates to the importance of establishing social capital during the active athletic career. Social capital generated in everyday networks that are beneficial to individuals and communities has been crucial in securing a financial future for retired professional rugby players. In 2007 a study done by SARPA revealed that 78,18% of all professional rugby players in South Africa were totally dependent on rugby for their income and had no alternative financial sources (Schoeman, 2009:99).

This is a disquieting statistic, but I show how the social capital that rugby players accumulate by belonging to a very tight-knit rugby playing community enables them to tap into ‘bonding’ social capital. These social networks were developed at school and university level, through participation in rugby at traditionally rugby playing schools and university clubs. Looking at the role that schools and universities play in forging these networks is a provocative way to understand how the lives of players unfold after sport. A central finding of this thesis is that social capital is established during the ‘active’ period of an elite sportsperson’s career and enables athletes to establish trusting relationships outside the sphere of sport in the working world.

The majority of Springboks came from only 1.81% of the total number of schools in the country. Friendships and networks formed by players who attend the same schools, come from a similar class background and go on to play professional rugby together, are crucial for occupational options after rugby. The case of De Wet Barry and Marius Joubert going into a business venture together attests to the fact that norms of trust and reciprocity (the antecedents of social capital) that were developed through rugby can secure an occupation to fall back on after sport.

Considering that only a small percentage of players are able to balance their professional playing careers with a parallel career in the professional era, these networks become imperative to secure a financially stable life after sport. Social capital can however be exclusionary, as those players who don’t come from traditionally rugby playing schools and who weren’t able to secure these norms of trust and reciprocity from a young age, have to find alternative ways to survive financially after rugby. The case of Eddie Andrews, who worked as a delivery man, before signing a rugby contract with a franchise elucidates this point. Rugby as a space in which fraternal bonding occurs, and the initiation and other rituals that Springboks are exposed to, cement these relationships.

Life histories for individual athletes become collective life histories when reproduced and packaged in the public domain as heritage. The life histories of athletes do not develop in a vacuum but are continuously being shaped by the elite sports culture, social networks and the heritage industry. Chris Hedges (2009:32), makes the poignant point that “celebrity culture plunges us into a moral void. No one has any worth beyond his or her appearance, usefulness, or ability to ‘succeed.’ The highest achievements in a celebrity culture are wealth, sexual conquest, and fame. It does not matter how these are obtained.” Hedges (2009) also argues that sport and athletes have become a form of spectacle. This research shows that the sporting spectacle is not only confined to the quadrants of the stadiums, but lives on symbolically in various forms through heritage, nostalgia and memory. This thesis considers how this difficult terrain was traversed.

Heritage studies have escalated in post-apartheid South Africa. Monuments, memorials, and museums have become the focal point in understanding issues of culture, nature and the complexity of representing the past. The politics of representation and that what historian Leslie Witz (2015) has termed “the dilemma label” in the museum industry reflect on the difficulty heritage practitioners experience when dealing with change.

Heritage in the South African landscape has been studied as it relates to visual culture (Coombes, 2003), museums (Legassick & Rassool, 2000; Rasool & Prosalendis, 2001; Rassool, 2006; Faber, Rassool & Witz, 2007; Witz & Murray, 2015), nature (Meskell, 2012), memorials (Marschall, 2010) and memory (Grundlingh & Huigen, 2011). The study of heritage as it relates to both the tangible and intangible aspects of sport has been largely overlooked. Bolsmann and Burnett (2015) note in fact that in general the study of sport remains marginal within South African academia. In a small way my study contributes to this neglected field.

Moreover I show that the heritage associated with the sporting past does not only represent groups or communities, but heritage is also a very personal experience for sport heroes who themselves have become heritage ‘objects’. I argue in line with Timothy and Boyd (2003) that heritage exist in ‘scales’, where a common or shared heritage can be on a global, national, local or personal scale. Their memories and the material culture that reinforce these memories have personal significance for the players and their immediate families. The case of the Errol Tobias exhibition at the Springbok Experience Museum shows the important personal aspect of sporting heritage.

An analysis of the small-scale preservation of South African rugby heritage on the one hand (Choet Visser Rugby Museum) and the commercialisation of the Springbok brand on the other (Springbok Experience Rugby Museum) shows the contested and changing nature of sport heritage practices. I argued that with the inevitable tide of professionalism sweeping through South African rugby administration, it is not only the players who become sought after commodities sold on a very competitive players transfer market, but the material culture representing their heritage has also become commercialised. Timothy (2011) states that heritage is the present use of the past. I show how the past is strategically used for present day purposes, especially in the commercialised rugby heritage industry. The rise of the sports heritage industry in South Africa goes hand in hand with the commercialisation of sport where individuality, wealth and the maximisation of profit trump all.

Changes in terms of the preservation of South African rugby heritage were highlighted and it was shown how community rugby museums and private collections formed the backbone of rugby heritage during the amateur era of the game. Private rugby collectors often had personal relationships with players who donated their memorabilia to them.

This is especially the case with Choet Visser, who as an influential businessman and rugby administrator in Bloemfontein formed friendships with prominent rugby players who gifted their memorabilia to his museum. Visser was adamant that all the memorabilia in his museum had to be donated. This form of gift giving cemented not only the relationship between him and the rugby player who donated the artefacts, but also contributed to the museum becoming a space where informal relationships could be forged amongst fans and players of the game. In the professional era, and with the monetary value that is assigned to memorabilia, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain community sport museums. As Visser's son-in-law explained, professional rugby players have realised the monetary value of their jerseys and rather sell them to charities or auction them off to accumulate capital.

The findings suggest that the nature of sport heritage has changed since the professionalization of rugby in South Africa. Sport heritage during the amateur era reflected a nuanced, personal and intimate relationship between the collector and the donor. In the professional era the heritage associated with rugby has become overtly commercial, as the case study of the Springbok Experience Museum demonstrates.

In contrast to the Springbok Experience Museum where commercialisation trumped sentiment, the Comrades Marathon House in Pietermaritzburg was initiated and maintained by a group of

“old boys” who have a vested interest in the preservation associated with the material culture of the race. Topophilia, or the bond between people and place, is used as a lens to make sense of the affiliation runners have with the Comrades Marathon House.

The Comrades Marathon house is not only a museum but a place that runners who have participated in the race consider as a sacred place. I have argued that the symbolic immortality of legends of the race is promoted by the running memorabilia that are donated to museum. The notion of “heroes as heritage” (Gammon, 2014) is explored and it was shown that the gift giving of sports memorabilia that occurs at the museum is a reciprocal process whereby the material culture associated with athletes of the past enables them to live on in perpetuity.

A key conclusion is that intangible aspects of the Comrades Marathon’s heritage escape the confines of the museum and live on in nuanced ways – through rituals, traditions and the markers on the race route where the intangible aspect of the race’s history is promoted. These memories escape the confines of the museum and contribute to the mysticism associated with the race.

This brief overview of the content of the thesis indicates how the study’s conceptualisation shifts from the individual to the collective and how remembrance practices are shaped in both the private and public sphere.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

What then is the significance of this study, both in terms of the methodology as well as the contribution it makes to discourse development in anthropology?

It breaks new ground pertaining to the existing body of knowledge on sport and anthropology in South Africa. This is done by making the connection between the athletic afterlife and remembrance practices. It also elucidates the pioneering role that early South African anthropologists, like Danie Craven and Max Gluckman played in promoting sport as a vehicle to understand the complexity of culture.

Very few anthropological studies have considered South African sport (see Rubin, 2013; Vidacs, 2006 and Ogunniyi, 2013). Moreover no study to date has considered the afterlife of athlete’s as it relates to their corporeality, social networks, and heritage in the South African context. A nuanced interpretation derived from observations and interviews show how the continuation of life after sport escapes the confines of the personal and becomes strategically produced to stimulate the memory bank of the South African sporting public.

The analysis moves beyond conventional approaches both in terms of the methodological approach and by integrating anthropological concepts such as culture, embodiment, networks and memory to make a compelling argument for the importance of sport as a serious study in its own right. The methodological strength lies in the utilization of unique “field sites” such as sport events, sport auctions, museums, and locker rooms. In doing so I constructed a multi-sited field (Marcus, 1995). By “following the thing”, or the sporting artefact in this instance, I show how the afterlife of athletes transcend the immediate retirement phase and their sporting memories live on, in sometimes unpredictable abstract ways. The experiences of athletes at the elite level who in their own right have trials and tribulations relating to their sporting afterlives has been overlooked. This thesis therefore addresses the lacuna and enhances the anthropological body of knowledge by considering the neglected aspect of the elite sportsperson’s lives and its manifestation in the elite sports culture and in heritage practices.

Moreover this study contributes meaningfully to the discourse development of the discipline, as it critically engages with questions of what anthropological fieldwork entails and demonstrates the value of doing “anthropology at home.” Micaela di Leonardo (1998) in her seminal text, *Exotics at Home* makes a persuasive argument for implementing an “ethnographic, culture – sensitive eye to social analysis, at home and abroad.” (Di Leonardo, 1998:23). This thesis advocates the social analysis of sport in South African society from an emic perspective within a context that I am familiar with, as a former elite athlete.

There seems to be a trend in recent South African anthropological work that draws on a biographical approach (see van der Waal 2015; Dickson & Spiegel, 2015). This study builds on this tradition by making meaningful interpretations of the life histories of athletes, whilst upholding the necessary detachment or what Comaroff (2010) calls ‘critical estrangement’ facilitated by my position as a female in a very masculine sport and as an elite athlete in a less ‘prestigious’ sport This makes me in a sense both an insider and an outsider. This positionality is addressed in the “personal reflections” section to follow.

PERSONAL REFLECTION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The “reflexive turn” in anthropology reiterated the importance of considering the anthropologist’s values and beliefs when studying people and their cultures. The work of Clifford and Marcus (1986), Rabinow (1978) and Geertz (1988) challenged anthropologists to consider their own positionality and critically reflect on the influence they may have on the people they study. It was deemed important to reflect on your role as a researcher in the research

process and in doing so address the potential bias of one's conclusions. Burawoy (1991) argues that reflexivity is critical for legitimising research findings.

Reflecting on my own personal history and how that has informed the findings of this study is imperative. My 'previous' life as an elite athlete stimulated my interest in exploring how other athletes experience life after sport. As a South African swimmer my retirement from the sport was enforced by a shoulder injury almost ten years ago. This personal experience informed my understanding of how rugby players and athletes perceive their lives after sport.

I believe that embarking on this study only after a ten-year hiatus from sport has provided me with the necessary objectivity to relate to the emotiveness of the process of retiring from sport without being subjectively influenced. I found that by introducing myself as someone who had participated on an elite level in sport was an effective way to start a conversation around the pressures of being a professional sportsperson. Tinley (2003, 2012) a former professional American triathlete whose research dealt with the emotional trauma of athletic retirement, also found that his status as an 'insider' contributed to the access he could gain to retired high profile athletes. According to him he had "earned the conversation" he could have with former athletes, because of his status as a former sporting celebrity himself.

Many of the informants shared with me intimate details of their decision to retire from competitive sport, and I believe that my status as an "insider", although in a very different sporting code, enhanced the openness and honesty with which they shared their stories. This level of 'comfortability' with the researcher contributed to many of the informants providing me with the contact details of their former team mates with whom I could organise interviews. This snow-ball interview technique proved very effective, as there were times when I approached former professional athletes for an interview and would be denied either because of time constraints or because they considered me to be a potential journalist trying to pry into their lives.

Reflecting on my identity as a woman doing research amongst male rugby players, I realise it undoubtedly shaped the type of conversations I could pursue. For example in an interview with a former professional athlete he explained in detail the pressure that his life as a recognisable figure in public placed on his relationship with his wife. He spoke of how their privacy was compromised when they went out into the public domain, as fans would approach him for autographs or just to have a casual chat. He explained that despite this 'unwanted' attention he never denied a person an autograph and that his lack of privacy affected his marriage adversely.

After this revelation he said, “I probably shouldn’t be telling you this because you are also a woman and will probably side with my wife’s feelings around this.” This example shows how certain information was censored and deemed not appropriate for discussion, because of my status as a woman.

I also experienced a situation where whilst interviewing a rugby player he suggested that I speak to one of his former team mates. As the interview drew to a close he made the phone call to his friend informing him that he is sitting with a “young lady” doing research on retirement from professional rugby. His reference to me as a “young lady” could have influenced the decision of his friend to agree to be interviewed. It was however not only in the interviews with the former rugby players where the effect of my identity as a woman became apparent, but most of the private collectors of rugby memorabilia were also men.

At the Lions Rugby Museum at Ellis Park the curator of the museum greeted me and asked where my interest in rugby came from as “most woman he knew were pretty uninformed about the game”. Although this generalised statement is tainted with male chauvinism, the point is that he found it strange that I as a woman was firstly knowledgeable about rugby, and secondly actually doing research on rugby heritage. The perception of me as a woman doing research in a male-dominant environment of rugby undeniably allowed me access to many former rugby players, but it also contributed to the ‘censoring’ of certain information as they tried to uphold their gendered norms.

After the triumph explores how former professional rugby players and athletes (road running and track and field) experience a life after sport. This experience is categorised according to the elite sports culture, their bodies and the social networks that are drawn on to secure financial stability after sport. I also show how the memories and nostalgia associated with the sporting past contribute to sport heroes’ symbolically immortal status in society.

A limitation of this study is that it considers mostly men’s experiences in mostly male dominated sports, such as rugby. The majority athletes interviewed were men. Although women’s experiences were portrayed through Elana Meyer and Zola Budd’s accounts of their lives out of the sporting limelight, further research could consider whether men and women decide to end their professional athletic careers for different reasons. For example, when I asked Zola Budd whether she ever sustained a career threatening injury she replied, “My biggest injury was becoming pregnant with the twins. I had to stop running when I was

pregnant.” This disclosure raises questions around biological and cultural expectations and differences between men and women when it comes to the termination of an athletic career.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF RESEARCH

After the Triumph, has prised open several debates that could lead to further research. Future studies could consider how the notion of pain is understood as it relates to injured sporting bodies. A comparative study on injury and risk in sport could compare rugby (a contact or more accurately a combat sport) with athletics for example. This study set out to provide an analysis of rugby (mostly male dominates) and athlete’s experiences after sport. Women’s rugby in South Africa is a growing sport. The memorabilia associated with their achievements and the manner in which their heritage is packaged has not yet been researched. Considering that the exhibition of the women’s game is marginal at the Springbok Experience Museum, future research could consider issues around gender, rugby and heritage in South African rugby. Furthermore studying sporting artefacts from the perspective of material culture could see future research consider the notion of ‘fetishism’ as it relates to why people collect sports memorabilia.

The sport heritage aspect of this study is a novel approach to the study of sport. But the relationship between sport heritage and nostalgia is complex and further research should consider what role nostalgia plays in the decision-making process and motivation for visiting sport heritage attractions. Considering that sport heritage is an understudied field in South African scholarship, further research might consider why visitors frequent sport museums. Finally, the production of heritage attractions are often driven by those in power (Gavua, 2015). Research into the politics of sport heritage practice in the South African context, and research into sport heritage as a contested space, can illuminate the complex relationship between politics, sport, heritage and different forms of memory.

In spite of how sport heroes are often perceived in society - through the lens of achievement and fame - this study has highlighted the complex reality that athletes have to deal with once their sporting careers are over. The athletic afterlife, as shown has compelling dimensions that were analysed on an individual level through fame, their bodies and social networks and linked to remembrance practices in the sports heritage industry. These concepts are key to describing a ‘new reality’ within in the context of South African sport and in doing so this thesis advances our knowledge of elite sport cultures.

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APPENDIX A
LIST OF INTERVIEWS, DATE AND PLACE

1. Sport Medical Doctor 17 April 2013 (Bloemfontein)
2. Sport Biokeneticist 29 April 2013 (Stellenbosch Institute of Sport)
3. Elana Meyer 13 May 2013 Former South African Athlete and Olympic Medallist (At her home in Stellenbosch)
4. Dr Hendrik Snyders 16 August 2013 SARU Heritage Manager (SARU Offices, Tygerburg Cape Town)
5. Saartjie Olivier 9 September 2013 Loftus Pretoria Blue Bull Rugby Museum assistant curator (BBRU Offices, Loftus Versfeld, Pretoria)
6. Balthi Du Plessis 10 September 2013 Pretoria Blue Bull Heritage Consultant (Home Pretoria)
7. Nico du Plessis 1 September 2013 Choet Visser Rugby Museum, Bloemfontein (Home)
8. Veronica du Plessis 1 September 2013 Choet Visser Rugby Museum, Bloemfontein (Home)
9. Andy Colquhoun 8 November 2013 SARU Strategic Manager (Coffee Shop, Waterfront, Cape Town)
10. Bevin Fortuin 8 December 2013 Former Springbok Rugby Player (Outeniqua Park, George)
11. Sian Theron 9 February 2014 Comrades House Museum Curator (Pietermaritzburg)
12. Ollie le Roux 18 February 2014 Former Springbok Rugby Player (Coffee Shop Bloemfontein)
13. Xolile Yawa 18 February 2014 Former South African road runner (CareCure Offices Bloemfontein)
14. Chris Roussouw 2014 12 March Former Springbok Rugby Player (Coffee Shop, Stellenbosch)
15. De Wet Barry 26 march 2014 Former Springbok Rugby Player (Quantec Business Offices, Tygervalley, Cape Town)
16. Marius Joubert 4 April 2014 Former Springbok Rugby Player (Quantec Business Offices, Tygervalley, Cape Town)
17. Pieter Muller 3 April 2014 Former Springbok Rugby Player (Sport Science Institute of South Africa, Cape Town)
18. Eddie Andrews 4 April 2014 Former Springbok Rugby Player (DA provincial offices, Mitchells Plain, Cape Town)
19. Zola Budd 14 April 2014 Former South African runner and world record holder (Coffee Shop, Stellenbosch)
20. David de Villiers 23 April 2014 Former Free State Cheetah rugby player and Manager at SARPA (Coffee Shop Stellenbosch)
21. Keith Andrews 5 June 2014 Former Western Province and Springbok rugby player (PTI Offices Cape town)

22. Johan Fourie 6 June 2014 Former South African middle distance runner (Alexander Forbes offices Stellenbosch)
23. Chris Kruger 26 June 2014 Former Free State Cheetah/Blue Bulls Rugby Player (At his home, Bloemfontein)
24. Jantjie Marthinus 14 July 2014 Former South African athlete (completed his Phd on the psychological effects of retirement on athletes) (Coffee Shop Stellenbosch)
25. Sport Psychologist 24 July 2014 Hotel Cape Town
26. Anton Leonard 18 July 2014 Former Springbok/Blue Bulls Captain (Coffee Shop George)
27. Brendan Venter 13 August 2014 Former Springbok Rugby Player (1995/1999 World Cup) Medical Doctor (Telephonic Interview)
28. Anonymous Curator at Paul Roos Museum 20 August 2013 (Stellenbosch)
29. Hendrick Ramaala 4 September 2014 Marathon Athlete/ Coach (Telephonic Interview)
30. Theo Guesteyn 5 September 2014. Rugby collector and owner of private rugby museum. (Kleine Zalze Estate, Stellenbosch)
31. James Dalton Snr 15 September 2014 Rugby Curator Ellis Park Rugby Museum (Ellis Park Rugby Museum)
32. Bruce Fordyce 16 September 2014 Former Comrades Winner (At his home Parkhurst, Johannesburg)
33. Richard Mayer 17 September 2014. Author of book on road running in SA keen runner and coach (At his office in Sandton, Johannesburg)
34. Piet Heymans 5 November 2014. CEO SARPA (Coffee Shop, Stellenbosch)
35. Jason Reed (Pseudonym) 15 November 2014. 10 time Comrades Marathon Athlete (At his home, Constantia, Cape Town)

APPENDIX B INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Introduction:

Aims and purpose regarding the study (Read to interviewee)

I am Marizanne Grundlingh. I am undertaking research as part of my doctoral studies in anthropology at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. My study is titled 'After the Triumph': An anthropological study into the lives of elite athletes after competitive sport. The study is concerned with the experiences elite athletes have of retirement from competitive sport. The study is completely confidential, so nothing that you say will be reported in a way that might identify you, unless you agree to be identified. If you do not wish to be identified, an invented name (pseudonym) will be used. The interview will be informal with a few guiding questions and will be recorded, with your consent. If you prefer this interview not to be recorded, I am happy just to take notes. Also, you are under no obligation to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with. You will also not be compensated for choosing to be part of the study. Thank you for taking time to meet with me.

Interviewee Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Sport: _____ **Highest level achieved in sport** _____

Years of competitive sport: _____

Interview Duration: _____

Research Questions

- How did your sporting career develop from school to professionalization?
- What was your greatest sporting moment?
- How did you come to the decision to end your professional sporting career? In other words what factors contributed to your retirement? Age, injury, loss of interest, decline in performance, family commitments, financial difficulty.
- Can you explain to me how you experienced the decision to retire from sport and the adjustment phase thereafter?
- Did you stay involved in the sporting discipline, either as a coach, administrators, television commentators or public speakers, once you retired from competitive sport?
- How did you plan for a life once you retired from competitive sport? Did you plan at all?
- Did you study at the height of your sporting career? Do you consider tertiary education important for your post- sports life?
- Did you receive any support, in terms of planning and advice about your career termination from sports governing bodies during your time as elite sports men/women?
- Who was your support system, during the decision process of retirement and afterwards; family, friends, team mates, coaches?
- Have you maintained friendships and stayed in contact with team mates, coaches and competitors, once you retired?
- What aspects did you find most challenging in your post-sporting lives?

- What are your memories of your sporting life?
- Are you concerned with the legacy you left once you retired?
- Do you have any memorabilia that is of symbolic significance to you?
- Do you have any regrets of being an elite athlete, or retiring at the time that you did?
- Did your sense of self and self-worth change in any way after retirement?
- Do you feel you had an impact on the wider society, in terms of influencing the youth or being a role model?
- Do you have any regrets in being an elite athlete, or retiring at the time when you did?
- Did you experience a smooth transition from athlete to non-athlete, in terms of adapting to less rigorous daily routines?
- What did you learn about yourself, by being an elite sportsperson?
- How has being an elite sports person, affected the relationships with your friends and family? Did this changed once you retired?
- Do you long back to still be competitive on the sports field?
- Are you competitive, in other ways?
- Has your diet and physical conditioning changed since you have retired?
- How do you feel about being a non – athlete?
- Do you still participate in any sport, or have you taken up other sports?
- Would you want the same sporting-life you had for your children, if you have children?
- Any other comments or stories you would like to share about this topic?

Would you be willing to suggest other athletes who you know, who would want to participate in this study?

Name: _____ Cell/Email: _____

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

I, (print your name)..... give consent to take part in the study titled: *'After the Triumph': An anthropological study into the lives of elite athletes after competitive sport.*

I acknowledge that I have been explained the aims and purpose of this study. I confirm that I have had the study, so far as it affects me, fully explained to my satisfaction by the researcher, Marizanne Grundlingh. My consent to be interviewed for the purpose of the study by Marizanne Grundlingh is freely given. Although I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of elite athlete's retirement process, it has been explained to me that my involvement in the study may not be of any benefit to me or my community. I understand that I can request that my name not be connected with any information that I provide and that, if I do not wish to be identified, Marizanne Grundlingh will create a pseudonym to identify me.

- I do/do not (circle one) wish to be identified.

I also understand that, if I do not wish the interview to be tape-recorded, Marizanne Grundlingh will only take notes of the interview.

- I do/do not (circle one) wish to be recorded.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw the information that I provide at any time during the information gathering stage of the study.

I am under no obligation during the interview to divulge information or to discuss issues if I do not wish to do so.

I understand that I will be provided with information about the results of the study if I wish.

- I do/do not wish (circle one) to be provided with information about the results of the study.

If you answered in the affirmative to either of the above questions, please provide your contact details.

Name _____ Date _____

Residential address _____

Contact number _____ Email _____

Signature (Participant) _____

WITNESS

I, Marizanne Grundlingh, have described to _____ the nature of the interview to be carried out. In my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature (Interviewer) _____ Date _____

Thank You for participating in this study. If you have any questions or queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Marizanne Grundlingh

(07228****)

PhD Candidate (Anthropology): University of Free State

APPENDIX C
SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS OF INFORMANTS

Name	Sport	Sporting achievements
Bevin Fortuin	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Springbok test caps. • 22 Appearances for Free State Cheetah's in Super Rugby between 2006 -2008. • Currie Cup winner with Free State Cheetah's in 2007.
Ollie le Roux	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54 Springbok test caps. • Currie Cup winner with the Natal Sharks (1992). • Participated in 1999 Rugby World Cup. • Three time Currie Cup winner with the Free State Cheetah's (2005, 2006 (shared), 2007).
Chris Rossouw	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 Springbok test caps. • Winner of the 1995 Rugby World Cup. • Participated in 1999 Rugby World Cup.
De Wet Barry	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 Springbok test caps. • Two time Currie Cup winner with Western Province in 2000 and 2001. • Participated in Rugby World Cup 2003. • Winner of 2004 Tri-nations tournament.
Marius Joubert	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 Springbok test caps. • Currie Cup winner with the Free State Cheetah's in 2007. • Winner of 2004 Tri-nations tournament.
Pieter Muller	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 Springbok test caps. • Participated in 1999 Rugby World Cup.
Eddie Andrews	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 Springbok test caps • Represented the Stormers from 2003 – 2007.
David de Villiers	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represented the Lions and Cheetahs in Currie Cup and Super Rugby.
Keith Andrews	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 Springbok test caps. • Represented Western Province from 1985 -1997.

Chris Kruger	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represented Free State Cheetah's in provincial competitions.
Anton Leonard	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Springbok test caps. • Former Blue Bull captain. • Winner of 2007 Super Rugby Championships with the Blue Bulls.
Brendan Venter	Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 Springbok test caps • Part of the victorious 1995 Springbok Rugby World Cup squad. • Represented Springboks at 1999 Rugby World Cup.
Elana Meyer	Middle distance running/ Half Marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver medallist at 1992 Barcelona Olympics in 10 000m. • Winner of World half marathon championships in Oslo 1994. • Half marathon world record holder in 1991, 1997, 1998 and 1999.
Xolile Yawa	Middle distance/ Marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13th in 10 000m at Barcelona Olympics in 1992. • Winner of Berlin Marathon in 1993. • Represented South Africa at 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. • 9 time South African National Champion in 10 000m (1985–1990, 1992, 1994, 1996).
Zola Budd	Middle distance running/ Marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World record holder in 5000m in 1984(unratified) and 1985. • Competed in 1984 Los Angeles. Olympics for Great Britain and 1992 Barcelona Olympics for South Africa.
Johan Fourie	Middle distance running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star athlete in the 1980s, but could not compete internationally due to the sports boycott. • Ran more than 50 sub – four miles. • South African record holder in the mile in 1987.
Bruce Fordyce	Road running/ Marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9- time winner of Comrades Marathon (1981 – 1988, 1990). • Completed 30 Comrades Marathons.
Jason Reed*	Marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10- Time Comrades Marathon finisher.
Jantjie Marthinus	Middle distance running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former South African 800m champion.
Richard Mayer	Road running/ Marathon and Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated runner and Coach.

Hendrick Ramaala	Road running/ Marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner of 2004 New York Marathon. • Silver medallist in World Half Marathon Championship in 1998 and 1999. • 4 – time Olympian (1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008).
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*pseudonym