COMMUNICATION AND POLITICAL PROTEST IN SPORT: A CASE STUDY OF CROSS-NATIONAL SUPPORT IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

The interrelationship between politics and (political) communication has increased dramatically since the advent of mass media. During the modern era, mass media plays an important role to articulate societal, political and social demands. In many instances, political action is a reaction to political communication from the mass media, but also from civil society, individuals in society and other role-players. In the modern era the mass media has become political actors deeply integrated within the political process. This is partly the result of a decline in political socialisation, where the family in their role as primary agents play a lesser role as a result of the media's role as principle agents through which information and policies are being presented to the public. However, during the apartheid years, mass media in South Africa predominantly articulated support to the government, and disenfranchised communities were left with few channels to articulate their grievances. The disenfranchised communities used different channels to articulate their grievances. One channel that was used was sport. Visiting teams to South Africa were supported to illustrate dissatisfaction with their position in society. However, after the democratisation of the country, the expectation was that support would be transferred back to the national team. This article investigates this continued phenomenon of cross-national support and provides a number of reasons to explain the reasoning behind this form of political protest.

Keywords: Political communication; political protest; cross-national support; All Blacks; Springboks.

Sleutelwoorde: Politieke kommunikasie; politieke protes; teen-nasionale steun; All Blacks; Springbokke.

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the domestic and international society a dynamic interrelationship has developed in the modern era between politics and the media. This interrelationship between politics (political system) and the media (communication system) has been accelerated and intensified since the advent of mass literacy and the popular press in the nineteenth century (Heywood 2004:204). In the modern state politics (political system) and the media (communication system) have always existed parallel, but interdependable, next to each other. It is therefore doubtful that the two systems could function optimally without the other. Political scientists and academics in the two related fields have acknowledged the interdependence of international and

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local politics and the media. The reason for this phenomenon is that political action in many instances is a reaction in the form of a policy or a related action to demands or support articulated through (political) communication (Roskin 2009:155).

Political communication within the broader political environment is the manner in which inputs are articulated by society and then transformed as inputs into the political system. This articulation of political communication is predominantly channelled through the media as inputs into the political system. These inputs can be classified in two broad categories, either in the form of support or as demands from society. The political system may then act on the inputs by way of outputs (policy or related action) to the demands articulated by society or a section of society. If the demands are satisfactorily dealt with, any further demands may either increase or subside. The demands may subside if the central government either deals satisfactorily with the demands, or are able to suppress the demands made by society (Roskin 2009:155). If the demands are not satisfactorily addressed, then they could intensify and put pressure on the political system as a further set of inputs.

Society, and specifically organised civil society, articulates grievances or support through different channels, but in the modern era communication is predominantly through mass media such as the newspapers, television or radio. However, in some instances where the mass media is either controlled or co-opted by the government, society or sub-society has to develop alternative channels to articulate their grievances.

Political communication and its relationship with meanings/viewpoints at sub-societal level, is a prominent field with the subfield of politics and culture (Berezin 1997:371). The concept "meaning" in this context is derived from the specific perspectives of society, which they articulate as inputs within the political system (government). Within the cultural subdivisions of society, especially in a country with sharp cultural and racial divisions, political communication is a dynamic force that shapes societies through the inputs that they articulate. It may be that the subdivision of society is a minority or is suppressed by an overbearing government which potentially inhibits their grievances, with the result that their demands are not successfully dealt with.

The allegiance or disloyalty of a political/cultural subgroup to the larger group in the political system could be demonstrated in various ways. When their outputs are suppressed and they are frustrated in their efforts to articulate their grievances, it could be channelled along alternative means. In its most extreme form it could be in the way of political protest resulting in inputs and demands to the political system.

2. SPECIFIC POLITICAL PROTEST – CROSS-NATIONAL SUPPORT IN SPORT

In the South African state, political protest as a form of political communication existed almost as long as the South African state itself. The disenfranchised non-white population has used various channels to politically communicate their protest against the apartheid regime. In the government controlled environment during the 84 years under apartheid, the disenfranchised communities (black and coloured) had restricted leverage through the mass media and were forced to adopt alternative ways to articulate their grievances to a wider audience.

The disenfranchised communities' political protest since 1910 against the minority regime has therefore manifested itself in various forms. It included violent protests and even the organisation of the armed struggle. On the sub-societal level the protest has also included cross-national support for visiting international sport teams, especially rugby teams which was used as a platform to demonstrate their opposition.

Grundlingh (1995:115) indicated how especially rugby was progressively used as a platform to oppose a bastion of Afrikaner dominance in South Africa. Visiting overseas sports teams, especially if they were able to beat the national team (the Springboks), were strongly supported by the non-white population as a form of political protest and to demonstrate their opposition to the apartheid regime. Sport was used as a communication platform or channel to articulate political protests and demands against the apartheid regime during the 1910-1994 era.

However, it was optimistically thought that with the democratisation of the country in 1994 and the process of nation building, disloyalty would be transcended onto unifying symbols to end the era of division in the country. The expectation was that cross-national support and political protest as a form of political communication would subside the process of the normalisation of the broader society.

However, the shift as expected in the post-1994 era did not materialise. In the Western Cape strong support for visiting teams such as the All Blacks and the regional Super Rugby team, the Crusaders, not only persisted, but were actually on the increase amongst the coloured and even black communities (Keytele 2012:82). The increasing support from the coloured community in the Western Cape for the All Black national rugby team and their very successful regional team, the Crusaders, is a disconcerting tendency in a country attempting to rebuild a nation. This phenomenon or form of cross-national support undermines sport's potential as nation builder in South Africa.

3. OBJECTIVE OF ARTICLE

The intrinsic potential of sport to unite a diverse and fragmented society has been argued and proved by many leading scholars in sociology, political sciences and other subfields of the human sciences. The objective of this article is not to belabour this phenomenon, because it has already been done in many publications by Allison (1984), Jarvie (2006) and Houlihan (1997).

In South Africa's history the creation of a common bond through sport has been an important phenomenon which has galvanised communities and the broader society into cohesive units. However, if sport is again used as a communication channel to register political protest in the form of cross-national loyalty this will undermine its ability as nation-builder. Political protest as a form of (political) communication intrinsically has the potential to degrade the potential of sport to create unity and to accentuate, rather than to diminish, the existing racial divisions in society.

In order to investigate the phenomenon of (political) communication and cross-national support the following points will be addressed in this article:

- A discussion of underpinning theory of mass media and political communication.
- A short outline of the potential of sport as nation builder.
- An outline of cross-national loyalty in sport (specifically rugby) during the apartheid years and how protest was used as a form of political communication to express opposition against the apartheid regime.
- To conduct an investigation into the current phenomenon in South Africa of cross-national loyalty and protest as a form of political communication. This will be done with reference to its potential impact on nation-building in the country.
- To provide an explanation of the reason why cross-national loyalty persisted in the post-apartheid phase and why sport is still used as political communication to illustrate opposition.

4. MASS MEDIA AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

The mass media in the modern era developed into a dominant political role-player deeply integrated within the political environment. However, the stronger and more prominent role of the media resulted in the decline of political socialisation in the broader society. In the past, the family acted as the primary agents of socialisation, but the role diminished as a result of the more prominent role of the media as principle agents through which information and policies are presented to the public.

The political role and impact of mass media is underpinned by a number of competing theories, such as the pluralist model, the dominant-ideology model, the market model and the values model. The role of the media during the apartheid era was very strongly linked to the dominant-ideology model where the media aim at supporting the views of the economic and social elites (Heywood 2004:204). Although opposition views existed in the media, which aligned stronger with the pluralist model, the state apparatus controlled the flow of information in South Africa to a large extent.

The expectation was that society, faced with an all-powerful media driven by the dominant ideology, would result in the decline of political socialisation on a sub-societal level. The expectation was that primary agents of political socialisation on the sub-societal level, such as the family and social class, would wither in the face of the dominance of an all-powerful mass media. However, in South Africa political socialisation became progressively a strong political energy in the disenfranchised communities and unified them against the propaganda of the apartheid state which was also articulated through the media.

Opposition to state policies therefore manifested itself on many terrains. As will be outlined in this article, opposition through allegiance in sport became a strong "weapon" to oppose the state, but with the ability to undermine sport's potential to build a nation.

5. SPORT AS A NATION-BUILDER

The potential of sport as a nation-builder and to create loyalty and a bond between people are rarely disputed in the academic forum. The potential of sport as a nation-builder in a divided and fragmented society has been the underlying topic and focus of many scholars in the field (Cronin and Mayall 1998; Hargreaves 1986; Jarvie 1994 and Grundlingh 1995).

The concept of nation-building is often used very generally and needs to be defined and understood more specifically. In its narrowest sense nation-building is the establishment of a new national identity. This entails the sharing of a common past with heroes and myths that inspires and promotes pride, the fostering of a common language and the building of a single, new unique culture with shared values, traditions, customs and a common literature in a social engineered nation state.

The power of sport as a social mechanism is an undeniable fact and a powerful phenomenon in society. Examples of the role of sport as a nation-builder in divided societies to unite people across the broad racial and ideological divide are well-known. In this manner athletics played an important role to unite East and West Germany into one nation after more than 40 years of forced segregation. This phenomenon is global and in diverse countries such as Fiji and the West Indian

Islands rugby and cricket has respectively played an important role to galvanise the diverse population into a more cohesive unit.

The fact is that, in spite of cultural differences, sport has the potential to interconnect divisions in society in a manner that very few other activities are able to duplicate. Sport has the intrinsic communicative potential to penetrate and negate cultural diversity and could be used by all institutions to promote unity amongst the diverse groups in a more spontaneous manner.

As a nation, we need no foreign examples to remind us of the potential value of sport as a nation-builder. A great majority of the country could clearly recall when the Springboks won the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the wonderful feeling of togetherness and well-being that poured out over the walls of Ellis Park like a blanket, embracing all South Africans in a sense of togetherness; something never experienced before. The late Steve Tshwete, former Minister of Sport, exclaimed afterwards, "When we won the Rugby World Cup in 1995, never once in the history of our country, never for a single moment before, were the people so solidly united. Never!" (Griffiths 1995:115)

The reason why sport is such an ideal tool or vehicle for nation-building resides in its relative innocence and the idea that sport presumably occupies a place outside the parameters of politics. Sport is seen as a low-cost mechanism, an innocent Trojan horse which can bring people together without them realising it and having to surrender too much in the process. Sport is seen as a neutral, innocent zone between two divided groups where diverse ethnic groups could converge over a broad historical divide to forge a common identity.

Sport's potential as nation-builder is enhanced by the strong communicative power of ceremonial rituals and symbolic gestures, together with the participation of statesmen and politicians during and after the victory celebrations. All the pomp and ceremony portrays and communicate strong symbolic messages of national unity or nation-building which, for the first time in the history of many countries, invoke powerful feelings of a shared identity (Hargreaves 1986:155).

Sport as a nation-builder is also enhanced by the role that the media (communication) plays to stimulate the process of social and racial integration in a divided country. The media's use of words and expressions such as –"how are we going to fare?" and "How have we done?"– contributes strongly to the process of nation-building. When success in the form of a gold medal or a victory in a major competition materialises, sport transcends sectional interests and becomes a matter of general interest with national news exposure that again feeds positively into the process.

6. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND CROSS-NATIONAL IDENTITY AS A FORM OF POLITICAL PROTEST: THE APARTHEID ERA

The first accepted, unwritten and basic "principle" within the field of social identity in sport is that support should, geographically speaking, be locally based. It is also socially accepted that the support for a team should be locally based. It means that the local club, province, franchise and the country should be supported by the people who reside in the area (Keytele 2012:83).

However, within the political slogan of "no normal sport in an abnormal society", as it was in South Africa's fragmented society, the historical political realities may be a major stumble block to achieve localised unity. Historical events of the past left a legacy which is still stubbornly obstructing the breaking down of barriers between sub-societal groups.

The historical exclusion of black and coloured communities in South Africa through the system of apartheid, has denied these sub-societal groups a political voice to communication and to express their grievances politically. The coloured and black communities in the era 1910–1994 never had an institutionalised channel to communicate their support or to oppose a government that had excluded them from the political processes of their country.

Within the broader field of political communication and related political protest, South Africa is a unique case or a society of a special kind. Support in sport for teams provided these disenfranchised communities with an opportunity and a platform to communicate their (political and socio-economic) opposition in the form of political protest (cross-national support) against the apartheid regime.

The support from the coloured and black communities for the opposition teams and not for local teams was a strong form of political protest. For decades, this has been a regular phenomenon in South African rugby and it increased exponentially since 1948 when the National Party came into power.[2] The usage of sport as a form of political communication has probably been around before 1948, but it came stronger into the fore with the arrival of the 1949 All Blacks in South Africa. During the period 1948–1994, when international teams (the British Lions and the New Zealand All Blacks) visited South Africa, the coloured and black communities vociferously supported them. Through this channel of political communication "their silenced voices and disapproval" could be internationalised

2 The controversy relating to the inclusion of Moari players in New Zealand teams dates back to the first Springbok tour to the country in 1921. The controversy raged for decades and resulted progressively to undermine the relationship between South Africa and New Zealand and reached a pinnacle with Dr Verwoerd's speech at Loskopdam in 1965 when he made it abundantly clear that Moari players were not welcome in South Africa. This resulted in the cancellation of the 1967 tour to South Africa. See Paul Dobson, *Rugby's greatest rivalry: South Africa vs New Zealand, 1921-1995* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1996), pp. 28-37.

and demonstrated to local and to overseas players, visitors and the local and international media.

The doyen of South African rugby and former president of the Rugby Board, the late Danie Craven (1955:92-93), expressed his concern about the phenomenon in the 1950s, after the 1955 British Lions toured the Union of South Africa. He mentioned that he has heard the booing of the Springboks from the non-white stand since 1949 when the New Zealand All Blacks toured the country. Craven mentioned that the booing of the Springboks reached a low point during the 1955 Newlands test against the Lions when the national team was booed throughout the match. He then very pedantically expressed the opinion that he believed that the coloureds will correct their behaviour themselves (Craven 1955:94).

Jenkins (1956:57), a British journalist who toured with the 1955 British Lions in South Africa, also reported in his book on the tour that the coloured sections of the crowd were usually on the side of the British team and that they could count on their support throughout the tour. He mentioned that during the matches in 1955 the "coloured sections in the crowd cheered their tries to the echo".

During the 1960 All Black tour to South Africa the decider test was played at Port Elizabeth. Parker (1960:215) wrote that an estimated 60 000 spectators were present at the test, including 10 000 non-whites "who almost to a man cheered for a New Zealand victory".

Political communication through political protest in sport were repeated with all visiting teams and reached an unfortunate climax in the 1970s when racial and political tensions spilled over onto the sports fields. The petty apartheid laws during the 1960s and the 1970s dictated that different racial groups may not attend social functions together, included rugby matches, but that separate entrances, seating and ablution facilities be provided for the different races. At the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein a block of seats (No 37) was barricaded for the usage of non-whites, who had their own entrance at the southern end of the stadium. The block and its spectators provided an easy target for bottle throwing and other projectiles from the rest of the blocks in the stadium.

In 1970 the touring All Black team arrived in South Africa for an extended tour and the controversy about the inclusion of Maoris or players of colour created national and international tension. In South Africa the racial tension and animosity between the white and non-white sections of the crowd were violently communicated. There were violent outbreaks of physical confrontations and bottle throwing between the different racial groups during matches. The police had to use riot sticks and police dogs to control the situation (Steyn 1970:139).

During the 1970 All Black tour to South Africa the use of sport as a political communication channel by the non-white population reached a pinnacle. During the match played at the Boet Erasmus Stadium in Port Elizabeth more than 4 000

turned up and wildly supported the All Blacks against the Eastern Province (Labuschagne 1970:81).

However, the tension because of coloured and black support for the visiting All Blacks could no longer be prevented and it spilled over at the match at Kimberley. The match took place at the De Beers field that allowed spectators to sit next to the field and no barriers were erected to contain the crowd. As the All Blacks trotted off the field, the Samoan wing, Bryan Williams, was surrounded by a wildly cheering bunch of non-white supporters and he was soon hoisted on the shoulders of a coloured supporter. A free-for-all fist fight ensued with the white men who converged onto the field and bottles were flying between the two groups. The New Zealand journalist recorded remarks from the white supporters who watched this and remarks were shouted such as "get out the machine guns...they shouldn't be here in the ground in the first place" (Labuschagne 1970:81; Steyn 1970:115).

The restrictions that were placed on non-white attendance at matches and stronger police presence during the rest of the tour in the period leading up to the Soweto uprising of 1976 put a damper on the usage of sport as a political communication tool. However, the non-white support for visiting teams remained and was an enduring theme throughout the apartheid years. There was naturally also strong support from large sections of especially the English-speaking communities for the visiting teams for the same reasons. The sport journalist, David Williams (1998:161), wrote that he "even enjoyed for complicated political reasons the thrashing handed out by the Springboks to the 1974 British Lions".

In order to explain the cross-national social identity in sport and why sport was used as a form of political communication during the apartheid era is not too complicated. The division between the racial groups was too accentuated and strongly institutionalised to be bridged by sport and international matches provided an ideal opportunity to politically communicate their opposition to the apartheid regime. Political communication through sport to articulate political protest has been successfully used by anti-apartheid groups during the Springbok tour to the United Kingdom. Political protest massively disrupted the tour and was very effective as a counter mechanism (Viviers 1970; Griffiths 1996).

7. WHY RUGBY? THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY IN SPORT AND POLITICS

The control over rugby in South Africa started well before the National Party came into power in 1948. The control over the discipline was not exclusively in the hands of the Afrikaners, but was controlled by their English counterparts. The Afrikaner sports administrators realised that "unless they have full control of the various

bodies involved in rugby they would be unable to influence or control the wider social and political dimension of sport in South Africa" (Grundlingh 1995:121).

In South Africa, sport has always been part of the cultural, social and political expression of different and opposing groups and, during the apartheid era, sport was legally and institutionally contained within specific racial groups. The control of rugby in the 1960s and onwards was in the hands of the secretive Afrikaner "Broederbond". The organisation was formed in 1918 to sustain, foster and expand their control in all spheres of life by ensuring that they placed their 12 000 members in positions of power which included rugby. Griffiths (2006:127) calculated that of the eight men who captained the Springboks between 1956 and 1965 only two were not members of the Broederbond. Grundlingh (1996:131) also remarked in this regard, "Afrikaner appropriation of the game in South Africa coincided with general Afrikaner nationalistic political ascendency and was in the final analyses a way of demonstrating and representing a specific brand of ideological power."

It was therefore no surprise that during the period 1960-1980, when the Afrikaner administration was in control, the separation between the two racial groups were pushed to its limit. No mixed teams and no social contact on the sports field were allowed between the racial groups. The institutionalisation of separateness between the racial groups was in 1965 driven to the extreme when Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd announced that he will not allow Moaris to tour South Africa with the All Blacks in the future. This announcement effectively spelled the beginning of the end of further contact with the rest of the sporting world.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the non-white community during the apartheid period reacted the way they did, by either boycotting or obstructing white sport, and by forming their own sports organisations. When the non-white community attended rugby matches under the preconditions which was set for them, it was for the sole purpose of disrupting the game or to communicate their political support for the visiting overseas team. This seemed to be a very logical reason and perfectly understandable within the political and social context of the time. The establishment of a cross-national identity and the support for the non-South African team that still prevails, may therefore have their roots firmly entrenched within the political and social context of the period before the democratisation of South Africa.

This "disloyalty" or cross-national support for opposition teams is, however, not conducive to building a nation. As Jackson and Jackson (1997:35) indicated, a nation, as opposed to a state, is a cultural entity and represents an essential subjective disposition, a sense of social belonging and, ultimately, loyalty amongst a group or groups of people. It is a shared sense of loyalty, a psychological attachment and a collective identification within a nation. This explains why sport is so powerful, because it invokes feelings of spontaneous loyalty and emotion which can unite

strangers under a common barrier, flag and colours. Any behaviour contrary to this basic principle has the potential to drain sport of one of its major values.

8. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND CROSS-NATIONAL IDENTITY AS A FORM OF POLITICAL PROTEST: THE POST-APARTHEID ERA

South Africa's transition in the 1990s from a radical racially divided society spearheaded by a minority regime to an all-inclusive democracy brought an end to apartheid. The political transformation included the integration of all the different sports codes into one national and provincial code. The amalgamation in one sporting structure should therefore have brought an end to the division.

However, although the division in support for the national teams is certainly less fragmented and less accentuated than in the past, cross-national identity and support for visiting overseas based teams unfortunately still persists. The alarming aspect is that the support is actually growing, especially in the Western Cape, and the phenomenon seems to be spreading north.

The question is also how far (geographically) and deep (total commitment) the support for the All Black team has manifested itself within South African society? A further question is whether the support is restricted to the Western Cape or is it spreading into the rest of the country. According to Keytle (2012:84) there are 45 registered All Blacks supporter clubs in the Cape Flats and the alarming aspect is that the support is gradually stretching into the rest of the Western Cape to places such as Parow, Paarl, Pniel, Worcester and Robertson, and even into the Eastern Cape. The support for the All Blacks was always present, but not in an organised supporter club format.

There are clearly strong and compelling evidence of cross-national support. The challenge is how cross-national support as a form of political communication should be understood and explained, especially against the success of the background of the golden window of the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations, which seemingly united the nation behind one team. The victory of the Springboks in 1995 in the Rugby World Cup spilled over the walls of Ellispark into the streets of every little hamlet and city in South Africa. The political communication from the team as "One Team, One Country" seemed to have been realised in those magic moments (Griffiths 1996:103), as well as its importance in relation to nation building.

Many years have passed since the triumph of 1995 and the initial turmoil in rugby has subsided, apart from occasional complaints about the pace of transformation in sport. The success of consecutive national teams playing under one flag and the same national colours must certainly have strengthened the hope of a united rainbow nation over the years.

However, the existence of cross-national support as a form of political communication has left many unanswered questions. In the following subsections a number of reasons are offered in an effort to offer an explanation for the phenomenon.

8.1 The unrepresentivity of teams

The first plausible reason for cross-national support is that the government has transformed, but the non-governmental and societal spheres in society are still representative of the old order. Is it possible that the racial composition of national and local teams is still not representative of the broader community and that this may explain the lack of support? It seems plausible that the slow pace of transformation to include sufficient numbers of players from designated groups seems to remain a problem. Even the most successful franchise in South Africa, the Bulls in Pretoria, is still struggling to be more representative of the demographics of the country. This phenomenon undermines the ability for spectator association with the regional team if it is representative of predominately one racial group in society.

During 1998 the Bulls team had the following number of Asian, Coloured and African players in their team for the last round of the Super 14 competition:

Bulls	Asian	Coloured	African	White
	0	4	1	18

The question is if any progress has been made since this 1998 survey was done as part of a concerted effort to include more players of the designated groups in the team. In 2013, during the second round of the Super Rugby competition against the Western Force, the Bulls selectors were able to pick the largest number of non-white players in their history in their starting fifteen (*Beeld*, 28 February 2013). Within the 22 member team, including the reserves, the total of black and coloured players were as follow:

Bulls	Asian	Coloured	African	White
	0	2	2	18

Although four non-white players were picked in the starting fifteen, the total number of players in the match (22) proved that, since 1998, little progress was made to include more players of colour. Furthermore, only one of the players, Chiliboy Ralepelle, was a local player; the rest were bought into the franchise. This shows that hardly any progress was made and that the influx of non-white players into the franchise is not fast enough to be representative of the demographics of the broader society. The political message is that sport is still the domain of the white community in South Africa.

Is it possible that the lack of transformation may therefore be responsible for the phenomenon of cross-loyalty support in South Africa and the adverse forms of political communication that are prevalent? In the Western Province (Stormers) team that was picked in early 2013 to play in the second round of the Super Rugby competition there were a higher number of black and coloured players, more than elsewhere in the country. Seven players that were picked in the starting fifteen were from the non-white community, which represented almost half the team (*Beeld*, 28 Februarie 2013).

Even in a franchise such as the Stormers, which are more representative of the local community, the local support for their own team remains fragmented. This leaves only one conclusion: even if the supporters find it difficult to associate or identify with the local team because it is dominated by white players, the reason seems to be superfluous. If the racial composition of the Crusaders team, which enjoy the support of the "Cape Crusaders", is taken into account, the association with the team members would be more difficult than the Western Province team. The Crusaders team predominantly includes white players and only a few Maori players. Maori players have stronger representation in teams such as the Auckland Blues and Waikato Chiefs and are rarely included in the Crusaders team. It therefore seems highly improbable that the demographic composition of the local teams and the Springboks have anything to do with the cross-identification and association with overseas based teams.

8.2 Success breed success – follow the winners?

Is it possible that the cross-national support is the result of the fact that the Crusaders team is the most successful team in the Super Rugby competition? Supporters seem to associate them very readily with success and like to bath in the reflected glory of successful teams. When the Sharks were languishing in the B section of the Currie Cup they had hardly any support, but as soon as they were successful, their support base showed a dramatic growth.

It is certainly plausible that the success of the teams from the "Long White Cloud" have something to do with its support. This phenomenon will certainly explain the following, but the reason for cross-national support may be at a deeper level as will be explained under the next heading.

8.3 Political socialisation and political protest

Under the dominant-ideological model of the mass media, the impression was that political socialisation was on the decline. It seems that the opposite is the case and that on sub-society level there is less of a dependency on the media for

political socialisation and the influence of families plays a stronger role than what is generally been acknowledged.

The answer to the cross-national support may be very complicated, but socialisation, or more specific political socialisation, probably plays a stronger part in the phenomenon of political communication than is anticipated. Political socialisation is a process by which a specific cultural perception develops by way of learning, because it comprises casual informal learning from peers and family. According to Jackson and Jackson (1997:121) the learning process is a primary agent of political socialisation in a community which could be enhanced by secondary sources, such as local newspapers, church and local community organisations within the civil society.

The answer to the question of sport as a communicative protest and cross-national support may therefore be grounded in the process of political socialisation that took place in the Western Cape during and after the democratisation of the country. The process of political socialisation seemed to be historically imbedded and implicit in the broader political landscape of South Africa, which is very much still tradition driven and loyalties are rarely shifted, but rather transferred from generation to generation within a community.

Political loyalties in this equation seem to be largely driven by past memories and experiences which make the crossover to other political affiliations very slow. This disposition and political orientation through socialisation is strongly communicated within society.

This point of view corresponds with the views expressed by Keytle (2012:82), who outlined a twofold process. The first is an immediate process that instigates the change and the second a more gradual process of crossing-over. He explained that a section of the current All Black supporters switched loyalty from the local team to an overseas team as a result of an incident or a tragic political occurrence of the past. He cited a pastor, Stanley Stevens, who was a loyal Western Province supporter of the highly successful team captained by Divan Serfontein. One of Stevens' closest friends were gunned down in front of him, which made him to became a passionate supporter of the All Blacks although no history of cross-national identity existed in his family. The support for the All Blacks is therefore political communication to register political protest against the authorities about an incident that happened in the 1980s.

The second process is a more gradual process of political socialisation that happens more gradually in social circles and families in a community. Sons follow fathers and tend to support the same teams as their peers and in this manner social and psychological connections are formed within the hierarchy. As indicated earlier by Grundlingh (1995:115) rugby became dominated by Afrikaners, which alienated the coloured and black communities. For decades, the Maoris were not allowed to

tour South Africa. The lines of division have been drawn and explain the support for visiting teams and to communicate opposition to the local teams. This explains the strong support for the All Blacks during the 1970 and 1976 tours to South Africa.

The coloured and black players were excluded from the Springbok team and formed their own federations, teams, affiliations and loyalty. Supporting other teams became an act of defiance against the Springboks. The best team to place your bets on is the All Blacks to "represent" you or a community against the team that your racial group were excluded from.

It is easy to support the All Blacks as a team because their winning streaks are without precedence and therefore they are a "safe bet" to support. However, as Keytle (2012:83) observes, the adventurous style of the All Blacks and the inclusion of All Black players have certainly a lot to do with the forming of a bond of loyalty towards the New Zealand team.

9. CONCLUSION

In this article it was explained that although the expectation was that political change and democratisation had the potential to unify society and to ensure support for the local and national team, it did not happen. Sport is still used as a form of political protest to communicate cross-national support to opposing international teams. The challenge is therefore, to attempt to understand the perpetuation and persistence of cross-national support and the necessity to still use sport to communicate opposition towards the local and national teams.

Although most provincial and even national teams are not representative of the demographics of the country, the reasons for the support of the opposition are debatable at its very least. It seems that the phenomenon regarding teams not been racially representative of the broader society does not play a very significant role.

On the surface it seems that the success of an overseas team has a lot to do with increased local support in certain sections of the South African society. It is not a coincidence that the All Blacks (the most successful international team) and the New Zealand-based Crusaders (arguably the strongest regional or provincial team in the world) are chosen as the teams for cross-national support and loyalty. The success of the teams on the rugby field over the years certainly has a lot to do with the popularity amongst non-home based supporters and offered them a way to associate with success. This is on a psychological level not an unknown phenomenon and presents itself globally in all societies.

The answer seems to be located much deeper in the layers of a society which was historically stimulated by a process of political socialisation as a result of political oppression that allowed limited channels to register political protest.

What makes the South African society unique, is that the reasons for the subdivisions that also manifested itself in sport are strengthened and underpinned by political and historical reasons. The legacy of apartheid and the way politics and sport has intertwined over decades have left historical relics in the non-white communities which will take decades to be eradicated. This is a political reality and, although difficult to comprehend, should be used to understand the complexities of a previously fragmented society. Sport can unite, but it is not a miracle cure for problems that are located deep into the soul of a society. It therefore seems that sport will continue to be used as a platform to politically communicate opposition and to register political protest.

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