Nation, State and Identity in International Sport

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Abstract

The question of eligibility for international sporting representation (ISR) has become increasingly contentious. In this paper we argue that the current ISR regulations are outdated and problematic. Sporting governing bodies ought to ignore citizenship as a criterion for ISR, and instead ISR should be based on a normative account of national belonging which would operate primarily on grounds of early socialisation and long-term residency. This approach would avoid many of the pragmatic and moral pathologies of ISR, and would utilise sports potential in promoting a liberal and progressive understanding of national ties.

Key Words: Nation, nation-state, identity, citizenship, international sporting representation

Introduction

The idea that the imagined national community seems most evidently real during international sporting competition is well established (Hobsbawm, 1992). Most historical accounts stress that the importance placed on international athletic competition is to be understood in terms of the geo-political conditions of modernity. Whilst there are diverging views regarding the genealogy of nations and nationalism, there is no doubting the dominance of the national scale in socio-politico processes from the late eighteenth century onwards. What characterises this period is the primacy of the national unit as the natural container of economic, political and social life (Poli, 2007). National sports thus reflect the corresponding importance of phenomena such as national identities and cultures, national economies, national territories, and most importantly the nation-state. There is, however, some evidence that the importance

1

of the national scale is withering as society shifts into a postmodern and, arguably, post-nationalist age.

In economic and politico-institutional terms, the nation-state is increasingly being complemented and in some cases substituted by trans, supra and sub-national scales. In turn, the nation-state seems to be suffering from what Anderson (1996: 8) laconically termed an 'impending crisis of the hyphen…that yoked state and nation', as the cultural and political realms are becoming increasingly differentiated and multi-layered (McCrone & Kiely, 2000). Many believe that what inevitably accompanies these developments is the rescaling of national identity. It is argued that identities, like social processes, are becoming separated from geographical and territorial space (Poli, 2007). It is within such a context that issues of migration, multi-culturalism, cosmopolitanism, and hybridity have become increasingly relevant amongst debates on national identity (Antonsich, 2009).

International sport seems to be a prime example of the decreasing significance and increasing flexibility of national ties. Poli (2007), for instance, argues that the progressive disconnection between the geographical origin and residence of sportspeople and the nation-states that they represent is indicative of the de-ethnicisation and de-territorialisation of national identity. It may thus be argued that sport is playing a central role in articulating and displaying a more fluid, plural and unencumbered sense of identity. On the other hand, however, others (Antonsich, 2009; Miller, 1995) reject the notion that collective identities have lost ground to some form of global cosmopolitanism and that talk of hybridity, flexibility and identity de-territorialisation is grossly exaggerated. There also exist concerns that what initiates such flexibility in the sporting arena is the corrupt influence of the market. In other words, the decisions of athletes to represent a nation other than the one in which they were born and

brought up is nothing to do with flexible identities and cultural hybridity, but is a means to other ends such as money and career enhancement.

One of the results of these seemingly contradictory analyses is uncertainty within the sports practice community regarding the appropriate criteria for international sporting representation (hereafter ISR). On the one hand, international sporting governing bodies are aware that ISR regulations ought to allow for a degree of freedom and flexibility in an increasingly globalised and fractured society. Nonetheless, there is also concern that individuals and national governing bodies are likely to take advantage of excessively open and liberal regulations and that such practices undermine the authenticity of international sport. On a wider scale yet, there is tension and confusion in light of the fact that international sport is sometimes exclusively between nation-states, and in other sports, or in different contexts, may sometimes involve cultural or stateless nations, and in some circumstances supranational unions. Whilst the policies of international governing bodies vary significantly, a worrying commonality is the lack of a clear and principled understanding of how ISR regulations ought to look. Perhaps this uncertainly within the sports practice community merely reflects the wider ambiguity about what we mean by national communities and identities in contemporary society.

In this paper we will attempt to demonstrate that current ISR regulations are plagued by conceptual, sociological, and moral failings. Firstly, we will discuss the social and conceptual difficulties of nationalism, and in particular the complex relationship between the concepts of nation and nation-state, and national identity and citizenship. Whilst discussing these conceptual issues will not lead us far in terms of answering how ISR regulations ought to look, it will serve as the basis for further argumentation to ensue. In the second part, we will argue that the main reasons for the failings of current ISR rules is that they primarily rely upon, or

take their normative orientation from, the citizenship practices of various nation-states. Citizenship, we argue, is an outdated and inadequate method of dealing with the complexities and realities of contemporary society, and also leads to a number of pragmatic and moral pathologies. The upshot of this argument is that international governing bodies should develop autonomous ISR regulations which operate according to a more general and normative account of national and cultural belonging. Such an account, we argue, would avoid many of the pragmatic and moral pathologies associated with citizenship, and would also utilise sports potential in promoting a liberal and progressive understanding of national ties. In the last section, we will outline how such an account might look, particularly focusing on the importance of cultural engagement and commitment over traditional identity markers such as birth, ancestry, and citizenship. Firstly, however, we begin with a brief comparison of the current rules and regulations of various governing bodies.

The Current State of Play

The eligibility rules of various governing bodies differ significantly and are notoriously complex. For the purposes of this paper, we have chosen to focus on the eligibility criteria of four key governing bodies; the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the International Rugby Board (IRB), and the International Cricket Council (ICC). These governing bodies have been chosen as examples for several reasons. Although the IOC is slightly different to the other three in terms of not controlling a single sport as such, it is perhaps the most important, since many governing bodies of other sports tend to follow in its footsteps. FIFA was included for its global relevance and popularity, and because they have grappled with, and developed their regulations significantly over the years. The IRB and the ICC were chosen for the distinctiveness of their ISR regulations, which means they are interesting and complex case studies. Together these four

governing bodies provide a fairly comprehensive example of the types of eligibility regulations that exist, and therefore provide the widest theoretical context for discussion. These regulations are summarised in the table below:

	•Relies on the legal national status of individuals. •In the case of dual nationals, the individual can choose. •A competitor who has represented a country and who has changed their nationality, or acquired a new nationality, may represent their new country provided that at least three years have passed since the competitor last represented their former country.
	•In order to represent a country, a player must either have: •Been born in that country •One parent or grandparent born in that country •Completed thirty six consecutive months of residence.
	•Primarily relies on the legal national status of individuals. •Legal national status which is based on residency does not count. •FIFA allows players who either have a dual nationality or those who acquire a new nationality to change the Association for whom they wish to play, subject to the condition that they have not played at senior national level for their current association and that they also meet one of the following conditions: born in that country; parents born in that country; grandparents born in that country; 2 years residency (for dual nationals); 4 years residency (newly acquired nationality).

5

•In order to be eligible, players must meet one of the following criteria:

•A legal national of the country

•Born in the country

•Resident in the country for at least 183 days in each of the immediately preceding seven years (2 for women)

•Resident in the country for at least 183 days in each of the immediately preceding four years (there is a limit in team selection of a maximum of 2 players who are eligible on this provision)

•For players wishing to swap nations, there is a four year waiting period (2 for women) between representing both countries.

1 - The Social Complexity of Nationalism

Most scholars of nationalism agree that it is a subject on which it is extraordinarily hard to get a conceptual grip (Canovan, 1998). The same is true with respect to issues of ISR, for the question of who ought to be allowed to represent a nation at sporting competition is beset by a number of complex sociological and conceptual ambiguities. This complexity may be alleviated to some degree by a careful exposition of the relationship between the concepts of nation and nation-state, and the concepts of national identity and citizenship.

The taken for granted understanding of the nation-state is that of a political community which is filled and driven by a cultural community; the nation. A standard definition of the nation would point towards a human community that shares a public culture, history, myths, homeland and usually a language. Nations usually have, or aspire towards, some degree of political autonomy or control. Whilst the nation should not be equated with the nation-state, the general thrust of nationalist ideology has been the claim that each nation and its associated culture require political expression in the form of the nation-state. Whether one subscribes to the modernist view that nationalist ideology created nations, or the pre-modern conception that

nations were the basis of such ideologies and processes in the first place, they seem to agree on the pervasiveness of the nation-state model. That is; the idea that behind each state exists the national culture, community and identity.

More often than not, sport has been a highly visible means of promoting and legitimising the idea of the nation-state. International sporting competition is mostly held between nation-states, and eligibility for such competition is primarily based on having citizenship in the nation-state. The Olympic Games, as a prime example, is primarily open to nation-states and their citizens.[1] Nonetheless, it is fair to assume that most people take it for granted that in such sporting contexts we are also displaying and celebrating the national culture, identity, and traditions. In many ways, then, international sporting competition has served to strengthen the axiomatic association between identities, cultures, nations and states.

An uncritical analysis of the relationship between these phenomena, however, obfuscates what is a more complex and nuanced relationship. The above understanding of nation-state is clearly oversimplified and merely represents the ideal of nationalist ideology. In reality, very few, if any, nation-states meet such criteria. Nation-states are almost never culturally homogeneous and always multiethnic. Whilst all nation-states are to some degree multi-cultural, some states are clearly multi-national. The United Kingdom, for example, is a state that includes at least four nations (Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland). The existence of cultural or stateless nations in and across political states demonstrates the way in which nation, state and society are increasingly differentiated in contemporary society (McCrone and Kiely, 2002). As

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[1] Although the Olympics are primarily open to nation-states and their citizens, the IOC does allow for some exceptions. For example, during the London 2012 Olympics four athletes competed under the Olympic flag as Independent Olympic Athletes, as they came from nations that had either dissolved (Netherlands Antilles) or not yet formed an Olympic Committee (South Sudan). A more exceptional example yet is when the IOC accepted a unified team at the Summer and Winter Olympics of 1992 following the collapse of the USSR. These are very much the exception, however.

a result, it is also commonplace for there to exist incongruence between one's sense of cultural and national belonging or identity on the one hand, and one's citizenship or membership in a state on the other. Whilst sociological orthodoxy has usually treated these concepts as synonymous, what characterises the current situation is that political power and people's sense of identity have become multi-layered, operating at different levels for different purposes at different times (McCrone and Kiely, 2002). All of this seems to suggest that the concepts of nation and national identity might need to be understood independently to that of state and citizenship. This, in turn, seems to question the very relevance of the concept of 'nation-state', which implies that social organisation, political control and cultural identity coalesce (McCrone and Kiely, 2002). This is an issue to which we shall shortly return.

Whilst international sport has often strengthened the idea of the nation-state, this is not always the case. Perhaps one of the most obvious examples is the fact that the IRB has no citizenship requirements as part of their international eligibility requirements. Wales, Scotland and England are part of the United Kingdom, and all those born within its boundaries acquire British citizenship. Nonetheless, Wales, Scotland and England compete as separate nations in Rugby Union. Even more interesting is the fact that Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, who belong to two different nation-states (from a political jurisdiction perspective), compete as one nation in Rugby Union. Since individuals living in the United Kingdom have British citizenship rather than Welsh, Scottish or English ones (or in the case of those representing Ireland, have either Republic of Ireland citizenship or British citizenship, rather than Irish citizenship), it follows that relying on the citizenship laws of various nation-states to regulate ISR would be problematic in the case of Rugby Union. For these reasons, the IRB has ignored citizenship as a criterion for ISR and created independent eligibility regulations that aim to ensure that representatives have a genuine and credible national link with the nation

(state) in question. The IRB are different to the other sporting bodies discussed in this paper, since they do not include citizenship as key aspect of their ISR regulations.

The kinds of problems encountered in Rugby Union have also risen in Association Football. Again, for FIFA the United Kingdom has proved to be a difficult case. As with rugby, Wales, Scotland and England compete independently, as does Northern Ireland. Considering that the eligibility regulations of FIFA primarily rely on citizenship, this issue has been particularly problematic. The problem in this instance is that anyone with British citizenship would be allowed to represent any of the national federations as long as they met one of the following conditions: born in that country, parents or grandparents born in that country, or two years residence in that country. In order to inhibit players from representing nations to which they have little connection, the four home nations have agreed to a remove the residency clause, and therefore a British Citizen may only represent one of the four nations if they or their parents or grandparents were born on the relevant territory. [2] Whilst the rules and regulations of FIFA are complicated, it is clear that the social complexity of nationalism has required them to create additional regulations beyond that of citizenship.

A further complication is that athletes might represent different nations and states in different sports and contexts. For example, an athlete who runs for Great Britain in the Olympics might compete for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales in the Commonwealth Games. Similarly, the British and Irish Lions team compete as a multi-national and multi-state team in rugby union once every four years, whilst the rest of the time players will represent Wales, England, Scotland or Ireland. As has already been noted, Ireland play as one nation in rugby

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[2] A further clause was introduced in 2009 which allowed individuals who had received five or more years of education under the age of 18 in a country - to represent that country if they wished.

union, where in football there is a Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland team. Such complexities often lead to controversies, for example, the inclusion of a Great Britain football team in the 2012 London Olympics for the first time in decades outraged the associations of Scotland, Wales and Ireland, who believed it might undermine their home nation's agreement with FIFA. All these examples reflect the social complexity of nationalism as well as the role sport has played in disrupting the axiomatic associations between identities, cultures, nations and states by giving expression to those cultural and stateless nations that exist beyond and within political states.

It should be noted, however, that sports role in giving expression to such cultural and stateless nations has been limited, and suggests that such disruption in terms of ISR can only be exercised by the powerful (sporting and political). In other words, governing bodies seem to be treating the British as a one-off case, and there is no indication that such arrangements or regulations will be tolerated elsewhere.[3] Whilst there are other examples, such as the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team, the Viva World Cup (for stateless nations or national minorities) and the Island Games (for islands which do not have full independence), and the New Zealand Maoris, they are often treated subordinately. The Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team, for example, are a Native American and First Nations team sanctioned to compete internationally, but whose travel documents were nonetheless rejected prior to the World Championship held in England in 2010 (Price, 2010). The team rejected the authorities' offer for them to travel on alternative US or Canadian passports, for they felt it would serve to reinforce the notion that they were somehow not a real and bonafide nation. Similarly, the New Zealand Maoris often play against other IRB affiliated nations, but they are still considered something of a novelty

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[3] There are historical reasons why this may be the case, for example Britain's role in the creation of modern sport, and more specifically, the role of these four national representative identities in the emergence of international sport, and the subsequent emergence of International Governing Bodies.

compared to the New Zealand All Blacks, whilst the Viva World Cup is a football tournament specifically organised for non-FIFA-affiliated teams, or in other words, to those nations who are considered less genuine or inferior.

Despite the fact that such examples are exceptions, they do demonstrate effectively the danger of misleadingly equating nation and state, and also of conflating national identity and citizenship. As has already been argued, scholars of nationalism have long argued for the need to keep analytical distinction between these concepts. Whilst failing to recognise the distinction between state and nation will undermine a proper understanding of these phenomena, an equally perilous assumption is to conclude from this, that these concepts are completely unrelated and distinct. Walker Connor (1994) for example, argues that British state patriotism or citizenship exists alongside an English, Scottish and Welsh nationalism which is more a psychological and cultural identity. Similarly, Ware (1998) distinguishes between nationalities (cultural or societal nations) and countries (political nation-states), and argues that these are two separate phenomena. According to Ware (1998) nationalities have linguistic, cultural, historical, ethnic, and sometimes religious determinants. On the other hand, countries are members of a world institutional and territorial system. Such states are often multi-lingual, multi-cultural and radically pluralistic in beliefs and values (Ware: 1998). Accordingly, issues of citizenship are to do with countries in this political sense, and they do not necessarily have members who share a cultural or societal identity.

Whilst we have some sympathies with Ware's (1998) approach, especially in its questioning of the idea of the nation-state, we are not at all certain whether such a strong distinction between these phenomena can, or ought to be, upheld. The problem with Ware's approach is that it downplays the fact that nationalism is an ideology which is, to varying degrees, both political

and cultural. Most strong and large national communities (or nationalities in Ware's terminology) usually have political ambitions, and strong and healthy political states are usually legitimised by a strong and healthy public culture (Poole, 1999). To take the British example once more, Ware (1998) would argue that Wales is a societal or cultural nation that exists within a British state. To some degree this is true, but it does not mean that the Welsh nation and the British state are two entirely different phenomena. That is, that we can draw a neat line between the cultural feeling of Welsh national identity from British patriotism and citizenship. The reality is much more complex and intricate. Wales as a nation, or some parts of it at least, have long fought for political autonomy or independence, and since 1997 have voted for devolution. The Welsh cultural or societal nation therefore, clearly has political ambitions. As a corollary, the British state has also depended on the existence of a British culture and identity to legitimise the British state. Of course, the vitality of the British state largely depends on the degree to which it succeeds in allowing for cultural and national diversity that is contained within, and contributes towards, an over-arching British identity. The notion of being simultaneously Welsh and British in a cultural sense is not necessarily an oxymoron, for individuals often have multiple, yet complimentary identities.[4]

If the above analysis is correct, then it seems that the difference between a nation in a cultural sense and its political manifestation becomes less clear. Under such circumstances, is it not more accurate to consider the difference between a stateless nation, a 'nation-state' which is multicultural, and a multinational state, as one of degree rather than of kind? Whilst these issues are complex, it would be reasonable to argue that what makes states multinational rather than multicultural, is the existence of more than one large cultural group with distinctive histories,

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[4] This is an issue which has always divided the Welsh. Some see the idea of Britishness as a synonym for Englishness and thus view it negatively. Others, however, embrace the idea of being Welsh and British.

cultures, and often languages, who have, at different times and to varying degrees, some aspirations for political autonomy. For such multinational states to be viable, it is usually the case for some degree of cultural similarity, or an aggregated sense of identity, to exist alongside a more narrow sense of belonging or identity. The weaker this sense of identity and the more segregated such cultures get, the greater the likelihood that these nations will seek political independence.[5] This, however, is not to hold that the political boundaries of a state necessarily coincide with a corresponding national culture, and neither is it to deny the existence of stateless nations, nor multi-national states. What it does mean, is that culture and politics tend to converge. This, however, need not require cultural homogeneity on the one hand, or political independence on the other. A state will always need something like a cultural nation behind it if it is to be viable, but such a national culture is compatible with a degree of cultural diversity, and in some cases, nationhood elsewhere (Poole, 1999).

The above analysis clearly questions the relevance and intelligibility of the term 'nation-state', for it misleadingly implies that the political boundaries of a state necessarily coincide with the cultural boundaries of a nation. Apart from when we are referring directly to this misleading conflation, we shall avoid using the term 'nation-state'. Instead, we will simply use the term 'national-state' to refer to political jurisdictions which have at least some degree of national and cultural unity, but which does not rule out the likelihood of cultural diversity and the potential for cultural nations within and beyond that state. This also applies to our understanding of people's cultural attachment to such entities, and thus reflects the complex relationship between citizenship and national identity. In one sense they are clearly not synonymous, for one's primary sense of national identity might be different to one's legal citizenship. But since we have argued that most modern states' legitimacy depends on their

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[5] Indeed, this process is currently being negotiated in contemporary Scotland.

connection to some national community or communities, it stands to reason that citizenship will also have a large cultural element to it, even if this is based on and amalgamation of such cultures. The term 'national-state' therefore reflects our argument that individuals may have multiple and complimentary cultural identities, and that the notion of belonging to a culture, is relevant, albeit in different ways, to all manifestations of nationalism. In sum, we hope that this term is much more flexible in accounting for the socio-cultural complexity and diversity of nationalism, and more particularly the fluid and convoluted relationship between the realms of the cultural and political.

The emerging picture here is a very complex one, and we certainly have not provided many answers in terms of how ISR criteria ought to look. Nonetheless, by outlining the social complexity of nationalism, we have argued that whilst the concepts of nation and nation-state, and the concepts national identity and citizenship, are inextricably connected, they are not synonymous. The question that begs to be answered, however, is whether international sporting competition should be between nations or national-states, and whether ISR should be based on national identity or citizenship? The logical, yet equivocal, answer is that it could be either or both. Here, however, it is important to recognise once more the role international sport, and more particularly international governing bodies, have played in promoting the idea of the 'nation–state' as the legitimate manifestation of nationhood. This is clearly reflected in the way in which most international sporting competition is primarily open to such states and eligibility for representation is primarily based on citizenship. This has reinforced the idea that international sport is only for 'real nations' who have achieved statehood, and that stateless or cultural manifestations of nationhood are in some way incomplete or less significant. As McCrone (2000: 22-23) argues, it implies once more, the misleading idea that 'genuine "societies" are those in which social, political and cultural dimensions are in alignment', and

we agree that this 'neither describes nor explains the way the modern world is, nor what it is likely to become.'

As we have attempted to demonstrate in this section, given that the axiomatic nation-state/citizenship relation cannot encapsulate all nationalistic tending identities, the key issue is what role does sport have in legitimizing these outliers? ISR rules which prioritise citizenship reinforce the tactitly held belief that international sport is for 'nations' who have statehood and citizens, and therefore is unhelpful at best to those cultural or stateless nations which may seek national expression through sport. If sport is to play a role in legitimizing and giving expression to other nationalistic tending identities, then governing bodies need to develop alternative criteria for determining what constitutes meaningful national representation. This is likely to become increasingly relevant in times when national states are being threatened from above and below, and where the relationship between culture and politics is likely to become increasingly complicated and multi-layered. Under such conditions, developing an understanding of what constitutes meaningful cultural or national representation is a much more flexible and universally applicable method for dealing with the complexities of contemporary society. That is, if our arguments in this section are accurate, the notion of belonging to a national culture is relevant, albeit to varying degrees, to all forms of nationalism, whereas citizenship is only relevant to national states.

Our analysis so far has only begun to explain why citizenship as a criterion for ISR may be limited in some instances. In the next section, we will offer reasons why international governing bodies ought to do away with the citizenship criterion altogether. This argument will give renewed credence to our claim that such bodies must elaborate in more detail the

conditions of a genuine cultural and national belonging, which we have argued here, is relevant to all manifestations of nationalism.

2 - The Pragmatic and Moral problems with Citizenship as a Criterion for ISR

It seems that the general premise of including citizenship as a criterion is that it is a fairly easy way of establishing that a 'genuine link exists between the person involved and the nation-state in question' (De Groot, 2006: 4). This assumption is suspect in many instances, but suppose for sake of argument that such legal nationality laws do in fact manifest such a genuine link, there still remain major problems with such an approach. There is, and always will be, a significant inconsistency in the application of this rule within institutions as citizenship requirements between various national-states differ significantly. To outline details of the complexity and variance of legal nationality laws between different national-states is beyond the scope of this paper and has already been discussed in detail by others (de Groot, 2006). The difficulties, however, can be exemplified by the fact that citizenship can be acquired in Belgium after three years of residence, whilst it is twelve years in Switzerland (de Groot, 2006). Furthermore, residence is only one method of acquiring citizenship; birth, ancestry, and marriage are among a plethora of other variables taken into consideration. The important point is that ISR regulations which are primarily based on the citizenship laws of various national-states will result in an inconsistent and unequal process for establishing eligibility for sporting purposes. This inequality, however, is only part of the problem.

In many cases, acquiring citizenship does not necessarily mean an individual has a meaningful link with the national-state and its culture. Changing one's legal nationality or citizenship is an

easier process than changing one's genuine loyalty and identity. Talk of flexible and hybrid identities is often exaggerated and conflated with issues of dual citizenship or legal nationality, and what often accompany these empirical doubts are political and moral concerns over the perils of hyper commercialism (Walsh & Guilianotti, 2007). Such concerns are heightened in international sport, where evidence suggests that talk of flexible and hybrid identities in the context of acquiring citizenship is often a Trojan horse to less worthy pursuits such as consumerism. Indeed, many individuals are taking advantage of the citizenship laws to reap the extrinsic benefits of international sport. Similarly, various national governing bodies and national-states have not been slow to realise the potential benefits that might be accrued if the naturalisation process of talented athletes are rapidly accelerated (Chiba, Ebihara, & Morino, 2001; Siekman, 2006).

It has been well documented that national sporting representation has developed into a more strategic and economically driven activity (Holmes, 2004; Maguire, 1999). For example, Poli's (2007) discussion of the way in which Saif Saeed Shaheen (formerly known as Stephen Cherono) converted from Kenya to Qatar having being promised a life pension of 1,000 dollars per month, is among a long line of similar examples which indicate the way in which athletes act and are treated as hired mercenaries. Under such circumstances, athletes' decisions to change nationality are based on a pragmatic and instrumental desire to reap the extrinsic benefits of ISR rather than anything to do with cultural or national allegiance.[6]

When we move beyond the narratives of individuals it becomes clear that this is an issue which also involves the overt collusion of National Governing Bodies and political benefactors. A

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[6] Extrinsic benefits may include money and fame, as well as commercial endorsements and sponsorships associated with sporting success. It should be pointed out that athletes are far more likely to accrue such benefits if they represent wealthier nations.

controversial example is the nationality change of the former Ethiopian runner Zenebech Tola, who explored the possibility of acquiring citizenship in Switzerland, America, Canada, and France, before Bahrain offered her fast-track citizenship and, according to Poli (2007), a payment of 80,000 Euros. Tola was required to change her name to Mariam Yusuf Jamal and now competes for Barhain, although she still lives and trains in Switzerland (Poli, 2007). The notion of hired mercenaries is also well-documented in the sport of weightlifting. Qatar is one of the most prominent examples as their weightlifting team for the 2000 Sydney Olympics was almost entirely represented by former Bulgarian national representatives. Most of these athletes still lived and trained in Bulgaria, and Hayward (2000) ironically captured the paradox of such national representation when claiming that the stomach upsets that kept Badr Nayef (formerly known as Peter Tanev) and Nader Abbas (formerly known as Andrey Ivanov) out of the Olympic finals were their unfamiliarity with Middle Eastern Cuisine.[7]

The issue here is not that the world is changing and that individuals are more flexible in terms of national identity or citizenship, but rather the motivating factors initiating such changes. Current trends of national sporting representation are not merely the embodiment of more flexible and hybrid cultural identities and commitments, but often are means to secure financial and career orientated ends. It is also somewhat of a paradox that what often acts under the rubric of such openness, is a hidden parochialism where national-states and national governing bodies strive to further their own nationalistic ambitions.[8] This ironic reality captures the

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[7] Paul Hayward, Weightlifting: drug expulsions leave weightlifters caught short, Daily Telegraph 23 Sept 2000, available at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/477206/Weighlifting-Drug-expulsions-leave-weightlifters-caught-short.html.

[8] The interesting point is that such sport is still overwhelmingly sold and consumed along national and cultural lines. Even if the transnational corporations and business oligarchs prefer sport's commercial potential to be unencumbered by rigid national ties, such controlling forces remain acutely aware of the rich economic rewards that can be harvested through elite athletic performance grounded in some form of national or cultural identity. This is perhaps most clearly evidenced in the way national and cultural identities are prioritised and foisted upon sports where nationality is largely irrelevant (for example, tennis, golf and Formula 1). The key question however, is whether this national manifestation of sport, is by now merely a simulacrum of the real thing.

complex relationship between the nation in a cultural sense, and its political veneer. Morgan (2006: 31-32) explains the perils of this situation persuasively:

> The real worry here is not just that for the right price athletes are willing to forsake their national and political identities...for flimsy corporate ones but that they are willing as well to forsake their very practical identities, those identities that underwrite what makes their lives...meaningful, for a pot of money. This is, to put it mildly, scary stuff.... If this does not amount to moral suicide, I do not know what does.

An associated concern with the instrumental nature of sporting citizenship is that it could also undermine the integrity of such competition. Reynolds (1990: 6) rightly argues that spectators are drawn to international sporting competition 'not so much by the spectacle, by the ritual, or by an appreciation of the skills involved, but because there is a competitor or a team whom we feel is representing us.' But the current ease which some athletes change nationality for sporting purposes threatens this. If the national and cultural component of international sport becomes illusory, then the value which makes such competition attractive in the first place is threatened.

What is even more worrying with respect to this market-driven flexibility is that some particular groups and individuals are positioned as to benefit more than, and often at the expense of, other groups and individuals. Massey (1993) had something similar in mind when referring to the power geometry of time-space compression. A pertinent example of such distributive injustice is the 2004 Olympic Games which included 270 naturalised athletes. Detailed statistics show how the majority of these individuals had grown up in less powerful and wealthy national states and eventually competed for the richer and more powerful ones.

Poli (2007) discovered how the balance in naturalisations on a continental or subcontinental scale was positive for Western Europe (+67), America (+22) and Oceania (+12), while negative for Eastern Europe (-47), Africa (-36) and Asia (-18). Another example of the hegemonic nature of sporting representation is the way in which young talented rugby players from the Pacific Islands (Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga) have been appropriated by New Zealand and Australia in order to strengthen the quality of their player base. Some (Grainger, 2006) have criticised the New Zealand Rugby Union for marginalising Samoan rugby by purposefully retaining promising Samoan rugby talent within the New Zealand system. The presence of Samoans in the All Blacks is by no means the embodiment of flexible national and political identities, but a concealed hegemonic imperialism (Grainger, 2006).

The above examples demonstrate that there are significant ethical issues that need to be dealt with in the context of ISR. Governing bodies and the sports practice community are no doubt aware of these problems, and are actively attempting to resolve them.[9] What is less certain, however, is whether they realise that ISR regulations which include, and often primarily rely upon, the diverse citizenship processes of various national-states, provide fertile ground for such pathologies to thrive [10]. The aforementioned examples demonstrate that athletes, governing bodies, and national-states, are taking advantage of such citizenship regulations in order to further their own personal, sporting, and nationalistic ambitions. In the context of the

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[9] For example, the IOC (XII Olympic Congress, Copenhagen, 2009), IRB (9th IRB General Assembly, Dublin 2009) and FIFA (FIFA World Congress, Bahamas, 2009) have held debates on the issue fairly recently. There has also been an increase in the collaboration between academics and various international governing bodies in attempting to address such issues. In one of the most high profile events, a conference was held at the Olympic Museum at Lausanne in November 2005 concerning the issues and problems of national representation in sport. The conference was organised by the CIES (International Centre for Sports Studies) in association with the IOC, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), the Association of International Olympic Winter Sports Federations (AIOWF) and FIFA. Guests also included the IOC president Jacques Rogge and senior representatives from four international sports federations - basketball, ice hockey, skating and skiing (de Groot, 2006)

[10] It is important to note that some of the other criteria and bye-laws are also guilty in this respect, and this will be discussed in the next section.

pervasive nature of commercialism in sport, regulations that are based on citizenship are weakly constituted to preserve the integrity and values of international sporting competition. Firstly, the regulations are too lax in the context of rampant commercialisation in sport and therefore make it easy for athletes and governing bodies to take advantage. Secondly, the fact that individual national-states control such activity invites corruption in the context of international sport. This is clearly seen in the examples where national-states rapidly accelerate the naturalisation of talented athletes, and often these 'deals' involve financial agreements, either with the individual or with the cooperative national-state (Tarasti, 2007).

Citizenship and the Various Faces of Nationalism

As we attempted to demonstrate in the first section of this analysis, all manifestations of nationalism depend to some degree of the notion of identity and culture, and thus always involve a form of difference and exclusion. This, however, is not to deny that there exists huge diversity in the ways that various nations and national-states, at various times and contexts, conceive of such differences and exclusion. This is again most clearly expressed in the diverse citizenship practices of national-states.

Much has been written on the difference between ethnic and civic conceptions of the nation. The ethnic conception of the nation is often viewed negatively because membership within such communities is usually exclusionary and ascribed by objective and natural characteristics such as birth and ancestry. This ethnic conception is closely related to the citizenship law of 'jus sanguinis' (law of blood) where individuals are granted the status of a national if they possess certain objective characteristics such as ancestry. Lichtenberg (1997) gives the example of German citizenship laws where ethnic Germans who have lived for generations in the former Soviet Union are automatically granted citizenship, whilst citizenship may not be

granted to individuals of Turkish descent who may have lived their whole lives in Germany.[11] This account is usually contrasted with a 'civic' conception of the nation that emphasises freedom and choice. This approach is associated with the citizenship law of 'jus soli' (law of the soil) where nationality is automatically granted to those born on the territory, but also allows those individuals who want to be politically united with members of a certain nation to acquire nationality by means of residence or marriage.

It is clear that important moral consequences ensue from adopting a certain conception of the nation and of national identity. The difference between a nationalism which celebrates diversity and inclusivity compared to one which is exclusionary and illiberal, is one of great moral significance. A long line of liberal philosophers have argued that nationalism will always collapse into vulgar manifestations of ethnocentrism (Levinson, 1995; Miscevic, 2001; Nussbaum, 1996; Vincent, 1997). Authors of such disposition believe that nationalism is inherently illiberal, and therefore have criticised any defence of national ties variously as 'oxymoronic' (Levinson, 1995), 'irresponsible' (Vincent, 1997), and ultimately 'immoral' (Miscevic, 2001). Although there are reasons to be pessimistic considering some of the history and reality of some manifestations of nationalism, it is also evident that these critics ignore the existence of liberal and healthy manifestations of nationalism (Couture, Nielsen, & Seymour, 1998).

In addition to being attentive to the ideological differences between various nationalisms, we should also avoid treating them as static phenomena. The nature of various nationalisms can

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[11] The lost Jewish tribes of India is an interesting case, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/24/bnei-menashe-move-to-israel-indian-jews-from-lost-tribe-arrive-in-holy-land-photos_n_2359086.html
 for on the one hand it suggests a citizenry of openness and diversity – but because the granting of Isreali citizenship to all Jews is bred from a particular set of brutal historical antecedents – the hovering up of such lost tribes demonstrates a level of religious and ethnic fundamentalism that is deeply contradictory to freedom and choice. This seems to be an ethnic rather than civic conception of identity.

change drastically over time. What started out as an ethnic nationalism may over time become much more liberal and inclusive, and in much the same way nationalisms which were originally political and civic may evolve to include a popular public culture as a central element of its existence. Poole (1999) discusses the example of the British national-state where ethnicity has become less central to its self understanding over the twentieth century. He also mentions other examples of similar shifts, such as the inclusion of immigrants from Asia and the indigenous inhabitants of Australia as key contributors to the Australian nation and identity. There is a complex relationship between the histories of various nationalisms, their present manifestations, and their potential futures. It is certainly the case that there cannot, and should not be, a purely normative theory which ignores historical and sociological reality (Couture, et al., 1998). But whilst our political and moral theories must keep within the purview of history and sociology, they must amount to more than merely a reiteration of such histories and sociologies. Here, one is reminded of Dewey's warning that we should never consider values in isolation from facts or facts in isolation from values (Couture et al, 1998). What this suggests, then, is that the content of various nationalisms are subject to change, and such change is often the result of political and moral debates centred on the nation's self understanding of its culture, identity, and history. This is something we, as actors in this world, can influence and change, for as Poole (1999) persuasively argues, the history of nationalism is not one constrained or shaped by history, but by ongoing political and moral debates. If one takes the view, as we do, that some form of cultural community is an inevitable feature of human society, then surely it is our duty to render such attachments into peaceful and constructive channels. Nationalism may well be a transitory manifestation of such a community, but it is the one which still dominates in contemporary society, and thus our hopes for a more liberal and egalitarian world, requires we take nationalism seriously, and more than anything, critically.

In light of these arguments, it seems morally problematic for international sporting governing bodies to blindly follow the diverse citizenship processes of individual national-states. Considering the obvious moral issues associated with certain conceptions of national belonging and citizenship, blindly following such regulations means the sporting practice community may be supporting and promoting illiberal and immoral manifestations of nationalism. If Poole (1999) is right that the content and future of nationalism is a matter of morality and politics, then we argue that sport has an important role to play in rendering national attachments and identities into constructive and peaceful directions. If this is to be the case, the international sporting governing bodies should ignore the diverse citizenship processes of various national-states, and consider in more detail what a liberal and progressive of ISR would look like. It is to this task that we finally turn.

3 - National Identity and Belonging

Primarily as a result of the aforementioned problems with citizenship as a criterion for ISR, all of the international sporting governing bodies have realised that they need to supplement this regulation with further requirements. One of the problems for sporting governing bodies, however, is that they are pulled by two opposing forces. On the one hand they seem to acknowledge that in conditions of globalisation, progress in sport requires greater freedom and flexibility from overtly rigid ties of national identity. From this perspective, ISR rules ought to portray an open and flexible understanding of national identity and belonging. On the other hand, there also exists a concern that excessively liberal regulations might undermine the basis for meaningful national representation and is also liable to give ground to the corruptive nature of the market. The biggest problem for governing bodies, however, is that rule formulation and adaptation seem more like ad hoc compromises to particular problematic instances rather than

being grounded in a principled account of national identity and belonging. Even more worrying is that these regulations usually take their normative bearings from the existing citizenship practices of various national-states, and seem to lack the critical reflection required to develop a meaningful and appropriate account of ISR. What should guide such an account is the need to find the right balance between an understanding of national ties that is liberal and inclusive, and one that is still meaningful and inhibits the moral pathologies associated with hyper-commercialisation in sport.

Trying to establish an account of national identity and belonging that finds this balance is itself a complex task, and we can only offer a brief sketch in this paper. Nonetheless, what has hindered debate on such issues is the fact that the conceptualisation of national identity has traditionally been centred on a misleading dichotomy. Firstly, there is the 'civic' and voluntaristic conception which views national identity as a matter of individual identification and choice. This 'civic' understanding is often misleadingly associated with citizenship (McCrone, 2000). Alternatively, there is the 'ethnic' and deterministic view that national identities are ascribed to individuals as a matter of fate. Whilst the 'ethnic' conception has been denounced for neglecting the capacity for social reflexivity, freedom and assimilation (Adams, 2006; Antonsich, 2009; McCrone, 2002), the 'civic' conception has been criticised for promoting extremes of voluntarism, abstracting the individual from the contingency of their inherited history and cultural experiences (Canovan, 1998; Van de Putte, 1998; Yack, 1996).

What has further fuelled this theoretical impasse is the misleading idea that any attempt to discuss the content and limits of national identity is inherently regressive. This dualistic understanding of national identity suggests that anything except a fully open and inclusive understanding of national ties is liable to slip into xenophobia and antagonism towards

outsiders. In other words, that moving beyond a civic understanding of identities (or often citizenship) and discussing the cultural elements of national identity is automatically subject to the problems associated with the 'ethnic' and deterministic account. Whilst such concerns are understandable, some authors (Couture, et al., 1998; Miller, 1995; Poole, 1999; Tamir, 1993) have argued that they are nonetheless illusory, and have attempted to defend what could broadly be termed a liberal and cultural nationalism. Such authors argue that it is perfectly possible to discuss a meaningful cultural account of national identity, as well as its abuses, without slipping into ethnocentrism or threatening the openness and inclusivity that is appropriate to contemporary times.

A Liberal and Cultural Understanding of National Identity and Belonging

Tamir (1993) conceptualises liberal nationalism as a mid-way position between the nationalist claim that individuals are the products of their culture, and the liberal outlook that individuals should be the authors of their own lives. Firstly, it must be accepted that all humans are inevitably influenced by the communities, associations and institutions in which they are socialised (Miller, 1995). Most of us have a family, are educated, live in a particular geographical area, and of course, are born within national cultures. As might be evident, this understanding of identity shares much with Bourdieu's notions of habitus and field. According to Bourdieu (1977) social fields are endowed with a specific gravity which influences the agents that exist within it. The existence of such fields requires and engenders certain responses from individuals. Habitus is the collective term for this array of dispositions. For example, individuals do not usually seek out a national identity, rather it is given by virtue of exposure to a national habitus which is transmitted via agencies such as family, language, education, media and history. As Maguire and Poulton (1999: 20) argue, such habitus codes are constructed through discursive practices and practical actions, which include 'the familiar, the

taken for granted, the daily unnoticed actions (that) bind us to a particular I/we identity – a process that has occurred through childhood and continues through adult life'. What is important about such habitus codes however, is that their external and objective influence crucially depends on the subjective engagement of individuals. So whilst national identities are internalised into the psychology of its members, 'their actions remake the national habitus anew' (Maguire and Poulton, 1999: 19). This is what Bourdieu (1977) means when arguing that habitus is structured and structuring, and therefore has the capacity to explain away the false dichotomy between individuals and society.

Although this might seem to portray a rather deterministic account of identity, in claiming this linkage between subjectivity and objectivity it opens up a space for a fruitful development in the form of a hybridisation of the concepts of determinism and voluntarism. Moreover, it portrays a picture of identity that is neither exclusively closed nor open, but negotiable and adaptable. McNay (1999), in developing the work of Bourdieu (1977) on habitus and field, has possibly come closest to asserting a view of identity formation which is consonant with the liberal and cultural nationalist position. McNay (1999) felt particularly dissatisfied with a tendency in some theories of falsely portraying identity formation as an asocial process. She is therefore leaning towards Bourdieu's concept of habitus and field as they explain the generative nature, persistence and reproduction of certain identities. This, however, does not mean that individuals are the inevitable and static products of the social structure, as humans have the capacity to reflect on such contingencies. This understanding of identity therefore, is one in which the persistence and power of habitus are heavily influential, but do not fully deny the potential for reflexivity (Adams, 2006; McNay, 1999).

This understanding reflects the liberal and cultural nationalist's construal of membership to a nation, which is summarised effectively by Tamir (1993: 14) who argued that 'no individual can be context free, but that all can be free within a context'. This means individuals have the capacity to choose their own ends and communal affiliations, even though they are laden with contingent influences (Tamir, 1993). Tamir (1993: 37) further argues that national identities seem to belong to such an intermediate category:

> Just as our belief in freedom of religion is not oblivious to the fact that most of us are born within a particular religion, arguing for the view of national culture as a matter of choice merely suggest that, having discovered the cultural and national frameworks we are born into, we can reflect on them critically and exercise choices regarding our future commitments and affiliations. In other words, a national culture is not a prison and cultural ties are not shackles.

Although a liberal and cultural nationalist would accept that choice is possible, such identities cannot be created and dissolved *ad lib* (Canovan,1998). Changing one's identity is a process that is more than simply a voluntary choice, and involves the complex interplay between one's prior social affiliations and one's current cultural achievement, commitment and allegiance. Adams (2006) similarly argues that despite reflexive possibility, such choices are never abstract or asocial, and are consequently subject to certain restrictions. In line with McNay's (1999) re-articulation of the concepts of habitus and reflexivity, the liberal nationalist accepts that a sense of national identity can take shape in a number of ways, but that authentic attachment and affection only develop through engagement and commitment over time. Despite the possibility of individuals acquiring or changing a sense of identity, this would be the exception rather than the norm. A person's sense of identity usually develops naturally from

where they were brought up, educated and socialised. For most people, their sense of national identity is largely unproblematic and it is unlikely that many would be capable of changing their allegiance once it is established. Mumford (2004: 185) in discussing notions of allegiance and identity, similarly argues that a fleeting or momentary allegiance would be an oxymoron since it is premised on a 'strong, at least semi-permanent, emotional attachment'. In this sense, the concept of allegiance and identity is very much like that of love, which must be extended over time, but 'to say that an allegiance, or love, must be permanent would be too strict' (Mumford, 2004: 185). Poole (1999: 110-11) similarly summarises the liberal and cultural understanding of national belonging in the following way:

> Of course, commitments are subject to change: artists become accountants, devoted spouses form new attachments, and migrants seek to better understand themselves in foreign lands. It is important…that such changes be possible. But it would be superficial to bring these under the rubric of freedom of choice. They involve a change in the determinants of choice – the standards we bring to bear, the aspirations we seek to further, and the meaning we assign to our life as a whole…Such transitions are not and ought not to be easy…In the case of national identity, for most of us the transition is almost impossible to make completely: our national culture has inescapably formed our voice and our vision. Though here too we may (and certainly ought to) allow the possibility of change, we do not feel that it should be too lightly made'

In sum, national identities are not in a perpetual state of flux, and for most people it is highly salient, stable, unproblematic and constantly reinforced (Poole, 1999; McCrone, 2002). This is not to deny that one's sense of belonging can be multi-layered and include more than one level of allegiance. Moreover, the possibility of changing one's identity or loyalty is subject to a

negotiated social process that is ultimately dependent on significant cultural engagement, achievement and assimilation. This kind of understanding seems to dampen the extreme voluntarism and determinism associated with dualistic accounts of national belonging, and portrays a liberal, yet meaningful, account of national identity and belonging.

What is also important with such an understanding of identity is that it portrays a liberal and progressive conceptualisation of the national community itself. Although we argue that individuals who wish to join the national community must assimilate into the national culture to some degree, it is also the case that the national community must be open to influence by such newcomers and diversity. This is a premise of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field. A culture, as Poole (1999) argues, is a story of change and evolution, not a fixed essence. In addition to influencing those who participate within it, it is continually being created, recreated and modified. The only condition a liberal and cultural nationalist would make in such instances is that the evolution of a national community must be gradual and must be a process of give and take on both sides. So although change is built into the definition of national identities and communities, a meaningful understanding these concepts depends on the idea of continuity over time. And as Smith (2001: 20) argues, this could not be otherwise for insofar as identities and nations 'connotes a measure of stability, of sameness over time, change can only operate within clear boundaries' for otherwise they would not be preserved sufficiently for us to speak of the same nation or identity 'from one generation to the next'. Nonetheless, a liberal and cultural nationalist would generally celebrate the fact that diversity can contribute to a nation's own cultural self-understanding (Poole, 1999).

Implications for ISR

It is such a liberal and cultural understanding of national identity and belonging that we argue should guide ISR regulations. Arguing that national identity is based on cultural attachment and familiarity suggests that the most important factor is the subjective feelings of individuals. Theoretically, it matters not how such individuals acquire such cultural attachment. The difficulty in using such an account in a prescriptive way, as we propose in the case of ISR, is that it must somehow objectify the subjective. Implementing normative based policies is difficult and such attempts will always be rather crude and will encounter exceptions and contradictions. This is certainly the case with ISR, for it is very difficult to change something as emotional, subjective and complex as national identity into a set of rules and regulations. This does not negate the fact that on occasions such frameworks are clearly required.

Although there is great variance in the eligibility rules of different governing bodies, they are usually centred on four identity markers, namely: citizenship, ancestry, birth, and residence. In light of our arguments in this paper, we argue that eligibility regulations ought to be substantially simplified and operate according to cultural achievement and commitments. Let us briefly make our case.

We are not arguing that place of birth, ancestry, and citizenship is unimportant, rather that they are liable to fuel the moral pathologies identified, and are of secondary importance compared to early socialisation and long-term residency. It should also be noted that for most individuals their sense of identity will be based on a combination of factors. For example, it is probable for many that their place of birth, place of early socialisation and education, their citizenship, and a large majority of their ancestry all point towards one identity. For other individuals, however,

these issues might be more complex, and in light of the ethical issues associated with ISR, there needs to be a discussion about which of these identity markers are most important.

Although there is a sense of intuitive logic that birthplace is important, on its own it is largely irrelevant. Birthplace does not guarantee that an individual will be attached to, or familiar with the national culture and identity in any significant way.[12] Of course, most people are brought up and educated in the same culture that they were born, but it is the socialisation and immersion within a cultural framework that is important rather than merely the fact of birthplace. Moreover, this criterion is liable to give ground to the moral pathologies discussed with respect to the citizenship criterion. Individuals who have no meaningful cultural attachment with their place of birth, and have lived all their lives elsewhere, often take advantage of this regulation for the wrong reasons. The fact that citizenship is almost always given to those born in the relevant territory further aggravates our concerns in respect to the citizenship criterion.

As with birthplace, intuitively the national identity of one's parents or grandparents might seem important. Whilst this may be the case in some instances, it is fairly clear that a liberal and cultural nationalist would not place great significance on ancestral ties. Factors such as one's own place of early socialisation and education are usually more determinative with respect to national identity. We do, however, accept that individuals may feel authentically attached to a nation due to their parent's national identity, and that they may have cultural attachments to more than one nation. Despite this possibility, there are other reasons why ancestral ties are

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[12] Again we would emphasise that we are not arguing that the unit of representation (whether be it the nation-state, a stateless nation etc) necessarily corresponds to such a national culture and identity. As was argued in the first section, people's identities and cultural attachments are often multifaceted, operating at different levels in various contexts. For example, one's eligibility for British sporting representation might be based on one's attachment and immersion within a Welsh cultural identity (which is itself part of the wider British identity.

problematic with respect to ISR, and in any case such individuals can still represent a nation based on residency grounds if they are committed to represent that nation.

As with birthplace, many individuals and national governing bodies are taking advantage of the ancestral regulation, and it allows the aforementioned pathologies of ISR to thrive. It is commonplace for athletes to represent nations to which they have tenuous cultural attachments on the basis of their parents or grandparents nationality. Holmes and Storey's (2004) discussion of the 'Anglo' dominance within the Republic of Ireland team during the 1990s, demonstrated by the fact that on six occasions a team started with nine players neither born or brought up in Ireland, captures our concern effectively. Another problematic issue with such a regulation is establishing how to determine the parent's or grandparent's nationality. We have in mind here the possibility of some form *of reductio ad absurdum*, where the questions regarding what constitutes meaningful national belonging only get relegated one level. In other words, how would we determine the parents' or grandparents' nationality in the first place? We are not arguing that there is no method of getting around such issues, only that doing so overcomplicates the process. This is especially the case considering the attractiveness of a simpler residency requirement.

Such a residency based requirement is attractive for two reasons. Firstly, it resonates with the liberal and cultural understanding of national identity. Since we have argued that national identity is usually developed with engagement over time in the national culture, it makes sense that for most, their sense of national identity naturally develops as a result of early socialisation, upbringing and education. A residency requirement would therefore automatically allow such individuals to represent the nation where they were brought up and educated.

The second feature that makes a residency requirement attractive is the fact that it would allow for the possibility that people may acquire or choose a national identity. The liberal and cultural nationalist accepts that it is possible to acquire a national identity but only when the individual is immersed sufficiently in that culture to allow for the 'contamination' of one's prior patriotic affections with new ones. A residency requirement, thus, is consonant with the liberal cultural account that bridges the gap between the extremes of voluntarism and determinism. To ensure that ISR regulations limit the moral pathologies discussed, rules which lead to athletes meeting minimal residency requirements should be avoided. Fleeting allegiances with national cultures, with no meaningful engagement with the nation's cultural practices and institutions, are unlikely to lead to genuine national representation. There is, however, no need to get overly pedantic about the length of residence. ISR regulations should only attempt to ensure that national representatives have a genuine cultural and national commitment to the nation in question, and are not merely using sporting representation as means to other ends. In light of the relatively short career length of sportspeople, we argue that something like a five year residency period amounts to a significant commitment.[13]

Conclusion

In this paper we have discussed a diverse range of issues concerned with nations, national-states, national identity and citizenship. The purpose of discussing these issues has been to address what we take to be a significant issue within sport, namely, ISR. We hope, however,

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[13] We realise that a 5 year residency period may seem arbitrary and this reflects the problematic nature of the concept of line drawing in general. Nonetheless, we have spent considerable space explaining why residency periods need to be sufficiently long to avoid mercenary athletes, to ensure representatives have a genuine and authentic attachment with the culture in question, and to portray a liberal, open and inclusive account of national attachments. We feel that a residency period of five years is coherent with our account of national identity, and would also limit some of the pathologies of ISR. We would however, emphasise the importance of the principles underlying the regulations, rather than the regulations themselves.

that some of these discussions might be informative on wider issues concerned with national identity and citizenship in contemporary society.

Our central argument in this paper is that current ISR regulations are plagued by conceptual, sociological and moral problems. Firstly we argued that the rules fail to deal with the sociological complexity of nationalism, and tend to follow the general trend of prioritising the national-state model and citizenship; and consequently pay scant regard to the existence of stateless and cultural nations and also the increasing complexity of nationalisms in contemporary society. Secondly, we argued that ISR regulations that follow the diverse citizenship practices of various national-states leads to inequality and certain moral pathologies that ought to be avoided. Our proposed alternative is that ISR regulations ought to ignore citizenship as a criterion, and focus instead on a more general notion of what it means to belong to a national community. Such regulations would work for all manifestations of nationalism (stateless and cultural nations as well as national-states), would limit the moral issues associated with commercialism in international sport, and would also portray a liberal understanding of national ties that is appropriate to contemporary society. Although all governing bodies have taken steps towards this end, in the final section we have attempted to demonstrate that their approach seems confused, unprincipled, and often lead to further moral problems.

Whilst we certainly believe that international sporting governing bodies ought to take the arguments presented here seriously, we should emphasise that we are not claiming that transforming the normative arguments of this paper into practical regulations is an easy step. The fundamental purpose of this paper is to outline the background principles and normative framework that could guide and inform such policy implementation. The actual work of

creating and adapting policies of ISR ought to be done with due care and attention by a number of specialists, including lawyers, policy analysts, as well as the input of international governing bodies and the wider sports practice community. What we have developed here, therefore, should be thought of as a starting point to a wider process. Possible areas of future research may therefore focus on the more practical and operational difficulties of policy implementation. With this caveat in order, however, we are confident that some of the insights of this paper harbour the potential to reform our sporting world for the better. Whether international sporting bodies are willing to listen, or are ready to engage in a reflective and thorough process of deliberation, we are unfortunately not as confident.

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