

HIGHLAND GAMES, ANCIENT SPORTING TRADITIONS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN MODERN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

GRANT JARVIE

University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland

Sports Studies Department

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ABSTRACT

The article draws upon the history and contemporary relevance of the Scottish Highland Games in order to explain the relevance of ancient sporting traditions within to-days world. The article is divided around four themes: 1) A discussion of global sport and the place of sport within anti-globalisation movements; 2) A history of the Scottish Highland Games; 3) The contemporary social, cultural and economic significance of Highland Games and ancient sporting traditions, and finally; 4) A critique of global sport which involves a defence of the value of ancient sporting traditions in developing social capital. The article concludes by suggesting that the local, traditional and at times international is the natural defence against both global and or American cultural and economic forces of the day.

INTRODUCTION

Firstly can I say many, many sincere thanks to the FALSAB (Federation des Amis des Luttes et Sports Athletiques de Bretagne) and the Breton Cultural Institute for asking me to contribute to and learn from the workshops that make up this colloquium. When I look at the names and contributors to present and past meetings it is a privilege to be here to. Can I sincerely thank you for and on behalf of the University of Stirling and the British Society of Sports History for inviting me to your gathering.

Having read many of the past papers and contributions over the years I note that the defence of traditional games and sports has been made so eloquently by others that it is difficult to add to what others have said [1, 2, 3; 12, 13]. Renson has warned us that “we should not speak of Danish, Flemish, Hawaiian, Nigerian or Scottish games but rather of traditional games practised in Denmark, Flanders, Hawaii, Nigeria or Scotland” [13, 51]. Salter has addressed the utilitarian functions of traditional leisure time activities in developing societies in terms of ritual, commerce, politics, social control, and education [14, 65] while Palm calls for the revival of traditional games as basis for a genuine resource to promote sport for all [12, 77]. I am mindful and indeed sympathetic of Eichberg’s ideas on body culture and popular culture as facets of association and living democracy [3]. The aforementioned list is far from exhaustive, but all of the authors included above have revealed in some way the vitality and importance of traditional games and sports and their utility within various

communities. They have done so from a particular stance or a particular knowledge base of one or more cultures while at the same time being careful to acknowledge that the utility of their approaches should not be reified or taken as any form of universalism to solve a set of common problems such as the marginalisation or lack of mainstream funding support for traditional games and sport.

No matter where we come from and despite our many differences colloquiums such as this clearly prove that internationality and indeed social capital can be sustained and developed through an interest and involvement in traditional games and sports. Fairly innocent questions about traditional games and sports can soon lead you to fairly heated debates about culture, history, the impossible search for authenticity and the values associated with sporting practices. In *Highland Games: The Making of the Myth* [9] and *Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures* [8] I rightly or wrongly argued that Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and the many forms of sport within the Celtic cultures of Europe, could not be properly understood without a rigorous and systematic attempt to ask how the development of these activities were influenced by the historical and social conditions of the day. If *Highland Games: The Making of the Myth* had been written to-day it would have been a far better book had the author been much more critical about America's growing obsession with its Scottish connections which are so clearly on display during the North American Highland Games season or the extent to which different traditions of Highland Games have taken on different meanings as they have travelled the globe and become much more international.

Whatever stories we tell about the changing nature of traditional games and sports in different parts of the world the defence of the traditional needs to be sensitive to the bigger diagnostic pictures necessary to orientate social support and political focus for the diversity of traditional games and sport throughout Europe. This in itself will be an uneven story because European social relations are themselves uneven. The story I want to share with you to-day is not just a comment in defence of Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and ancient sports such as shinty but more a critique of those arguments that uncritically accept the notion or the trend of global sport as the way things are or the way things ought to be. It is an argument that rejects the free market notion of globalisation in favour of the idea of internationality while at the same time highlighting that the residual social aspects of many traditional Scottish games and sports hold an important middle ground. A third space between the free market provision associated with highly commercialised sports and state sponsored sports supported by local authority or government lottery funded sport which, at least in Scotland, tends to marginalize traditional sports and games. The significance of these issues I hope to illustrate very superficially in the time allowed. Nonetheless the questions at the heart of this paper are relatively straightforward; (I) is modern sport truly global? (II) what contribution can traditional Scottish games and sports make in terms of economic, cultural and social capital and (III), how can we defend traditional games and sports against the power of global sport in the 21st century? In order to achieve this I have divided this paper into the following three sections (A) a critique of global sport; (B) an account of Scottish Highland Gatherings and ancient Scottish sports and (C) a defence of the social in traditional games and sports.

GLOBAL SPORT, CAPITAL AND ANTI-GLOBALISATION MOVEMENTS

It is impossible to describe modern life accurately without acknowledging the impact of games and sport worldwide. For example the claims associated with what has uncritically become termed global sport have been imprinted across newspaper headlines throughout the summer of 2002 and illustratively epitomised by the 2002 FIFA sponsored World Cup. FIFA is an organisation that likes to think of itself as governing the global game of football. Much of the research on globalisation and sport has tended focus upon the spread of sport across the globe in economic, cultural and political terms. A particular strand of this process has been to argue that the nation-state and the national are no longer as important as the global or the European or indeed broader configurations such as the Celtic. There are two competing concepts of globalisation. One encompasses a community of human citizens and worked for, for instance by environmentalists who talk in terms of thinking global and acting local. The other is of an unregulated free market where capital is king or queen and the poor are left to struggle with the consequences of de-regulation, privatisation, and the international plundering of international corporations. Proponents of globalisation typically argue that we live in an age in which a new kind of international world has emerged, one that is characteristic of global competition for markets, consumers and culture. A facet of the free-market driven form of globalisation has been that markets have decided if we will have pensions in our old age; if people suffering from ill-health in Africa will be treated and what forms of games and sports will be supported or even whether certain regions will have football clubs or not.

Critics of globalisation insist that the process and development of global sport has neither been created completely nor produced a world that may be defined by rampant free markets or passive nation states. While globalisation may exist as a process it has not been achieved as an end point. The movement for global change is often referred to as anti-globalisation or anti-capitalist movement. There are two competing concepts of anti-globalisation one termed radical and one termed moderate. The radical wing view globalisation as a process largely designed to ensure that wealthy elites become more wealthy at the expense of poorer countries. The moderate wing although more difficult to define tend to share the view that globalisation has the potential to be good or bad. It has the potential to provide for a sharing of cultures paid for out of the economic growth provided by free trade but that because the institutions and rules that govern the world are currently controlled by wealthy elites then inequality, instability and injustice are inevitable. In a sporting context a corollary of this might be to argue that traditional cultural rights and traditions need to be at least equally recognised as socially and culturally, if not economically, as important as market supported forms of commercialised sport. Other solutions might involve the return of economic power and possibly political and cultural power to small localities.

Some have argued that it is important to distinguish between internationalisation and globalisation. McGovern's study of the migration of footballers into the English League between 1946 and 1995 prefers to use the terms Celtic and International rather than globalisation when talking of the labour migration of footballers into and within Britain [11, 28]. As such it is concluded that the migration of professional footballers is clearly becoming more international in nature and that this is a trend that is developing along regional rather than global lines. Thus it is suggested that as far as one sport that claims to be global is concerned the notion that globalisation has been achieved is fundamentally flawed. It might be suggested that in terms of the spread of traditional games and sport is concerned that terms such as international, local and or

Celtic, for example, might be more appropriate than the all consuming notion of globalisation.

TRADITIONS OF SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GATHERINGS AND GAMES AND OTHER ANCIENT SPORTS

It might have been tempting to talk of Scottish football in international terms maybe 30 or so years ago but the nation now ranked 60th in the football world failed to qualify for the 2002 World Cup. It could certainly be talked of in free-market terms as an illustrative case study of the problems brought about by the free-market international trade of footballers and the effect it has had on youth football in Scotland. Yet just as important too many local Scottish communities has been the traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games season. The Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games incorporate feats of strength and agility that continue to be practised throughout Scotland but their formal organisation and annual occurrence seems to have taken off after about 1820. The identities encouraged by traditional games and sports in Scotland are usually multi-faceted and like other traditional sporting pastimes they can help to forge not only a sense of self but also a sense of place, a sense of belonging, a sense of inclusion or exclusion, a sense of geography and history. They can contribute to a mythical or real sense of community that can often last a lifetime. Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games come in different forms and sizes and collectively there defence as a forum for traditional games and sport lies not in their potential as a form of free-market or global entity but rather their historical, cultural and international importance. But even these are secondary to their social importance as a form of social capital.

Consider the following facets of Highland Games and ancient sports and the contribution that they make to modern local, national and international communities:

(I) Highland Gathering and Games as Tartanry, Tourism and Economic Capital

As recently as September 2002 I was reminded yet again of the influence of the traditional games and sports to the 21st century Highlands and Islands of Scotland. In reading a particular Highland Cities bid to become recognised as a European Capital of Culture it was clear that there was a due recognition given to the power of the traditional in developing, and sustaining economic capital in contemporary society. This particular report went on to claim that there is a high correspondence between the attractions of the area and the rationale for being recognised as a European Capital of Culture. Themes that included the natural environment, cultural history and facilities, traditional and contemporary arts, the Gaelic language, traditional and distinctive events such as the Celtic folk festivals, ancient sports such as shinty and traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games.

The Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games have not only been a traditional facet of Scotland's sporting history but there are many different facets, images or even traditions of this set of essentially athletic activities. The following are but a few. They have evoked and presented to the rest of the world a particular image of Scotland. An image that is closely associated with the traditional organised Highland Gatherings such as those founded at St Fillans (1819), Lonach (1823), Ballater (1866), Aboyne (1867), Argyllshire (1871) and Cowal (1871). An image that is

closely associated with kilted athletes and dancers, the skirl of the pipes, in some cases royal patronage, the distinct sub-culture of the heavies' traditional strength events and the sense of bonhomie. In many ways this remains the dominant or most popular tourist image of the Scottish Highland Games - that is to say an image which is recognised by the tourist and one that is prioritised over other perhaps less formal local images of the Scottish Highland Games which equally have the right to be termed traditional.

(II) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games as Royalty, Class and Status

There is of course the distinctly Royal image associated with the Braemar Royal Highland Gathering and Games. Queen Victoria's attachment to Balmoral, Braemar and Royal Deeside is often quoted as the most single important factor that contributed to the development of the Scottish Highland Games. They still owe much to the royal patronage bestowed by the current Royal Family who attend Braemar while on their traditional summer holiday in the Highlands of Scotland. The stamp of royal approval first provided for by Queen Victoria attending the Braemar Gathering in 1848 contributed to a sense of respectability and royal approval but at the expense of some of the traditional content. As the traditional role of the monarchy declined during the 19th century royal games became increasingly important. Events such as the Braemar Royal Highland Society Gathering contributed to a growing nucleus of activities which helped to define an emerging British, Scottish and Highland sporting calendar which to-day includes the Derby (Epsom), Ascot racing week (Gold Cup) and various shooting seasons. In this sense the traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games at Braemar continue to be about sociability, status, and social class.

(III) Highland Gathering and Games as Community, Social Memory and Mutual Obligation

The Ceres Highland Games in a part of Scotland called Fife are still thriving almost 700 years after the King of Scots granted the village a charter to hold a market and fair in recognition for the part played by local farmers, labourers, craftsmen and many others who joined the ranks of "the small folk" who allegedly fought at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Upon enquiring about what makes these games important one local who had been coming to the Ceres Highland Games for more than 40 years asserted "you see people you never see any other time of the year and it's good to catch up. It's funny how you only see someone once a year at the games and you just pick up where you left off with them – that's what makes the games special". In this sense it is crucial to recognise the extent to which Highland Gatherings and Games foster a sense of community and social memory.

Attending traditional games and sports can bring back visions of warmly remembered places and times, friends and families and connections that have forged not just specific sporting communities but on a broader scale local and national communities. The experiences of memory in shaping people's lives has been widely explored in terms of how people make sense of various places or communities and in particular national communities. A sense of shared history and experience is important. Memories and stories of traditional games and sports, such as specific Highland Gatherings and Games or shinty matches, provide for generational stories, memories of childhood, memories of place, memories of past games which may be innocent in

one sense but in another sense they provide threads of continuity in lives otherwise lived in separate chapters, in different jobs, know living in different villages and towns. Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games provide collective moments of identification between people that should not be underestimated. Traditional games and sports cannot create community but it can make a contribution. This notion of creating community could be developed a little bit further.

It has been suggested that just as important as the glamorous commercial Tourist Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games of the contemporary period are many of the less formal, local, Highland Games (in both the Highlands and the Lowlands). Writing in 1923 in *Hebridean Memories*, Seaton Gordon wrote “that the greatest event in the lives of the Uist and Barra crofterstakes place in July, when the annual Highland Gathering is held”. Although the great feature of Uist Gathering is the piping, the attraction to the component events of the different Highland Games were often secondary to the social function of meeting friends and in this sense the actual contests were more of a spectacle than the *raison d’etre* for the games themselves. The atmosphere of these less formal events such as those at Glenelg, Skye and Uist are as equally traditional as Braemar and Lonach and yet they are a world apart from the more formal, rationalised, commercial Highland Games circuit of the late 21st Century. What is being emphasised here is the opportunity afforded by the local and the traditional to sustain a network of social groups and relationships that fosters co-operative working and community well being. It involves communities and other social groups exercising a certain degree of trust through taking on mutual obligations in the staging of traditional games and sports.

(IV) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games as International Culture

There is the international and/or North American image that is presented through magazines such as “Celtic World”, which continues to report and carry stories of the Scottish Highland Games to all corners of the Celtic World and beyond. It is in many senses an image that contributes to an international or Celtic image of the Scottish Highland Games. Visit the Scottish Highland Games 2002 Web pages and you will be promptly transported to Scottish Highland Games in Waipu New Zealand (1871); The Auckland Highland Games and Gathering (1980); Turakina Highland Games (1856); Highland Games Sychrov-near Prague (2001); The Tri-Annual Highland Gathering Leeuwarden (1998); The Hengelo Scottish Games – Netherlands (2002) and the Highland Games Association of Western Australia to name but a few. The language and appeal of these activities now extend around the world. The Web pages of the Highland Games Association of Western Australia receive daily hits from many corners of the globe in a way that would have been unthinkable ten, twenty or thirty years ago. All of these developments are testament to the place of traditional and non-traditional Highland Games as an international although not global form of culture.

The same might be said of the ancient game of shinty or it’s Irish derivative hurling. The Web pages of the Camanachd Association and the Gaelic Athletic Association receive daily hits from many corners of the globe. Entries on the Camanachd Association web page from Vancouver, Florida, Ontario, Oklahoma City, Cyprus, Brisbane, Windang, Virginia, Dubai, are testament to the place of shinty in the lives of the Émigré. A visit to the Gaelic Athletic Association Web page will take you not only a tour of the North American GAA administered territories but also to GAA

Clubs such as the Pittsburgh Celtics Gaelic Football Club, the Washington DC Gaels, the Paris Gaels GAA Club, the Taiwan GAA site, and the Japan GAA site. This is a web site that has had over 99,000 visitors since March 1998. All of these developments are testament to the place of Gaelic games in the lives of the world wide Irish Diaspora.

(V) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games as North American Scottish Culture

A particular facet of this internationalisation has been the development of the Scottish Highland Games and the role that it plays in North American émigré culture. One cannot divorce the development of Highland Games overseas from the diverse conditions that gave rise to emigration in the first place. Numerous Scottish societies emerged in order to facilitate the preservation, albeit in a particular form, of Scottish customs – including what the 1903 register of Scottish Societies called national athletic games. Highland Games were incorporated into the agenda of Scottish societies such as those formed in Philadelphia (1749), Savannah Georgia (1750), New York City (1756), Halifax Nova Scotia (1768), St John New Brunswick (1798), Albany (1803), Buffalo (1843), New York (1847), Detroit (1849), and San Francisco (1866). By the time the *Kingussie Record* of 1903 had reported on the efforts of the New York Highlanders Shinty Club, traditional sporting customs had become part of the social and cultural fabric of many émigré communities. It is not necessary to provide example after example to illustrate the point that by the time the North American Caledonian Association was formed towards the end of the nineteenth Century Scottish Highland Games and other ancient sporting traditions had become focal points of émigré re-unions.

The Highland roots in these communities would seem to be enormously important but what exactly is it that is being celebrated at the Glengarry Highland Games and other similar festivals such as those in Glasgow Kentucky? A lost past, a romantic history, a dislocated Scottish Diaspora, an authentic Highland Games free from the encroachment of Anglicisation, an ancient sporting tradition which has flourished in an authentic Gaelic culture? I think not. Certainly the Glengarry Highland Games and the pipers, the dancers, the hammer throwers and the heavy events give the occasion of a distinct sense of being associated in some way with some part of some Scottish/Highland culture which in itself is as different as it is similar and in any case almost impossible to define. Or does it owe nothing to Scotland at all – a celebration of a different sense of community whose substance has nothing to do with an émigré culture and whose customs and traditions have exorcised an early culling of nostalgic pride. Is it a Glengarry sense of identity that is as different in the 21st century as it was in the nineteenth century? A celebration which owes as much to the myriad of experiences which make Glengarry County and the Glengarry Highland Games what they are to-day – s o - m e t h i n g t h a t i s n o t S c o t t i s h o r H i g h l a n d a t a l l but draws upon being a celebration of being a North American Scottish Highlander or Scot [7]. The distinction between the two contexts is absolutely crucial.

(VI) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and Ancient Sports as Educational and Cultural Capital

Traditional games and sports may also be viewed as forms of educational and cultural capital. So widely understood is the language and vocabulary of traditional games and sports that many commentators employ its imagery to cut through complexity. Whisky advertisers extol the virtues of their product regularly by using the ancient game of shinty. “Commitment, skill and endurance - qualities we appreciate” has been the symbolism or branding that has for so long cemented the relationship between shinty and Glenmorangie, one of Scotland’s famous brands of whisky. The shinty yearbook would regularly testify that such qualities are epitomised by “the sport of the Gael, shinty, just as they are embodied in Scotland’s favourite malt whisky, Glenmorangie” (*Shinty Yearbook 1995-96*, 70).

Furthermore both shinty and the Irish game of hurling have helped to fire the artistic imagination as artists use the sports to depict aspects of the human condition. Playwrights, painters, poets, photographers such as Sorley Maclean, Neil Gunn, Gordon Gillespie, Flann O’Brien, and Art O’ Maolfabhal, have used Celtic sports to explore the scope of human interaction and freedom. Anyone who has read the magnificent collection of primary sources accounted for in *Not an Orchid* is left in no doubt about the historical and cultural importance of shinty and hurling within past and present Celtic communities [10].

The same might be said of Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games when one considers the place of these activities within Scottish literary culture and writings. For example during the 1930s and 1940s the writer, novelist and Scottish Nationalist Neil Gunn (1891-1973) continually probed the relationship between symbolism, tradition, nationalism and culture [4]. The importance of sport within a changing way of life did not escape the attention of Gunn who not only questioned the notion of the Highlands as a sporting playground for the rich, in particular the nouveau riche from the South, but also the commercialisation of Scottish Highland Games and the spectacle of the professional athlete travelling from village to village collecting any money that local labour and patronage could gather [5]. Commenting upon one particular incident, Gunn recalls an occasion when the dancers were called together and the prize piper, who had carried off all the money that day, appeared not in the traditional Highland dress but in a blue suit and bowler hat. The judge, obviously astonished, called the piper over and asked him to explain what the rig-out meant. Not recognising the importance of the blue ribbon tradition of the best piper having the honour of playing for the dancers at the last event, the piper explained that he had wanted to catch an early train and therefore he had jettisoned his borrowed kilt so that he could beat it at the earliest moment [5, 413].

At one level, the humorous dismissal of the incident may seem insignificant and yet at another level, the writer’s point is intrinsically a serious one since what Gunn was in fact commenting upon was the decline of a Highland way of life in the 1930s and the in-roads being made by a more urban, commercialised and a times anglicised culture which took little cognisance of Celtic tradition, local people and customs. What seems clear about Gunn’s writings on tradition, including sporting traditions, and nationalism is the view that they were both inextricably linked and that the life and death of one was the life and death of the other [5].

The writings and contributions must be viewed in the specific context of time and place and I have used this example here to merely illustrate that Scottish Highland

Gatherings and Games, like shinty as forms of traditional games and sports have contributed to Scottish literary culture and hence may be viewed in terms of educational and cultural capital. The emphasis here again on the cultural and social significance of traditional games and sports should not be underestimated in that social groups and individuals learn more when they can draw upon the cultural resources of people around them. They learn from each other directly but they also learn to trust that the social arrangements are in place to ensure that learning, through a multitude of mediums including traditional games and sports, will benefit them both culturally and socially. The contribution that traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and ancient traditional sports such as shinty have made to other cultural forms such art, poetry, and literature indicates they have at times been used an educational medium for saying something about the human condition and the social arrangements that exist in any given society at any given point in time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: IN DEFENCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND TRADITIONAL GAMES AND SPORTS

Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games so despised because of their association with Gaelic culture in the 18th century have now become a much-valued part of one cities bid to become a European Capital of Culture in the early part of the 21st century. It is always exciting and sometimes a little confusing to live through a revival of any kind, when something long forgotten rises from oblivion and gains a fresh and potent currency in the present or when something like traditional games and sports marginalised from mainstream funding in the United Kingdom suddenly becomes important in terms of its cultural capital. Perhaps more importantly it serves as an example, and there are many others that could be drawn upon from all parts of Europe, that parts of the old world are still present in the new or that the classical, ancient and traditional is never dead but merely residual and in the same sense residual sporting cultures while they might never be dominant in this increasingly commercialised global and international sporting world are ever present and have much to say not just about the contemporary sporting worlds but also the way we live, who we are and where we want to go.

It seems that in the alleged era of global sport some or all of the following arguments are just as important in the early part of the 21st century. That traditional games and sports can: (a) through their associational nature help in the production and reproduction of social capital; (b) contribute to a sense of civic pride, local pride and boosterism; (c) play a vital role in the regeneration and sustaining of communities; (d) in some cases make a contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities, provide a social focus for community and consequently influence people's perceptions of locality and even nationhood and culture; (e) illustrate that the social values often associated with traditional games and sports are even more important today given the alleged decline in civil society and social capital; (f) provide for a strong sense of collective identification but can also be divisive; (vii) (cannot) sustain vibrant living communities but they can make a contribution; and finally; (g) contribute to international sporting markets and patterns of consumption while at the same time crucially influence local sporting identity and taste. In essence the local, traditional and at times international is the natural defence against the global or the American or the dominant cultural and economic forces of the day.

Finally in conclusion I should like to finish by highlighting three points. Firstly, I have rightly or wrongly attempted to suggest that traditional games and sports in many ways may serve to provide alternative to the readily accepted notion of global sport or more importantly the values associated with global sport. Many traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games in Scotland have their roots in the 19th century notion of a friendly society which served as a form of social welfare for local communities and individuals in time of need or hardship. These values are at times worth thinking about in an alleged global world which fosters ideological notion of a free-market driven form of global sport the consequences seem to be civic disengagement, liberal individualism and lack of trust not just in forms governance but life itself. It has been suggested that the notion of global sport and indeed globalisation is in some senses flawed and the notion of internationality might be a more reality congruent term. However with specific reference to traditional games and sport as form of middle ground or third space between global free-market driven sport and state sponsored sport, at least in Scotland where funding for traditional sports is marginal, it would seem that one of the strongest defences would be to that such activities help to sustain forms of social and cultural capital that is more than just educational. It refers to the network of social groups and relationships that fosters co-operative working and community well being. It involves communities and other social groups exercising a certain degree of trust through taking on mutual obligations. Traditional Highland Gatherings and Games have done this for centuries.

Secondly, community survival often requires a collective sense of identification and public spirit which in turn often requires the survival of other kinds of organisations and associations that help to regularly renew and cement social and cultural relationships. If traditional games and sports in other parts of Europe are anything like the Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and other ancient sports in Scotland then they have been part of the social glue that have held communities together. When the economic viability of life in certain local regions or community “a”, “b” or “c” is threatened perhaps it is unrealistic to expect sport to make more than a symbolic significance. Clearly there are limits to what traditional games and sports can do in contributing to community renewal, survival and sustainability. Nonetheless the role of traditional games and sports in cementing new and old relationships should not be underestimated either.

Finally, in an ever changing individualised and more home based world in which the traditional practices and forms of employment which often held communities together are increasingly under threat then the role of traditional games and sport in to-days communities becomes increasingly important. The different European groups of people who attend colloquiums and seminar such as this is in part testament to the fact that traditional games and sport is not only culture but an instrument of social and cultural inclusion that can bring peoples and cultures together when the correct conditions are given. They are testament, like the enduring residual social facet of Highland Games, to the role that traditional games and sport can play in the production of social and cultural capital within and across modern International Communities.

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