

SECTARIAN FACT OR FICTION? EXAMING SCOTTISH NATIONAL IDENTITY
THROUGH GLASGOW'S OLD FIRM

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On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction...4
2. The Roots of the Old Firm...12
3. The Offensive Behaviours Act and its Critics...33
4. Modern Glasgow and the Problems of Football Sectarianism...37
5. Hegemonic Fandom in Scotland, 45
6. Parliament and the Demonization of the Working Class, 51
7. Football and the Media, 55
8. Football Sectarianism and the Clubs, 62
9. Reconciling These Problems, 70
10. Conclusion, 75
11. Bibliography, 78

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Introduction

Unlike the professional teams of the United States, many European football clubs have a backstory in politics, religion, regional identity or some other distinguishing non-sporting characteristic. The appeal of football has been all encompassing for the past century in Europe, as dictators, economic sets, religious factions, and social groups all have their own teams, intertwining the backstories of football clubs in the overall respective histories of their countries.

Scottish football is one the premier examples of sport transcending the stadiums built to contain it. Traditionally the workingman's game in the country, its modern influence in the world emanates from Glasgow, the third largest city in the United Kingdom. From its inland outpost on the River Clyde, Glasgow evolved from a minor university town into one of the shipping and engineering capitals of the 18th and 19th centuries as the muscle behind the burgeoning British Empire. This influx of industry brought immigration from across the United Kingdom and Ireland, creating an overcrowded hotbed of nationalism, religion, and the tension that typically accompanies both.

This thesis seeks to examine the historic background that has connected Glaswegian football culture to the seemingly independent idea of nationalism, focusing on its political and religious connotations in the city. Although the history behind the confusing and often paradoxical national identities in Scotland is well established in the country, the modern concept of a sectarian Glasgow is back in the streets, stadiums, and

Parliament, culminating in the 2012 Offensive Behaviors at Football Act. Using recent scholarship on the subject, match descriptions, police reports, and the most recent Scottish census data, I intend to analyze the oft-convoluted relationship between pitch and population in Glasgow. Is religious bigotry still the relevant issue that Scottish society makes it out to be, or have the chants ringing throughout Ibrox and Parkhead transcended their sectarian meanings merely into football songs? With these external social and political problems challenging sport across the world, this topic has never been more imperative to investigate, as Scottish Parliament leads the way in attempting to separate what were once very real political, religious, and nationalist passions from the modern football club that has simply become a cause in itself.

The first step in establishing a coherent argument on bigotry and football in 21st Scotland is to define what the term sectarianism means. Perhaps *the* term in vogue to describe these problems, interpreting what constitutes acceptable religious identification is the first step in establishing how it is experienced, and therefore can be governed. Most arguments for or against the eradication of sectarianism in Scottish football are organized into two broad categories. The first set consists of those who believe that sectarianism does not exist in Scottish society as its football representations can be construed under the category of extreme fandom. The latter group believes that it is still a serious problem and needs to be legislated as such. While the first category of sectarian identifiers certainly draw their own problems, the breadth of disciplines and arguments that the

second group draws from make conflicting and misleading accounts of sectarianism inevitable. This range only serves to increase the difficulties in government legislation. The major issue in this second category is their popular argument of construing sectarianism as having an identity based in ethnic and religious elements. As a country that has theoretically been colonized, only to later aid in the invasion of over ninety percent of the world, the influx of immigration and culture from all of these peoples has created a diverse populace.¹ Trying to encapsulate multiple identities as a form of sectarianism is not needed, nor realistically possible. However, what is feasible in Scotland is defining sectarianism as using ones real or imagined ethnic identity as a means of justifying prejudice or bigotry towards them, the interpretation that this paper will employ.

The major issue in trying to legislate concepts traditionally not associated with football is that teams have often transcended athletics by creating their own unique blend of civic, national, political or religious identity. Irish Times correspondent and footballing pundit Paddy Agnew described the state of the game as, “A very simple barometer of a society...If the red light is flashing in society, the red light is flashing in football.”² Although Agnew spoke these words in 1980, they ring equally true from the beginnings of the 20th century all the way through the modern European game. It is no coincidence that the late 19th century origins of the football club coincided with that of the nation state, as it has been and remains intertwined with social, political, and religious

¹ Richard P Seymour, "The British Have Invaded 90% of the World's Countries?" *The Guardian*,

² Simek, "The Frightening Passion That Rules Italian Soccer," (2015)

movements across the continent. This conglomeration makes every match a struggle not just for the day's three points, but whatever wider points the institution has stood for since its own sporting sovereignty.

To better understand the ethno-religious divide taking place in Glasgow, it is necessary to comprehend this importance of the football club as a wider expression of national, racial, political, or religious identities. Examining the case study of Athletic Bilbao's idiosyncratic ideology should be a sufficient lens in which to frame the similar gulf between Scotland's biggest powerhouses. Although separated by 2000 kilometers, the Basque region and wider Glaswegian area are alike as part of a national or even multinational area that does not always accept them.

In the modern climate of football, Athletic Bilbao is a proud anomaly. Based out of San Sebastian in the north of Spain, the "Pride of Basque Country," is one of the top clubs in Spain today, and only one of three teams to have never been relegated from the top division. Matching their tradition on the pitch, off the field, Bilbao have made no attempts to hide their clear political agenda as a symbol of Basque nationalism. During Francisco Franco's dictatorship, the Basque region endured serious oppression as all regional characteristics were banned in an attempt to create a unified brand of nationalism in the country. The Basque language was banned, and it became an offense to fly a regional flag.³ As a result, the football ground with its vast crowds became the

³ Joseph M Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland: Culture, Politics, and Football* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 20

safest place for repressed thoughts and actions to find their natural expression. Football

historian Duncan Shaw wrote on the San Sebastian side,

“As well as being a focus for Basque emotions at home, the Athletic Bilbao club became a pole of resistance to Francoism across the country. Hundreds of local supporters clubs were established by workers who had never visited the Basque Country, but saw in Athletic both a successful working class club, and a powerful symbol of opposition.”⁴

For those repressed by a tyrannical central government, Bilbao became about more than football. They came to proudly represent a people under the severe repression of a dictator. Even today, the club has retained an international cult following for its adherence to community with its historic policy of only fielding players born or raised in the Basque region. A practice as heralded as it is controversial; Novelist Luis De Castresana explains,

Athletic is for me something more than a football team; a part of the emotional landscape of my Bilbao, My Vizcaya...at root, we Vizcayans love Athletic because we intuit that it has something which belongs to us, that within it is a piece of ourselves. [Athletic has] an identity as an umbilical cord linking men to the land, a geographical-emotional capacity.⁵

With its strong Basque community values in the face of modern clubs spending millions of dollars a year on players, the appeal of Bilbao’s tradition as a nostalgic remnant of yesteryear is clear. Because the official Basque government does not possess great power in wider Spain, the club has become the real symbol of Basques on and off the field. On the field, their policy of only playing local players compared with the international superstars that they compete with in the Spanish and Champions League

⁴ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 20

⁵ James MacClancy, *Expressing Identities in the Basque Arena* (New York, New York: World Anthropology, 2007), 56

makes it a minor miracle that they still find success. However, Bilbao remains as active across the community outside the San Mamés as it does inside its famous stadium.

In 1996, the club signed French Basque left back Bixente Lizarazu. The first French Basque player to play for Bilbao, the transfer was a radically political ploy from the San Sebastian side. Traditionally, the French Basques do not hold the same nationalist and often-separatist motives of their Spanish neighbors.⁶ By recognizing Lizarazu's identity as a Basque, Bilbao completely redrew very real political borders by bringing the French-born player into their theoretical national team, an action that the government would not have the power to do. With just one transfer, Athletic Bilbao in effect established stimulus for the Spanish Basques to accept their French cousins, in the same turn offering the invitation for their neighbors to join in what has now become a shared nationalist struggle. This action was a fantastic indication of the power of the club in shaping Basque national identity, a concept at the heart of the problems in Glasgow, the epitome of a city at odds with itself in a country with the same troubles.

As is the case with Bilbao and the Basques, the deep history of sectarianism in Glasgow is intertwined not just in the roots of the city, but the Scottish nation as a whole. Even before the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath, Scotland had asserted its Gaelic national identity apart from England as a Catholic Celtic, "kingdom where one hundred and thirteen kings of their own royal stock have reigned...the line unbroken by a single foreigner."⁷ As the centuries progressed, this identity slowly began to disintegrate

⁶ Igor Ahedo Gurrutxaga, Nationalism in the French Basque Country, *Regional & Federal Studies*, (2005) 76

⁷ *The Declarations of Arbroath, 1320*

through intermarriage, trade, and most importantly the rise of Protestantism, culminating in the Reformation and its defeat of the “auld-alliance” of French and Scottish Catholics.

Prior to the Reformation, only 10% of the nobility were Protestant compared with the majority of England.⁸ The landscape was dotted with countless abbeys and some of the greatest cathedrals in the world. With the victory of English and Scottish Protestants, these were destroyed and what was a devout Catholic country shifted almost overnight. The majority of the nobility turned its support towards England, a provisional government was established, Parliament renounced the Pope's authority, and Catholic mass was declared illegal. George Buchanan, one of the new moderators of the Church of Scotland even went as far to completely invalidate Scotland's own Gaelic history. He asserted that the ancient Gaelic Kings of Scotland had been elected and not divinely appointed, theoretically de-legitimizing the country's Pre-Reformation past.⁹

This distinct national identity separate from England was further weakened by the 1707 Union of the Crowns, and destroyed at Culloden in 1745 where England defeated the Bonnie Prince Charlie. With this victory over the last Jacobite Catholic pretender to the throne, England banned the Gaelic language, Highland dress, tartan, bagpipes, and with it, the last great ideals of traditional Celtic Scotland. As a result of this complete erasure, standard of what it meant to be ‘Scottish’ were ruined, creating a power vacuum in which Celtic and Rangers eventually came to stand for some semblance of identity in a nation sorely lacking in any. While the two clubs have changed drastically over the past century, Scotland's lack of a distinct national character has remained. As a result, those in power today have to create the idea of a non-Scottish ‘other’ in order to give the rest of

⁸ "The Scottish Reformation," *British Broadcasting Channel* (2014)

⁹ "The Scottish Reformation," *British Broadcasting Channel* (2014)

the country a vision of is 'theirs' and what is not. The working class values of the modern Glaswegian fan, as well as the dissenting British and Irish versions of Scottish identity that the Old Firm have eventually come to represent have made the two clubs a popular target for the government, media, and society. While this headhunting would be a problem regardless, both Old Firm clubs encourage this bigoted rivalry, as it has become one of the last vestiges in which they remain relevant in the global game. While later data proves that sectarianism is not a major societal issue in Scotland today, its real very history and correlating perpetuation keep the idea of religious bigotry alive in the modern country.

The Roots of the Old Firm

To understand today's industry of sectarianism, the respective histories of the two clubs have to be examined as a response to their own constantly changing city. Following the Reformation and especially later Industrial Revolution, Glasgow came to prominence as the hub of international trade for the burgeoning British Empire. A city built under the pretense of a united Britain, by the end of the 18th century, Glasgow possessed 43 Anti-Catholic societies in comparison to their 39 Catholic civilians.¹⁰ Despite its prejudices, by 1820, Glasgow had surpassed Edinburgh as Scotland's largest city and soon after was processing more than half of Britain's shipping. In addition to its maritime dominance, Britain's 'Second City' had become an international leader in chemical, industrial, and military engineering, as well the banking, insurance, and professional industries needed to support this rapid growth. In short, the city was booming, causing the England-born adventure writer Daniel Defoe to exclaim that it was, "the cleanest and beautifullest, and best built city in Britain."¹¹

Under this expectation that Defoe praised, Glasgow's reputation as a prosperous Protestant stronghold came under attack from the Irish. Scotland was and still is a country fiercely proud of its national and religious tradition, however confused it may be after centuries of immigration, coupled with religious and political upheaval. Despite its wealth, Glasgow was equivalent to the rest of the country in apprehension towards its

¹⁰ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 11

¹¹ James Sutcliffe, *Glasgow: A City Guide for Long Weekenders* (Louisville, Kentucky: Butler, 2010), 1

own national identity in a theoretically united Britain. With the potato famine starving the Irish population, the already confusing cauldron of nationalism stirring in the city boiled over. Glasgow's position on the country's west coast made it an attainable landing spot for the thousands of refugees too poor to make it to America or even the east of Scotland.¹² What was once a primarily Protestant city quickly became segregated in a virtual apartheid. "Irish" and "Catholic" became synonymous as the new immigrants formed their own societies, churches, neighborhoods, and eventually sporting clubs, threatening the city from a different direction.¹³ With this influx of Irish immigration, the Glasgow skilled working class became worried about losing their jobs. As a result, prejudice against the Irish-Catholics became rampant as they came to stand as a shifty immigrant underclass to the city. It was the perfect hotbed for a football rivalry to form, with the very 'real' teams coming to stand for what were just imagined forms of bigotry beforehand.

In what would become the most famous remnant of this original migration, in 1887, an Irish-Catholic priest by the name of Father Walfrid founded The Celtic Football Club out of Glasgow's Irish East End.¹⁴ Just a few years prior, the Hibernian Football Club was formed in Edinburgh as way to raise money to feed poor Irish immigrants in the capital. Following their initial success, the Father saw an opportunity to do the same in Glasgow. Instead of choosing a name like Hibernian (literally "out of Ireland"), Walfrid choose "Celtic," an homage to the club's Irish roots, but also a challenge to the ancient

¹² Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 24

¹³ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 40

¹⁴ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 24

and ignored link between his home and adopted country in their shared Celtic traditions. Out of nothing, the club exploded onto the Scottish football scene, reaching the final of the Scottish Cup in their first season and winning four league champions from 1893-98.¹⁵ As the club achieved success on the field, they became a rallying point for Scottish Catholics, proving that the Catholic inferiority complex that had swept the country post-Reformation was in fact a myth. Although they did not explicitly mention religion in their club codes, Celtic was at its heart a club for Irish-Catholics. All the clubs founders were of Irish descent or birth, and its 19th century support was almost entirely from the burgeoning community in Glasgow.¹⁶ Described by the first manager Willie Malay as the man, “to whom the Club owes its existence,” John Glass, the President and Director of the club in its formidable years was a major Irish Catholic figure.¹⁷ He was treasurer of the Home Government Branch of the United Irish League as well as a prominent member of the Catholic Union. Another member, William McKillop would go on to become an Irish Member of Parliament, while the fan ranks swelled with supporters such as Michael Davitt, a famous Irish Patriot, Fenian, MP, and founder of the Irish National Land League.¹⁸ The entire atmosphere of the club was politically active. They donated large sums to Catholic charities as well as exclusively Irish causes such as the Evicted Tenants Fund. Officials, players, and fans were also vocal supporters of Irish Home Rule.

¹⁵ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 24

¹⁶ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 35

¹⁷ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 35

¹⁸ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 35

Historians Tom Campbell and Pat Woods wrote, “If as Catholics, the members were concerned about the plight of local charities, as Irishmen they were obsessed with the perennial question of Irish politics, home rule.”¹⁹ Even as transplants, the club used its position of power to further their agenda. Celtic’s political influence did not just adhere to Ireland. The club actively supported Scottish Catholic state schools as well as campaigned against British involvement in the South African Boer War as an act of unjust imperialism.²⁰

Out of this Irish-Catholic diaspora sweeping the city, the Scottish press called for a ‘homegrown’ team to take back the power from the “Irish.” Just as “homegrown” meant Protestant in the same way Irish meant Catholic, Rangers Football Club came to take up this mantle.²¹ At its 1873 founding, Rangers were Protestant mainly in the sense that the majority of clubs in Scotland were. However, by the founding of Celtic in 1887, the club began to openly foster an anti-Catholic sentiment on the issue of Irish home rule. With the early successes of Celtic, Rangers quickly became the, “savior to Protestant Scots who deserted other teams to follow the one team capable of putting the Irishmen back in their place.”²² Modern Scottish academic Joseph Bradley asserted on the rivalry, “that Rangers Protestant political and cultural identity would not have been possible

¹⁹ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 35

²⁰ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 35

²¹ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 24

²² Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 25

without the formation of Celtic.”²³ Although that statement would most likely leave its speaker in trouble in Glasgow’s proud West End, Bradley’s belief is spot-on. Celtic simply were the best team in Scotland at the turn of the nineteenth century, established and developed by and for their community. The club’s strong community values were a sharp contrast to Rangers burgeoning identity as xenophobic response to their changing city.

What facilitated Rangers personality to the rest of the country was that they could and did beat Celtic, a feat their neighbors Queens Park and Partick Thistle could not.²⁴ What was once a dull, everyman Protestant identity soon gleamed as Scotland saw a defense against the rampaging Irishmen. By the end of the century, the Old Firm rivalry was thriving under these pretenses.²⁵ Match reports noted the extent of “bad blood” between the two sides, and soon players found out to be Catholic were forced to leave Glasgow’s blue side. Club patron and eventual chairman Sir John Ure Primrose was paramount to facilitating this transition into Celtic’s ideological opposites. A former Liberal leader, Ure left the party due to his opposition towards Irish independence and transformed his career on this idea. A prominent member of the Orange Order, he made

²³ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 25

²⁴ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 36

²⁵ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 11

no attempts to hide his blatant anti-Irish and anti-Catholic views, instead bringing them to the forefront of the club.²⁶

By 1911, what was a solid ideological difference became concrete with the move of Belfast shipping company Harland & Wolf to the Govan docks in Glasgow. This industrial relocation brought skilled labor jobs to the city as well as a significant number of Ulster Protestant workers. This move from the large Ulster group helped to alleviate unemployment fears, all while providing a strong Unionist backbone at the shipping heart of the city. The relocation was also significant because the company only hired Protestant workers. Taking notes from their districtmen as well as a large proportion of their supporters, around this time Rangers established a strict policy of only signing Protestant players.²⁷ Both clubs actively encouraged this sectarianism and its accompanying violence because it supposedly “put bums in seats,” a controversial concept that has lasted into modernity as the traditional marketing strategy of the Old Firm rivals. Despite its questionable morality, by the outbreak of the First World War, Celtic and Rangers matches were averaging 25,000 spectators.²⁸

The postwar rivalry between the two clubs showed no signs of a sectarian ceasefire, as the formation of the Republic of Ireland only served to add new impetus to the competition. Much to the confusion of the apathetic or foreign fan, Celtic decided to fly the Irish tricolor above Parkhead in support of the Republic. Although published

²⁶ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 25

²⁷ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 25

²⁸ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 25

decades later, the Daily Mail printed the perplexed testament of an Englishmen on holiday up north, “I watched football in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow- and it was first class. Certainly better than anything I’ve seen down here. The only thing that puzzled me was when Celtic played Dundee at Parkhead the home fans (Celtic) were all waving the Republic of Ireland flag. How confusing!”²⁹ While nationalism and football are no strangers to one another, Celtic’s policy of flying a foreign flag above their stadium was bound to draw a reaction. However, what caused the real problem was that it was not just an alien standard, but rather the flag of a nation their host country was at war with. One writer to the Glasgow Herald suggested that, “when the flag of a foreign and frequently hostile state, whose constitution impudently claims sovereignty over part of the United Kingdom, and whose land and people the present pope has declared to be ‘Mary’s Dowry,’ no longer flies from the masthead of ‘Paradise,’ there may be, I say only may be, less ‘bigoting’ in the stands of Ibrox.”³⁰ His imagery calling on the Republic of Ireland, The Virgin Mary, and Paradise, the colloquial term for Celtic Park, is an accurate commentary on the correlation of religion, politics, and football at Parkhead. They portray the very real anger and fear the treasonous Celtic represented to the rest of Scotland. Although fans saw their support of the Republic as a response to the active repression of an Irish-Catholic identity across the country, the rest of the nation saw this explicit expression of Irishness as a direct challenge on their own Scottish identity. Across Celtic Park, anthems glorifying militant Irish nationalism were

²⁹ *The Sunday Mail*, January 5, 1988

³⁰ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 43

commonly sung, in essence supporting an organization the rest of the country saw as terrorists. One of the most sung Irish ‘rebel’ songs that chorused throughout Celtic Park simply went, “Oh Ah Up the Ra,” (IRA) while others were more explicit, such as the “Ballad of Billy Reid”

And the radio said there’s another shot dead,
And he died with a gun in his hand,
But they didn’t say why Billy Reid had to die,
For he died to free Ireland.³¹

Billy Reid was a member of the Belfast Brigade of the Provisional Irish Republican Army. He shot the first British Army soldier to be killed during The Troubles, leading to the beginning of all out war between IRA and Britain. Celebrating a terrorist did nothing to improve tension between Celtic and their Caledonian hosts. Even so, the Herald’s call that Ibrox was less bigoted should be taken with a blue-red grain of salt.

The formation of the Republic of Ireland provided Rangers with the same motivation as their East End neighbors to further their sectarian identities. Chants of “Kill the Fenian Shite,” filled Ibrox while the Union Jack flew proudly overhead, testifying towards Rangers commitment to a united British Isles.³² One of the most popular songs that Ibrox came to be associated with was the “Billy Boys,” referencing King William’s Glorious Revolution. It went,

³¹ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 41

³² T.C Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People, 1830-1950* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1969), 154

Hello, Hello,
 We are the Billy Boys.
 Hello, Hello
 You'll know us by our noise.
 We're up to our knees in Fenian blood,
 Surrender or you'll die.
 For we are the 'Billy Billy' Boys.³³

With the Irish conflict, these songs from the First World War era acquired new meaning in Glasgow as they condemned the Pope, Catholicism, and of course, the terrorist Irish Republican Army. While the 'Fenian blood' referenced in the early part of the century was just a historic remnant of the Williamite victory over the "Fenian" Irishmen (and thousands of easily forgotten Jacobite Scots), with the outset of 'The Troubles', it acquired new meaning as literal Irish blood was spilled daily by Scottish troops. Suddenly, what was a song about long-ago descendants developed modern connotations. Much of the Celtic support had Irish Republican family, friends, or even ties themselves. To have their neighbors celebrating the callous bloodshed of their own people furthered an already contentious relationship.

Following World War II, the militant Protestantism occurring in Glaswegian stadiums was actually declining in the rest of Scotland. Whether to do with the uproar following the realization of Hitler's mass religious genocide camps, or the staggering amount of Scottish Catholics that died beside their Protestant brothers at arms, most British social historians of the era note a significant drop in concrete prejudices against

³³ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 41

Catholics (jobs, schools, social orders, ect).³⁴ Although the religion was still active in the city, Sectarian expert Steve Bruce argued that its militant Reformation-era Protestantism was, “no longer a force...if it survives it will be a “ghetto” in a small isolated communities separated from the main culture.”³⁵ Pressing forward this decline in bigotry, Scottish political theorist Tom Nairn stated that, “zealous anti-Catholicism is now the preserve of cranks and ideological gangsters in Scotland.”³⁶ Strong arguments from two of Scotland’s foremost 20th century religious academics, by most accounts the mass of decent Protestants rejected the beliefs that Rangers held dear following the unifying atmosphere World War II’s victory brought to Britain.

Out of this island-wide societal ambience, Rangers very public bigotry took a turn for the worse. Their anti-Catholic employment policy moved to the extreme in contrast with their changing city. Possessing Catholic relatives or having a non-practicing Catholic wife or ex-wife disqualified mid-century Scottish stars Sir Alex Ferguson, Graham Fyfe and Bobby Russell from continuing their careers at Rangers.³⁷

While most clubs used a scouting system to evaluate a player’s technical ability, finishing, or attitude, Ranger’s scouts instead evaluated the purity of a player’s Protestantism. Forward Don Kickenbrand, a South African signed under the pretense of his Afrikaans Calvinist integrity was a major star for Rangers. In his debut season, the

³⁴ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 25

³⁵ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 26

³⁶ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 26

³⁷ Ian Herbert, "Why Rangers Will Always Mean Regret for Ferguson," *Independent*, September 13, 2010

forward scored twenty-three goals in twenty-five games.³⁸ Assuming that any white South African would be Protestant, Rangers received a shock when rumors began to circulate through Ibrox that Kichenbrand was in fact a Catholic. The player joined the protestant Masonic group in Glasgow as an attempt to deflect the true gossip, but even his Orange connections and star status could not save him, as the South African was eventually shipped off to Sunderland, proof that Rangers valued their off-field traditions more than success on it.³⁹

At this point in the mid-century, Rangers Football Club split the Scottish public opinion. Their early 20th century position as “the Scottish club” had become compromised by their refusal to adapt to a readily changing country. Under public pressure from a growing population of those concerned about their bigotry, Rangers came to deny the existence of an ‘official policy’ on signing Catholics.⁴⁰ However, the public rhetoric often did not match the sentiments trickling out of the boardroom. At the same time the club issued this proclamation, Rangers signed Willie Allison as their public relations officer. Prominent sports journalist Alex Cameron described Allison as, “about as bigoted as they come: the type who would have been in the Ku Klux Klan had he lived in America. He asked right away about my religion.”⁴¹ As shown by their conflicting popular statements and internal appointments, Rangers were caught in a

³⁸ Richard Witzig, *The Global Art of Soccer*, (New Orleans, Louisiana: CusiBoy Publishing), 2006, 48

³⁹ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 26

⁴⁰ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 26

⁴¹ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 26

quandary at this point in the century. Their discriminating history created a real marketing problem, as for the first time in Rangers' existence, the club's beliefs took a divergent path from societal changes not just in Glasgow, but the wider Scottish society they looked to for support.

Much of this problem lies in the paramount importance of 'history' in football. A concept that more than often overshadows its in-game reality, many clubs value their traditions off of the pitch as much as their success on it. Rangers vice-Chairman Matt Taylor recognized this character issue in trying to uphold Rangers traditions, all while attempting promote his football club in a changing Scotland.⁴² In denying his club's history, however steeped in intolerance, he would lose backing from Rangers fans across the world. As a result, the Vice-Chairmen bowed out in fear of the financial repercussions of signing a Catholic. Taylor released a 1967 statement that, "the ban is part of our tradition. To change that now would lose us considerable support."⁴³ Five years later board member George Brown confirmed Taylor's belief that the club, "Will not sign a Catholic, Rangers are the Protestant team and always will be."⁴⁴ While the Rangers board believed that signing a Catholic would radically alter the tradition of the club, in truth, much of the club was already in decay due to the backroom's uncompromising stance.

⁴² Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 57

⁴³ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 26

⁴⁴ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 26

In the 1971 Old Firm match, a crush in the stairway occurred, leading to the compressive asphyxiation deaths of sixty-six supporters, and injuring over two hundred more. The Scottish press severely condemned the club, and the resulting government investigation found the board guilty of sanctioning unsafe seating, the furor a direct sign from the rest of the country that the club should focus more on their football and infrastructure than its players religion.⁴⁵ Even with Rangers 1972 European Cup Winners Cup victory against Barcelona, undoubtedly the highlight of the club's existence, Rangers fans invaded the pitch, starting a full-scale brawl with Franco's police, and resulting in a ban the following year from European competition.

Out of this chaos occurring in Glasgow, a Rangers marketing director by the name of David Pope successfully helped to finance a safer new stand. Due to his liberal character and reputation as an "organizer of outstanding ability," many Rangers fans and club members saw Pope as the gateway to a forward-looking club identity. Set to become the Rangers chairman in 1973, his election was blocked because the club had discovered that he had married a Catholic forty-three years earlier.⁴⁶ This move was the epitome of Rangers uncompromising core principles. By the mid-1980's the club had fallen to a lowly fourth place in Scotland, fighting to attract crowds of even 7,000.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Paul English, "At First Fans Were Shouting 'Get Back' but Then the Stairs Fell Silent. They Couldn't Even Scream for Their Lives; Survivor's Story as Documentary Looks Into Ibrox Disaster," *Daily Record*, February 4, 2010

⁴⁶ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 27

⁴⁷ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 43

In contrast to Rangers decline, Celtic were flourishing in a more progressive Scotland. Although they had never made a practice of only fielding Catholic players, as Rangers received negative public outcry, Celtic's pitch-based multiculturalism only stood out more. Protestant stars such as Danny McGrain and boyhood Rangers fan Kenny Dalglish led an era of class across the pitch in the 1960's as they came to prominence in the Celtic reserve side known "the Quality Street Boys." They quickly achieved fame for their overall abilities, and stunning victory against a full Scottish international side.⁴⁸ However, at the heart of these rampaging Celtic teams was the Protestant manager Jock Stein. Stein guided Celtic to nine consecutive league championships between 1966 and 1974, becoming the first British manager to win a European Cup with Celtic's integrated and buccaneering "Lisbon Lions" side in 1967.⁴⁹

Because Celtic's identity was rooted not against its ideological rival, but in its own Irish Catholic community, they were able to sign Protestants with no real backlash from their own support. In fact the growth of players such as McGrain, rejected by Rangers because he "had an Irish name," and Dalglish, born just blocks from Ibrox, were almost a boon to Celtic support. The club was able to pick the pockets of their rivals in which to rampage not just through Scotland, but all of Europe with their politically and

⁴⁸ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 38

⁴⁹ Archie MacPherson, *Jock Stein: The Definitive Biography* (Compton, West Berkshire: Highdown, 2007), 166

tactically forward looking lineup.⁵⁰ Even if the core of their bigoted boardroom was not rotting from the inside out as was Rangers, Celtic still felt the pressure from its external host city. While wider Scotland may have been moving in a more tolerant direction, the continued success of Glasgow's East End club made the club a major target again, once again blurring the already fine line between sporting success and national identity in the country.

In an attempt to fight back against Celtic's monolithic domination of Scotland, Rangers underwent another minor shift in character to stay relevant. Breaking their traditions of hiring 'Rangers' men that had a connection with the club, the board brought in Graham Souness as a player-manager.⁵¹ A cocksure Scot with a reputation as a fantastic player, Souness was unique in his lack of experience in the Scottish professional divisions. A polarizing character to the most hardcore of supporters, Souness quickly attempted to bridge Rangers proud Unionist traditions with modern Scotland. Immediately upon on his arrival, the new Rangers manager brought in a number of high profile players including international keeper Chris Woods and most importantly the England captain and major Thatcher supporter, Terry Butcher.⁵² Suddenly Rangers were relevant again across Britain as they competed with top English clubs for the best players on the island, resulting in a new era of 'British' identity. Since English clubs were banned from European competition following Heysel, English eyes looked to north to see

⁵⁰ Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, 41

⁵¹ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 24

⁵² Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 28

their own succeeding in Europe. With the influx of southerners, suddenly, what was a dying Unionist character became resurrected stronger than ever as Rangers started winning, and Ibrox responded in like. English football kits began to appear in the stands as St Georges Cross joined the traditional Union Jack. Across the terraces, tunes of ‘God Save the Queen’, ‘Rule Britannia’, and ‘Three Lions’, filled the Scottish air as Ibrox attention began to shift from Belfast to London.

Despite his reinstatement of Anglo pride, Souness was behind the biggest move in Rangers history when he signed the first major Catholic for the club since WW1. Following a period of negotiation, Glasgow’s blues brought in the former Celtic player Maurice Johnston. Despite his prolific goalscoring with Celtic and French club Nantes, Johnson’s transfer was met with anger on both sides of Glasgow.⁵³ Many Rangers fans gathered at Ibrox to burn club scarves while others threatened to turn in their season tickets. The Rangers kitman even made Johnson sort his own uniform out in protest. By 1991, Souness realized that his secular ambitions could never be satisfied at Rangers, and coupled with the appeal of the Liverpool job, the Rangers savior left to take the role in England. Souness later commented on his former club that “I’ll never be comfortable with bigotry, and it will always be at Rangers.”⁵⁴

Following the loss of Souness to Liverpool, the English-Unionism of Rangers came under scrutiny from the rest of the country with the 1998 referendum on Home

⁵³ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 29

⁵⁴ Armstrong, *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, 28

Rule. Rangers Vice-Chairmen Donald Findlay played a leading role in the Conservative-led “No” campaign, but was ultimately defeated as Scots voted for a devolved Parliament with the ability to raise taxes.⁵⁵ Ironically Glasgow City and its neighboring West Dumbartonshire council areas, both Rangers strongholds, balloted highest “Yes” percentage in the upper eighty percentile, an early sign that the colors and songs in the stadiums might not match the feelings on the streets.

Despite his legislative defeat, Findlay remained a popular figure among Rangers supporters. A highly successful lawyer, he achieved infamy by helping to ensure the freeing of a variety of footballing hooligans on both sides of Glasgow, using his abilities and influence to achieve a position on the Rangers board, a post he obviously enjoyed. When attending games at Parkhead, Findlay liked to smoke his pipe, putting his polished shoes up on the desks reserved for opposing management in a blatant show of disdain for his surroundings.⁵⁶ If that was not enough to anger the Celtic supporters below him, he would cheer, shout, and dance at every Rangers goal, antagonizing the fans in green to no end. In published interviews, Findlay made no attempts to hide his dislike for Celtic. He often joked that he did not celebrate his birthday on St Patrick’s Day, instead reserving festivities for July 12th, the anniversary of William’s Glorious Revolution.⁵⁷

Even if he angered rivals, Findlay was a well-respected figure in Scottish society.

He was given a rectorship at the University of St Andrews, and was in the process of

⁵⁵ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, 53

⁵⁶ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, 53

⁵⁷ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, 53

being awarded an honorary degree from the university until the night of May 3rd 1999. Rangers had just defeated Celtic soundly by three to nil, and Findlay joined the players in a raucous night out. In jubilation, the vice-chairmen sang the classic tune, “We’re up to our knees in Fenian blood,” proceeding to damn the papists they had soundly demolished. Unfortunately for the lawyer, his tune was caught on camera and handed over to Scotland’s *Daily Record*. While the video only really confirmed the bigotry of the Ibrox boardroom to the wider public, it happened on the same night that Rangers fans stabbed and shot three young Celtic supporters. Although the correlation was indirect, its magnanimity was too indicative of the internal problems in Glasgow’s western club. The morning that the Findlay story broke, he immediately resigned from Rangers, but the damage was already done. The Scottish Faculty of Advocates, the body governing the nation’s lawyers fined him heavily, and St Andrews cancelled any plans for an honorary degree.⁵⁸

Following the *Daily Record* video, Findlay became the subject of a nation-wide debate. Giving the keynote speech at the Edinburgh Festival, Scottish composer James MacMillan declared that, “Donald Findlay is not a one-off. To believe that is self-delusion because our society is jam-packed with people like Donald Findlay.”⁵⁹

However, Findlay had as many defenders as attackers, with some of the Celtic management even testifying to his good heart and humor. In an interview with author

⁵⁸ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, 53

⁵⁹ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, 54

Franklin Foer, Findlay immediately brought up the tapes, arguing that, “I should have put up a fight...I would try to challenge them to provide one human being who’d been adversely affected by me because of religion, color, or anything else...It’s about getting into the opposition’s head; it’s a game; it’s in the context of football. Do you want to be up to your knees in Fenian blood? Don’t be ridiculous.”⁶⁰ The national conversation about sectarianism and all its connotations across the country had finally started, raging all decade until its 2011 peak following the appointment of former Celtic star Neil Lennon as manager of Glasgow’s Bhoys.

A decisive character in both his playing and management careers, Lennon was perhaps the perfect representation of the new United Kingdom, and as a result, was originally an enigma to both the Rangers and Celtic support.⁶¹ Lennon was an Ulsterman, yet he also was Catholic, supported a united Ireland, and was a passionate Celtic supporter since birth. As a player he represented Northern Ireland with distinction until his transfer to Celtic. Although supported by most of the Northern Irish faithful, Lennon retired from international duty at the age of 31 following death threats to both him and his family from the paramilitary Loyalist Volunteer Force.⁶² As a manager, Lennon was quickly embraced by the Celtic faithful for the success he brought to the club, and his

⁶⁰ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, 53

⁶¹ Michael Rosie, “Outside the Hothouse: Perspectives Beyond the Old Firm, 21

⁶² Michael Rosie, “Outside the Hothouse: Perspectives Beyond the Old Firm, 21

overall passion for the club.⁶³ However, following a tumultuous derby match in January of 2011, Northern Ireland mail workers intercepted three packages containing bullets addressed to Lennon, and the players Niall McGinn and Paddy McCourt, all Northern Irishmen. With this new threat, all types of mania broke loose in the media narratives of the account. Some sources suggested that Lennon himself was to blame, as his unique combination of nationality, religion, and ardor for his club made him a magnet for aggravation because he chose to live in Glasgow.⁶⁴ Other incidents followed the bullet threats as Lennon was verbally abused on the streets of the city, while reports of more alleged death threats found their way into the media outlets. Celtic chief executive Peter Lawwell commented on the worried state of his manager that “No one in any walk of life should have to live their life in this way.”⁶⁵

While the sensationalist media response to Lennon was the perfect indication of the problems he faced, its widespread coverage was successful as a catalyst for the Scottish Parliament to attempt and address the age-old demons plaguing its national game. As a result, the country became a pioneer to the rest of Europe as its Scottish National Party railroaded its trailblazing Offensive Behaviours at Football and Threatening Communications Act into action. The Offensive Behaviours Act authorized police to bring criminal action against fans bringing ideas into the streets and stadiums

⁶³ Irene Reid, “He’s Back! But Scotland’s National Demon Never Left: Revisiting Media Representations of Neil Lennon and Narratives of Bigotry,” In *Bigotry, Football, and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 143

⁶⁴ Irene Reid, “He’s Back! But Scotland’s National Demon Never Left,” 146

⁶⁵ Michael Rosie, “Outside the Hothouse: Perspectives Beyond the Old Firm,” 21

that could cause “unrest and disorder,” namely politics and religion.⁶⁶ In 2012-13, its initial success was that 64% of reports resulted in conviction, usually likely a fine, and by 2013-14, reports of offensive behavior went down 24% from 2012-13, a remarkable achievement.⁶⁷ Despite the act’s success, it has also caused no shortage of troubles in the past few years. Recently described, as “a knee-jerk reaction, horribly drafted, and impossible to enforce,” the bill is currently facing review in Parliament as a result of its attempt to criminalize religious and politics from Scotland’s most popular clubs formed under those exact auspices.

⁶⁶ "It Is Time to Review Sectarian Legislation," *The Herald Scotland*, June 21, 2016

⁶⁷ Scottish Government, *Charges Reported Under the Offensive Behavior at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 in 2013-14*, (2014)

The Offensive Behaviors Act and its Critics

A staple of any Scottish football match, the songs sung in the stands by both the home and away fans are the most conducive aspect to creating an atmosphere in the arena. Under this new legislature, they are also the most analyzed aspect of the match. Recognizing the potential problems in trying to criminalize normal fan behavior, Scotland's *Daily Mirror* did an analysis of the songs that would be banned and not under the Offensive Behaviors Act.

Not Banned

The Sash

An Ulster ballad, it glorifies the victory of King William III in the 1690 War against Ireland. Its lyrics also mention the 1689 Siege of Derry, the 1689 Battle of Newtownbutler near Enniskillen, the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, and the 1691 Battle of Aughrim.

The Fields Of Athenry

A song from the Republic of Ireland, it is played before every Celtic match. Its lyrics refer to a young man sent to Australia for stealing his neighbors' corn after starving due to the English-caused famine. Its lyrics quite literally refer to "rebellling against the famine and the crown."

The Cry Is No Surrender

The Cry of No Surrender is another song about William and Mary's accession to the throne of Scotland, England and Ireland. It also commemorates the Siege of Derry in 1689 during the Williamite War in Ireland, its lyrics "no surrender, or you'll die...we'll guard old Derry's walls...When James and all his rebel scum came up to bishops gate."

SONGS BANNED

Billy Boys

This song originated in the 1920s and celebrates the "Brigton" (Bridgeton, Glasgow) Protestant gang led by Billy Fullerton who often clashed with Catholic gangs. The lyrics, "We're up to our knees in Fenian blood," are deemed sufficiently offensive to ban it from the streets and stadiums.

The Famine Song

This Rangers chant gloats about the Irish Famine of the 1840s. It was banned because its lyrics, "Why Don't You Go Home," are seen to incite controversy.

The Guardian's Kevin McKenna wrote an accurate commentary on these songs and the bill in his piece *Offensive? Our lawmakers' Decision to Target Scottish Football Fans Certainly Is*, when he commented that he had, "seen fewer gray areas on Billy

Connelly's beard."⁶⁸ A thoroughly Scottish analysis of the Offensive Behaviors Act, his point on the club anthems rings true. While the Billy Boys and Famine Song are quite obviously offensive, it would be hard to argue that "rebellious against the crown," and fighting the King of Scotland, "James and his rebel scum" would not incite some type of controversy. The many ambiguities in this law have already caused problems in trying to legislate it. Strathclyde police apprehended a man for wearing a Celtic scarf commemorating the Pope's visit to Britain. However, the case was minor news compared to the arrest of Celtic supporter Calum Graham for singing the song Roll of Honor at a match in Inverness over the charge that the tune would be likely to incite public disorder. This belief was because the song's lyrics commemorated the deaths of IRA hunger strikers.⁶⁹ In court, defense attorney Duncan Henderson made the argument that the Roll of Honor's memorialization of these men and its aspirations for Irish nationhood was no different than the Flower of Scotland's commemoration of those that died at Bannockburn. Henderson's point was well taken by the jury and Graham was acquitted. David Scott, the campaign director for the anti-sectarian charity Nil by Mouth commented on the case and law itself that "It is very important that we do not ignore the political dimension to sectarianism and the vast majority of people would believe that the song in question has no place at a football match. However, this outcome underlines the need to review this legislation as there seems to be considerable confusion between

⁶⁸ Kevin McKenna, "Offensive? Our Lawmakers' Decision to Target Scottish Football Fans Certainly Is," *The Guardian* (December 17, 2011)

⁶⁹ "Celtic Fan Who Sang IRA Song is Cleared of Offence," *The Herald Scotland* (May 28, 2013)

the courts, politicians, police and supporters as what seems to constitute a breach of this law.”⁷⁰

⁷⁰ “Celtic Fan Who Sang IRA Song is Cleared of Offence,” *The Herald Scotland* (May 28, 2013)

Modern Glasgow and the Problems of Football Sectarianism

As evidenced by the array of problems in governing football sectarianism in two clubs developed as the antithesis of each other, it needs to be asked, is the Old Firm the tip of a deeply rooted issue, or all that is left? In a 2014 Scottish Social Attitudes Report, the government did a comprehensive study on the climate of sectarianism in the country, leading to my conclusion that while football related issues of politics and religion are indicative of a historic problem in the country, their modern prevalence on an institutional and personal level is a myth perpetuated by their intentional exposure through Parliament, media, and the marketing strategies of the clubs themselves.

The first step in getting after the heart of this problem is examining the modern culture of the city of Glasgow. With the disintegration of the Empire, Glasgow's shipyards and steel mills continually declined until their eventual fold in the 1973 oil shocks. As a result of this crash, the city entered a lengthy period of economic decline and rapid de-industrialization, leading to high unemployment, urban decay, population decline, and poor health for the city's inhabitants.⁷¹ It quickly began to develop a reputation to the rest of the United Kingdom as a gang-ridden, impoverished, city of welfare-dependent alcoholics, which did nothing to improve its problems. As a consequence of this position, the city underwent a major process of rebuilding and regeneration as it attempted to stay relevant in a country in the processes of shedding its industrial ways. One of the first moves Glasgow made was to launch its "Miles Better,"

⁷¹ Reevel Alderson, "Why Glasgow was 'miles better'"(23 June 2008)

advertising campaign in 1982, promoting the city as a haven of new industry and tourist potential.⁷² The campaign reached international audiences when the City of Glasgow booked their trademark “Miles Better,” smiley face on the side of six Edinburgh busses for the Edinburgh Festival. Fearing the thought of tourists associating the traditionally posh center with its historically seedy brother, the Edinburgh Council banned any association with the campaign. This move eventually led to the Wall Street Journal writing a popular story on the ludicrous nature of the ban. Despite any slip-ups the “Miles Better,” rebranding may have achieved in the Scottish capital, on the homefront it was wildly successful.⁷³ The city bulldozed its former Catholic and Protestant slums, replacing them with parks and integrated housing. Glasgow then invested heavily in infrastructure with an extensive system of arterial roads and motorways, as well as opening Scotland’s largest exhibition center. It also focused on pouring resources back into its own declining museums. The city also opened many new ones, such as the popular art gallery, The Burrell Collection. However, the most important changes that the City of Glasgow made was in the economic reinvention of its former industrial district on the Clyde. Through its new infrastructure and energy, the city recruited companies like Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan, National Australia Group, Esure, BNP Paribas and Aon to operate where the shipyards used to loom, leading a Glasgow City Council report to state that, “If you walked these quaysides today, the only thing you would recognize is the

⁷² Reevel Alderson, "Why Glasgow was 'miles better'"(23 June 2008)

⁷³ Reevel Alderson, "Why Glasgow was 'miles better'"(23 June 2008)

water.”⁷⁴ These global entities brought new German, American, and Japanese leadership in place of the former religiously restricted ones, a new economic order, “not nearly as obsessed with defending Derry’s walls against the Whore of Babylon,” as writer Patrick Riley put it. Today, the formerly derelict dockside of Broomielaw has become home to 15,000 new jobs, with \$1.5 billion of new investment promised as the city itself has experienced a 32 percent economic growth rate since the turn of the century.⁷⁵ On the tourism side, Glasgow was just rated one of the top ten cities in the world to visit by LonelyPlanet.com, with its people voted the friendliest in the world by Conde Nast magazine and travel publisher Rough Guides.⁷⁶ Although it has not shaken off all of its old demons, Scotland’s largest city certainly is almost unrecognizable from its 19th century self that bred a distinct Catholic versus Protestant segregation. Most of the old slums have been demolished, and with the closing of the old shipping and steel mills with their segregated religious hiring practices, much of the concrete legacies of sectarianism were destroyed in the unconscious processes of economic de-segregation, leaving the country with a history of bigotry that has mostly faded away without having to be reckoned with.

⁷⁴ "Glasgow Reinvented – the Regeneration of Glasgow and the River Clyde," Scotland.org (April 1, 2015)

⁷⁵ "Glasgow Reinvented – the Regeneration of Glasgow and the River Clyde," Scotland.org (April 1, 2015)

⁷⁶ "Glasgow Reinvented – the Regeneration of Glasgow and the River Clyde," Scotland.org (April 1, 2015)

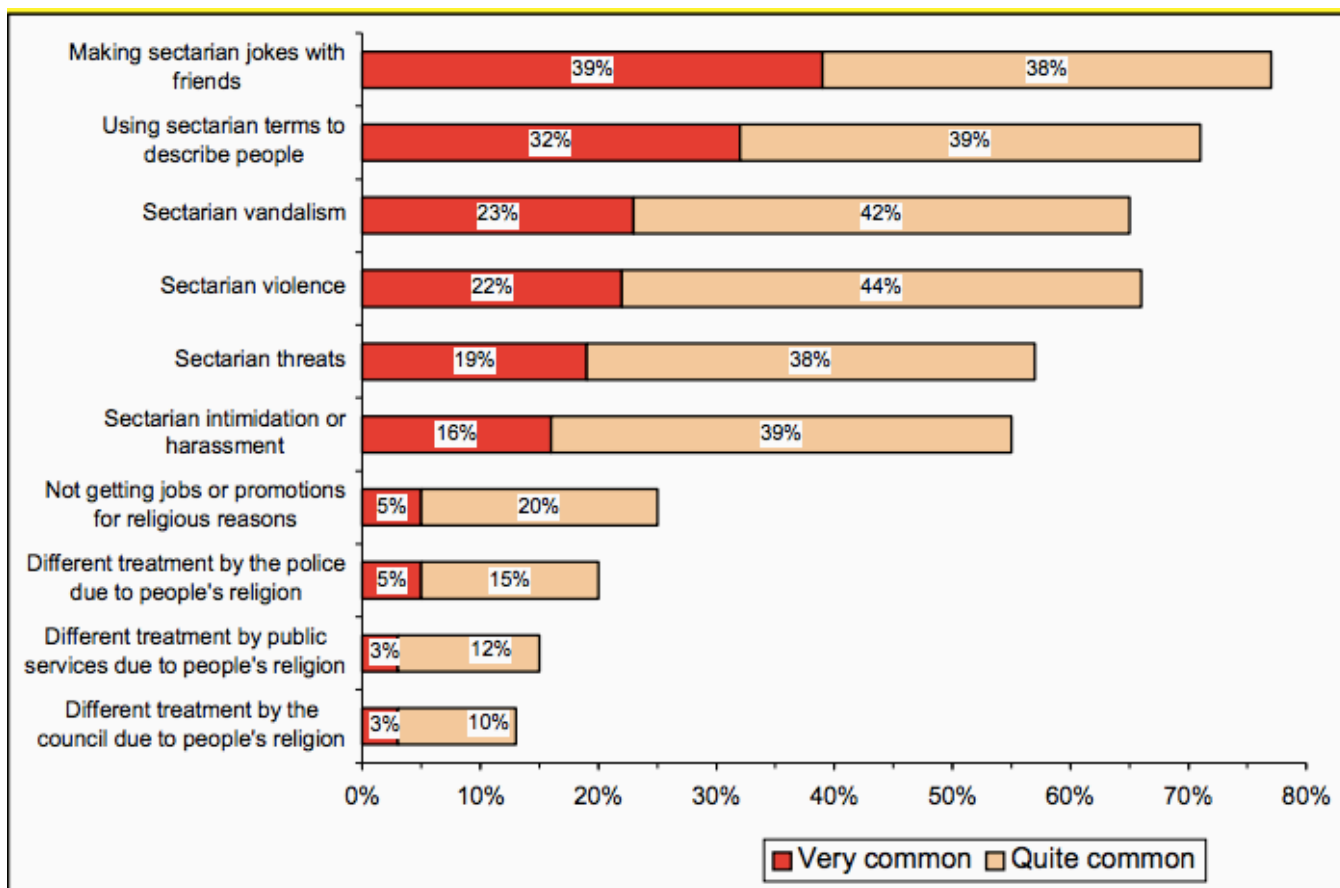
Out of this new character, Glasgow has become the center of attention regarding sectarianism in Scotland as Parliament has tried to reconcile the transformations in the community with the recurring problems in the stadiums. As a result, the Scottish Government allocated resources to the Glasgow City Council to draft a 2014 report on the modern climate of sectarianism and bigotry in the city. Introduced as a survey entitled, ‘Attitudes to life in Glasgow as well as experiences of prejudice and discrimination’ in an attempt to limit refusals to talk about religion, the study took a representative sample of 1,000 adults in Glasgow. It separated them into Protestants, Catholics, and those who did not align themselves under either religion. This comprehensive survey asked what most people thought the main causes of sectarianism were in the country, their own perceptions and experiences on the problem, and how or if football was related to it.

As evidenced by the survey, most respondents continue to see sectarianism as a current and prevalent problem in Glasgow. Only 9% of those surveyed agreed that “discrimination along sectarian lines no longer exists,” while 68% disagreed, a consistent belief across all religions, sexes, social classes and ethnicity.⁷⁷ According to those surveyed, sectarianism was most commonly observed through jokes between friends and by using sectarian terms to describe people.⁷⁸ Overall, 77% said that sectarian jokes between friends were very or quite common, while 71% said that sectarian phrases

⁷⁷ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2014), 38

⁷⁸ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2014), 38

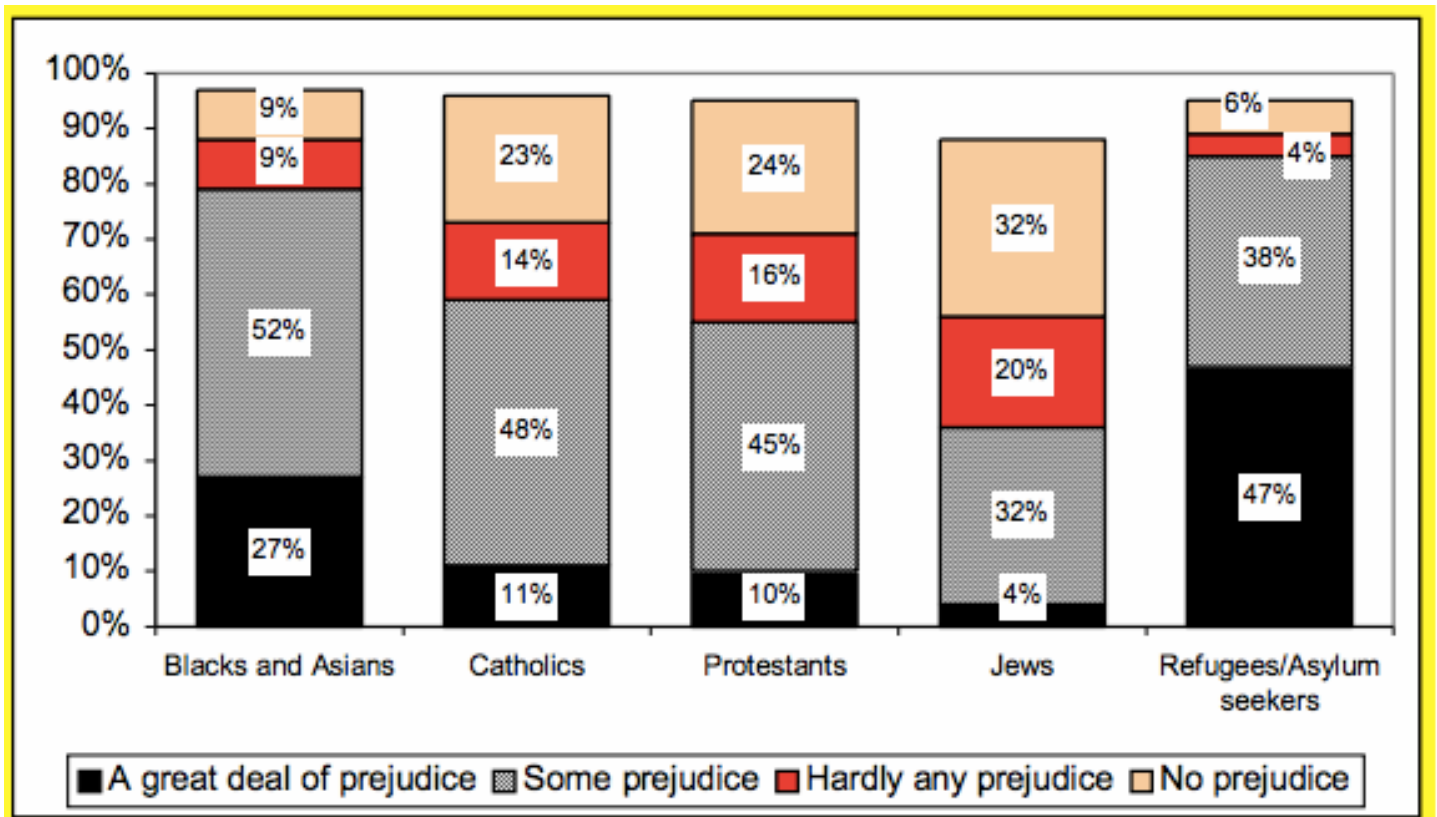
(Fenian, Hun) were common in everyday life. Around two-thirds (65%) of respondents felt that sectarian violence was very or quite common and a majority (58%) felt that sectarian threats and harassment were ordinary in Glasgow.⁷⁹



These findings show that the public perception of sectarianism is that bigoted differential treatment is still prevalent and an issue of concern in Glasgow. The survey also demonstrates that sectarianism seems to be more of an individual issue rather than

⁷⁹ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2014), 24

institutionalized prejudice.⁸⁰ Perhaps the most interesting conclusion is that religious bigotry is only part of a broader feeling of injustice in Glasgow as the next table shows.

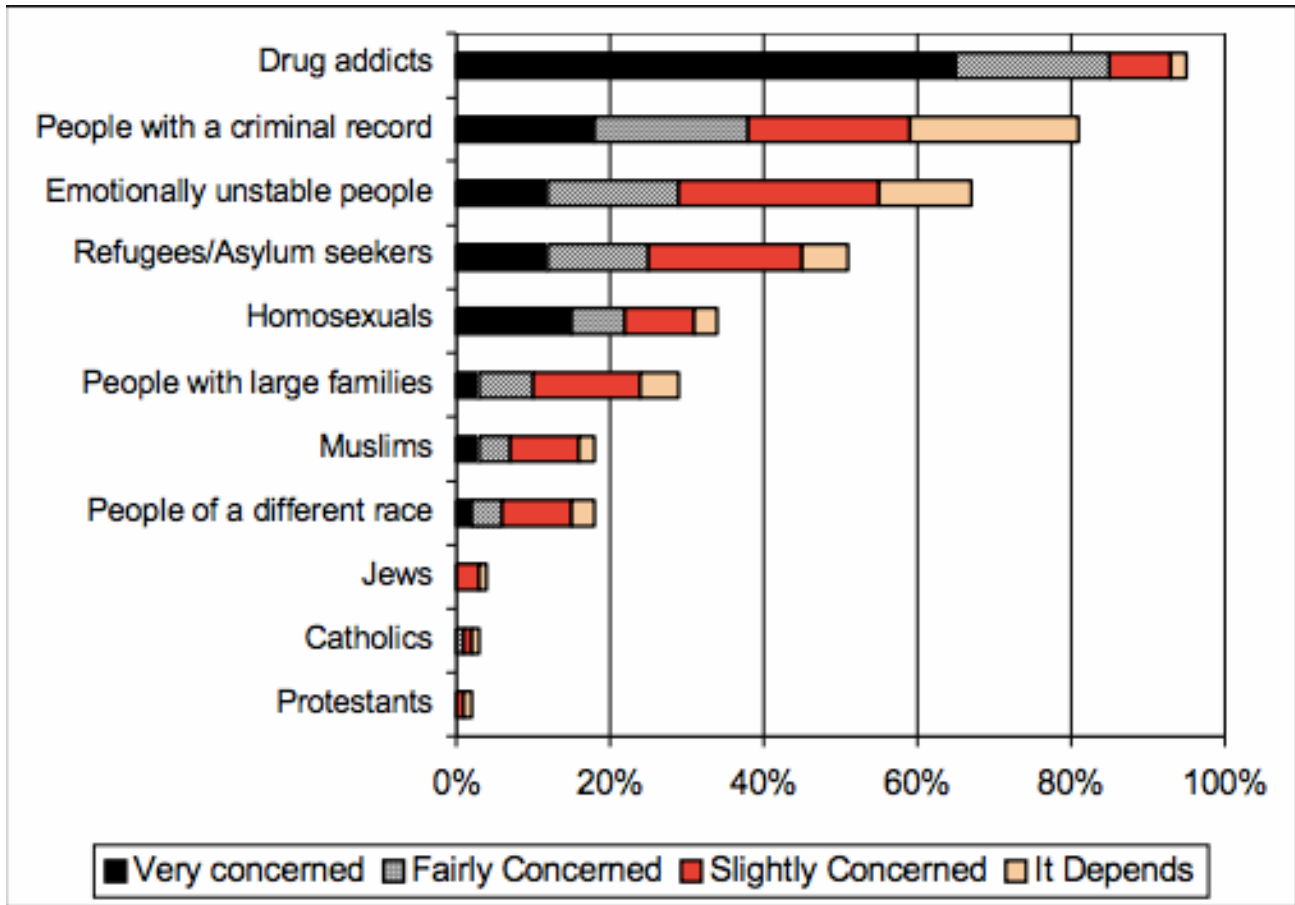


Prejudices towards Blacks and Asians, as well as towards Refugees and Asylum seekers is much higher than bigotry between and towards Catholics and Protestants. This data is important because it contradicts the conclusion that football was perceived to be the greatest fuel for religious bigotry in the city. Nearly 48% of respondents agreed that the Old Firm was the root of Glasgow's bigoted problems.⁸¹ However, when actually polled, Glaswegians perceived Catholic versus Protestant prejudices as less than bigotry towards other social groups. To further examine prejudices against certain Glaswegian

⁸⁰ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2015), 12

⁸¹ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2014), 12

groups, the survey asked residents how concerned they would be about particular groups of people moving into a neighboring house or flat.



As indicated by the report, Catholics and Protestant neighbors drew the least amount of concern by a significant amount, leaving an observer to wonder if Catholic versus Protestant religious bigotry is really the greatest concern in modern Glasgow.

Following up on the concept of perceptions, the survey moved to the actual experiences of discrimination and/or crime against Glaswegians. Out of the 68% of Glaswegians surveyed, less than one percent of all responders claimed that their religion was the cause of a physical attack against them (.7%), a threat of physical violence

(.8%), vandalism (.6%) or any other forms of harassment against them (.4%) in the last five years.⁸² On a similar note, only a small percentage of respondents maintained that they had been turned down for a job because of their religion (1.1%), or that they had been unfairly treated at work for the same reasons (1.1%), leaving one to wonder how the perception of Catholic versus Protestant sectarianism that the Old Firm represents can be so different from its actual occurrences. This major discrepancy can be explained in the paramount importance and visibility of football in Scottish society.⁸³

⁸² Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2015), 14

⁸³ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2015), 16

Hegemonic Fandom in Scotland

Football has always been immensely popular as a working-class game in Britain. As the Industrial Revolution spread across the country in the mid 19th century, the population began to migrate from rural communities into rapidly growing cities. By the end of the century, the Factory Acts shortened the traditional six-day workweek, and gave industrial laborers the time and energy to pursue recreational activities. Wanting to keep employee morale up in this time off, many of these factories created football teams, and suddenly the sport took off. Unlike rugby with its many rules and regulations, football was a relatively simple and democratic game. Anyone could play regardless of size and strength. All that was needed was a ball and small patch of dirt. As a result of this accessibility, it quickly became very popular among the working classes by the end of the 19th century as the English industrial belt teams came to dominate the British game.⁸⁴ Although football has evolved from its factory team roots, it still holds many of its grassroots ideals. Most Scottish football supporters remain poorer, less educated, and working class. At its core, the game remains a pleasant escape from the routines of construction, factory, or other middle class jobs. Fans can go out with the lads for a few pints and have the chance to yell at fellow working class denizens from another rainy, grey Scottish village in the same way that their fathers, grandfathers, and even great-grandfathers did. To many of these fans, the language echoing through the stands of Celtic and Rangers games is just an antiquated relic of a past long gone, instead

⁸⁴ Richard Jolly, "Football's Working-class Roots," *The National* (October 23, 2010)

becoming a wind-up that has only derived meaning in its ability to agitate the other team.

The Ugandan soccer writer Simon Kuper wrote on a changing Scotland that, “the Old Firm rivalry has outlived religious rivalry...and...has survived as a phenomenon because the fans enjoy it so much. They are not about to give up their ancient traditions just because they no longer believe in God.”⁸⁵

Rival football supporters tend to exaggerate their differences for the purpose of ritual insult, and football’s considerable presence in Scottish society make the clubs a easily discernable target. Traveling Glaswegians to Edinburgh are taunted with the chant, “In my Glasgow slum,” all while serenading their capital hosts with their AIDS record.⁸⁶

While the offending words may not mean much to the modern Glaswegian, the fans understand what they represent to their clubs, therefore giving them significance in a different way. Examining this very public fan culture is the University of Sunderland’s Paul Davis in his, “Hegemonic Fandom and the Red Herring of Sectarianism.” Davis unpacks the issues of making football issues societal issues, arguing that its only relevance in Scottish life is due to the cultural visibility of the dominant fan cultures of the country. He writes that, “football rivalry is a social force in its own right that should not, with considerable scaling down, be taken to stand for anything else,” setting up this reasoning with an accurate description of the modern Glaswegian fan,

As is frequently the case, he doesn’t attempt church; doesn’t pray; couldn’t name and wouldn’t recognize his parish priest; does zilch for Lent; doesn’t go confession; barely

⁸⁵ Michael Rosie, “Outside the Hothouse: Perspectives Beyond the Old Firm, 23

⁸⁶ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, 53

extends theologically to belief in God, let alone Jesus; pays scarce attention to Irish politics; visits Ireland less than the Mediterranean, and frequently behaves, by performing football sectarianism, in a way that sits uncomfortably with any kind of Christianity. Nor is it the easiest for his Rangers counterpart to impress in his apparently ardent identifications and aversions if, as is frequently the case, he can't say confidently what kind of Protestant he is; wholly irreligious; barely extends theological belief to belief in God, let alone Jesus; pays scarce attention to Irish politics; could fit what he knows about 1690 on the back of a postage stamp; visits Northern Ireland less than does the Mediterranean; and frequently behaves, by performing football sectarianism, in a way that sits uncomfortably with any kind of Christianity.⁸⁷

While the antagonist mindset of the modern Old Firm supporter with their rivals may be the same as their forefathers, the Glaswegian culture that once made this competition very real is gone. The Catholic Church and Church of Scotland are simply not relevant in Scotland's largest city. Combined, less than 77,000 of Glasgow citizens attend church weekly. In comparison, more than 90,000 attend Celtic and Rangers games on a hebdomadal basis.⁸⁸ Out of this new climate of irreligiosity, what have remained are the two major soccer clubs and their respective histories. They allow the unbelieving modern fan to join in celebrating the prejudiced religious traditions of their precursors without actually having to be a bigot at heart.

The Scottish social research poll on the Offensive Behaviors Act backs up this idea, as only 29% of Celtic fans believe that it is offensive to make political gestures at football games. An astounding 49% do not even find it offensive to sing songs in support of terrorist organizations, echoing the 50% of all Scottish fans surveyed that said, "people go to football matches to let off steam and what they say should not be taken seriously."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Paul Davis, "Hegemonic Fandom and the Red Herring of Sectarianism," 123

⁸⁸ Paul Davis, "Hegemonic Fandom and the Red Herring of Sectarianism," 126

⁸⁹ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, 4040 (2014), 15

To many of these fans, while the football was indicative of a historic problem, their words and actions in the stands mean nothing in a city devolved of these problems.

Another survey from the Social Research poll examines this idea.

	Paddy	Fenian	Proddy	Hun	Paki	Nigger	Poof
Think it acceptable	22%	10%	20%	11%	15%	6%	10%
It depends on the context	24%	18%	22%	20%	18%	12%	21%
Think it unacceptable but not say anything	20%	26%	22%	24%	24%	24%	24%
Think it unacceptable and say so	27%	39%	30%	37%	40%	55%	40%
Can't say	7%	7%	6%	7%	4%	4%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While there was a line on what words Glaswegians found acceptable, there was a large portion that believed the context was the most important. If used to cause offence, the word was inappropriate, while if used among friends, acquaintances or co-workers was totally acceptable as banter. Although seen by many football fans as a bit of fun, these trigger words that commonly float across the stands of most Old Firm matches are an easy target for the 27-55% of Glaswegians that find them wholly unacceptable.

The University of Abertay's Stuart Waiton, founder of Scotland's Take a Liberty movement expounds on this difference in ideas when he stated that the Offensive Behaviors Act creates an issue, "No longer fundamentally about challenging religious sect-like behavior, but rather a part of a wider framework of psychic protection, where everybody, but especially those defined as 'vulnerable groups' is protected from emotional hurt...consequently creating part of a protection racket."⁹⁰ In a Scotland where

⁹⁰ Stuart Waiton, "The New Sectarrians," In *Bigotry, Football, and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 99

less than 1% of Glaswegians have experienced problems with bigotry, what need is there to legislate songs that have no modern connotations? What was once just seen as ‘banter,’ or ‘water off a ducks back,’ has now become a political and cultural ‘industry’ in which the real history of sectarianism is being capitalized on to further a modern identity.⁹¹ Writing on the rise of this new form of intolerant tolerance, Waiton discusses the distance between those governing sectarianism in Scotland and actually watching the football.⁹² While the older football fan may have settled their differences physically, the modern Celtic or Rangers fan is instead using YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook to monitor the behavior of the rivals to expose every expression of ‘offensive’ remarks made. This documentation has become a real problem as supporters have realized that 5 years in prison and stiff financial sanctions on their rival club is exponentially more damaging than a quick punch.⁹³ As a result, hundreds of police complaints are sent in weekly as sets of rival fans try to exploit the complexity of the law.⁹⁴

While some are no doubt real, the example of the 2011 Old Firm Derby is a perfect example of the law becoming another tool in which to ‘get at’ rivals. After the game, hundreds of Rangers fans complained that the Celtic manager Neil Lennon mouthed something offensive to one of their players, resulting in a police investigation involving lip reading experts in which the Celtic man was eventually acquitted.⁹⁵ In a country where football reigns supreme, its presence in society will be a constant. While a

⁹¹ Waiton, Stuart, “The New Sectarians,” 105

⁹² Waiton, Stuart, “The New Sectarians,” 105

⁹³ Waiton, Stuart, “The New Sectarians,” 105

⁹⁴ Waiton, Stuart, “The New Sectarians,” 107

⁹⁵ Waiton, Stuart, “The New Sectarians,” 107

simple solution to equate problems in football with those in society, the correlation leaves many flaws. Glasgow is not the political and religiously separated city it was before. Football means so much to Glaswegians because through the clubs, they are able to trace their own histories in a city that has actively erased much of its Irish and British legacies. In legislating against sectarianism with the Offensive Behaviors Act, the Scottish government is essentially beating a dead horse. Unlike the Old Firm, the traditional Protestant v Catholic rivalry is dead in Glasgow. As a result, the Act is not legislating against religious bigotry. Instead, Scottish society is using the magnanimous presence and real history of religious bigotry in Glasgow to target an easy scapegoat, the traditional football fan, a problem aggressively furthered by Parliament.

Parliament and the Demonization of the Working Class

The title of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Act lends credence to the idea of separation between the elites of the Scottish Nationalist Party and the Labour-supporting working class football fans. The law does not apply to cricket, field hockey, or rugby, because its supporters draw from an upper class crowd, and thus are expected to behave in that matter. An example of this targeting is Scotland's alcohol ban. Beer and liquor are allowed at every sporting event in the country besides football. By explicitly legislating against football supporters, Parliament is essentially able to push their agenda against working class Scots, an ever-increasing problem in the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom has always had a difficult relationship between the elites and others.⁹⁶ Following the rise and heavy defeat of British fascism pre-World War II, the working classes of Britain won a serious victory in Parliament with the triumph of the Labour Party. With their success, trade unions achieved high positions of power, and the traditional working-class values of community and solidarity could not be ignored in the country as before. Yet, any gains they made were soon destroyed by the rise of Margaret Thatcher and the Tories to power. Although her official party doctrine stated that "It's not the existence of classes that threatens the unity of the nation, but the existence of class feeling," Thatcher did all she could to assault the working class in attempts to create a new, supposedly upwardly mobile Britain in which every citizen would be able to

⁹⁶ Owen Jones, *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class* (London: Verso, 2011), 7

climb the ladder of success.⁹⁷ The Conservatives achieved this goal by systematically trying to destroy the traditional echelons of working-class Britain, industry and the trade unions. Within three months of achieving majority, the Tories abolished exchange controls that allowed the big banks of London to make huge profits from currency speculation. This allowed the traditional Conservative capital to thrive, but at the expense of the industrial Midlands and Glasgow that suffered from the soaring value of the pound. By 1983, one-third of British manufacturing had vanished from its shores, leaving many working-class communities in ruin.⁹⁸ As a result, many people from those communities turned to traditional outlets of drugs, alcohol, and football. Suddenly, a working class once described by Disraeli as ‘angels in marble,’ had become an underclass that deserved to be caricatured and despised as welfare-dependent addicts.⁹⁹

In 2016 Britain, the dominant word to describe these young working class peoples stuck in a system that has historically excluded them is a ‘chav’ or ‘ned.’ First mentioned in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2005, a Chav was branded, ‘a young working-class person who dresses in casual sports clothing.’ A popular origin story of the term is it came to be through the acronym, ‘Young Council-Housed and Violent.’¹⁰⁰ Guardian journalist Zoe Williams wrote about the word evolving to stand for any encompassing of negative traits associated with working-class people-violence, laziness, teenage

⁹⁷ Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 47

⁹⁸ Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 37

⁹⁹ Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 42

¹⁰⁰ Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 3

pregnancies, racism, drunkenness and the rest, stating that, “While Chav might have grabbed the popular imagination by seeming to convey something original- now it covers so many bases as to be synonymous with the prole or any word meaning poor and therefore worthless.”¹⁰¹

Richard Hilton, the CEO of London company Gymbox perhaps epitomizes British feelings about Chavs and the working class. Responding to inquiries about self-defense classes, Hilton formed a new class entitled Chav Fighting. Its description went as follows, “Don’t give moody chavs an ASBO, give them a kicking. We’ll teach you how to take a Baccardi off a hoodie and turn a grunt into a whine.”¹⁰² Playing off the stereotypes of wealthy Londoners scared of violent youths, Hilton described his version of chavs as,

Young Burberry clad street kids... They tend to live in England but would probably pronounce it ‘Englerland.’ They have trouble articulating themselves and have little ability to spell or write. They love their pit bull dogs as well as their blades, and would happily ‘shank’ you if you accidentally brush past them or look at them in the wrong way.” They tend to breed by the age of fifteen... and if are not institutionalized by twenty-one they are considered pillars of strength in the community or get ‘much respect for being lucky.’¹⁰³

Hilton’s description encompasses most negative feelings about the British working classes today. It also creates an inherent difference between the elites and others. To many Brits, working class youths cannot speak, write, or behave, stereotypes that popular Chav Fighting class take advantage of. Despite his explicit targeting, the Gymbox CEO makes a real point. Britain and perhaps to a heightened degree Scotland

¹⁰¹ Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 8

¹⁰² Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 3

¹⁰³ Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 3

has a real problem of anti-social behavior. Sectarian expert Steve Bruce commented on the matter that, “Too many men drink too much, take drugs, carry weapons, and regard any insult to an easily offended propriety as justification for assault.”¹⁰⁴ In my own conversation with an Edinburgh police officer on watching the football, he told me to, “Stay away from those Chavs in tracksuits and Burberry. In the United States, your police officers can’t stereotype, but here in Scotland that’s all we do.” Perhaps the perfect summary of working class identities from those not in the spectrum, Chav types have become synonymous with crime and anti-social behavior as well as football, their own working class game. Thus, by focusing on football support, the Scottish Nationalist politicians in Parliament are able to target a common societal enemy that conveniently happens to be the power base of their political opponents as well.

¹⁰⁴ Paul Davis, “Hegemonic Fandom and the Red Herring of Sectarianism,” 116

Football and the Media

Despite its lack of real occurrence in Glasgow, documenting sectarian violence has become an industry not just in the government, but through the media as well.¹⁰⁵ While both teams are portrayed as not quite Scottish, Scotland's national news outlets tend to depict Rangers as arrogantly Anglophile, while Celtic are the aggressive younger brother, fighting until wronged, when they play the victim.¹⁰⁶ Not particularly flattering characteristics for either side, sports articles on the two teams are among the most popular in the country, especially when they are dramatized prior to and following the Old Firm Derby. An example of the media representation of Rangers conception of themselves came during the 1999 European Finals playoff with England. Already a politically charged game due to the relationship between the two nations, its promise as a gateway to the Championships left it a thrilling tie. In what should have been perhaps the largest game of his player's careers, instead of wishing them luck, Rangers chairman David Murray warned the Scottish Football Association that he would seek compensation for the use of his bench player Collin Hendry for injuries incurred. This statement infuriated the wider Scottish public. Hendry was the captain of his country, perhaps the highest honor that a player can receive in his career. For the Murray to suggest that that he should not play or be used sparingly was akin to treason for the Scottish media. Even non-exclusively sports journalists entered the debate, as leading Scottish political writer

¹⁰⁵ Irene Reid, "He's Back!", 147

¹⁰⁶ Irene Reid, "He's Back!", 147

Ian Bell suggested that Murray's interventions were proof of a, 'certain arrogance' that he would pick the Scottish side to benefit club rather than country.¹⁰⁷ A problem not endemic to Rangers, the Scottish media has been even harsher to Celtic. The 2011 incidents involving Celtic Manager Neil Lennon are a fantastic example. Lennon's distinctive red hair and fiery passion caused many news sources to label him a 'fiery Irishman.' Some sources even suggested that he should move back across the Irish Sea to his own country (actually Northern Ireland).¹⁰⁸ Despite his actual place of birth, to many Scots, Lennon was the epitome of everything that was wrong with Celtic. He was a foreigner, disrespectful to the established Scottish sides, and worst of all, wore his orange and green heart on his sleeve. A comment from a non-Celtic fan online in The Guardian following Celtic's 2013 heroics against Shakhter Karagandy breaks down this point,

You know, I never *liked* Celtic.

That didn't change when Lennon became manager. All I saw from him was the aggressive photos at the top of articles about Scottish football, his face frozen in a seeming rictus of anger and rage. He looked to me to be the embodiment of the worst of Scottish football... the snarling aggression, the rampant sectarian schism. He didn't seem to be a very likable chap.

And then I realised that that was *all* I saw from him.

Every article, every photo, it was always him being angry. None where he was contemplative, none where he was anything but full of rage...He wasn't the Dali Lama reborn but neither was he the frothing at the mouth rage monster one might have suspected. He was a former football player and a current manager... one who was clearly passionate about his team and his job... but nothing more than one would expect from managers across the footballing world.

¹⁰⁷ Irene Reid, "He's Back!", 147

¹⁰⁸ Irene Reid, "He's Back!", 147

And then I became aware of the other things. Of him being assaulted and knocked unconscious by two Rangers fans. Of the bullets and parcel bombs sent to him. Of the fact he was attacked while on the pitch, simply for doing his job. And while 'sympathy' is perhaps a patronising word, I started to feel something akin to that for him and for Celtic. And a certain sense of shame that however indirectly, I had bought in to the media portrayal that made such things more likely.¹⁰⁹

Although just the opinion of an isolated Scotsman, his perception is anything but remote. Instead of applauding Lennon for the passion he showed for his club, he was portrayed as the epitome of everything Scottish football stood against, a raging, disrespectful caricature of what they believed an Irishmen should be. The media tells Scots what they want to hear about the Old Firm sides, a trap this reader realized that he fell into. The reason for furthering this rivalry is simple; the Old Firm sparks controversy, which in turn sells papers.

Following the historic 2011 derby in which Lennon and his counterpart Ally McCoist fought each other, the refs, and players, media representations of both managers differed spectacularly. Under the published photo of both managers, Lennon was shot at the front of the picture with McCoist symbolically in the shadows. Scotland's *Daily Record* wrote that Lennon was guilty of a 'furious reaction,' while the *Herald* accused the Celtic manager of 'reacting venomously.'¹¹⁰ In contrast, the Scotsman McCoist mostly escaped criticism. The *Herald* alleged that he only 'lost the plot' due to alleged verbal attacks by Lennon on his players.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Alan Campbell, The Guardian, August 28, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2013/aug/28/celtic-shakhter-karagandy-champions-league>

¹¹⁰ Irene Reid, "He's Back! 149

¹¹¹ Irene Reid, "He's Back!, 147

Expounding on the prior Guardian comment, Lennon was an easy target due to his perceived Irishness, Roman Catholicism, and obvious passion for his club.¹¹² Even when he was being threatened with death and violence, the newspapers often did not show the Celtic manager any respect, instead accusing him of, ‘playing the victim’ as his club was perceived to do.¹¹³ Although Rangers and McCoist mostly escaped criticism in 2011, that year’s Old Firm Derby and earlier example about Rangers national selection illuminate the major problem the media furthers in discourse about Glasgow’s two biggest teams. Both clubs represent some sort of identity that the rest of the country sees as ‘Non-Scottish,’ or even anti-Scottish. In the media picking apart these identities and their real-world representations, Scotland is able to see in Glasgow’s two largest sides problems that the country itself has not been able to come to terms with itself as a nation. Celtic’s challenge and success against the established Protestant old guard of the country are an everyday reminder of the Irish identity that they have not recognized in their own history, just as Ranger’s arrogant British and later Unionist identity simply does not hold relevance in a Glasgow and wider Scotland now political devolved from London and closer than ever to full independence.

Every year these two clubs and their respective histories come to an apex at the Old Firm Derby. As a result, the media feasts on both sides and the flammable ‘sectarianism’ that they offer. The Scottish Social Research survey on Glasgow reflects this idea, as its participants saw the media as one of the major problems in furthering

¹¹² Irene Reid, “He’s Back!, 147

¹¹³ Irene Reid, “He’s Back!, 147

sectarian identities.¹¹⁴ One Glaswegian interviewed by the survey commented on this idea of ‘sleep-walking bigotry’ that the media furthers,

They stick so much ammunition behind it when it comes to Old Firm games, it just fuels the hatred. So there you’ve got this massive hatred fuelled by the media, who think they’re not doing anything, but they are. They are, because they parade this kind of stuff all the time. And the more times they put stuff in the paper about violence here, violence there.... That just takes somebody else to go...“oh, well done him. Well done him.”¹¹⁵

It is no secret that sectarianism sells. In talking about previous Old Firm incidents, the papers fuel interest in the game by riling up hate by writing about their real sectarian histories to incite controversy. They then criticize the sets of fans that use the articles about the past as a reason to incite controversy in the present. Former Daily Mail writer James Traynor criticized his fellow professionals in this respect when he wrote that, “the media craves controversy, but then condemn it when the Old Firm actually delivers.” While the technique may sell papers, it leaves serious consequences on the football in the country, and society that sees it as indicative of a wider issue.¹¹⁶ Not an isolated incident, Steve Bruce discusses the unthinking way in which the media portrays the Celtic v Rangers rivalry, and the same way that fans swallow it up. He wrote,

In 2004, on the Sunday after a heated Rangers-Celtic game, a Sunday tabloid newspaper ran a two-page story under the headline "Real toll of that Old Firm mayhem". One page was given over to a fire which severely damaged a Catholic church in Stornoway. The implication was clear; "Priest's church blaze agony" was caused by

¹¹⁴ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2014), 54

¹¹⁵ Scottish Government Social Research, *Public Attitudes To Sectarianism in Scotland*, (2014), 54

¹¹⁶ Irene Reid, “He’s Back! 150

"Old Firm Mayhem." The boring truth, which merited just one column inch in a sister tabloid the following week, was that the fire was caused by an electrical fault.¹¹⁷

Equal parts lazy journalism and sensationalist headlines, the myth of sectarianism thrives off of naivety, carelessness and exaggeration, three traits the Scottish media are guilty of. What is not being reported is that the minority of fans that wind each other up with fading ethno-religious identities are not representative of a larger group. Thus, they should never be taken as evidence of wider Scottish society or culture, a conclusion that the most recent 2015 Guardian Derby article, "Old Firm Match Emblematic of a Scotland so Many Want to Forget" forgoes. Its title simply sounds better than, "Just 19 out of 50,000 Old Firm Fans Questioned by Police for Sectarian Chanting."

This willful exaggeration by the Scottish press is not just contained to the written word. Television series and documentary crews often feature the Old Firm Derby, trying to cash in on this reputation of conflict and danger. One famous series, *The Real Football Factories International*, featured prominent football stadiums and hooligans, making Ibrox one of its first stops. Staring EastEnders actor and self-proclaimed hardman Danny Dyer, the episode features Dyer standing in front of Ibrox saying, "You can just sense at any point its going to kick off, and if it goes, you know its going to go (if someone gets hit, there will be a huge fight)...but finger crossed, its going to be a nice game, and I won't get me head kicked in."¹¹⁸ In reality, men and little kids are walking behind Dyer

¹¹⁷ Steve Bruce, "Scottish Sectarianism? Let's Lay This Myth to Rest," *The Guardian*, (April 24, 2007) <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2011/apr/24/scotland->

¹¹⁸ Dyer, Danny, "The Old Firm," In *The Real Football Factories International* (CNN)

with a cup of tea and a bacon roll for the 10:30 A.M kickoff, while the majority of fans seem more excited to show their colors to the camera than antagonize the opposition.

Yet, the episode was aired on British television to the delight of the public for confirming what they already believed about football and its supporters.

Football Sectarianism and the Clubs

While the Scottish media and Parliament both profit from encouraging sectarian identities, they are not the only guilty facets. Although both Old Firm clubs speak out against bigotry and give money to anti-sectarian groups, their actions behind the scenes are not always conducive to this blind partisanship. In the 2003 season, Rangers introduced an orange kit as their new third shirts, a quite obvious nod to William of Orange and the Glorious Revolution. Although they played it off as a purely non-political move, the club was able to sell a massive 300,000 kits before public pressure led them to drop the shirts.¹¹⁹ Celtic is no different in its marketing strategy. In 2012, the club released a full-length video for their 125th anniversary entitled 'If You Know The History.' While the movie was made to celebrate their new kits, it discussed at length Irish-Catholic persecution in Scotland, and the club's role as a savior to those Irish-Catholics persecuted in 19th century Glasgow. The jersey featured a prominent Celtic cross on the front, an obvious tribute to the club's origins.

It seems contradictory that any club would want to further a limited identity in this new world of globalized football. To understand this marketing strategy, the history and present of the Scottish Premier League has to be examined. Once the top league in Britain and one of the best in Europe, from the beginnings of the 20th century to the 1980's, the Scottish Division One, now known as The Scottish Premier League,

¹¹⁹ "[Rangers to drop orange strip after sectarian outcry](#)," Sunday Herald (October 6, 2002)

dominated club competitions. Celtic were the first British team to win a European cup, while Rangers, and to a lesser degree Dundee United and Aberdeen made memorable runs throughout Europe. However, as football and its mega-money began to spread across the world rapidly by the end of the 20th century, Scotland began to be left behind. One of the major reasons for this regression was the growth of other major European Leagues, as well as the formation of the English Premier League in 1992. The English Premier League brought the top teams in England together, and its initial successes domestically and across Europe caused it to grow exponentially. As a result of this early prosperity, the league has continued to bring in the wealthiest people in the world to run and finance the clubs. Today the EPL possesses many of the world's top players, making it an attractive international television market. Sky and BT Sport retained the rights to the recent season for £5.14 Billion dollars, while British Broadcasting Channel bought the rights to the highlights for another whopping £204 million.¹²⁰ Because of these massive deals, the bottom team in the league will receive £99 million while the champions will be awarded £156 million. In comparison, the Scottish domestic league television deal is worth just £15 million per season, the equivalent of two English Premier League games.¹²¹ These huge stakes in club football are not just a trend conducive to England. Across the rest of Europe, the leagues that used to traditionally compete against Scottish

¹²⁰ "Premier League in Record £5.14bn TV Rights Deal - BBC News," BBC News, (February 10, 2015) <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-31379128>.

¹²¹ "Premier League in Record £5.14bn TV Rights Deal - BBC News," BBC News, (February 10, 2015) <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-31379128>.

clubs have received mega-investment from billionaire owners and television companies looking to buy into the global football bubble that is only just starting to blossom.

An example of this investment is the French team Paris St. Germain. Previously a middling French side, the team was bought in 2011 by the group Qatar Sports Investment. Quickly, they began pouring money into the team, in 2013 spending more on defenders alone than half the countries in the world spend on national defense. Their dividends quickly paid off as the club now competes for the top prizes in Europe. In sharp contrast to Paris St Germain, a team that did not even exist when Celtic won their European Cup, Scottish football continues to miss the global economic investment. This lack of growth can be explained in a few interconnected reasons; football is becoming a positive feedback loop of money, Scotland is a semi-peripheral European country, and quite frankly, its domestic football is just not very good.

An illustration of the positive feedback loop of money in football is the difference between the net values of the top clubs in Britain from 2007 to 2015. Using Forbes valuations, in 2007, Celtic had the 20th highest net value in Europe at \$185,000,000 while Rangers were 24th at \$147,000,000.¹²² Both clubs were finding success in Europe and still able to compete with the top clubs across the continent. However, the television and commercial money was beginning to hit England and the rest of Europe at this point. The traditional top four clubs south of the border are Manchester United, Arsenal,

¹²² ["2007 Soccer Team Valuations,"](#) *Forbes.com*, (June 30, 2008)

Chelsea and Liverpool, valued at \$1,450,000,000, \$915,000,000, \$537,000,000 and \$454,000,000 respectively in 2007.¹²³ As the money continued coming in, the English clubs invested in larger new stadiums, top coaches, and better players. Trying to keep up, Glasgow's Old Firm attempted to do the same. While Celtic has managed to stay somewhat relevant in European competition, Rangers overspending has caused the club to go in administration in 2012. As a result, the club had to sell most of their top players as assets, while being sent to the Scottish Third Division as a punishment. Today, they have made it back to the second division, and look favorites for promotion in 2016, but the Rangers brand has still taken a hit as a result. The club is now worth a fraction of its 2007 height, valued at \$44,000,000, more than \$100,000,000 less than it was ten years ago. Without Rangers in the league, Celtic is without its only rival, and has won the league every year since Rangers departure. As a result, Scottish football has turned into a one-team race, and Celtic's own value as a brand has declined. Today the club is only worth \$65,000,000, more than \$100,000,000 less than their 2007 height. However, the fact that both clubs are currently turning a profit makes them an enigma in the SPL. Most Scottish clubs are running at an annual deficit, and the continually declining value of their own brand makes it unlikely this deterioration will change. In sharp contrast, England has thrived under the new economic climate of Premier League money. Manchester United has doubled in value to \$3,100,000,000, while Arsenal, Chelsea and

¹²³ ["2015 Soccer Team Valuations,"](#) *Forbes.com* (25 June 2015)

Liverpool are now worth \$1,310,000,000, \$1,370,000,000, and \$982,000,000 respectively, and are only expected to continue growing at this extraordinary rate.¹²⁴ The reason for this growth is that the Premier League money is being spread across the entire league as well as the lower divisions. Unlike Celtic and Rangers singular domination of Scotland, every Premier League team is now able to bring in the top talent in the world, making every game relevant and continually raising the league brand to newer heights across the globe, resulting in its continual increase in valuation.

One of the major problems that has caused the stagnation of the Scottish League is the country's semi-peripheral status as a European nation. In this new era of sport where the players are as big of a brand as the clubs themselves, top footballers are reluctant to play in Scotland, and for a good reason. The top four domestic leagues in Europe are Germany, England, Italy, and Spain. They play in front of global audiences on television, and in stadiums of 40,000 or more on a weekly basis in cosmopolitan international cities. A spectacular game for Sassuolo in Naples or Malaga in Madrid will instantly make a previously unknown player an entity to be eyed by the top clubs in Europe. In contrast, a great performance by a young Raith Rovers youngster in front of 3,000 in Inverness will probably give the player a bad cold, and maybe a beer or two from a supporter that recognizes him on the street. The same problem applies to the owners of the top Scottish clubs. Most English Premier teams are owned by Middle Eastern oilmen, Asian businessmen, British and American financial groups, Russian

¹²⁴ ["2015 Soccer Team Valuations," *Forbes.com* \(25 June 2015\)](#)

oligarchs, or a combination of all of the above. While some live abroad, many of the owners live in London and are able to watch their societal, financial and football interests from the confines of a posh West London flat. Scotland just does not have the same appeal to a wealthy football owner. Even the most enthusiastic of Scotsmen would be hard pressed to argue that the country is not cold, grey, and relatively disconnected from the rest of Europe. While the nation possesses natural assets such as North Sea oil, most of the economic and political infrastructure that give it value are based out of London rather than Glasgow, Edinburgh or Aberdeen. As a result, most rich owners prefer to invest in a Monaco, Paris, Milan, or Roman side where they can manage their assets while enjoying a yacht, vineyard, or supermodel girlfriend, all limited quantities in Glasgow. Due to this lack of willingness to invest by wealthy foreigners, Scottish football remains stagnant if not declining in contrast to the flourishing economic climate in the rest of the European game. This point leads to the last and perhaps greatest problem, Scottish football is just really bad.

Looking past all the history, economics, politics and religion in football, the sport remains about one thing, entertainment. Discounting the most hardcore of fans, most supporters come to see a show, whether a spectacular goal, piece of skill, or even a thrilling title challenge by an underdog. In general, the Scottish game leaves a casual observer very little of these. A lack of investment means that most clubs can only afford to bring in fading players that are not good enough for a better league, or play their own

academy players until they perform well enough that a bigger (English) club comes in and snatches them. As a result, the quality on the field is not very enjoyable to watch, a fact that their dismal television rights can attest to. As far as title challenges go, the Scottish League also leaves very little in terms of variety. In 119 seasons, Celtic or Rangers have won 100 league titles combined, the last non-Glaswegian side to win being Aberdeen in the 1984-85 season.¹²⁵ Especially with the loss of Rangers in the Scottish Premiership, the league has become a foregone conclusion as Celtic have walked away with the title in the past few seasons, the UK betting houses making Glasgow's green side 1/33 odds to win without their biggest rivals.

Because of these domestic growth problems, Celtic and Rangers have been behind a number of unsuccessful plots to stay both profitable and successful in Europe. Both clubs have tried to enter into the potentially lucrative English lower leagues. However, they faced fierce opposition the rest of the Scottish Premier League teams that need the Glaswegian sides to stay alive as the only real profitable clubs in the country. The two Old Firm sides also tried to team up with other peripheral nation teams to form a European super league of sorts, but this proposal was shot down by many of the bigger clubs that had already found their way into the new money infiltrating the game.

As a result, Celtic and Rangers are desperately trying to stay relevant not just in Scotland, but the wider game as a whole. While Celtic's Irish identity will always hold

¹²⁵ "[History](http://www.scotprem.premiumtv.co.uk)," *www.scotprem.premiumtv.co.uk*. *Scottish Premier League* (February 2, 2007)

meaning for the millions of Irish expats and descendants across the globe, Rangers willful nostalgia of Empire and Union does not tap a large international base. However, the clubs have had the most trouble with their historic character in Glasgow. In 2014, Glasgow made history as the only major Scottish city to vote “Yes” in the Independence referendum. While independence from the United Kingdom was narrowly defeated, what the vote did was finally give the country a facet in which to define their Scottish identity, an idea that the city led the rest of the nation in promoting.

As a result of this new form of nationalism gripping the Old Firm’s municipality and wider country, how do their 19th century identities hold relevance in the 21st century? The answer is barely; the football of both clubs is only a shadow of its gloried past, while their character remains the same. As a result, the two clubs have realized that their associated controversy is one of the only marketable aspects of their rivalry. Without sectarianism, The Old Firm would decline even more than they already have. Both clubs simply do not have the global reach they once did. A majority of their players will not be seen in the Champions League, European finals, or World Cup. As a result, it is no coincidence that the Old Firm is the only Scottish game that sports fans will hear about in the New York Times or ESPN, and that is not because of the football. The average football follower has no interest in a league that features below average players and only two teams with a realistic chance at winning. Yet, what the Old Firm does possess is an attractive backstory steeped in controversy, its major selling point. Fights, stabbings, and wildly inappropriate songs sell tickets more than a low quality 1-0 game. So while the

clubs may argue that they are against their sectarian rivalry, in reality, it has become one of the only facets in which they continue to exist as global entities today.

Reconciling These Problems

Comparing the data on sectarianism in Glasgow with its exposure in the country through Parliament, media, and the clubs themselves, it leaves a massive gap. Why can the perception of an idea be so prevalent in a society where its real-life experience is anything but? To examine this concept, the echelons of Scottish history once again have to be delved into. There has been no unified version of it. Somehow the nation has been attempting to bring Catholic, Protestant, Irish, English, Loyalist, Republican, and Norse traditions into one distinctly Scottish, creating a fragmented culture that others may not understand or like, even within their own borders. As a result, making a certain group stand for an idealized 'other' has popular appeal in trying to project what its 'Scottish' and what is not. While football fans have often served as the 'other' for their unfashionable class values, the two Old Firm clubs represent a larger problem to wider Scottish society as their versions of a British and Irish Scotland do not fit the current nationalistic rhetoric, and thus have become a very public target due to their popularity.

The reason for this 'othering' is the real root of the problem of perceived sectarianism in Scotland. The country has never accepted its Celtic history and role in Irish subjugation. Rangers and especially Celtic have become prominent reminders of this blind partisanship. While Rangers historically have been viewed and identified with various facets of Scottish, Protestant, and British identities that have mirrored the wider feelings of society, as Scotland has become more accepting of different groups, Rangers

have still stayed as popular, passionate, and numerically significant as they were at their founding. Supporters from rival club such as Hearts and Aberdeen will often play the Scottish national anthem “Flower of Scotland,” to mock Ranger’s inauthentic national identity.¹²⁶ However, what makes Rangers the most visible target of wider society is their support of British military endeavors. Many of Rangers songs focus on historical events, individuals and battles vital to the emergence of the British Empire, many of which focus on Northern Ireland and the troubles across the Irish Sea. While it might be easy to mark these songs as ‘offensive,’ their real damage in Scottish society is that they make Scots question their own history. It is a topic they are thoroughly uncomfortable doing, and for good reason. Following Culloden in 1746, England banned what it meant to be ‘Scottish’ in the traditional sense. Yet, just years later Scottish soldiers and civilians were guilty of doing the same things England did to them in North America, Asia, and Africa, no doubt recognizing the irony in joining those they could not beat. It is much easier for Scotland to simply mark Rangers denouncement of Ireland and Catholics while celebrating Union and Empire as ‘bigotry’ then to accept parts of their own history in Rangers.

While Rangers remain a poignant reminder of Scotland’s own historiographical issues, Celtic magnanimously supersede their rivals in the respect as being ‘Irish’ is less acceptable than ‘British’ in the country. Today 1/5th of Scots technically belong to the Roman Catholic Church. While most do not practice, their membership remains an

¹²⁶ Joseph M Bradley, “History and Memory in Scottish Football,” In *Bigotry, Football, and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 68

indication and recognition of their own history in Irish immigration to Scotland.¹²⁷ Yet, Scotland refuses to accept Irish history as part of its own. In her 1993 analysis of Scottish education, author M.J Hickman wrote that, “Irish history has been conspicuously excluded from the curriculum in Britain since the nineteenth century, not only of state schools, but also from the Catholic school arrangement where the majority of children of Irish descent are educated.”¹²⁸ A recent Economic and Social Research Council study supports this idea. The study focused on second and third generation Irish in Britain and asked them about their knowledge of, and interest in Irish history. While many of the respondents said they learned about it in the home, most could never remember Ireland being mentioned in the classroom. For a country so shaped by immigration and events across the Irish Sea, this absence is striking. In excluding Irish from their dominant English/Scottish/British mainstream, it promotes the (false) colonial view that the Irish are a different race, and should be treated as such. While it seems like this concept would cause more problems than the less than 1% of Glaswegians affected by their ‘Irish’ identity, the cultural and genetic similarities between the two countries help and mask the issue. Among the same second and third generation Irish populations previously interviewed, there is not much difference between the ‘native’ Scots and them. Both groups have white skin, local accents, assumed cultural similarities, and even as students

¹²⁷ "[Scotland's Census 2011 – Table KS209SCb](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)," scotlandscensus.gov.uk

¹²⁸ Joseph M Bradley, “History and Memory in Scottish Football,” 73

of Catholic or non-denominational state schools, are subject to the same British curriculum. Yet, what Celtic does is give these people a chance to express their Irish identity in a society that has tried to exclude it otherwise, an idea the rest of Scotland is thoroughly uncomfortable with. A letter to Scotland's *Daily Record* after the 2003 UEFA Cup in Seville is indicative of this idea,

I was absolutely appalled and disgusted when watching the UEFA Cup Final. I am sure I am not the only non-Celtic supporter who was urged to 'get behind' the Scottish team. How many Scottish flags were in the stadium? I counted one but maybe I couldn't see the others due to the sea of Irish Republican flags in display. Isn't it about time that people like this decided which nationality they are? I could have sworn the UEFA Cup Final in Seville was between teams from Scotland and Portugal, but judging by the flags in the stadium I think it was actually Ireland against Portugal; there were more American, Canadian, or Australian flags than Scottish. . . . I can't imagine what the rest of the world thought as they watched this disgraceful sight, which was attended by some of our politicians who supposedly abhor this type of behaviour. This was not a good reflection on our culture and a bad night for Scottish sport.¹²⁹

While this achievement should have been a proud moment for Scottish football, the Scottish international players on display, and the wider country itself, this fan represented the feelings of many Caledonian nationals. They could not understand or appreciate how Celtic's Irish-Catholic identity could represent them, or even worse, other countries and people. In promoting a facet of Scottish history that Scotland has not accepted as its own, Celtic has found itself in the same problem as Rangers, a complication best summed up by a BBC Radio caller on the Offensive Behaviors Act,

¹²⁹ Kathy Burrell and Panikos Panayi, *Histories and Memories: Migrants and Their History in Britain* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 250

If we all come out with the fact and said we were Scottish instead of half Celtic fans thinking they're Irish and half Rangers supporters thinking they're British. That it the answer to sectarianism...It all boils down to the fact that people need to stand up and be counted as Scottish.

A simple answer to a seemingly simple problem, this caller articulated a point very similar to those made at the Parliamentary debates on the Offensive Behaviors Act, if everyone in Scotland could be Scottish, there would be no problems with football bigotry, a point much easier said than done.

Conclusion

As evidenced by this confusing conglomeration of history, religion, and politics in Scotland, how is one supposed to separate what were very real societal passions from two football clubs whose sectarian rivalry has become the source of their existence? The Glasgow Sectarian Public Survey shows that religious bigotry is not an issue in the modern climate of Scotland's largest city. As a result, it needs to be questioned why the idea of sectarianism, as well as efforts to combat it have become such an industry in the country. The root of this problem is Scotland's lack of a national identity. Migration from across the Irish and North Seas has created a diverse country that has never been economically, religiously, or politically independent long enough to create anything distinctly 'Scottish,' as Parliament might wish to portray. As a result, those in power have to create the idea of a non-Scottish 'other' in order to give the rest of the country a vision of is 'theirs' and what is not. The working class values of the modern Glaswegian fan, as well as the British and Irish versions of Scottish identity that the Old Firm represent have made the two clubs the perfect target for Parliamentary intervention, in this case the Offensive Behaviors at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012. While this targeting of the working class would be a problem regardless, it is magnified by the real history of sectarianism in the country, and the fact that the myth of this problem is not only perpetuated by the government, but the media and clubs as well. Unlike the United States and its extensive Civil Rights Movement, Irish-Catholics were simply integrated into society as a new economic order was brought

in that cared more about capital than culture. Because of this lack of a national conversation, Scotland has never had explicitly confronted its bigoted demons, instead preferring to ignore them. This blatant snub is a luxury that Celtic and Rangers do not afford society with their paramount importance to football in the country, a religion today bigger than the Catholic and Protestant faiths that birthed the clubs in the first place.

While modern Scotland may accept these fans as citizens unlike their forefathers, the Irish and Protestant communities where other facets of Scottish identity may have once thrived have been destroyed in a changing Glasgow. As a result, these clubs have become a last bastion for fans to celebrate their history in a country actively trying to erase it. Thus, any misstep, isolated incident, or even questionable move made by Old Firm fans or the clubs themselves are latched onto by the media simply because it sparks controversy, and controversy sparks discussion and its associated revenue. A problem not endemic to the media, this deep rivalry, once indicative of real bigotry in the nation, has become one of the last marketable aspects not just of Rangers and Celtic's existence, but Scottish football as a whole.

With all of these industries trying to further the idea of bigotry in modern Scotland, and a society willing to accept it, is it even possible to promote the idea of a sectarian Scotland where the relatively rare public displays of sectarian animosity are not the visible tip of a submerged mass of ice, but rather all that is left? While it might be optimistic to suggest the sectarian industry will disappear, Scotland's recent push for independence creates an interesting paradox. Will Rangers and Celtic's outmoded identities be further exposed in nationalistic fervor, or finally included in a country at

peace with itself? While history might suggest the latter, the regressive economic climate of Scottish football suggests the league and its top clubs might not even make it till then.

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