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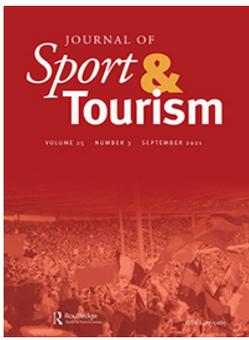
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The city and the country: Cardiff, England and the 2015 Rugby World Cup

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ABSTRACT

Major international sporting events have long been recognised for the role they play in city and/or nation branding. The 2015 Rugby World Cup, England 2015, was promoted as the world's biggest sporting event of the year. In addition to the 12 stadiums in England staging matches, games also took place at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. Cardiff is not located in England but is the capital city of neighbouring Wales, a place where rugby union is the national sport and England its biggest rival. This paper looks at the incorporation of a Welsh city in an event hosted by England where the VisitEngland promotional campaign was based upon images of 'England's green and pleasant land'. Drawing upon the work of the cultural theorist Raymond Williams, it considers some of the issues shaping tourism promotion and assesses the imagery and discourse relating to a city that sits outside the borders of the host nation of an event.

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Introduction

I'm Cardiff born and Cardiff bred, and when I dies I'll be Cardiff dead. (Frank Hennesey)
'Country' and 'city' are very powerful words, and this is not surprising when we remember how much they seem to stand for in the experience of human communities. In English, 'country' is both a nation and part of a 'land'; 'the country' can be the whole society or its rural area. (Raymond Williams)

Rugby Union is the national sport of Wales. Mackay (2010) uses the sport as a focus of the first chapter of the edited collection *Understanding Contemporary Wales* and notes that 'By examining rugby, we can make sense of much about contemporary Wales' (p. 3). The novelist and poet Sheers (2013) points out how Wales has been synonymous with rugby for almost as long as the game has existed and describes it as 'the foundation sport of Welsh culture' (p. 8). Without wishing to over-simplify, or over-state the importance of the sport, it was through rugby that Wales was able to be equal to its bigger neighbour (England) in a way that was not always available in other spheres. The cultural theorist Williams

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(1983/2003, p. 17) captured this difference with his descriptor of ‘the Welsh rugby team, out-rucking Chamberlain and Hoare and Halifax and the young toffs they’d persuaded to stand in for them’. Rugby then, as referred to by Williams in the quote above, is more than just a game and offers a site for the (re)production of national identity, social class and difference.

This paper attempts to further explore aspects of the relationship between Wales and England with a particular focus on the role of Cardiff as a host city for the 2015 Rugby World Cup (RWC). The title of this paper is an adaptation of Williams’s (1973) text *The Country and the City*. Williams provides the lens through which we look at this event although it is important to note that the focus of his book was on capitalist development and the relationship between the urban and the rural. The main focus in this paper is the role of a city (Cardiff) hosting part of a major international sporting event in a country (England) of which it is not a part.

The relationship between Wales and England is a complex one, and whilst space does not permit a detailed discussion of the history of the two nations here, it is important to briefly outline a couple of key points to help set the scene for the discussion that follows. The Acts of Union in the sixteenth century which brought Wales and England together was a smoother process than the subsequent union with Scotland in 1707, although as Colley (2014, p. 76) notes there has also been ‘stubborn and creative’ responses to attempted acts of union. Wales has usually been viewed as a junior partner to England. Whilst some have suggested that Wales could be viewed as an internal colony of England (see, for example, Hechter, 1975; Johnes, 2019), others argue that we should consider it more as a dependent periphery (Evans, 1991). Whatever the relationship between the two nations, the rugby pitch has long provided an important site for the promotion and celebration of difference between them (see Richards, 2009).

In one sense Cardiff (and by extension Wales?) shared in the prestige of hosting the 2015 RWC and the associated economic benefits that this brought. Yet this simple statement does not consider the dynamics of having a city outside the national borders of the host nation involved in an event that is being used more broadly to promote tourism to England and where the money generated would also be used by the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to further develop rugby in England. The contested terrain that surrounds the position of Wales as a separate country, a stateless nation, needs to be considered here. The event was branded and marketed as England 2015 so this case also offers a particularly interesting site to consider the geographical place of Cardiff in relation to the study of sport, tourism and events.

Major sporting events and national identities

Bidding for, and hosting, major international sporting events has become a key part of the policies and strategies of politicians and various other stakeholders across the globe (Whitson & Horne, 2006; Wise & Harris, 2017). Cities and nations compete with each other for the rights to stage the biggest of these with the FIFA Football World Cup (Men) and the Olympic Games (Summer) being by far the two most prized events to host (see Weed, 2007; Zimbalist, 2015). Just below these two mega-events, there is generally less competition to win the rights to stage many events, but some of these are still sought after as a badge of honour that bestows upon its hosts the pride and prestige associated with staging them. In the build-up to any large event, it seems as if the

promises of widespread social and economic regeneration show little sign of abating (see Wagg, 2015; Zimbalist, 2015). Although we have known for some time that the bidding process for many of these events is positioned on a shaky platform of under-estimated costs and over-estimated benefits (Whitson & Horne, 2006), there continues to be an enthusiasm for staging these events in a range of places across the globe (Weed, 2007; Zimbalist, 2015).

The 2015 RWC was the latest in a portfolio of major sporting events that took place in the wider configuration of Great Britain within the space of five years. Wales hosted golf's Ryder Cup in 2010 and Scotland welcomed Team Europe to Gleneagles for the first time in 2014 with victories for the 'home' team on both occasions. The latter was a significant year in Scotland with the Commonwealth Games taking place in Glasgow in the summer of 2014 and a referendum on Scottish independence just two months later. The internationalisation of sport continued apace with the Tour de France, the most iconic cycling race in the world, beginning in Yorkshire (England) that same summer with the Grand Depart from Leeds. The National Football League (NFL) continue to stage matches in Wembley Stadium (London) and a number of other major sporting events took place in the three different nations that make up Great Britain.

Arguably the biggest sporting event of all, the Olympic Games were awarded to England's capital city in 2005 and seven years later London 2012 provided the site for a popular celebration of Britishness. The then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron, referred to it as a time when patriotism came out of the shadows (*The Spectator*, 2014). These were conceived and promoted as a 'British' games with a focus on the wider collective beyond London and the south-east of England (Coe, 2012). Football matches took place in Glasgow (Scotland) and Cardiff (Wales) as part of this conscious attempt to make the event a British one rather than being perceived as solely an English event. The games were in many ways a great success and the relatively good weather, the success of Team GB who finished third in the medal table, and a general 'feel-good' factor, all contributed to a strong sense of national pride (see Vincent, Hill, Billings, Harris, & Massey, 2018; Wagg, 2015). Yet despite some obvious connections between London 2012 and England 2015, it is important not to confuse a 'British' event where the home team competed as Team GB (representing Great Britain & Northern Ireland) to one where the host nation and the home team is England. It should be noted here that the use of the name Team GB is itself controversial as Team UK would be a more accurate descriptor for a collective that includes Northern Ireland.

England and Britain are words that are often used interchangeably (see Colley, 2014; Williams, 1983/2003). Wales regularly finds itself subsumed under its bigger neighbour as most clearly evidenced by the often-cited example of the encyclopaedia entry for Wales that simply said 'See England' (see Johnes, 2019; Williams, 1975/2003). Wales is an English name for the land of foreigners and came into existence in the ninth and tenth centuries 'as a junior partner in a Britain run by England' (Williams, 1985/2003, p. 67). Wales has often struggled to define itself as a separate country in an international context but sport has proved to be a powerful tool to promote Wales as a distinct place (Holden, 2011). Before looking at the specific case of the city of Cardiff as part of England 2015, it is important to firstly outline a brief history of the RWC to show how the event has evolved in the short period that rugby union has had a World Cup competition and to consider the significant place of Cardiff in this.

Cardiff, Wales and the RWC

The first RWC competition took place in New Zealand and Australia in 1987. Rugby union did not become an openly professional sport until 1995 just after the third World Cup competition had taken place. That event, staged in South Africa, really took the sport to a wider international audience and has been celebrated in the Hollywood film *Invictus*. From its rather humble beginnings in 1987 the RWC has developed exponentially as the wider increased commercialisation and commodification of elite sport has dramatically changed the landscape of large-scale events (Harris, 2010, 2013; Wise, 2017).

Cardiff first hosted RWC matches in 1991. One of the main recommendations after the first RWC in Australia and New Zealand was that all future tournaments should take place in one nation and yet the 1991 event took place in five (see Wyatt, 1996). Whilst the 1991 RWC had developed many of the areas somewhat overlooked in 1987 in relation to the business side of the event, there was still much work to be done. As it was still nominally an amateur game few had really considered the wider commercial potential of the event and it was to be a few years before this became more central to international rugby governance and as a potential stage for promoting tourism (see Richards, 2007; Wyatt, 1996).

Wales was named as the host nation for the 1999 RWC but matches also took place in France and in other parts of the United Kingdom. At the centre of the bid to host the 1999 tournament was the creation of a new national stadium but the actual economic impact of this event was much lower than originally anticipated (Jones, 2001). Some were critical of the size of the debt that the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) incurred in developing the Millennium Stadium (see Harris, 2008; Jones, 2001). The protracted redevelopment of Wembley Stadium in London meant that Cardiff benefited from staging the play-off finals for the English football league clubs for six years. The Millennium Stadium also hosted the FA Cup final and the FA Community Shield in the same period. These events provided significant economic benefits to Cardiff and showcased the stadium to a wider audience beyond that of the somewhat narrow confines of international rugby union where a small geographical core (including Wales and England) had long retained control of the sport.

Holden (2011) highlighted that the opening of the Millennium Stadium was evidence of Wales branding itself 'as a nation of sport, not one entirely based on rugby union' (p. 278). The stadium is positioned in the centre of the city and dominates the skyline as visibly shown in the following extract from the novel *Cardiff Dead*:

The old stadium, the Arms Park, was almost invisible from the centre of town. You were only really aware of it when you looked at it from over the river in Riverside. The new stadium dominated the centre and you could see it from almost anywhere in Cardiff. (Williams, 2000, p. 231)

Australia hosted the RWC in 2003 and the 2007 tournament was awarded to France. The politics of international rugby governance between the hegemonic core of the International Rugby Board (IRB) was most evident as Cardiff also hosted four matches of the 2007 tournament. Here once again we saw certain nations backing a particular bid in exchange for being allowed to host some of the matches. This had been a feature of every RWC tournament taking place in the northern hemisphere (see Harris, 2010; Richards, 2007; Wyatt, 1996). Wales failed to make it through the group stages of the 2007 competition so there was at least some consolation for Welsh rugby fans in having a quarter-final match taking place in Cardiff. Many felt that Japan should have been awarded the RWC finals in 2011

but they lost out to New Zealand in somewhat controversial circumstances. Japan did get to host the competition in 2019 and this was the first time that the tournament had been staged outside of the eight foundation nations of World Rugby (see Harris & Wise, 2019).

On the field of play there has been a clear southern hemisphere dominance of the event with England's victory at the 2003 RWC in Australia representing the only World Cup title for a northern hemisphere nation to date. In 2015, there was a heightened expectation level and belief that the host nation could add to the number of wins for the northern hemisphere nations as the successes of 'home' nations in both London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 remained fresh in the minds of many. Yet despite the many successes of this event, England became the first (and to-date only) host nation to fail to make the knockout stages of a RWC competition. Wales exited at the quarter-final stage and all four of the semi-finalists came from the southern hemisphere. Having outlined a brief history of the RWC we now look at the case of the 2015 RWC and in particular the role of Cardiff as a host city. It is important to acknowledge here that this is in part a conceptual paper which aims to look at one particular aspect of a major sporting event as a case study. It does this by looking at two adverts. These were conceived and promoted by VisitEngland in presenting a particular version of England and Englishness to domestic and international markets. It then also looks at the commissioned reports produced to measure the predicted and reported economic impact of England 2015. In relation to both of these we are explicitly focusing on the promotion of national identity and the unusual place of one particular host city which sits outside of the borders of the host nation.

The work of the cultural theorist Raymond Williams is used to inform this study as his broad corpus of writing included work reflecting upon the relationship between Wales and England. Turner (1990, p. 52) suggests that the influence of Williams 'has arguably been more profound than any other' within Cultural Studies, whilst McGuigan (2014, p. xv) referred to Williams as 'the greatest cultural theorist of modern Britain'. Williams was also described as a librarian's nightmare given the breadth of his work that transcended established disciplinary boundaries (see Eagleton, 1988). His work offered various interpretations that would not sit well within traditional positivistic discourse. One of the recognised strengths of the *Journal of Sport & Tourism* since it was relaunched under the editorship of Professor Mike Weed in 2006 has been the variety of academic disciplines and different approaches to research welcomed to the journal.

It is important to note that this paper is a collaborative effort of three authors. As relates to the topic focused on here, one of us is Welsh and one of us is English. The third member of the triumvirate is from outside of the United Kingdom, so between us we each have very different backgrounds and experiences relating to the focus of this particular paper. In sharing ideas and various drafts of the paper our individual interpretations were challenged and key issues were teased out through this collaboration. This case study is part of a much broader ongoing collaborative research into sporting events and national identities that has critically examined various narratives of the nation in relation to major events (see for example, Harris & Vincent, 2015; Harris & Wise, 2019; Vincent & Harris, 2014; Wise & Harris, 2019).

In choosing the topic of study here, we are looking at an issue that was totally ignored in the coverage of England 2015 and a topic (the congruency of event image and destination fit) that has to the best of our knowledge not been addressed in any previous studies on sport and tourism. It is here that we hope to make a contribution to the extant literature on

the relationship between sport and tourism. To do this the paper will focus on four specific areas. The first of these is an analysis of the VisitEngland adverts promoting the 2015 RWC. This is then considered in relation to a topic, event image and destination fit, that has been looked at by leading scholars in sport and tourism. The analysis then looks more broadly at the importance of place and the topics of identity and difference in relation to the case study. The penultimate section considers how and where Cardiff is positioned in relation to England within other sporting contexts and assesses how a tweet from the Chief Executive of World Rugby highlighted some of the tensions/complexities rarely acknowledged. The final section offers a brief summary of the key issues and returns to briefly consider how the work of Raymond Williams has informed this analysis.

England 2015: this green and pleasant land

As the body responsible for promoting tourism in England, VisitEngland is the largest of all the national tourism organisations in Britain. Tourism is estimated to be worth in the region of over one-hundred billion pounds per annum to the British economy (Deloitte, 2013) and the predicted economic impacts for England 2015 was put at 2.2 billion pounds (Ernst & Young, 2014). On the day that the television advert for the 2015 RWC was launched the Chief Executive of VisitEngland noted that:

The TV Advert showcases England as a fantastic place to book a holiday or short break and I hope it gets the British public as excited as we are about what's in store for 2015. We want to entice Brits to set out to find what makes England a unique and special destination for them. (in ITCM, 2015)

Here we see some of the ways in which England and Britain are used interchangeably with the descriptor of promoting England to the British public. The VisitBritain (2017) website describes its role as follows:

As the national tourism agency – a non-departmental public body funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), VisitBritain/VisitEngland plays a unique role in building England's tourism product, raising Britain's profile worldwide, increasing the volume and value of tourism exports and developing England and Britain's visitor economy.

There are a variety of places where Britain and England are used interchangeably. There is a different relationship between the two organisations than there is between VisitBritain and Visit Wales or VisitScotland. This is of course related both to the size of England compared to the other two nations and the geographical and strategic importance of London as capital of England and as the largest city in Britain.

Two different adverts were created for the *Discover Your England* campaign – one to be shown in the domestic market and another to be screened for an international audience. The two adverts are very similar but also include some key differences. In the advert for the domestic market the scene is set by former England rugby captain Martin Corry. Corry's are the first words spoken in the television advertisement that was first screened in January, 2015 (VisitEngland, 2015a). This advert, just like part of the opening ceremony to the London 2012 Olympic Games, highlighted the tranquil, rural idyll of the English countryside. Nostalgic associations of the English countryside with images of village greens and the rolling hills are common signifiers of a traditional version of English identity (Williams, 1970, 1973).

This rural ideal was popularised in William Blake's *Prelude to Milton – And did those feet in ancient time* poem. Written in 1804, this was later put to music by Sir Hubert Parry in his patriotic anthem, *Jerusalem*. Blake's *Jerusalem* poem suggests that although England's 'green and pleasant land' was giving way to the 'dark Satanic Mills' of industrialisation, Christ had once visited Glastonbury and England can build a New Jerusalem. Parry's *Jerusalem* is sung widely in churches, schools and at some sporting events such as England rugby union international matches. The popularity of *Jerusalem* has grown in recent years and it has been used by England at the Commonwealth Games since 2010. Blake's poem suggests that there may have been a divine visit to England's *green and pleasant land* by Jesus and the brief establishment of a New Jerusalem, a metaphor for heaven in England.

The then Prime Minister, David Cameron, suggested in 2012 that *Jerusalem* could replace *God Save the Queen* (the British national anthem) before England's international football matches. As the national anthem for both Britain and England there has often been some tensions around the use of this anthem in relation to sporting competition. In London 2012 there was some controversy surrounding the fact that Welsh players in the GB&NI men's football team refused to sing this anthem prior to the matches (Harris & Vincent, 2015). Such controversy is not confined solely to the sporting arena though and in the summer of 2017 a Welsh choir performing on the popular television show *Britain's Got Talent* changed the words of *Jerusalem* to sing about *Britain's* green and pleasant land.

As noted earlier, the lines between the two are often blurred but it is important to recognise that England and Britain are different things. Cardiff is a part of Britain but it is not a part of England. Something that has received surprisingly little attention to date concerns the congruency of event image and destination fit when we consider the hosting of international sporting events that cross national borders. The next section considers this issue with specific reference to Cardiff's role in England 2015.

England 2015: event image and destination fit

There's only one England. (Stuart Lancaster)

The above quote from the then Head Coach of the England rugby team is the closing line spoken by the cast of contributors to the *Discover Your England* advertisement. This featured iconic images of England and representations of Englishness ranging from the splendour of the Georgian terraced houses in Bath to showcasing the beauty of various countryside locations of the green and pleasant land. The Saint George's Cross (the Flag of England) was cleverly inserted into a variety of different places within this advertisement, such as on the top of cupcakes and on the roof of a tractor. Williams (1970, 1973) would have recognised this representation of Englishness that linked an idealised version of national identity with the landscape. The advert was a celebration of England and a coming together of the nation as one. Sport can be a particularly powerful tool for promoting images of an imagined community and offers a site for a collective sense of belonging (Bairner, 2001). Yet what has not been considered to date is if the promotional campaign is a celebration of England and Englishness, then where does Cardiff fit in this?

There is a developing body of research concerned with the relationship between the image of an event and its perceived fit with the host destination (e.g. Chalip & Costa,

2005; Florek & Insch, 2011; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Knott, Fyall, & Jones, 2015). No research to date though has attempted to explore the key issues relating to this when a single city is positioned outside of the national borders of an event. Rather than simply branding or rebranding a place, those marketing destinations are managing an existing brand and may also be aiming to change people's perceptions. Cardiff has received significant investment and widespread regeneration catalysed by the development of the Cardiff Bay area (Hooper & Punter, 2006). In a broader sense, Fevre and Thompson (1999, p. 5) note that 'we must begin to consider how public representations of "Wales" and "Welshness" are reproduced as well as to explore what the consequences of these practices are for how people understand what it is to be "Welsh"'.

An advert for VisitEngland is not produced with a brief to promote Wales and Cardiff, which was noticeably absent from the *Discover Your England* campaign (VisitEngland, 2015a, 2015b). Whilst the domestic version includes a Morris dancer walking out of a country pub, the international advert has a Welshman wearing a Six Nations t-shirt with the word Cymru (Wales in Welsh) walking out of the same pub. The spoken text is still the same though (the words of Jerusalem) but we have the different accents and various national jerseys at the heart of this campaign. The international campaign is a way of showing that the different nations of the rugby world are welcome to England (and Cardiff?). This advert ends with the invitation to 'Discover Your England at VisitEngland.com' but the caption that appears at the end is 'Rugby is GREAT Britain' (VisitEngland, 2015b).

Rugby has been used as a key driver of the wider promotion of Cardiff (and Wales) in various international markets (see Harris, 2008, 2015, 2017; Hooper & Punter, 2006; Mackay, 2010). In some ways, Cardiff has to be subtly incorporated into the 2015 RWC marketing and it is included but at the same time not included when the branding is England 2015. The fact that matches took place in Cardiff was usually sandwiched in the long list when outlining the roll call of cities and/or stadia staging the RWC (Ernst & Young, 2016). The overall economic impact report provides a breakdown of the different groups of spectators and defines them as 'Domestic visitors are residents of England that live outside of the Host city' and 'Local fans are residents of England that live within the Host City' (Ernst & Young, 2016, p. 12). Cardiff is included in this list but no distinction is made so in this sense it is presented as another one of the 'English' cities.

England and Cardiff: place, identity and difference

The RWC was clearly titled and marketed as England 2015 so having a Welsh city as part of this surely confuses the issue as to where Cardiff is and who the Welsh are. Barlow (2005) highlights that Wales has been variously understood as a 'region', 'principality', 'western extension of England' and 'national region' (p. 201). He goes on to note that having never been an entirely separate entity or a fully integrated one, then confusion or denial about its status 'has had obvious and far-reaching ramifications' (Barlow, 2005, p. 201). Part of the RFUs bid to World Rugby (formerly known as the International Rugby Board) to host the RWC highlighted the strategic location of Cardiff in relation to the west of England. Some matches took place in Gloucester but other rugby strongholds in the west of England such as the cities of Bath and Bristol did not get to host any matches. In this sense then some may be tempted to view Cardiff as a western extension of England.

Cardiff celebrated 60 years as a capital city in 2015. Weight (2002) suggests that up until the time it became the capital of Wales it was still regarded by most Britons as a provincial city 'with the same status as Bristol, Manchester or Glasgow' (p. 279). Prior to that any claim to be the capital city rested largely on its positioning as the largest settlement in the country, for it had no specific role and little particular religious or cultural significance in the history of Wales (see Hooper & Punter, 2006; Johnes, 2012). There was very little about Cardiff that really defined it as a capital city although international rugby matches provided a means of putting the country on something of an 'international' stage, albeit within the relatively narrow geographical confines of the international rugby world. The successes of the Welsh rugby teams of the 1970s as more and more people were able to watch sport on colour television is also important to note here.

To be Welsh is still in many respects largely defined against not being English (see Richards, 2009). Nowhere is this more marked than on the rugby pitch where 15 men come together and visibly represent an imagined community of three million people in a tangible and 'real' way (Harris, 2007). Richards (2009) has cogently outlined this rivalry between the two nations and documents the history of one of the oldest and most keenly contested rugby fixtures. Wales and England were drawn in the same group for England 2015 so would face each other on the field of play hereby adding another chapter to a storied rugby rivalry.

It has been suggested that Wales has long suffered from something of an identity crisis as it attempts to develop and position itself as a distinct entity and brand in the tourism industry (see Clifton, 2014; Pitchford, 1998; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). In many international markets Wales is often viewed as just another part of England. In making the case that this identity and brand should clearly be differentiated and distanced from England reflects the ongoing challenge where people in various parts of the world frequently question what and/or where Wales actually is. Its geographical positioning is important to note here and banners which greeted tourists arriving at some of the main railway stations in London during the autumn of 2015 noted Cardiff's location as the nearest capital city to London and urged visitors to come to Cardiff as part of their experience of England 2015.

In some ways, attempts at differentiating Wales and England have been over-simplified and ignores the fact that in many respects the two nations are very much alike. Under the broader umbrella term of Great Britain, the two are closely entwined in much of the everyday lives of citizens living on both sides of Offa's Dyke. Raymond Williams understood this better than most having grown up in a border country where movements back and forth between the two places were part of the everyday lives of the people in the village of Pandy (see Williams, 1960). The fact that Wales had never been a unitary kingdom meant that its union with England, formalised during the Tudor period, made the integration of the two a smoother process than the subsequent union with Scotland at the beginning of the 1700s (see Colley, 2014; Johnes, 2019; Williams, 1983/2003). Johnes (2012) notes how the conquest of Wales by England preceded the urbanisation of Cardiff and the surrounding areas, so by the time urban areas began to emerge in Wales 'London was already well established as the centre of political power for the Welsh' (p. 510). In more recent times, the move to devolved government for Wales has led to questions about territorial rescaling and perceptions of place (see Pearce, 2019).

Cardiff, Wales and England: international sport and the host nation(s)

Cardiff was admitted to the Core Cities Group in 2014, a collective of self-selected cities outside of Greater London, formed to promote the role of cities in driving economic growth. Cardiff and Glasgow are the only cities in this group of 10 who are not located in England and the original 8 members when formed in 1995 were the English cities with the 2 others joining in 2014. Capital cities are the gateway to countries and can also have a symbolic value (Diekmann & Cloquet, 2012). As the capital city and a place often seen as the driving force of a wider city-region, then Cardiff has a responsibility beyond that of many other cities (Hooper & Punter, 2006). Its close proximity to England and the strong road and rail links means that Cardiff is in many ways more connected with the west of England and key places down the M4 corridor to London than it is to many other places within Wales itself. The triumvirate of Bristol (England), Cardiff and Newport are trying to work closer together and officially formed the Great Western Cities alliance earlier in 2015.

Two of the eight matches that took place in Cardiff during England 2015 featured the 'home' team as Wales defeated Fiji and Uruguay. Alongside these three nations, the two other teams in this so-called group of death were Australia and England. Only the winner and runner-up proceeded to the knockout stages, so Australia and England both faced Wales at Twickenham, London – home of the English rugby team. Despite a largely tongue in cheek bid by the WRU to stage the England match at the Millennium Stadium, the key matches in this group all took place at Twickenham. England versus Wales, like the Wales game against Australia, could of course never take place in Cardiff and evidences the collective power exerted by those at the core of international rugby governance. Those nations on the periphery such as Fiji and Uruguay were not afforded anything like the same consideration or privileges regarding any aspects of the game and both Fiji and Uruguay had to face Wales in Cardiff.

Cardiff did host an England team in 2015 when it staged an international cricket match between England and Australia. This reflected the increased focus on securing high-profile sporting events, as Cardiff staged a test match for the first time in 2009 and Glamorgan County Cricket Club continued to develop as a business and a core part of 'English' cricket (see Hignell, 2013). Cardiff is also firmly embedded in English football. Cardiff City currently competes in the second tier of the English football pyramid and won the FA Cup in 1927. Cardiff's fierce Welsh rivals, Swansea City, also play in this league although both teams have made it into the English Premier League in recent years. A little over 70 years after Cardiff's victory in the FA Cup, the city staged FA Cup finals as Wembley Stadium in London was redeveloped. The FA Cup final, that most English institutions, and Football League play-off finals were staged in Cardiff as it became the temporary home of English football.

These large-scale sporting events have been an important part of the repositioning of Cardiff as a capital city based on consumption and as a place where sporting events have formed a key part of its regeneration (see Gonçalves, 2017; Harris, 2017). Hughson, Inglis, and Free (2005, p. 180) reflected upon the ways in which sport has become an increasingly important part of wider cultural representations of place and note how 'sport featured in the bids by English cities for the title European City of Culture. The title, to be invested in 2008, was keenly sought by the finalists Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool, Newcastle/

Gateshead and Oxford'. Whilst Cardiff is not an English city, its culture-led regeneration has undoubtedly reshaped the cityscape (see Gonçalves, 2017). Cardiff is not perhaps as distinctive as the policy rhetoric and tourism marketing literature sometimes claims (see Hooper & Punter, 2006). Gonçalves (2017) has highlighted the importance of the wider cultural industries, but it is through rugby union that Cardiff has been able to differentiate itself and carve out a particular position in an increasingly competitive environment within sport tourism. Using rugby as a way of promoting and selling the city seemed to be an effective strategy to promote images of a new and vibrant Wales centred upon enterprise, leisure and consumerism (Harris, 2008, 2017).

As noted above, England and Wales were drawn in the same group as Australia which led the media in various parts of the UK to label it as the 'group of death'. It was the match between England and Wales that would prove to be the decisive one in deciding the fate of the two teams. The Chief Executive of World Rugby, Australian Brett Gosper, had tweeted 'England fail to exit pool in World Cup? [...] Not the words we want to hear during #RWC2015' after the England cricket team had been knocked out of the Cricket World Cup and this somewhat innocuous comment received significant attention in the Welsh press. The then Head Coach of Wales, New Zealander Warren Gatland, suggested that Gosper should not have made such a statement but Gosper felt that his tweet had been 'over-interpreted' and also noted that he had gained a significant number of Welsh followers to his Twitter account (BT Sport, 2015). The key point he was making was that 'organisers of tournaments do like to see the hosts do well' (BT Sport, 2015). Gosper's tweet was to prove a prophetic one as England became the first host nation in the history of the RWC to fail to reach the knockout stages of the competition. The Wales victory over England in London was a significant news story across all media in Wales with front page-headlines in newspapers such as 'Our greatest win ever!' (*Wales on Sunday*, 27 September 2015) and 'Anthem of the brave: How tale of sporting heroism unfolded to unleash euphoria' (*The Western Mail*, 28 September 2015).

Concluding remarks

There has been little commentary about having the capital city of Wales as part of an event promoted and marketed as England 2015. This perhaps reflects the continued hegemony of England over Wales and muddies the water for those working hard to convince some sceptics that Wales is a distinct and separate place and not merely an extension of England. There was no real rationale for including Cardiff as a host city for the 2015 RWC, save for some economic driver as there were many large stadia in England more than capable of staging these matches. Indeed, part of the strength of the England 2015 bid was that the event did not involve any new stadium developments and promised a significant economic return (something that the 2011 RWC in New Zealand was not able to do). The money generated from the RWC forms a significant part of the overall funding of rugby union across the world, so the importance of this to the development activities of World Rugby must not be ignored (Harris & Wise, 2019). The overall economic impact of the 2015 RWC was put at 2.3 billion pounds (Ernst & Young, 2016) and the event was a huge financial success. Cardiff is the only city that has staged matches in every RWC to have taken place in Europe (1991, 1999, 2007, 2015) so clearly occupies an important role in international rugby.

Cardiff was both present and absent from the study commissioned to gauge the economic impact of the 2015 RWC, where some of the text focused on the legacy agenda of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and the tourism benefits to England, but also had to occasionally make reference to the *EnglandandCardiff* coupling (Ernst & Young, 2016). Cardiff was the city outside of London that hosted the most matches and was also the place that gained the second biggest economic impact from the tournament generating an economic output of 380 million pounds (Ernst & Young, 2016). In the arena where mega-events are often sold to host communities on promised economic benefits (many of which are very rarely achieved) then the economic significance of events is often very visible in discussions of the importance of such occasions. Scholars studying sport and tourism have investigated the relationship between event image and destination fit (e.g. Chalip & Costa, 2005; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Yet no discussion to date has attempted to unpack the challenges of incorporating a host city which sits beyond the national boundaries of a particular event.

Cardiff has been identified as an example of a case where a capital city brand is much more powerful than the country brand (Herstein, 2012). Some of the challenges facing Wales are also evidenced in this work where it is included alongside Western Australia and Florida in a discussion of 'regions' (Herstein, 2012, p. 148) but also where Cardiff has been successful in attracting tourists to visit the city 'that do no travel to the rest of the country' (p. 153). Tourism scholars have long highlighted the challenges and difficulties involved with identifying Wales as a distinct and separate entity (e.g. Clifton, 2014; Pitchford, 2008; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). Visit Wales, and its partners, have worked hard in an attempt to better position the nation in a range of international tourism market. The staging of the Ryder Cup in 2010 offered a window to promote golf in Wales and marketers positioned Wales as a challenger brand in the competitive golf tourism market (see Harris & Lepp, 2011; Harris, Lepp, & Lee, 2012). One of the things it was most firmly positioned against here was the corporateness of England. Shaping such a strategy around an event that takes place at a luxury hotel resort was always a little challenging but in reality, the majority of mega-events are clearly and unashamedly corporately driven despite some of the surrounding rhetoric of legacy and host community development.

In 2015, it was clearly the corporate world of rugby union at the forefront to have the Welsh capital city of Cardiff included as part of England 2015. The image of rugby as a classless game in Wales does not match the reality of a professional rugby business where the ticket prices for Six Nations international games and the RWC 2015 matches evidenced the increased commercialisation and commodification of the sport. The RWC is also no different to other mega-events where a sizeable percentage of tickets also go to key corporate partners and the environment becomes increasingly choreographed, staged and sanitised. It is evident then that rugby union is no longer just a game but an international business where key stakeholders shape where and when matches are now played. This point alone would offer a partial explanation for the temporary presence of Cardiff in England. Williams would have understood this but may also have found this problematic. The accelerated commercialisation of rugby union since it went openly professional in 1995 continues apace and ongoing concerns about player burnout, safety and welfare are becoming increasingly prominent in discussions around the future of the sport.

The work presented here is a case study of an event and it is recognised that some of the issues identified may be unique to this one case. We do not wish to make any generalisations from the work and acknowledge that it is a snapshot of international rugby union at a particular moment in time. It attempts to add to the extant literature on sport, tourism and events whilst also introducing new issues to discussions of sport, tourism and destination branding. The work of Raymond Williams has been used as a lens to explore some of the key issues pertinent to this particular case and the geographical area it relates to.

The nations of Wales and England are connected not just by the border that runs along the length of eastern Wales but by a shared history and a close interconnectedness in a variety of different spheres. Raymond Williams grew up in that border country and his formative experiences here shaped his prodigious output as one of the foremost cultural analysts of his time. Many of the images visible in the *Discover Your England* campaign are of a country that Williams would have recognised from his studies of English literature (Williams, 1973). The inclusion of Cardiff as a host city within this tournament would probably have been less palatable to this self-styled Welsh European who recognised better than most the challenges faced in promoting Wales as a distinct and separate country to its neighbours over the border. Williams (1983/2003) once noted that the general situation between Wales and England is hard and complex, and the case study presented here evidences aspects of that complex relationship in contemporary times.

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