



Scottish kiltmaking: Knowledge, practice, and potential for Protected Geographic Indication

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The Scottish kilt is a renowned cultural garment symbolic of Scotland (Martin, 1988). Economically it contributes £350 million annually to the Scottish apparel industry (“Licensed to Kilt,” 2009). However, the kiltmaking industry has declined due to foreign imports and lack of interest in the kiltmaking profession (Loranger, 2014). Scottish Government has constructed an official training program to encourage youth to learn kiltmaking, assistance to the industry and individuals is limited (Loranger, 2014). One possible avenue of import protection for the Scottish kiltmaking industry is Protected Geographic Indications (PGI), which regionally unique agricultural products. Recently, the European Union considered expanding PGI attributes to include links “between the product’s quality [and] characteristics...[and] the ways human societies work with them” (EU Green Paper, 2014, p. 16). There is a lack of literature solely devoted to Scottish kilts and kiltmaking. The purpose of this dissertation study was to investigate Scottish kiltmakers’ knowledge and experiences as a basis for industry protection via PGI.

Theoretical Frameworks. This research is grounded in two theoretical areas of learning and social organization. (1) Scaffolding theory (Tehrani and Riede, 2008) assists us in understanding how kiltmakers learn and teach, and if a common body of kiltmaking knowledge exists. (2) Social Capital theory (Coleman, 1988) is a framework with which to comprehend kiltmakers’ use of physical and human capital, along with development of informal practice networks.

Method. Human subjects IRB permissions were obtained. In October 2015, a Phase I, qualitative, phenomenological pilot study employed interviews, observations, video and artifact analysis, and prototyping to understand participant’s (n=4) experiences with learning and practicing kiltmaking. Pilot interviews, conducted in Scotland, lasted 30-60 minutes, with open-ended questions regarding kiltmakers’ demographics, practice, and community. A kiltmaker was videotaped for 10 hours making a kilt from beginning to end, and key stages of kiltmaking were recorded. Kilts (n=16) from the national Museum of Scotland archives were analyzed, based on physical characteristics adapted from *The Art of Kiltmaking* (Tewksbury & Stuehmeyer, 2001). Last, the researcher constructed a kilt, to understand kiltmakers’ experiences in practice. A revised Phase II interview schedule was constructed based on emergent themes from Phase I data. The researcher traveled back to Scotland in April 2016 to conduct phenomenological interviews with (n=13) additional kiltmakers in greater Edinburgh and Highland areas of Scotland. Both Phase I and II interviews were transcribed into node format utilizing Glaser & Strauss’ (1967) method of constant comparison. In both Phases, the Principle Investigator (PI) coded a single transcript along with an audit coder. Codes were compared and negotiated until an 80.22% inter-rater reliability was reached (Creswell, 2013).

Results. A Phase I theme emerged pertaining to *downturn* in the kiltmaking business. Betty said, "...things just went from bad to worse, and everything dive-bombed, and then money got tight, we hardly get enough work to cover us...", and went on to say competitive goods "...get imported from India, China." Kiltmakers' also discussed *learning*. Kiltmakers said that learners can train within a firm apprenticeship or in an official Scottish Vocational Qualification course. Participants also commented that they engage in *reverse learning* by taking apart garments to perform alterations. Terry said, "I'd take it into bits and put it back together. It was a good way to learn the structure of a kilt without having to do the difficult part." Video and artifact analyses were triangulated with interview data, and clarified aspects of kilt construction procedures. Phase II themes revolved around kiltmakers' *internal experiences* and *external experiences*. Kiltmakers pointed to feelings of *tradition* that drive them to kiltmaking practice. Jessica said, "it's the national dress of Scotland. Without kiltmakers, it would be more...no kilts!" Lisa described *learning* kiltmaking while commenting on mastering one task and moving up to a more difficult task, "We all get to move seat up one in the apprenticeship, and we all move up one again, and another apprentice comes in." Terry noted that *learning* occurs through diffusion by observing others, "It's amazing what you pick up just by watching other people. You pick it up from them, so you just pick up in pieces." The theme of *external experiences* included perceived apathy on the part of the Scottish government and feelings about PGI. Anna said that there is "very little support from Government so they kind of had to be like self-funded, and they had to find their own [funding]." Cookie reasoned that PGI would be difficult to establish due to quality differences, "...that's a very difficult one because not everybody does the kilts the same style that. But I can't see you can do it. I can't see that..."

Conclusion. Emergent themes established that kiltmakers utilize a Scaffolding learning process and share a pool of knowledge through observation and teaching. Kiltmakers attempt to add to their Social Capital through learning networks; however, the government could assist by facilitating funding and establishing better protections against imports.

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