Media construction and representation of national identities during the 1996 European Football Championships

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MEDIA CONSTRUCTION AND REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES DURING THE 1996 EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

By

Emma Kathleen Poulton

A Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the award of

Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

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Emma Poulton (March 2001).
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT i

LIST OF FIGURES iii

INTRODUCTION
1. Introducing the Problematic 1
2. Sport and National Identity 1
3. Media-Sport and National Identity 3
4. National and European Identities in Euro 96 5
5. Structuring the Study 8
6. In Summary 10

CHAPTER 1 – A REVIEW OF LITERATURE:
FIGURING THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MEDIA-SPORT
1. Introduction 11
2. Conceptualising Identity 12
3. On Nation and Nationhood 14
4. On National Character, Culture and Identity 19
5. Towards a Process-Sociological Approach 29
6. On Globalisation and ‘Glocal’ Identity Politics 37
7. On the Relationship between National Identity and Media-Sport 45
8. Concluding Remarks 54

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES, APPROACHES AND CONCERNS
1. Introduction 57
2. Methodological Issues: Competing Research Paradigms 58
   2i. The ‘Qualitative versus Quantitative’ Debate 60
3. Designing an Appropriate Research Strategy 64
   3i. The Research Problem 64
   3ii. Theoretical Concerns of the Process-Sociological Approach 65
2ii. A Man’s Game? 158
2iii. Common Trends in Content and Subject Matter 166

3. Linguistic Style and Evocative Language 171
3i. ‘Them’ and ‘Us’ 171
3ii. Simply the Best! 172
3iii. ‘Fighting Talk’! 174

4. Constructing and Representing National Identity 177
4i. The Branding of Nations 177
4ii. Banging the Drum for England 179
4iii. Flying the Flag 181

5. Lest We Forget: The Prevalence of Historical Discourse 184
5i. 1966 and all that… 184
5ii. Recalling the Past 186
5iii. Celebrating Tradition 189

6. Findings and Observations 191

CHAPTER 5 – THE ENGLISH PRESS COVERAGE OF EURO 96:
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Introduction 196

2. Linguistic Style and Evocative Language 198
2i. ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ 198
2ii. Super England! 200
2iii. War Minus the Shooting? 203

3. Constructing and Representing National Identity 225
3i. Bravehearts, Brave Bulls and Mad Cows 225
3ii. Patriotism versus Xenophobia 236

4. Findings and Observations 251

CHAPTER 6 – THE ENGLISH TELEVISION COVERAGE OF EURO 96:
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Introduction 255

2. Audio-Visual References to National Symbols 257

3. Striking a Patriotic Note! – The Broadcasting Styles of ITV and the BBC 259
4. 'A disappointing start for England...' and Echoes of '66  
4i. England Expects...  

5. ‘Most footballing encounters have a past: England-Scotland has a history’  
5i. Memories are Made of This  
5ii. ‘Pride, passion and no little prejudice’  

6. ‘A truly memorable night for English football’  
6i. Reflections on the Press Corps  
6ii. Avenging the Dutch  

7. ‘A potentially epic afternoon’?  
7i. Winning Over the ‘National’ Audience  
7ii. To Be Impartial, or Not To Be?  
7iii. ‘Moments and images we are unlikely to forget’  

8. Don’t Mention the War?  
8i. Vying for the National Audience  
8ii. The Perfect Start?  
8iii. Penalties Again...  

9. Findings and Observations  

**CONCLUSION**  
1. Introduction  
2. Objectives of the Study  
3. Methodological Considerations  
3i. Evaluating the Research Strategy  
3ii. Towards More Reality-Congruent Knowledge  
4. The Results of the Study  
4i. Empirical Findings and Observations  
4ii. Euro 96 – ‘A Metaphor for Our Times’?  
4iii. The Media Coverage of Euro 96 – The Legacy  
5. In Summary  

**REFERENCES**  
Other Sources
ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the relationship between national identity and media-sport. More specifically, it investigates the construction and representations of national identities in the media coverage of the 1996 European Football Championships (Euro 96). These are examined through a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the media texts generated by both the newspaper and television coverage of Euro 96. Attention is also given to the cultural production codes and processes involved in the making of these texts.

The study highlights the media representations that surround and underpin sport generally, and football in particular, in the context of concurrent European politics. In examining the identity politics that were evident prior to and during the Championships, consideration is given to the English position relative to those of their European neighbours. While the concepts of 'imagined communities' and 'invented traditions' are of considerable help in making sense of identity politics, it is suggested that Elias' examination of established-outsider relations, and the socio-genesis of more deeply sedimented national character and habitus codes, is particularly useful. These Eliasian concepts, together with those of 'sleeping memories', 'imagined charisma' and 'fantasy shields', are employed to construct an account of the tensions evident in Anglo-British/European relations that surfaced in the media coverage. As such, this thesis is underpinned by a specific approach to the study of media-sport, and national identity, derived from a process-sociological perspective.

The content analysis shows that national stereotyping, I/we images, established-outsider identities/relations, personal pronouns, the imagery of war and national habitus codes were prevalent discursive themes in the media coverage of
Euro 96. The findings point to the existence of an agenda based around nostalgia and ethnic assertiveness/defensiveness in sections of the media, with repeated references to World War II and England’s World Cup victory of 1966. In this way, media-sport draws upon deep-seated national habitus codes and sleeping memories that are re-awakened by contemporary identity politics, especially during international sporting contests. Consequently, it would appear that in some countries, notably England, global sports are being used to reassert an intense form of national identity in opposition to further European integration.
LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 2 – Methodological Issues, Approaches and Concerns

Fig. 1: The Figurational Dynamics Involved in the Research Problematic 76
Fig. 2: The Matches Subject to Content Analysis 99

Chapter 3 – Contextualising Euro 96

Fig. 1: The Daily Express’ (2 June 1996: 2) Dad’s Army-style Map Depicting the British Government’s ‘Offensives’ in the ‘Beef War’ 111
Fig. 2: The Guardian (3 June 1996: 14) Review of the Press Coverage of the ‘Beef War’ 112
Fig. 3: A Guardian Cartoon (3 June 1996: 10) Reflecting Some of the Concurrent Issues Surrounding the so-called ‘Beef War’ Prior to Euro 96 118
Fig. 4: The Sun (28 May 1996: 6) Mocks the BBC’s Selection of Beethoven to Accompany its Coverage of Euro 96 119

Chapter 4 – The English Press Coverage of Euro 96: A Quantitative Analysis

Fig. 1: The Number of Euro 96 ‘Texts’ Generated from the Newspapers Analysed 155
Fig. 2: The Newspapers’ Page Dedication to Sport During Euro 96 156
Fig. 3: The Newspapers’ Number of Sports Articles Dedicated to Euro 96 156
Fig. 4: The Newspapers’ Number of Sports Illustrations Dedicated to Euro 96 157
Fig. 5: To Show the Leading National Character of Euro 96 Articles 169
Fig. 6: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Containing Personal Pronouns 172
Fig. 7: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Containing Narcissism 173
Fig. 8: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Containing Narcissism (Week-by-Week) 173
Fig. 9: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Employing War Vocabulary /Militaristic Imagery 175
Fig. 10: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Employing War Vocabulary /Militaristic Imagery (Week-by-Week) 176
Fig. 11: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Containing National Stereotypes 178
Fig. 12: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Containing Nationalistic Sentiments /Nationalism 180
Fig. 13: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Containing Nationalistic Sentiments /Nationalism (Week-by-Week) 181
Fig. 14: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Making Reference to National Symbols 183
Fig. 15: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Containing Nostalgia 186
Fig. 16: To Show the Percentage of Euro 96 Articles Making Reference to National Habitus 188
Chapter 5 – The English Press Coverage of Euro 96: A Qualitative Analysis

Fig. 1: The Daily Mirror (24 June 1996: 1) Declares 'Football War' on Germany
Fig. 2: The Daily Mirror (24 June 1996: 63) Challenge the German Striker's Injury Claim
Fig. 3: The Daily Mirror (20 June 1996: 1) Send a Message to Spain
Fig. 4: John Major – Batting for Britain, but the 'odd one out' in Europe?
(Times, 22 June 1996: 5)

Chapter 6 – The English Television Coverage of Euro 96: A Qualitative Analysis

Fig. 1: Key to Quoted Passages from Transcribed Television Coverage
INTRODUCTION

1. Introducing the Problematic

This research project is concerned with the dynamic relationship between sport and national identity and the role of media-sport in this relationship. The (men's) European Football Championships of 1996 (Euro 96) serve as the focus for this examination of the proposed inter-relationship between media-sport and national identity. The objective is to investigate the (re)construction and (re)presentation of national (and European) identities, as they revealed themselves in the English media coverage of Euro 96, against the backdrop of the concurrent European political climate.

2. Sport and National Identity

The rationale for studying national identity in a sporting context is based on the widely documented idea that sport often plays a significant role in the quest for national 'belonging-ness' and identity. Indeed, the relationship between sport and national identity has been a burgeoning area of academic research for well over a decade (Arbena, 1991; Armstrong & Giulianotti, 1999; Holt, 1989; Maguire, 1993a, 1993b, 1994; Jarvie & Walker, 1994; MacClancy, 1996; Sugden & Bairner, 1996; Sugden & Tomlinson, 1994). Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, sport and national identity have become closely associated, with sport commonly acknowledged as being a medium for, and a barometer, of national identification (Elias, 1986; Holt, 1989; Maguire, 2000). Elias (1986: 23) has observed how, 'in the course of the twentieth century, the competitive bodily exertions of people in the highly regulated form that we call 'sport' have come to serve as symbolic representations of a non-violent, non-military form of competition between states'. In this way, victory in
international sports competitions is sometimes seen, or represented, as an indicator of a nation's superiority in its politico-economic system and its culture and, as such, a source of national pride and unity (Eitzen, 1989: 233).

Defeat in international competitions can be a rather different 'ball-game', yet can still ignite a passionate identification with the nation. However, this can sometimes be of a more defensive, negative and occasionally, aggressive nature: because of the role that sport plays in personal and national identity formation, defeats on the playing field become as a kind of litmus test for the nation's decline (Maguire, 1994: 423). Win or lose then, sporting passions can reflect prevailing moods of the wider socio-political climate and often may even reinforce or engender these social currents (Jarvie & Walker, 1994). Consequently, it is important to understand the contemporary socio-political and economic climate, which is currently characterised by globalising trends. This study is therefore theoretically contextualised by the interdependent concepts of identity politics and the processes of globalisation. It is within this framework that the relationship between sport and national identity is to be investigated.

Globalisation, as a multi-lateral, contested phenomenon that provokes debate over its very nature – whether it engenders heterogeneity, homogeneity or a commingling of both – inevitably raises issues about its potentially paradoxical implications and consequences. Sport then, as a vehicle for both identity formations and contestations, must be considered within the context of these globalising trends since it needs to be determined what effect is being had on the very identities which sport helps to construct and represent. As time-spatial differences become redefined, identities, at a whole variety of levels, can become challenged, contested or conflictual.
A dimension of globalisation is ‘Europeanisation’. Such a trend can be seen within the context of European politics and the on-going debate over further unification following moves toward ‘an ever closer union’ by the Member States of the European Union (EU). This has been considered by Maguire (1993a: 315), who remarks:

As with European integration more generally... the sports process occupies contested terrain in which the defensive response of strengthened ethnic identities may yet win out over broader pluralizing flows. Or will they?

An awareness of these European identity politics is crucial to this research project. Not only was Euro 96 a pan-European event, but the tournament was played at a time of considerable political tension in Europe. This was caused by the so-called ‘Beef War’ between the British Government and EU following the latter’s veto on the export of British beef products, alleged to be infected with BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis). There was further friction between Britain and Europe over controversial fishing quotas granted to Spain at the expense of British fisheries. This political context is addressed throughout the research project since it was to be a common theme in the media coverage of Euro 96.

3. Media-Sport and National Identity

Wenner (1998) maintains that the increasing linkages between sport and the mass media have led to what he considers to be a new form of sports experience: that of ‘media-sport’. The hybrid product of this cultural fusing of the two formerly separate, though closely connected entities, is manifested in the constant interaction between media institutions, texts and audiences. These three inter-related components also represent the three main areas of study concerned with media-sport. A fully comprehensive study of media-sport, therefore, ideally combines a textual analysis
with both an understanding of the political-economy of the institutions involved in the production, as well as the actual production codes and processes, and audience-response research (Jhally, 1989; Kinkema & Harris, 1998; Maguire, 1993a). This, however, is an extremely demanding task and one that was regrettably not feasible within the remit of this doctoral thesis. Consequently, as Chapter 2 details, audience research was not undertaken. Instead, the twin foci of this study are the codes and processes involved in the production of media-sport texts and, in particular, the content of those texts.

Media-sport texts have been shown to play a central role in producing and amplifying many of the discourses associated with sport in the modern world (Blain, Boyle & O'Donnell, 1993: 15). More specifically, Boyle & Haynes (2000: 143) have observed how the media ‘act as the interface between sporting, political and ideological discourse of identity and meaning’. Whannel (1998a: 23) explains how, ‘National belonging-ness is inscribed into the discursive practices which seek to mobilise national identities as part of the way in which our attention is engaged with a narrative hermeneutic. We want to know who will win it and ‘we’ hope that it will be our ‘own’ competitor’.

In this way, media-sport helps to construct and represent national identities based upon difference, upon oppositions between ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘our’ qualities and ‘theirs’. However, despite the media-sport discourse embracing the whole, homogenous nation, the ‘inclusivist rhetoric cannot match its exclusivist practice’ (Rowe, McKay & Miller, 1998: 133). They highlight how ‘the sporting nation is constructed by the media in a highly gendered way’ (Rowe et al., 1998: 126). The potentially gendered nature of national identities in the media coverage of Euro 96 will be considered in the course of the research project. The intention is to examine
and assess whether or not the constructions and representations of national identities throughout the tournament were inclusive and embracing of both genders, or whether there was any trace of gender exclusivity.

In addition to examining the actual media texts from the tournament coverage, consideration is given to the cultural processes and conditions of production behind the texts. In linking how media-sport was produced with what it produced, this study helps us to understand the cultural power of media-sport texts and images in the (re)presentation of national identity.

4. National and European Identities in Euro 96

Someone tell Brussels that Europe already has a common currency. Football, as well as being the greatest game ever, unites Europe. That’s why we’re delighted to be the official sportswear supplier and official sponsor of Euro 96. Roll on June. [Umbro Advertisement from: England - The Official Magazine of the National Team, April 1996]

Football, according to sportswear manufacturers, Umbro, unites Europe. The English Football Association (FA), as organisers and hosts of Euro 96 on behalf of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), agreed. ‘We’re in this Together’, sang Mick Hucknall of the pop group Simply Red, as they performed the official tournament song at the Opening Ceremony. This was after the crowd had been treated to an hour of entertainment with an historical theme of English culture. This included a re-enactment of the St. George and the Dragon myth, medieval jousting and a celebration of football’s homecoming to the place of its birth. Meanwhile, school children from the local London borough of Brent paraded around Wembley Stadium, dressed in the national team kits of the sixteen participating nations, waving UEFA-sponsored ‘fair-play’ flags, supposedly instilling some sense of unity, commonality,
goodwill and togetherness (fieldwork notes from attending Opening Ceremony, 5 June 1996).

The two main marketing messages of Euro 96 are in evidence here. 'Football Comes Home' was the official slogan developed by the organisers, headed by the director of the tournament, Glen Kirton. The slogan clearly reflected and played upon England’s historical role in the development of the game globally, and also the fact that Euro 96 was to be the largest, most prestigious sporting event to be held in England since 1966 when England hosted, and notably won, football’s World Cup. This fact was to provide ample scope for a nostalgic evocation of ‘66 and all that.

However, in contrast to the arguably rather Anglocentric ‘homecoming’ theme, there was also an apparently conscious effort to promote a sense of international unity and being ‘in it together’. Alec McGiven, the Euro 96 Media Relations Manager, explained:

We hope that the Opening Ceremony will reflect both on the internationalism of the Championship and the fact that England is the host nation. For us, football is indeed coming home and we want to highlight that message (Countdown Euro 96, Issue 2, June 1995: 2).

The organisers presumably had not expected some of the English and Swiss fans at the Opening Ceremony to boo and jeer the children in the German strip and the arrival of Germany’s flag (fieldwork notes from attending Opening Ceremony, 5 June 1996). This would suggest that those in attendance at the match did not necessarily share the rhetoric of internationalism, as intended by the organisers.

This was seen elsewhere too. Despite the marketing themes of Glen Kirton’s team, certain sections of the media emphasised quite contrasting themes, which is to be a focus of this study. For example, rather than inferring the sense of ‘unity’ and ‘togetherness’ advocated by the organisers, some unofficial publications chose to
allude to differences between the participating nationalities and nations, thereby fostering a degree of divisiveness. This is illustrated by this comment from the English comic, Stan Boardman:

Despite great anticipation, the Championship has been beset by problems. The Scots have taken all the goal posts to add to their collection, the Spaniards have pinched the nets for their fishermen and the French have stolen the team bus to use as a road blockade... even worse, Germany have threatened to pull out until the turnstiles have been turned into checkpoints and the Croatian team have been told they risk United Nations bombardment if they shoot (Gary Lineker’s Definitive Guide to the European Championship 1996: 163).

What sense of solidarity or unity, of European identity, was manifested amidst these stereotyped jibes at the expense of the visiting nationalities or in the incidents cited concerning the Opening Ceremony? It would appear that a certain amount of hostility and exclusion existed rather than ‘togetherness’. Some, it seems, were not so welcome. It is the purpose of this study to investigate these sentiments and manifestations of national identities and so determine who was, and who was not, in ‘it’ together.

Consideration will be given to the meaning and significance accorded to the Euro 96 tournament by its organisers, juxtaposed to how it was framed by media-sport. Were the Championships a celebration of a common European footballing culture and the coming together of European nations? Was there any identification by the English media with ‘Europe’ and with a sense of European identity? Or was Euro 96 a win-at-all costs sports contest, an arena in which to re-assert national allegiance and identity, and an opportunity to settle old scores, be those of a footballing or even politico-economic origin, given the fraught European political climate?

The study will examine how the politics of identity, nationhood, and European unity/integration versus diversity/fragmentation, were played out in Euro 96. It is possible to speculate that a competition such as this was loaded with ambiguities.
where identity is concerned. Tournaments like Euro 96 can serve to stimulate national identification and *unite* a nation in support of its team, and, at the same time, engender some sense of supranational unity and identity: a feeling of internationalism/Europeanism juxtaposed to national belonging-ness. However, MacClancy (1996:12) has highlighted the super-nationalistic competitive nature of sport. In this connection, Euro 96 may have actually served to *divide* rather than unite, as nation was pitted against nation, with world history providing a plethora of national rivalries and hostilities, from both on and off the field of sport. This is the contradictory character of the globalisation occurring in our changing world.

The main objective of the research is to probe the framing, construction and representation of national and European identities as they manifest themselves in the media-sport discourse surrounding Euro 96. This will allow for an exploration into precisely who the media chose to include/embrace, and exclude/reject, from these respective identities. How this is approached in the course of this thesis is outlined below.

5. Structuring the Study

The opening chapter offers a review of the existing literature pertinent to this investigation into the relationship between national identity and media-sport. Initially, consideration is given to the concept of identity, or rather identities, since the concept should be understood in its plural sense (Mennell, 1994). Problems to be considered include, what constitutes a national identity and what it means to have a sense of national identity. Different schools of thought from various disciplines have addressed these, and other, complex definitional concepts, and there is a wealth of literature on how social identities are (re)produced. Some of these are outlined before the theoretical framework underpinning this research project is detailed.
This is essentially based on the work of Norbert Elias and the process-sociological perspective. It also draws on the concepts of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) and 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm, 1983), as well as aspects of media studies. However, the contention is that the Eliasian concepts of established-outsider relations, I/we images and his examination of the socio-genesis of a more deeply sedimented national character and habitus, are particularly useful when examining national identity and identity politics more broadly. This theoretical discussion provides the foundations upon which the 'sport-nationalism-media troika' (Rowe et al., 1998: 133) can be investigated.

Having established the broad theoretical framework in Chapter 1, the next chapter builds on this by addressing the significant ontological and epistemological concerns. This forms part of the methodological discussion, which also explains a range of issues that arose during the research process, as well as the strategy employed. The actual methods used during the empirical research are also detailed. This predominantly involved the techniques of content analysis that was undertaken on the press and television coverage of Euro 96.

Boyle & Haynes (2000: 15) have noted that, 'Despite the usefulness of examining the mediated textual representations of sport, a more rooted concern with the economic, political and social structures and processes that remain central in shaping society can help to increase our understanding of the role of media-sport'. Consequently, the third chapter serves to contextualise Euro 96. This is done through a consideration of the socio-cultural and politico-economic conditions in which the tournament was played, and so in which the media coverage was produced. This includes the findings from interviews with media personnel regarding their plans for covering Euro 96, with particular reference to the (re)construction and
(re)presentation of national identities. In this way, the interviews helped to provide 'an insight into the journalists' self-assessment of their own and their colleagues work activities' (Rowe, 1999: 37).

The following three chapters present the results of the content analyses of the media coverage. The quantitative results of Chapter 4 do not claim to present the definitive picture of the newspaper coverage of Euro 96 and the framing, construction and representation of national identity by the press during the tournament. It is valuable, however, in indicating the structure of the press coverage, and in so doing complements the qualitative analysis, the results of which are found in the Chapter 5. These help to illuminate the different 'layers' of meaning in the media texts. The 'manifest' or surface features, established in the quantitative analysis, can be contrasted with the 'latent' or deeper-structure meanings. Chapter 6 provides the results from the analysis of the television coverage. All of the findings are cross-referenced with the information gained through the interviews with the media personnel, as well as the FA's Glen Kirton, who gave the official line on what it meant for England to host Euro 96. The final chapter, then, summarises the results, offering observations and concluding remarks, as the original problematic is re-addressed.

6. In Summary

Having established the basic theoretical and structural frameworks of this research study, we can now focus on the problematic in question. This requires addressing the phenomenon of identity and the theoretical framework underpinning this investigative study in much greater detail. Then the inter-dependent relationship with media-sport can be more adequately examined. It is to this we now turn in the opening chapter.
CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE:
FIGURING THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP WITH MEDIA-SPORT

1. Introduction

Grew (1986: 33) has observed that prior to the last couple of decades, national identity was ‘hardly an attractive subject of study in a world that had so cruelly experienced it as nationalism, imperialism, militarism and racism’. National identity is certainly an abstract and extremely complex concept. The problem of finding an acceptable definition ‘lies in the fact that the conceptual content of the term is so large and amorphous as to defy precise definition’ (Rossbach, 1986: 187). An understanding of the term, however, is paramount for the purpose of this study.

To obtain such an understanding requires the definition of other interconnected concepts: the nation; national character; national culture; national consciousness or feeling; and nationalism. Rossbach (1986: 187) has suggested that part of the confusion over the definition of national identity has been because ‘these other concepts have been used and understood by some authors as synonymous with national identity, while other authors see them as no more than parts of the concept of identity’. He recommends a third approach. This endeavours to distinguish between the terms, and define each one separately, while acknowledging the close relationship of them all to each other, and, particularly to the notion of national identity. This approach will be adopted here.

The initial section will therefore address these respective inter-related concepts. The chapter will also give due attention to the work of Elias, whose writings provide the broad theoretical framework that underpins this study. In his examination
of the Germans (Elias, 1996), established-outsider relations (Elias & Scotson, 1994) and the 'society of individuals' (Elias, 1991), Elias provided an important conceptual framework that, along with the work of Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (1983), and some principles of media studies and semiotics, is used in guiding the empirical research element of this study.

With this framework established, the chapter then moves on to consider the nature of globalisation and its impact on identity politics. Finally, the relationship between national identity and media sport will be investigated. This is what Rowe et al. (1998) describe as the 'sport-nationalism-media troika'. Bale (1986: 18) has observed how, 'whether at local, regional or national level, sport is, after war, probably the principal means of collective identification in modern life'. It is in this context that the media plays a pivotal role by drawing upon the myths of collectivity and unity, emphasising the nation as embodied in its team representatives (Rowe et al., 1998). It is only once these necessary concepts, roles and relationships have been defined, and examined, that the foundations for the empirical study will have been established. Let us then proceed with the task in hand.

2. Conceptualising Identity

The task of conceptualising the complex phenomenon of identity is a challenging one. It is, however, vital that the phenomenon is truly understood. Guibernau (1996: 73) offers some useful thoughts by means of introduction:

The key question with regard to identity is 'who am I?' Identity is a definition, an interpretation of the self that establishes what and where the person is in both social and psychological terms.

Every individual human being develops an 'identity': we come to know who we are.

Indeed, each human being has a plurality of identities since the human self forms, and
is formed by, an amalgam of multiple and dynamic identities (Mennell, 1994). Although each individual remains a unique human being in their respective identity make-up and character (or habitus), these identities are also shared in common with similar others. This, therefore, defines an individual socially. An individual then, is not only an 'I', but part of a group and therefore a 'we'. These identities may be based on gender, class, age, sexuality, religion, geographic region, or ethnicity, amongst others. One can of course, be any number of these identities at one time since our identities are multi-layered (Mennell, 1994). It often depends on circumstance as to one's identity at a given particular moment; our identity is situational. As Cohen (1994: 205) explains:

> An individual constructs and presents any one of a number of possible social identities, depending on the situation. Like a player concealing a deck of cards from other contestants, the individual pulls out a knave - or a religion, an ethnicity, a lifestyle - as the contestant deems a particular choice desirable or appropriate.

Although feminist and Marxist scholars might disagree, arguably the most vivid and all-embracing means of social collective identity in contemporary society is that based on nationality, i.e. national identity (Anderson, 1983; Smith, 1991; Guibernau, 1996; Maguire, 1994; Woolf, 1996). To possess a national identity implies having a relationship, an identification, with a nation. The concept of national identity then, could be seen as the collective expression of a subjective sense of belonging to a socio-political unit: the nation-state (Woolf, 1996: 26). To declare one's self as 'English' would be to imply that, along with others, you are part of and/or belong to the English nation. An English person, of course, may also feel a sense of being British, part of the British nation(s) and thus have a British identity, as well as yet more identities at a regional and civic level. Furthermore, a person, in addition to their
more 'local' (i.e. national) identity, may also identify with Europe, and so possess a supranational identity.

Evidently we are dealing with a complicated, intricate and multi-dimensional concept in national identity. The objective is to explore the related concepts, such as nation, and to define them to gain a thorough theoretical appreciation of:

- what a national identity is;
- how a national identity is formed and represented;
- what it means to have a national identity;
- and what happens when a national identity is under a perceived threat.

Once this is accomplished, the relationship with sport can be addressed.

3. On Nation and Nationhood

What is a nation? We may all claim to belong to, or be part of, a nation in our everyday existence. We may think of ourselves as 'English', 'Scottish', 'German' or 'American', but what are the implications of this? What is really meant by the term nation? Woolf (1996: 2) has suggested that three different elements have become inextricably imposed on our understanding of what he terms the nation-state. These are:

... the nation as a collective identity; the state as an expression of political independence; and the territory as a geographical area with frontiers demarcating the necessary coincidence between nation and state.

While we must acknowledge the nation as a territorial and politico-economic entity, our interest here is more with Woolf's first element of the nation, i.e. as a collective source of identity. Numerous authors have attempted to recognise shared characteristics particular to defining a nation, or nationhood. Smith (1991: 43) contends that the 'nation', as a named population, sharing an historical territory,
common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy, and common legal rights and duties for all its members, is a multi-dimensional concept. Further to this, it represents an 'ideal' type that provides a standard or touchstone that can be imitated to varying degrees. It is from an emphasised fulfilment of these attributes that a sense of 'unity' is conferred by those feelings of 'belonging', of identification with the nation and the notion of an all-encompassing national identity.

Guibernau (1996) appears in agreement with most of these features. She defines the nation as: 'a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future and claiming the right to rule itself' (Guibernau, 1996: 45). Significantly, Guibernau states that the community must be conscious of themselves as a collective. This is an idea shared with Gellner (1983) that is detailed below. Guibernau illuminates what she sees as the five dimensions of a nation. This builds on the three elements given to us by Woolf. Guibernau cites the nation as having psychological, cultural, territorial, political and historical dimensions. The first two of these dimensions are most significant as we seek to investigate this more abstract aspect of the concept of the nation.

It should be noted that these national characteristics are not 'essential'. Nations are not 'objective communities' in the sense that they are constructed around clear 'objective criteria' (Billig, 1995: 24). A nation need not necessarily possess a territorial boundary, a geographical location or possess, for example, a single language or religion. Palestine is a case in point. If the nation cannot be adequately defined in objective terms, might it be intimated that nations are subjective entities? Some would suggest this is so, although this thesis will adopt a non-dichotomous approach.
Anderson is one such author who claims that the nation is conceived in a subjective way, that nations are in some way 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983). Anderson contends that the imagined political community (the nation) is imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. He explains that nations are: 'limited because even the largest of them has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations; and sovereign, because the concept was born in an age in which the Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical realm' (Anderson, 1983: 7). Lastly, it is 'imagined' as a community because, 'regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may exist, the nation is nevertheless conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson, 1983: 16).

Anderson, notably, makes a distinction between his own understanding of the nation as an imagined community and that of Gellner. He claims that the latter is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation'. The reference to 'invention' is to Eric Hobsbawm's theory of the 'invention of tradition' which will be explored below. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that Gellner was writing an actual critique of nationalism, another concept that will be addressed later.

Gellner (1983: 6) proposed that nations are a contingency, not a universal necessity, despite the idea of the nation being apparently universal and normative. This is because, he argues, individuals can only claim to be of the same nation if they share the same (national) culture. This is what Anderson was referring to, since Gellner is critical of how this culture has been 'fabricated' and 'created'. He notes:
In other words, nations maketh man [sic]; nations are the artefacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities... It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members (Gellner, 1983: 7).

Gellner has a point with regard to the idea of the nation as a subjective, imagined or invented entity, i.e. a socio-cultural construction. This relates to the psychological and cultural dimensions highlighted by Guibernau. However, it might aid our understanding to consider that, while the ‘nation maketh man [sic]’, people may also contribute to ‘making the nation’, since the one engenders and enhances the other. To accept this would be to recognise the individual as being both a contributor to, as well as a citizen of, the nation. Indeed, the individual and the nation cannot rationally be considered separately for they are intrinsically related and interdependent. Because the image of a nation is experienced by individuals who form part of that nation, it is therefore also a constituent of that person’s self-image: ‘the virtue, the value, the meaningfulness of the nation are also his or her own’ (Elias, 1996: 152). As Elias elucidates:

The concept of identification makes it appear that the individual is here and the nation is there; it implies that the ‘individual’ and ‘nation’ are two different entities separated in space. Since nations consist of individuals and individuals who live in the more developed twentieth century state-societies belong, in the majority of cases, unambiguously to a nation, a conceptionalization which evokes the picture of two different entities separated in space, like mother and child, does not fit the facts (Elias, 1996: 152).

Cohen (1993) also appreciates the interaction between individuals and the nation in the formation of the latter. He, too, acknowledges a degree of subjectivity about the definition of nationhood, giving consideration to what a national boundary means to the people it encompasses, and the meanings given to those boundaries. Cohen thus allows for a symbolic and therefore subjective dimension to (national) community
boundaries. In doing so, he implies an element of symbolism attached to defining and conferring meaning on an individual’s national identity. Cohen (1993: 19) suggests national communities are ‘important repositories of symbols, whether in the forms of totems, football teams or war memorials which serve as markers of the community which distinguish it from others’. The symbolic markers of the community that Cohen mentions help contribute to a construction of the ‘we-identity’, in opposition to ‘them’, the outsiders:

[P]eople become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries: when they encounter other cultures, or when they become aware of other ways of doing things, or merely contradictions of their own culture (Cohen, 1993: 69).

This echoes some of Elias’ (1994) work with regard to established-outsider group relations, in which he made several important connections between issues of identity and the nation/national character. His established-outsider ‘I/we/they/them’ paradigm will be addressed in due course below.

It is important at this juncture to take stock of our understanding of the concept of the nation. Having established that the nation cannot be defined comprehensively on objective lines, we have seen how Anderson, Gellner and Cohen observe the nation as having an imaginary element. With its social psychological dimension, the nation can be recognised as a subjective entity. Arguably, a more fruitful understanding of the nation may be gained through not seeing the nation in terms of either an ‘objective’ or ‘subjective’ organism, and instead, with a semblance of both. This perspective adopts a more non-dichotomous processual stance that draws especially on the work of Elias.

As indicated above, Cohen, in particular, highlights how the nation, or at least the boundaries enclosing the nation, provide a pool of cultural symbols with which
citizens identify, and which give them meaning. This leads on to a consideration of the emotional investment of individuals in such symbols that form the very fabric of the national culture of their perceived nation. Such a distinctive, shared culture enables a community to know who they are. It provides them with a national character, which in turn aids the construction and representation of national identity. To this end, Billig (1995) has claimed the subjective way of conceiving the nation is an oversimplification, and that there has to be an 'ideological' dimension. For national identities are 'forms of social life, rather than internal psychological states and as such, they are ideological creations' (Billig, 1995: 24). This notion of an ideological element, with the existence of 'symbolic markers' as part of the national culture, is persuasive. To draw again on the writings of Gellner and the proposed revision of his premise, 'the nation maketh man' [sic]: people make the nation too, and so by implication, the national culture and national character. These concepts will now be addressed.

4. On National Character, Culture and Identity

Having defined what constitutes a nation, the aim now is to learn how nations, as a series of 'imagined' interdependent communities, are able to evoke a sense of identity. Though today we are ordinarily born within a nation, and so are born with a nationality - at least as far as our passport is concerned - we are not born with a sense of national identity. Rather, national identity is understood to be inscribed, in the very body of the individual, and not the contingent result of membership in intermediate groups (Calhoun, 1995: 238). As such, territorially extensive societies, most of whose members cannot know each other personally, can share a collective or social memory (Connerton, 1989). Symbols of the nation, a sense of common history, heritage, and
tradition, contribute to the fabric of the national culture that helps to ‘grip people’s imagination’ (Gowland et al., 1995: 270). These confer meaning on what it is to be part of and belong to the nation. In this way, the national culture is one of the chief begetters of an individual’s socio-cultural identity, and helps to shape the national character by providing individuals with signifiers of the nation. It helps to establish and distinguish who ‘we’, the nation, are.

However, Gowland et al. (1995: 270) suggest that many national traditions are in fact ‘invented, exaggerated or distorted ones’ in the interests of promoting a positive image and identity of the nation. This supports the assertion that national identities are in some respect an ‘ideological creation’ (Billig, 1995: 24). Hobsbawm provides the most comprehensive understanding of what he terms the ‘invention of tradition’. He defines this as: ‘a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to include certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past’ (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983: 1). Hobsbawm and Ranger cite three overlapping types of ‘invented tradition’. These are:

- those establishing or symbolising social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities
- those establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority
- those whose main purpose was socialisation, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour...

(Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983: 9)

The first, he suggests, is the most prevalent, while the others are implicit in or flowing from a sense of identification with a ‘community’ and/or the institutions representing or symbolising it, such as a ‘nation’ (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983: 9). He also highlights three dominant national symbols which proclaim a sense of identity and
therein command identification, those being the flag, anthem and emblem of the nation. Constant exposure to these cornerstones of the nation (and so the nation's identity), through subtle processes of socialisation, prompts instantaneous respect and loyalty. Elias has also articulated this idea:

...the emotional bonds of individuals with the collectivity which they form with each other crystallise and organise themselves around common symbols which do not require any factual explanations, which can and must be regarded as absolute values which are not to be questioned and which form focal points of a common belief system (Elias, 1996: 146).

Billig (1995), who maintains that in the established nations of the western world there is a continual 'flagging' or reminding of nationhood, shares a similar contention. Like Hobsbawm, his stress is upon the subtlety with which this is done:

In so many ways the citizens are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building (Billig, 1995: 8).

It is Billig's premise that, despite the negative associations with the term, nationalism is in fact 'banal', commonplace, in western societies. Of course nationalism, as an ideological concept, has been grossly tarnished by the totalitarian regimes of Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and Franco in the early-mid twentieth century. This has led to its meaning being lost to the emphasis on its more noxious character, through its association with fascism in Europe, and the waging of wars. Consequently, many prefer to distinguish between the concepts of national identity and nationalism to avoid the connotations of the latter marking that of the former. Columnist Robert Nye, writing on St. George's Day, made such a distinction when he remarked: 'Patriotism is a natural love of one's country, nationalism is an undue particularism in favour of it' (Times, 23 April 1998: 22). Other commentators and academics, as will
be outlined, believe that the two are very much compatible, and suggest that it is for convenience that such a distinction is made. Nationalism, with its negative associations, is frequently seen as being something adhered to by ‘them’, while ‘we’ merely demonstrate patriotism through our sense of national identity. As Elias (1996; 153) has noted:

In ordinary usage the term ‘nationalist’ is often loosely distinguished from others such as ‘national’ or ‘patriotic’, in order to express disapproval with the help of the former and approval with the help of the latter. But in many cases what one calls ‘nationalism’ is simply the ‘patriotism’ of others, what one calls ‘patriotism’, one’s own brand of ‘nationalism’.

Nairn (1977), coming from a Marxist perspective, has observed what he calls the ‘janus-face’ of nationalism because of its usefulness as a vehicle for liberation and radical ideas, as well as a justification for violence and intolerant values. Calhoun (1995: 233) has also noted the dualism of the rhetoric of nationalism that helps to ‘constitute not only violent programs of ethnic repression or civil war, but more commonly praised ideals of citizenship and patriotism’.

Nationalism can therefore be understood as the sentiment and ideological attachment to a nation and its interests, hence its close relationship with the concept of national identity. It can be likewise defined as a belief in, and a feeling of belonging to, a people united by common historical, linguistic and/or racial ties, with this people often associated with a particular territory. Again, the two concepts bear a close resemblance. In contrast, nationalism can also be an ideology of national superiority, that promotes the exaltation of the nation-state as the ideal form of political organisation with an over-riding, usually undemocratic, claim on the loyalty of its citizens. Nationalism, in this sense, is a programme to uphold national identity through political activity and is usually associated with the far-right. In extreme cases this can take aggressive and intolerant forms, characterised by national expansionism or
imperialism at the expense of other peoples; ethnocentrism and racism. It is here that we must make a distinction. Although there are some shared characteristics, the sense of national identity with which we are concerned here is not necessarily connected with the far-right dimension of nationalism. This can involve the mobilisation of a movement for the exaltation of the nation-state as a superior political body and the respective nation as the superior race. It therefore usually entails the promotion of an aggressive, often racist, exclusivity and ethnocentrism, far beyond any assertion of national identity as previously defined. However, as we will see, these traits are not exclusive to far-right national identities.

According to Billig, 'banal nationalism' is national culture in everyday operation. It is the means by which the members of a nation become sub-consciously aware of the national character that bestows their sense of national identity: 'daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged', in the lives of its citizenry' (Billig, 1995: 6). In this sense, national cultures are ready suppliers of a social fund of national images and symbols. Together with a shared history, collective nostalgic memories of the 'golden years' and a convenient amnesia about the 'bad times', they confer meaning to the nation, thereby defining and giving meaning to a sense of national identity. National cultures in 'recounting shared experiences, sorrows, triumphs and disasters' (Maguire, 1993: 296), also contribute to the framing and construction of the national character.

Although national cultures serve as anchors of meaning in the construction and maintenance of national identity, it is important to acknowledge that this can often occur simultaneously with an antipathetic interaction with outsiders, strangers, foreigners and aliens. As Cohen (1994: 1) has noted: 'you know who you are, only by knowing who you are not'. Several authors share this idea of a contradistinction between 'us' and 'them' in the construction and re-presentation of national identity,
including: Hogg & Abrams (1988); Bloom (1990); and Elias (1991, 1996). This will
now be considered.

Hogg & Abrams (1988) look at the social psychological nature of group
membership, and the social psychology of people within those groups. As we have
established, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, as well as nationality, help compile an
individual's identity. Hogg & Abrams (1988: 2) contend that:

...[P]eople's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and
how they relate to others (whether members of the same group - in-group - or
of different groups - out-groups), is largely determined by the groups to which
they feel they belong [italics in originals].

They proceed to ask how people identify with a group, which is the subject of inquiry
in this study in respect of the nation. Issues considered are: how society can bestow
self-conception; how society can help to shape individuals through the mediation of
groups represented by normative or consensual practices; and how in turn individuals
recreate these groups. Hogg & Abrams' (1988: 3) provide a synopsis of their thesis
when they write:

The central tenet of this approach is that belonging to a group (of whatever
size and distribution) is largely a psychological state which is quite distinct
from that of being a unique and separate individual, and that it confers social
identity, or a shared/collective representation of who one is and how one
should behave. It follows that the psychological processes associated with
social identity are also responsible for generating distinctly 'groupy'
behaviours, such as solidarity within one's group, conformity to group norms,
and discrimination against out-groups.

Hogg & Abrams provide some useful thoughts on how we distinguish between 'us'
and 'them' through the use of stereotypes, which they say are ideological in content.
Stereotypes are 'generalisations about people based on group membership; they are
beliefs that all members of a particular group have the same qualities which
circumscribe the group and differentiate it from other groups' (Hogg & Abrams,
There is usually a ‘tendency to attach derogatory stereotypes to out-groups and favourable ones to in-groups’ (Hogg & Abrams, 1988: 65). This can evidently be seen occurring in terms of nationality with, for example, English images of ‘dour Scots’, ‘fiery Italians’, ‘humourless Germans’ and such like.

Billig also supports this contention, implying that in asserting a positive national identity of their own, nations/groups ‘tend to compare themselves positively with contrasting groups and that they do this by selecting dimensions of comparison on which they will fare well’ (Billig, 1995: 66). He suggests that this might be done through the construction and re-presentation of ‘flattering stereotypes of themselves and demeaning stereotypes of other nations’ with which they compare themselves. This aids their maintenance of the ‘positive self-image’. Hogg & Abrams claim to base their work on that of Tajfel (1982). They cite him at length in their examination of stereotyping, observing that:

1. people show an easy readiness to characterise vast human groups in terms of a few fairly crude common attributes, that is stereotypes;
2. such stereotypes possess a kind of inertia in that they are very slow to change and such change when it does come is in response to social, political or economic changes;
3. stereotypes are learnt at a very young age (even before a child has clear knowledge about the group to which the stereotype refers);
4. stereotypes become more pronounced and hostile when social tensions arise between groups;
5. stereotypes do not present much of a problem when hostility is involved.

(Tajfel in Hogg & Abrams, 1988: 67)

Hogg & Abrams build on Tajfel’s work, stating that stereotypes serve both individual and social functions. For the individual, stereotypes make for a well-differentiated and
sharply focused world; they also lend themselves to a relatively positive self-
evaluation. Socially, a stereotype’s functions are:

~ Social causality - providing explanation for widespread and distressing social or
physical events, i.e. as a form of scapegoating;

~ Social justification - thus allowing for the rationalisation or justification for the
treatment of social groups;

~ Social differentiation - enhancing the accentuation and clarification of differences
between social groups.

(Hogg & Abrams, 1988: 77)

Stereotypes present crude generalisations of the supposed national character of a
respective nation. While such images are potent and prevalent, there cannot rationally
be a ‘specific’ national character because this ‘inconceivably assumes a single generic
blueprint radically different to that of other nations, or a set of traumatic historical
experiences that affected the whole nation uniformly’ (Cohen, 1994: 192). In fact, the
layer of social identity/habitus forming the national character, as a social construction,
is ‘like a language both hard and tough, but also flexible and far from immutable’
(Elias, 1991: 210). Being as it is in this state of flux, the assumption of a standardised
national character is, sociologically, rather facile. Yet, this still has a function in the
culture of a nation, and plays a powerful role in the construction and maintenance of
national identities, particularly in media-sport discourse. Stereotypes of national
character fail to consider the individuality of each human personality, and the
multiple identities that the individual is comprised of. Nevertheless, perceptions of
national characters, both of ‘them’ and ‘us’, are very much in evidence in present
society.

Bloom (1990), like Hogg & Abrams, works in the field of social psychology.
Although he is less concerned with the ‘us’ encountering ‘them’ equation, Bloom still
makes a useful contribution to understanding the concept of national identity,
especially with reference to the assertion of one's own personal identity within society. Bloom (1990: 4) addresses the 'deep psychological relationship between an individual and his/her social environment' in seeking to answer why individuals and mass national populations give their loyalty to the nation; the structure and dynamics of their psychological attachment and how that attachment is evoked. Bloom refers to Daniel Katz's essay on 'Nationalism and International Conflict Resolution', citing four latent forces within the individual that can be aroused, or appealed to, so that the individual assumes their role as a member of the national group, thereby acknowledging their national identity. It is through such recognition that Gellner (1983) claims that the nation maketh man. Yet, as was contended earlier, people also contribute to and so make the nation through the construction and maintenance of the national culture.

Firstly, there is the notion of an emotional and behavioural conditioning to national symbols, namely the flag, national anthem and head of state. This echoes the work of Hobsbawm, although he used the term 'emblem' rather than 'head of state'. Conditioning is the idea of the socialising processes in operation from infancy and throughout adulthood, which familiarise and channel individuals towards a sentimental attachment to such symbols that are the signifiers of the nation. Secondly, there is supposed to be a sense of the individual self as a national. The individual perceives their self as being of a particular nationality: a condition of 'consciousness' that is highlighted by Gellner. This occurs essentially through education: learning about a common history, about common traditions and culture, significantly in contrast to that of others.

Next, Bloom looks at Katz's notion of a compensatory and defensive identification with militant nationalism, based, it is claimed, on the individual's
attempts to solve their own insecurities. The last proposed dormant stimulus is a will for an instrumental involvement in the nation that acknowledges the potential results of rejecting the nation, these being imprisonment, exile or ostracism (Bloom, 1990: 20). Similarly, Elias has warned that 'to cast doubt on the common belief in one's own sovereign collectivity as a high, if not the highest possible value - means deviancy, a breach of trust: it can lead one to become an ostracised outsider' (Elias, 1996: 146).

For Bloom (1990: 52):

National identity describes the condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols - have internalised the symbols of the nation - so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of the enhancement of, the symbols of national identity.

Here we can note references to the identification of national symbols, as considered by Hobsbawm, and the psychological dimension of national identity, which echoes both Guibernau and Hogg & Abrams. There is also the inference that a group will assert itself and its (national) identity when under a perceived threat. This intimates that a nation will react when in confrontation with otherness, i.e. when 'we' are met with 'them'.

The work of Elias on established-outsider relations, which sought to develop a model of investigating power differences or 'ratios' between social (including national) groups, is particularly useful here. Indeed, it was in his introduction to The Established and Outsiders (Elias & Scotson, 1994) that Elias made some of his most incisive observations on the issues of identity and national character. However, works such as the Society of Individuals (1991) and, in particular, The Germans (1996), are where these links were most fully substantiated. These will now be addressed.
5. Towards a Process-Sociological Approach

Elias has contributed extensively to the literature attempting to cast light on the concept of national identity. The core of Elias' sociology lies in his studies of the 'civilising process'. However, he extended his perspective in relation to a variety of other central sociological concerns. 'Extensions' of his process sociology include 'a challenging understanding of the sociology of knowledge, sport and leisure and community relations' (van Krieken, 1998: 135). While his thinking on the sociology of knowledge underpins the methodology of this study (see Chapter 2), Elias' writing on sport and community relations is also of great value in our quest towards a better understanding of national identity and identity politics more broadly. The contribution of subsequent exponents of a process-sociological approach also cannot be underestimated (for example: Dunning, 1986, 1992, 1999; Maguire, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1999; Maguire & Tuck, 1997, 1998; Tuck, 1996, 1999; Maguire & Poulton, 1997, 1999; Murphy, Sheard & Waddington, 2000). Although Elias has already been cited on several occasions, a more focused exploration of his work is warranted.

Arguably, the central component of Elias' approach to sociological inquiry is the concept of 'figurations' or as he defined it, networks of mutually orientated and dependent people (Elias, 1994: 213). He maintained that humans are essentially 'social' and as such, we can only be understood in terms of interdependencies with each other, and the figurational dynamics that are involved in the relations within and between social groups (Elias, 1978, 1991). It is within these groups, such as a nation, that we develop, over time, a socially constructed habitus, or 'second nature'. This structures our individual personality and identity, but also our social identity. Let us unpack this.
Elias emphasised the plural character of an individual's identity, observing how many layers are interwoven in the social habitus of a person (Elias, 1991: 83). These over-lapping affiliations form the flexible latticework of the habitus of a person (Maguire & Poulton, 1999: 19). Elias (1996: 153) suggests that 'an individual does not only have an ego-image and an ego-ideal, but also a we-image and a we-ideal and how the image of this 'we' forms an integral part of the personality organisation of the individual who... uses the pronouns 'I' and 'we' with reference to him or herself'. As he explains in earlier writings:

The I-we identity... forms an integral part of the social habitus of a person, and as such is open to individualization. This identity represents the answer to the question 'Who am I?', both as a social and as an individual being (Elias, 1991: 183).

As argued from the outset of this chapter, of the social sources of worth, the most potent of an individual's I/we identities is that associated with the nation. Elias (1996: 352) observed how, 'nations in their relationship to one another, in their rank order, appear to have become the dominant and most powerful of all these supra-national influences on people's feelings of meaning and value'. Although often taken for granted, our national identity has special prominence because one's nationality constitutes membership of a social survival group and so there is a stronger identification bond. Elias points out that 'the traits of national group identity - what we call the 'national character' - are a layer of the social habitus built very deeply and firmly in the personality structure of the individual' (Elias, 1991: 209). In this way, the 'we-image' of a nation is also constitutive of a person's self-image (Elias, 1996: 151). This notion runs counter to conventional notions of the individual, the nation, and 'national character', which conceptionalises them as if they are separate entities.
The means by which a sub-conscious knowledge of the national character becomes instilled in an individual, as a construct of the we-identity, is socialisation, the subtle learning processes of familiarisation previously discussed in relation to Hobsbawm and Billig's writings. Discursive practices and taken-for-granted, unnoticed practical actions, both of which have an unacknowledged affective component, bind us to a specific I/we identity. Elias maintains the state education system in particular, is responsible for deepening and consolidating the we-feeling based exclusively on the national tradition (Elias & Scotson, 1994: 210). This can be seen for example, in the focus on a nation's own past in the teaching of history, a feature of many national school syllabuses; and also in the teaching of the more abstract myths and legends of a nation, like that of St George and the Dragon.

In this way, the emotional bonds that individuals form with each other can constitute, as one of their levels, 'sleeping memories', which tend to crystallise and become organised around common symbols - national sports teams being one example - that powerfully reinforce the notion of I/we relations and become the focus for a common belief system (Maguire & Poulton, 1999: 19). 'We' learn about 'our' history and 'our' ancestors. 'We' learn about the foundations on which 'our' society is born. We do this via national habitus codes (Maguire & Poulton, 1999; Maguire, 1999). Habitus codes can be understood as 'codes of being' that are built around a core of significations, which help us to know who we are, how to think, how to feel and how to behave. In other words, these properties or qualities shape and represent our embodied feelings and discursive practices Maguire & Poulton, 1999). These elements play a powerful role both in the foundation of cultural relations, identity politics, and in the construction and maintenance of a national identity (Maguire &
Poulton, 1999). As such, habitus codes often find expression in media discourse, which frequently frames vivid contests between 'us' and 'them'.

National habitus codes and, therefore, the processes of national habitus/character formation involve both interdependent ways of knowing that Giddens (1994: 41-44) has termed 'practical' and 'discursive' consciousness (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). The level of practical consciousness involves everyday actions that have been 'learned' through the subtle processes of socialisation and are therefore intuitively performed. This would include the more taken-for-granted, unnoticed activities that Billig (1995) referred to as 'banal nationalism'. These activities find expression in and are influenced by the two-way traffic conducted with an individual's discursive consciousness: those actions that result from the cognitively based decision-making of an individual, such as the chanting of overtly nationalistic slogans, or the production and consumption of media-sport.

By studying media-sport discourse, aspects of the processes through which national habitus/character construction is framed, constructed and represented by and through discursive practices can become more evident. The discursive practices of media-sport, for example, present us with a set of consciously created images, histories and symbols (or habitus codes) that confer meaning on what it is to be part of the nation. These are interwoven with the activities of spectators and supporters that occur at the level of practical consciousness, involving unnoted activities that reflect deeply rooted memories. Such practices and the symbols and 'sleeping memories' of the nation often go unremarked, yet they powerfully reinforce the notion of I/we relations and represent part of the group's collective shared stock of knowledge (Maguire, 1999).
As Maguire & Poulton (1999) and Maguire et al. (1999a, 1999b) have contended, whilst the concepts of invented tradition and imagined communities are fruitful in explaining European identity politics, such concepts only appear to be dealing with the level of 'discursive consciousness'. This ignores the level of practical consciousness and overlooks the interplay between the two, which it is suggested, is crucial to understanding national identity construction and representation and, in turn, identity politics. I/we habitus codes, then, give people a real sense of self and a we-group identity.

Elias also looked to the past to chart and attempt to comprehend the sociogenesis of national character and identity. In his study of The Germans, Elias (1996) analysed how processes of civilisation and decivilisation inter-relate with the long-term development of a nation-state and the habitus of its members. His over-riding question concerned the what led to the breakdown of civilisation that gave rise to and then helped to perpetuate Hitler's Nazi regime. Specifically, this was 'how the fortunes of a nation over the centuries become sedimented into the habitus of its individual members' (Elias, 1996: 19). With a national history marked by resounding defeats and disgrace, most recently in the two great conflagrations of the twentieth century, he found the Germans to be fearful and anxious about their nation's 'worth'. He observed:

[T]he cumulative effect of Germany's disturbed history – a history marked in the long-term by defeats and consequent power losses, and which gave rise correspondingly to a broken national pride, a national identity very uncertain of itself, a backward-looking national ideal which involved the projection of a fantasy picture of a greater past into the future – facilitated the emergence of a particularly malignant variant of beliefs and behavioural tendencies which also arose elsewhere (Elias, 1996: 329).

The effects of this are manifest in contemporary German society in the personality-structures, conscience-formation and codes of behaviour of German citizens, whose
actions remake the national habitus anew. This has significant ramifications since the we-image of a nation is also a constituent of a person’s self-image.

The observations that Elias made about the German nation can also be applied to the Anglo-British, i.e. the English nation within the framework of British identity politics. Just as Germany became a nation vanquished in 1918 and again during the mid-twentieth century, the fortunes of the Anglo-British have also changed dramatically over the last century. Having once enjoyed political, military, economic, as well as sporting success, with a global Empire as ‘Britannia Ruled the Waves’, the loss of the Empire instigated significant change. Britain’s economic and political status has gradually diminished. Ironically, the advent of the EU has emphasised the newly powerful position of a unified German state, relative to a weakened Anglo-Britain. While Germany, along with France, is the dominant force within the EU, many Britons, resentful of Germany’s pole position, appear to remain anxious about any further loss of national sovereignty. Again, the fortunes of the nation manifest themselves within the habitus of its people. Thus, the events that have befallen Anglo-Britain and Germany during the twentieth century are crucially important to their citizens today, as the ‘image’ that the nation possesses is also constitutive of a person’s self-image (Maguire et al., 1999b: 64). Many English people are also struggling to come to terms with Scottish and Welsh devolution within the UK. This has occurred at a time when the British (and arguably the English in particular) are still struggling to come to terms with the loss of the Empire, and are contending with the on going ‘Irish Problem’. Together with the increasingly evident intensification of other globalising trends, there is a prevailing sense of anxiety and dislocation (Hall, 1991), or even ‘crisis of identity’ (Maguire, 1994) among sections of the English.
Elias highlights several issues while addressing the experience of nations with an established superiority which have undergone some form of decline and the likely impact on their identity and national habitus. In one incisive passage, he observes:

A striking example in our time is that of the we-image and we-ideal of once powerful nations whose superiority in relation to others has declined... The radiance of their collective life as a nation has gone; their power superiority in relation to other groups... is irretrievably lost. Yet the dream of their special charisma is kept alive in a variety of ways - through the teaching of history, the old buildings, masterpieces of the nation in the time of its glory, or through new achievements which seemingly confirm the greatness of the past. For a time, the fantasy shield of their imagined charisma as a leading established group may give a declining nation the strength to carry on... But the discrepancy between the actual and imagined position of one's group among others can also entail a mistaken assessment of one's resources and, as a consequence, suggest a group strategy in pursuit of a fantasy image of one's own greatness that may lead to self-destruction... The dreams of nations... are dangerous (Elias, 1994: xliii).

These observations are very useful when considering the national identity and habitus of the English and also the identity politics within which the English are currently embroiled. The Eliasian concepts of 'fantasy shields' and 'imagined charisma' help to explain the existence of a superiority complex, no longer anchored in present realities, of a fallen nation like England that has known power and status in the past. This can engender an unjustified arrogance, born of an inferiority complex, which is often manifested in an ethnic defensiveness/assertiveness and nostalgia for those former times of glory.

The deepening and consolidation of an I/we identification can also be seen as a double-bind cognition/sentiment. On the one hand, the I/we identity enables us to 'share' things in common with others like 'us'. On the other, it acts to separate 'us' from 'them', the 'outsiders'. In this way, the I/we habitus code gives an individual a sense of self, and also a sense of their we-group identity. When confronted with 'outsiders', such codes tend to harden and become more sharply defined. In this
connection, the use of personal pronouns is also of particular interest to Elias. He recognised how their usage becomes socialised into the habitus of an individual, so serving as an identifier regarding who one is and, equally so, who one is not. Consequently, the I/we identity engenders its opposite: them, the others, the 'outsiders'. Elias explains this in national terms by suggesting 'nation(-states) were born in wars and for wars, between established and outsider groups' (Elias, 1991: 207). He elaborated:

Here we find the explanation why, among the various layers of we-identity, the state level of integration today carries special weight and a special emotional charge. The integration plane of the state, more than any other layer of we-identity, has in the consciousness of most members the function of a survival unit, a protection unit on which depends their physical and social security in the conflicts of human groups and in cases of physical catastrophe (Elias, 1991: 208).

Once again we see how a national identity becomes most vivid and often aggressively asserted when confronted with another, as contended by some authors previously discussed (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Cohen, 1993; Cohen, 1994; Billig, 1995 and Guibernau, 1996).

Having reviewed a range of literature on these inter-related concepts it becomes apparent that national character, national culture, national identity and nationalism are distinguishable from each other. National identity, as defined in this study, may share some features of nationalism, but it is not necessarily and inextricably aligned with the fascist, militaristic or imperialistic traits of the latter, nor to any political movement for the exaltation of the political nation-state. Rather, national identity is to be understood as an ideological manifestation of what Billig calls 'banal' nationalism.

In the modern West, national identity can be understood to be the most embracing and significant of a person's multi-layered identities that contribute to the
individual’s social habitus. Furthermore, one has a sense of national identity not simply at an individual level, but also as being part of a social group of similar nationality-sharing others. This I/we identity is essentially an ideological creation: framed, constructed and represented in the context of the national culture. This comprises of a set of images, histories, symbols and invented traditions that confer meaning on what it is to be psychologically and culturally part of the imagined community of the nation. The national culture therefore determines the traits of national character (both one’s own and those of others). These often come close to the stereotype since it is when faced with an alien national culture that one’s own national identity becomes emboldened and asserted. This is a common occurrence in the current climate of globalisation.

6. On Globalisation and ‘Glocal’ Identity Politics

Globalisation can be broadly understood as the intensification of global interconnections and linkages that are a prevalent feature of the world today. Globalising trends are evident in the ever-deepening, ever-increasing multi-directional movements and exchanges or ‘global cultural flows’ of people, capital, goods, customs, practices, food, media, images and ideas. Modern technology is a key factor here and this has helped to re-define concepts of both time and space. Jarvie and Maguire (1994: 230) contend that it is ‘difficult to understand local and national experiences without reference to these global flows’. No facet of socio-cultural life is left untouched by the globalising character of our society.

With this reality come some complex and potentially paradoxical implications in response to the intensification of global relationships in all spheres, brought about by what is experienced as time-spatial compression. Herein lie many debates. Yet as
Maguire (2000) has highlighted, there are several conceptual snares evident in the debates that have been generated by the antagonistic claims of the various competing theoretical traditions. These conflicting traditions include the modernisation perspective, theories of imperialism, dependency theory, world systems theory and process-figurational sociology, which underpins this thesis. Some authors, for example Wallerstein (1974, 1991), Rosenau (1980), and Gilpin (1981) have offered a mono-causal logic to explain the fluid transformation of the existing world order socially, politically, culturally, technologically and economically.

In contrast, the theories of Giddens (1990) and Robertson (1990, 1992) are concerned with multi-causal explanations. These are arguably the most helpful for conceptualising the ‘shrinking’ world and the implications of this, especially with regard to national identities. Robertson (1992) recognises the phenomenon of globalisation as contingent and dialectical, maintaining that no uniform changes or structured responses exist, rather a series of ‘mutually opposed tendencies’. He cites these as being:

- **Universalism versus Particularism**: The commonalties of consumerism and of the nation-state sensitise people to the ‘local’ and instil a sense of place, heimat, thus making vivid, clear differences that may strengthen local (i.e. national) identities. This can lead to the more extreme versions of nationalism.

- **Homogenisation versus Heterogenisation**: There may be a whitewashing effect with the increasing interdependence and exchange of goods, capital, services and labour, especially in the cultural realm, but this may in turn stimulate an assertion and promotion of the diversity to be found between different cultures, societies and nations.

- **Integration versus Fragmentation**: The formation of ‘supra-national communities’, for example the EU, which transcend national borders, unite and integrate people of different nations. However, they can also divide and fragment communities. National and regional divisions of labour may cause diversity internally and the awareness of nationality (national identity) might become more pronounced in spite of moves toward integration as ‘others’ become more proximate.

- **Centralisation versus De-centralisation**: The centralisation of information, knowledge and decision-making/legislative power with the establishment of supranational institutions like the EU can provoke reaction at local/regional level. This occurs as groups try to (re)assert their control over the situation and at a social level, as dissatisfaction with the sense of loss causes grievances that may lead to the mobilisation of social protest movements calling for decentralisation.
• Juxtaposition versus Syncretisation: Time-spatial distanciation forces the commingling of different cultural practices and lifestyles, generating a forum for exchange, i.e. a 'hybridisation' of values and cultures, yet can simultaneously consolidate prejudices and foster the building of (nationally symbolic) barriers.

These binary oppositions can be conceptualised as structuring many of the multi-disciplinary debates that have ensued regarding the possibly unsettling effects of globalising trends on identity politics. These have centred on the nature of globalising processes and their 'contradictory outcome - the tendency towards both a global post-modern culture and simultaneously the resurgence of nationalism, ethnicity and fundamentalism' (Hall in Hall et al., 1992: 9). Guibernau (1996: 134) similarly observes the paradox therein, noting that globalisation:

...has both enabling and constraining capabilities. It constrains national identities by breaking their cultural homogeneity. But at the same time, its enabling capacity not only offers individual cultures the possibility of using new technologies to reproduce themselves, but also opens new channels by which these same cultures can claim the right to survive, develop and flourish.

Maguire (2000), in this connection, has warned against recourse to dichotomous thinking and the tendency to view the processes of globalisation as governed by either the intended or the unintended actions of groups of people. He argues that, 'an either/or resolution of this complex structured process will not do. Put simply, a blend or balance between intended ideological practices and unplanned sets of interdependencies structure globalising process’ (Maguire, 2000: 357).

In light of this situation, Hall (1992) has questioned what is happening to cultural identity and more specifically, how national cultural identities are being affected or displaced by the process of globalisation. His contention is that:

...[E]stablished [national] identities are being challenged as the social world becomes subjected to a 'wider' process of change which is dislocating the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage (Hall et al., 1992: 274).
Apparent challenges to once seemingly 'stable' personal and social (i.e. I/we) identities, and a loss of a sense of self, are characteristic of the structural transformations of globalisation, which can dislodge long-standing notions of, for example, gender, class and nationality. It is these experiences of 'dislocation' that have given rise to the politics of identity. Of all the debated consequences and impacts on identity, three dominant possibilities have emerged. Let us consider these possible scenarios:

1) National identities will be/are being eroded as a result of the growth of cultural homogenisation and also by supranational co-operation at the politico-economic level that challenges national sovereignty. Exponents of cultural imperialism and dependency theories maintain that globalisation processes have led not only to the emergence of a global economy, but also a trans-national culture. People and nation states have become woven together in a tightening and deepening interdependency network. National identities are therefore being weakened or even subsumed. An illustrative example of this is the European Union. The EU has brought many of the nations of Europe together, politically, and economically, at the expense of a loss of sovereignty. 'Euro-sceptics' fear that this could lead to a loss of independence at a cultural level following the EU's objective for an 'ever closer union of the peoples of Europe'. This explains the anti-Europe/Brussels sentiments of some British, particularly English Conservative, politicians. Hall has observed that 'with the relative decline, or erosion, the instability of the nation-state, of the self-sufficiency of national economies and consequently, of national identities as points of reference, there has simultaneously been a fragmentation of collective social identity' (Hall, 1991: 44).
2) National and other 'local' identities (regional or ethnic) are being strengthened in resistance to globalisation. While globalising processes lead, as noted above, to a greater degree of interdependence and also to an increased sense of the world as a whole, this can also lead to a concomitant resurgence of local/national identities (Maguire, 1994). In this way, national identities can be seen as being strengthened in response to globalisation. This can be seen taking place in the European political climate in the late twentieth century and early part of the twenty-first century. As identified above, citizens and politicians of certain member-states are sceptical towards the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and the pledged moves towards ever closer union, fearing a loss of national sovereignty and identity. These moves to supranational politico-economic organisation came in response to the debacle of World War II. Despite the post-war co-operation that gave birth to the EU, memories of the conflict and the alliances involved, as well as enduring animosities from past conflicts, still figure significantly in the constructions and perceptions of 'them' and 'us'. This is the case in England and elsewhere: the rootedness of the ideas which Europeans have about each other is something located very deeply in the soul of the history of myth (Blain et al., 1993: 64). Schlesinger has also hinted at the inherent symbolic boundaries in popular consciousness, which have to date prevented an all-embracing acknowledgement of a European identity or citizenship. He suggests:

The possibility of constructing a European identity within the Community is rather slim, if we take as the model of supra-national identity the continuing powerful appeal of national identity as articulated by the official states of Community Europe. This model will not do, unless we suppose a substantial transfer of affect and identification to the supranational level (Schlesinger, 1994: 322).
Elias (1991: 226) has similarly commented on the greater potency of identification with the nation rather than with recent attempts to construct a European identity:

Think, for example, of the difference in the emotional charge between the statements: 'I am an Englishman', 'I am a Frenchman', 'I am a German' and the statement: 'I am an English, French or German European'. All references to the individual European nation-states have a strong emotive value to the people involved whether positive, negative or ambivalent. Statements like 'I am a European, a Latin American, an Asian' are emotively weak by comparison.

We have noted earlier in the chapter how it can prove difficult for the collective group memories and habitus codes of individuals' fantasy beliefs of the former greatness and superiority of their country to dissipate. Consequently, it may be that the citizens of contemporary European nations/member-states are the first generation who are taking the first tentative steps towards an I/we identification within a 'United States of Europe'. However, it may only be the descendants of these citizens who will actually feel an emotionally stronger I/we European identity than their ancestors currently feel towards Europe. On the other hand, however, the processes of globalisation (including the European dimension) may appear at the moment to be prompting an ethnic assertiveness and defensiveness in favour of national identity. As has been argued elsewhere, European integration at a political level is running ahead of the degree of identification that many, perhaps the majority, of citizens of European nation-states feel towards the notion of being 'European' (Maguire & Poulton, 1999: 19).

The extent to which the recognition and acceptance of a European identity is resisted, and national identity strengthened, and asserted, can vary. In the extreme, the assertion of national identity can be characterised by heterophobia: 'a phenomenon of unease, anxiety, discomfort and a sense of loss of control
commonly experienced when confronted by the unknown’ (Cohen, 1994: 194). Such sentiments have been responsible for ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe, and the re-emergence of neo-fascist social movements in numerous European countries. They are also more characteristic of nationalism as previously defined. As Hall (1993: 26) has noted:

... [W]hen the era of nation-states in globalisation begins to decline, one can see a regression to a very defensive and highly dangerous form of national identity which is driven by a very aggressive form of racism.

Anti-European feeling is prevalent amongst some of the population and politicians in England. Over the last decade, these sentiments have been manifest, at different times, in the Bruges Group (comprised of Thatcherite sympathisers and advisers), and the UK Independence Party and the Referendum Party, both of which contested the 1992 and 1997 General Elections, though they did not obtain substantial votes. Euro-scepticism was fuelled in the mid-1990s by the debate over the EU-vetoed export of British beef. This coincided with another controversy, in this case between the English and Spanish fishing industries and involving fishing quotas, with Brussels appearing to favour the latter.

Of significance to this study is the role of sport in the context of globalisation. Boyle & Haynes (2000: 143) have noted how: ‘With its visibility and focus on symbols, winning, competition, partisan fans – and in team games, the necessity of collective struggle – few other cultural forms lend themselves as easily as sport to being used as an indicator of certain national characteristics and, by extension, of being representative of a national identity’. Consequently, sport may yet prove to be a stumbling block to future European supranational ambition, especially if the governments of nation-states begin to appreciate the emotional hold that sport has
over national populations and its in-built capacity, as Mangan (1996) puts it, for separateness rather than ‘togetherness’.

3) National identities are declining, but also new hybrid identities are being forged.

The third implication for national cultures and identities is that they are being pluralised, with new identities emerging in place of the declining national identities. Hall discusses this possible consequence in the following passage:

One of the things which happens when the nation-state begins to weaken, becoming less convincing and powerful, is that the response seems to go in two ways simultaneously. It goes above the nation-state and it goes below it. It goes global and local in the same moment. Global and local are the two faces of the same movement from one epoch of globalisation, to one which has been dominated by the nation-state, the national economies, the national cultural identities, to something new (Hall, 1991: 27).

Maguire (1994, 1999, 2000) has made similar observations. Though national identities may appear to be threatened or undermined by processes of globalisation, this may be met by a reactionary nascent national defensiveness as if in response to these global trends. Consequently, while we may be witnessing greater interdependence, and an increased awareness of a sense of the world, we are also seeing a resurgence of the local/national.

Maguire (2000) suggests that these consequences of globalisation are in fact ‘two sides of the same coin’. He explains how, ‘People become more attuned to the notion that their local lives, and national ‘place’ of living, are part of a single social space – the globe’ (Maguire, 2000: 356). Maguire (1994, 1999, 2000) maintains that globalisation is best understood as a balance and blend between diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties, a commingling of cultures and attempts by more established groups to control and regulate access to global flows. He illustrates the usefulness of these twin concepts in relation to sport by highlighting what he contends is the
contradictory role that sport plays in globalising processes and national identity-formation:

Though sport has reinforced and reflected a diminishing of contrasts between nations, the close association of sport with national cultures and identities also means that moves towards integration of regions at a political level are being undermined by sport (Maguire, 2000: 367).

However, Maguire astutely observes some indications of countervailing trends. These are manifested in the tentative emergence of a European sports identity, as seen in athletics' World Cup competition, where six geographical areas are represented, and golf's Ryder and Solheim Cups. Emphasising the complex, contradictory nature of globalisation, Maguire warns that, 'As with European integration more generally, however, the sports process occupies contested terrain in which the defensive response of strengthened ethnic identities may yet win out over broader pluralizing global flows' (Maguire, 2000: 367, italics in the original). Consequently, sporting competitions like Euro 96 provide an arena where broader identity politics might be played out. I shall now address the relationship between sport and national identity to determine whether this was the case during Euro 96.

7. On the Relationship between National Identity and Media-Sport

As has already been indicated in this chapter, the sports arena can provide a powerful source for the construction and representation of national identity. Among those who have made a significant contribution to this area of sociological research, yet cannot be fully reviewed here, are: Andrews (1991); Arbera (1993); Bairner (1996); Bale (1996); Jarvie & Walker (1994); Klein (1996); Kruger (1993); MacClancy (1996); Mangan (1996); and Sugden & Bairner (1993). Utilising the work of Hobsbawm (1983), Duke & Crolley (1996: 4) note how 'football captures the
notion of an imaginary community perfectly: it is much easier to imagine the nation and confirm national identity when eleven players are representing the nation in a match against another nation'. Similarly, Critcher (1991: 81) has observed how: 'it is difficult to specify anything, other than war and royalty, which articulates national identity quite so powerfully as the England team competing in the latter stages of a World Cup competition'.

However, as Blain & Boyle (1998: 365) point out, albeit contentiously, 'the full cultural and ideological significance of sport is brought into being only through its mediation on television and in the press' [italics added]. This is observation is controversial, since, by implication, they are denying, for example, the actions and expressions of supporters as a demonstration of the cultural and ideological significance of sport. More particularly then, media-sport is held to play a crucial role in contributing to the national culture through the framing, construction and representation of national identities (Whannel, 1982, 1998a; Blain et al., 1993; Tudor, 1994; Blain & O'Donnell, 1998; Rowe et al., 1998; Maguire, 1993b, 1994, 2000). Rowe et al. (1998: 120) explain how the media have a 'key mythologising role in the symbolic process of nation-making through sport'. Their emphasis is on how media-sport plays upon discursive myths of collectivity and unity that appear to be all-embracing, but are in fact, exclusivist.

This is also a view shared by MacNeill (1996). She claims that ‘sporting spectacles contribute to the legitimization of select elements of a national and highly gendered culture’ (MacNeill, 1996: 104). Yet sport is still widely recognised as being highly effective in contributing to national identity formation (Rowe, 1999: 22). International sport, in particular, has proved to be a successful contributor to a 'largely artificial sense of national belonging and imaginary sense of coherence'
(Whannel, 1983: 105) whereby class, gender, ethnic and regional differences are overlooked. It is through media discourse that one's own collective national identity is promoted, and those of others are derided, as nation competes against nation. Jhally (1989: 84) explains how:

... '[W]e' are separated from 'them', the foreigners, through the use of stereotypical representations. 'They' are different from 'us' culturally and psychologically... '[W]e', who are separated from them, are drawn together under the mythical sign of the 'nation'.

Global sport can therefore provide an arena for the perpetuation of established-outsider relations, often aided by the propagation of personal pronouns adopted to emphasise the difference between 'us' and 'them'. Indeed Elias (1996: 23) has suggested that international sporting contests have come to serve as 'symbolic representations of a non-violent, non-military form of competition between states'. Consequently, sporting success or defeat has come to be seen as indicative of a nation's superiority or inferiority in the broader, global scheme of things and so is seen to reflect a nation's standing in the world hierarchy of states.

In this connection, Holt (1989: 230) has observed how sport has acted symbolically as a 'vitally important channel for [a] sense of collective resentment'. Historical or contemporary rivalries and hostilities often find expression in sporting contests, as framed by the media, providing nations with an accessible arena, outside of the political domain, to 'settle scores'. As Bromberger (1994: 284) observes: 'every match between rival towns, regions and countries takes the form of ritualised war, complete with anthem, military fanfares and banners wielded by fans who form the support divisions'. In this way, sport can express and even reinforce international divisions and tensions. Witness the way in which sporting competition between the USA and the former Soviet Union became an adjunct to the economic, political and
military rivalry of the superpowers during the Cold War (Guttmann, 1992: 85-102). The importance of sporting dominance can also be recognised today as having similar significance.

This can be seen within Europe with nations like England/Britain struggling to come to terms with European integration, and resenting Franco-German domination from Brussels. England’s lack of sporting success in recent times has combined with a general sense of dislocation that is due to numerous factors. Maguire & Tuck (1998) have suggested that the mid/late 1990s was a particularly interesting historical ‘moment’ to be studying ‘British’ national culture and identity, since Anglo-Britain was then and still is languishing in a ‘crisis of identity’ due to the four inter-related developments touched upon above.

Firstly, Britain seems to still be haunted by the incubus of her imperial past and the loss of the Empire. The consequential processes of inward and outward migration that have transformed Britain into a multi-cultural society do not help this. While the English attempt to come to terms with this, they also face the re-assertion of Scottish and Welsh national identities with calls for the devolution of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom and an escalation of the ‘Irish Problem’. Furthermore, moves towards European integration, with proposals for a single currency, have confirmed the fears of some over the loss of national sovereignty. These factors have been accentuated by the intensification of other globalising trends that have given rise to the sense of anxiety and dislocation referred to by Hall. This has not sat comfortably with defeats on the sports field, perceived by some as the last remaining cultural realm in which to salvage some national pride. As Maguire (1994: 415) explains:
The loss of positions of power in sporting politics coincides with the decline in global political terms... perhaps it is less surprising to observe that, in some societies, nostalgic resistance to global processes has grown more intense. In the identity politics of modern Britain, the fragile male 'Little Englander' wrestles with more fluid, more pluralistic, and less male-defined global identities.

Through a study of political and sporting discourse in the English media during the early nineties, Maguire was able to identify characteristics particular to the time of the regular defeats in specific national team sports, and to juxtaposition these with the dislocating experience engendered by globalisation and the politico-economic climate. Maguire (1994: 410) noted in this connection a:

... sense of national angst, malaise, and a longing for some mythical age and what might be termed 'homefulness'. Underpinning the construction and representation of national identities is a sense of nostalgia that is engendered, represented, and embodied.

This sense of 'wilful nostalgia' – a concept borrowed from Robertson (1990)¹ – is linked to a sense of melancholy, engendering a longing for a time, a place or, sometimes, a person (Maguire, 1999). As such, it is recognised as possessing several dimensions. These can be found in media-sport coverage. According to Maguire (1994: 413), this is characterised by:

i. a sense of historical decline or loss, a departure from some mythical golden age of 'homefulness'

ii. a sense of absence or loss of personal wholeness or moral certainty

iii. a concomitant sense of loss of individual freedom, autonomy and personal authenticity (for example, manifest in the perceived threats of European integration to national sovereignty and the liberties of the 'free born' English)

iv. a perceived and actual loss of rural life, traditional stability and cultural integration

These features of wilful nostalgia relate to Elias' (1994) observation about how generations, long after the decline of their empires, find it difficult to rid themselves of
a habitus of established superiority. This frequently manifests itself as a superiority complex, born in fact of an inferiority complex and sense of self-aggrandisement. Such nostalgic discourse was evident prior to and during Euro 96. Chapter 3 details how the English media attempted to evoke glorious images of 1966 when England hosted, and then won, football’s World Cup; a feat the media evidently hoped might be repeated as England played host to the European Championship exactly thirty years on. As Maguire (1994: 282) has noted, ‘English sporting success, increasingly an infrequent occurrence, has the propensity to restore, however superficially, a symbolic sense of stability’. Achieving success at Euro 96 was therefore particularly significant.

The contention here is that sport is a crucial component in ‘keeping alive’ nations’ dreams of their special charisma. The importance of sport in the construction and confirmation of national identity has already been established in this review of literature. This thesis argues that international sporting contests can reawaken the ‘sleeping memories’ that are a feature of a person’s national habitus, sedimented deep in a form of collective national ‘memory bank’. Sporting success can facilitate the enhancement of the ‘fantasy shield’ of peoples’ ‘imagined charisma’. For example, the long-standing political and military rivalry that exists between England and Germany makes sporting confrontations between the two nations - as was the case in Euro 96 - particularly potent occasions. This is reflected in and reinforced by the way the media structure their representation and re-presentation of the events, as will be illustrated in the content analysis of the media coverage of Euro 96.

Various techniques are adopted by the media in the framing, construction and representation of national identity during the reporting of sporting contests. These were prevalent in the Euro 96 coverage, as will be demonstrated in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Regular reference to war and the deployment of militaristic imagery is one such
technique. Blain & O'Donnell (1998: 46) have indicated the irony that surrounds the British media's apparent 'iconography' of World War II, which, they claim, 'constantly suggests, though not intentionally, that British greatness can only be conceived retrospectively'.

Another common media technique is the use of personal pronouns, identified by Elias as part of the construction of social identities, particularly with reference to 'us'. In this connection, the particular treatment of other nations, the opposition, is paramount to the assertion of one's own national identity in support of the national team. As Clarke & Clarke (1982: 66) note: 'sporting competition is invested with, and helps to keep in circulation, a whole repertoire of national and racial mythologies - myths of 'their' strangeness, difference, peculiarity, which help to reinforce the ethnocentrism of our own culture'. Emphasis is placed on 'otherness' with national identities often constructed on the basis of derogatory stereotypes drawn from a wealth of such images within the national culture. This is a tactic frequently employed by the tabloids, which frame these salient perceptions of the national character of opposing nations. Blain et al. (1993: 59) comment on how:

The Sun's [and other tabloids] history of abuse of other nationals is notorious - Italians are 'Wops' and German's are 'Krauts' and so on - but what is interesting about it are those features which are typical of certain myths and ideologies operative in English society, rather than their exaggeration in this one newspaper.

It is appropriate at this juncture to engage with the important contributions that Tudor (1992), Blain et al. (1993), O'Donnell (1994) and Blain & O'Donnell (1998) have made to research examining national identity and media-sport, especially since the latter two studies also consider Euro 96. While the process-sociological perspective and analysis characterising the theoretical framework of this thesis offers an essentially different approach to understanding this relationship, there are some
interesting comparisons and similar findings to be found in the work of these other researchers. For example, Blain & O'Donnell (1998: 40) rightly point out that ‘the semiological relationship between sport and culture is different in the UK from the equivalent continental Europe relationships’, in so far as it is constructed and represented in the sports press. Whannel (1998a) also points to what he claims are the ‘peculiarities of the British’ in this regard. His emphasis is on the ‘symbolic practices’ that the media engage in as part of the ‘constant marking and remarking of difference’ between ‘imagined communities’ (Whannel, 1998a: 29).

Furthermore, it is agreed that sport operates, as Blain & O'Donnell (1998) contend, in a ‘chiefly symbolic fashion’, as far as can be determined from the analysis of a country like Germany (see Maguire et al., 1999a, 1999b). Whereas in England, ‘it is made to bear, more precisely, an indexical relationship: it is metonymic rather than metaphorical’ (Blain & O'Donnell, 1998: 40). By which they mean, to cite their own illustrative example, ‘a German football performance is felt to be truly an aspect of a wider German identity which has to do with organization, energy, commitment and aggression’ (Blain & O'Donnell, 1998: 43). This claim is made on the basis of their research findings to date, from which they have identified three kinds of relationship between football and society, as mediated by the press of numerous European countries. Blain and O'Donnell suggest that football is a ‘sign of society’ in all of the continental European newspapers studied (including those of France, Germany and Spain), with the notable exceptions of Portugal and England. In these nations, football is an ‘extension of society’. They explain:

Portugal and Britain/England are without doubt the two European countries with the worst post-imperialist hangovers in Europe, and the ones where political and economic modernity – for quite different reasons – are least well developed. The most striking aspect of this relationship is an almost total failure to dislocate football and history… [A] failure of the football team is synonymous with a failure of society itself.
Finally, they claim that in Scotland, football is a ‘simulacrum of society’ as the nation adjusts to constitutional developments.

However, while Blain and O’Donnell hypothesise that the relationship between sport and culture/national identity is indicative of the level of politico-economic modernity that the country in question has reached, the emphasis in this thesis is less on the modernity/post-modernity debate. Instead, there is a deeper level of analysis that focuses on issues concerning the deeper-seated national habitus codes, and ‘sleeping memories’. These are re-awakened by contemporary identity politics, especially during times of international sports competition. Such memories, as Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will testify, were evoked in the English media coverage of Euro 96.

In this connection, the ‘fantasy shields’ of a nation’s ‘imagined charisma’ are also writ large in media-sport discourse in a country like England, suffering as Blain and O’Donnell rightly point out from a ‘post-imperialist hangover’. This is in marked contrast to Germany, a country positively blossoming – as many Britons perceive it – in the contemporary politico-economic, as well as sporting, world. These present day realities once again jolted fantasy images of the past when the England football team came face to face with Germany during Euro 96.

Garland & Rowe (1996) have also undertaken an examination of the press coverage of Euro 96. They adopt a socio-legal approach in order to offer observations on the consequences of the press coverage for public order. They state that ‘the xenophobia in abundant evidence in the coverage of Euro 96 cannot be dismissed as simply the product of a sensationalist and vulgar press’ (Garland & Rowe, 1996: 21). Instead, they argue that the political context of Britain’s relationship with the European Union in the 1990s reinforced the xenophobia found in the newspapers.
These are astute observations. Indeed, similar conclusions are made in this study. However, like Blain & O'Donnell (1998) and Whannel (1998a), Garland & Rowe fail to consider the long-term factors that have contributed to their contemporary identity politics.

The process-sociological perspective underpinning this thesis is advantageous here in the way it takes a developmental approach, informing us of the socio-genesis of habitus codes. This in turn aids our understanding of the relationship between national identity and media-sport. Such an approach arguably offers a much broader and deeper insight into the problematic in question. Consequently, the framework for analysis presented here and in previous collaborative work (Maguire & Poulton, 1999; Maguire et al., 1999a, 1999b) should be seen as complementing aspects of the work of Blain & O'Donnell, Garland & Rowe, and Whannel. The intention is that it will also provide a framework for the future study of the role of the media in the relationship between sport and national identity, both in Britain, Europe and also in more global terms.

8. Concluding Remarks

This chapter began with the adoption of Rossbach's (1986) proposed approach towards an understanding of national identity. This involved attempting to distinguish between and define the inter-related concepts of the nation, national character, national culture, and nationalism and, of course, national identity. This objective was achieved through reference to a range of pertinent existing literature, most notably the work of Billig (1995), Anderson (1983) and Hobsbawm (1983). The work of the latter two in particular has been widely acclaimed. However, it was argued that, while their respective concepts of imagined communities and invented
tradition are very useful to this study, they are somewhat limited. This is due to the
failure of their authors to acknowledge the level of practical consciousness, and its
interplay with the discursive level.

This led on to a discussion of the writings of Elias, which provide the main
element of the theoretical framework of the study. Firstly, Elias' stress upon the
plurality and multi-levelled character of an individual's social identity was discussed,
together with how a person possesses both an 'I' and 'we' image. Elias (1991, 1994,
1996) suggests that, in present-day nation-states, the we-identity of the nation is
arguably invested with the greatest sense of worth. This I/we national identity serves
as a double-bind cognition. While it allows 'us' to feel part of a united social
grouping, it also helps to accentuate a sense of other, alien groups. This is what Elias
(1991) referred to in his theorisation of established-outsider relations. The habitus of
one's own established group appears innate and natural, so rendering another group's
difference equally innate, but abnormal (Mennell, 1994).

In the Eliasian section, the processes of national habitus/character formation
were also outlined. In his analysis of the Germans, Elias (1996: 151) contended that
'the fortunes of the nation become sedimented as part of the national habitus of its
people'. Following on from previous collaborative work (Maguire & Poulton, 1999;
Maguire et al., 1999a, 1999b), it was suggested that Elias' work on the German
nation could be applied to the English. The contention is that Anglo-Britain is
suffering from the allusions to its former greatness that are perpetuated by fantasy
shields. The nation's dreams of its 'special charisma', which help to camouflage
insecurities about its real status, can often manifest themselves in nostalgia and an
ethnic defensiveness/assertiveness that find expression via national habitus codes.
Having addressed the nature of globalisation and some of the mono- and multi-causal explanations of the impact it may be having on national identities, the chapter moved on to consider the relationship between the national identity and media-sport. The literature referred to suggested a strong correlation between national identity and sport, with the latter helping to promote a sense of coherence and unity during international contests (Whannel, 1992, 1998a; Blain et al., 1993; Maguire, 1994; Blain & O'Donnell, 1998; Rowe et al., 1998). These contests are seen as a form of ritualised war, serving as symbolic representations of inter-state competition (Elias, 1996). However, it is the media's framing of such competition that vividly brings into being the cultural and ideological significance of sport (Blain & O'Donnell, 1998). Using a variety of techniques and production codes, media-sport contributes to the formation of a series of 'I/we' (Elias, 1991, 1994) and 'us/them' identities at a national level (Tudor, 1992; Blain et al., 1993; Blain & O'Donnell, 1998; Rowe et al., 1998).

In this way, media-sport has the ideological power to both represent and re-present the nation through the employment of various production codes and processes. In some extreme cases, such media discourse appears to mobilise, through the use of certain habitus codes that involve an interplay between the levels of practical and discursive consciousness, a highly visible context for a contest between 'us' and 'them' (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). The contextual background to Euro 96 is discussed in Chapter 3. Firstly, however, the methodological basis of this thesis must be outlined.

Notes
1. It is not entirely clear why Robertson (1990) uses the term 'wilful'. It may be used in the sense that there is a conscious (i.e. willed) promotion of nostalgia. It could also be interpreted as wilful in the sense of being experienced despite an individual's recognition that it relates to a mythical past, therefore implying a wilful self-deception.
CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES, APPROACHES AND CONCERNS

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I seek to outline and discuss the range of methodological issues, approaches and concerns of the research strategy and processes that underpin this investigation into national identity and media-sport. In order to explore the different components and foci of the research, a theoretical explanation of what methods and techniques are most appropriate and valid to generate and justify the knowledge sought, is offered.

Initially, the competing qualitative and quantitative research paradigms will be identified and consideration will be given to a selection of key epistemological and ontological concerns pertinent to this investigation. In the next section, I shall explore the process of designing an appropriate research strategy to investigate the chosen problematic. In the last two sections, I will focus on the actual methods that were used in the course of the empirical research. In the first of these, I shall consider the use of interviews as a means of investigating the intended production codes of media personnel with regard to their reporting of Euro 96. In the final section, I shall then introduce the strategies employed in the content analysis of the actual media coverage of the tournament.

2. Methodological Issues: Competing Research Paradigms

A discussion of the methodology of a research project can be understood as the philosophical evaluation of the investigative techniques employed and a concern with the conceptual, theoretical and research aspects of knowledge (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989; Ernest, 1994; Flick, 1998). Methodology was a central concern of
Durkheim, Marx and Weber. Each attempted to demonstrate that they had developed a distinctive ontological approach to the study of society that consequently would have epistemological ramifications. By demonstrating the validity of new investigative techniques, they contributed to the development of sociology as a distinctive discipline. Elias continued this tradition through his writings on his theoretical position with regard to understanding the social world and the sociology of knowledge (Elias, 1956, 1978, 1987, 1991).

A central methodological concern in the field of sociology has been a comparison between the discipline and the natural sciences. What is broadly termed 'natural science' is often associated with quantitative research methods, whereby an independent variable is manipulated in a carefully controlled experiment. If consistent results are obtained, the scientist may draw conclusions about the causes and effects involved, or conclude that a previously made hypothesis is confirmed or denied. In this way, the 'positivist' paradigm is often associated with the quest for the truth and an understanding of reality as something that can be studied and is entirely measurable and quantifiable.

Since this positivist approach is usually inapplicable in the social sciences, sociologists have developed new techniques to achieve a degree of relative validity that corresponds to that of the natural sciences. More specifically, they have sought to develop methods that do not seek to emulate the natural science goal of scientific laws of ultimate objectivity, but methods which are more appropriate to the nature of social reality (Smith, 1989; Guba, 1990; Flick, 1998). The outcome of this has been the development of qualitative research that in effect forms a critique of positivist thought. Whilst the provision of a comprehensive discussion of the long-standing gladiatorial paradigm debate may not be necessary in this context, it is important to address the differences between the interpretative and positivist paradigms, since this research
project uses the associated research methods of both approaches. The cause of contention essentially stems from the 'qualitative versus quantitative debate'.

2i. The 'Qualitative versus Quantitative' Debate

Quantitative research in sociology is associated with the scientific paradigm that takes what has come to be called a 'positivist' or 'neo-positivist' line. The overriding concerns of this approach are: objectivity; prediction; replicability; and the discovery of scientific generalisations or laws describing the phenomena in question (Sparkes, 1992; Ernest, 1994). Flick (1998: 3) explains how these guiding principles of positivist research have been generally used: to clearly isolate causes and effects; to properly operationalise theoretical relations; to measure and quantify phenomena; and to create research designs allowing the generalisation of findings to formulate general laws.

Certain aspects of quantitative research are applicable to a sociologically based inquiry such as the present study. For example, the measuring and quantification of phenomena are useful to a degree in the content analysis of media texts: particular discourse variables can be indexed according to their frequency and distribution. However, more suitable for the study of social relations, owing to the fact of the plurality of life-worlds, is qualitative research (Flick, 1998).

Qualitative research is attributed to and utilised by the paradigms of critical theory and interpretivism. A particular strength of qualitative research is sensitivity to individuals and their responses within particular contexts (Smith, 1989; Guba, 1990; Sparkes, 1992; Mason, 1996; Flick, 1998). This can be seen in the main concerns of the approach that, according to Ernest (1994) are those of human understanding; interpretation; inter-subjectivity and 'lived truth'. The latter expresses a concern within qualitative research, that it is the social construction of what people come to
understand as reality, and, the inter-active role of the researcher within the research process that is vital. A qualitative researcher approaches ‘reality’ as something that can never be entirely captured or understood in every detail. Further to this, the researcher is sensitive to their role and conscious of how their life-histories and identities, as well as those of the people under investigation can shape and influence the research findings (Sparkes, 1992; Ernest, 1994; Flick, 1998). This takes into account the humanistic aspect of research and acknowledges the potential for bias, or error, in the research process. Smith (1989: 157) acknowledges how:

An interpretative researcher cannot come to a study with a pre-established set of neutral procedures but can only choose to do some things as opposed to others based on what seems reasonable, given his or her interests and purposes, the context of the situation, and so on.

In this way, qualitative research can be more openly viewed as a ‘value-laden’ form of inquiry, while positivistic research is overtly ‘value-free’ in its designs to be completely objective in measuring the cause and the effect. Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 3) present a neat summation of the complex, multi-disciplinary nature of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings of individuals’ lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand.

Significantly, this passage captures how qualitative research seeks to provide a ‘better fix’ on the subject matter at hand. The objective is to achieve approximations to ‘the truth’ (Elias, 1978) through ‘methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced...; [and] methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and
context’ (Mason, 1996: 4). It is through such a mode of research that the qualitative researcher is able to get a ‘better fix’ on the problematic under investigation, with the aim being to produce generalisable social explanations rather than inflexible answers. Flick (1998) lists the essential features of qualitative research as the:

- **Appropriateness of methods and theories**: The central criteria in qualitative research are whether findings are grounded in empirical material and whether the methods have been appropriately selected and applied to the object under study (Flick, 1998: 5).

- **Perspectives of the participants and their diversity**: It is important within this type of research that the participants’ different knowledge, viewpoints and practices are taken into account because of the different subjective perspectives and social backgrounds related to them (Flick, 1998: 6).

- **Reflexivity of the researcher and the research**: Similarly, the subjectivity of the researcher, as well as those being studied, is part of the research process (Flick, 1998: 6). The researcher must acknowledge their own reflections on their actions, observations, interpretations and experiences during the research. This ‘active reflexivity’ in Eliasian terms, requires the researcher to be less involved and more detached from the subject matter under investigation.

- **Variety of approaches and methods in qualitative research**: Importantly, qualitative research is not based on a unified theoretical or methodological concept (Flick, 1998: 7). Mason (1996) advocates avoiding the ‘pigeon-holing’ of qualitative inquiry and suggests that its strengths actually come from the fact that qualitative research methods are utilised by so many different theoretical perspectives and in a wide variety of ways.

An underlying principle of Flick’s list of essential features is the emphasis on qualitative research as a ‘process’. Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 25) identify five phases integral to any given research process; these being: the researcher as a multi-cultural subject; theoretical paradigms and perspectives; research strategies; methods of data collection and analysis; and finally, the art of interpretation and presentation. These phases will serve as useful points of reference in the next section that outlines the actual research process employed in this study.

It should be noted that ‘qualitative and quantitative research are not incompatible opposites which should not be combined’ (Flick, 1998: 40). Particular research methods are more appropriate for particular lines of inquiry. The interpretative paradigm is especially receptive to the use of qualitative research methods alongside quantitative methods. Consequently, the paradigm is home to many
research traditions (for example: symbolic interactionism; ethnography; hermeneutics; case study; textual analysis and many more). It is therefore acceptable and useful to adopt a multi-disciplinary mode of research. The adoption of a variety of research methods is commonly known as triangulation. This refers to a strategy for cross-referencing evidence and validating results, consequently enriching the research process and in so doing, the knowledge gained from the findings. As Flick (1998: 230) testifies:

Triangulation may be used as an approach for further grounding the knowledge obtained with qualitative methods. Grounding here does not mean to assess results but to systematically extend and complete the possibilities of knowledge production. Triangulation is less a strategy for validating results and procedures than an alternative to validation which increases scope, depth and consistency in methodological proceedings.

Triangulation in a widest sense can also involve 'the combination of different methods, study groups, local and temporal settings, and different theoretical perspectives' (Denzin, 1989: 229). Such options would appear to suit Patton (1990) who advocates flexibility in the design and implementation of empirical research. He suggests:

Rather than believing that one must choose to align with one paradigm or another, I advocate a paradigm of choices. A paradigm of choices rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. The issue then becomes... whether one has made sensible methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated, and the resources available (Patton, 1990: 38-39).

Patton's arguments for flexibility are persuasive. The basis for any empirical research should, he argues, be based on practical need and situational responsiveness, rather than on compatibility with a particular set of methodological assumptions located within a neat paradigmatic position. This is considered by some as unacceptable (for example, Saloman 1991). However, the dismissal of 'paradigm affiliation' (advocated by: Patton, 1990 and Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 1998) represents an altogether more
practical and reflexive approach to the research process. This approach consequently characterises the research strategy employed in this study.

3. Designing an Appropriate Research Strategy

Sociological research should contain some combination of theory and empirical investigation. Maguire (1995) contended that in order to produce a 'balanced' piece of research, there is a need to marry theoretical insight and empirical inquiry. Each of these components is interdependent, allowing for a free transfer of knowledge between them. Central to this is the challenge of the research process. Given this, the next section seeks to review the specific problematic under investigation in this research project and in turn, to explain the strategic planning and design of the research process that were employed. The intention is to demonstrate that the adopted strategy serves as an appropriate base for the analysis of national identity and media-sport.

3i. The Research Problem

The main aim of this research project is to 'make sense' of the dynamic interrelationship between football, national identity and media-sport in contemporary English society. Rowe et al. (1998) have noted how the 'junction' between media-sport and the nation forms the ideal environment for the transmission of a wide variety of ideological messages. The intention is therefore is to explore these rich and fertile ideological messages and identify the dominant meanings that could be associated with them.

More specifically, the problematic involves a consideration of this interrelationship in the context of the 'crisis of identity' concurrently being experienced by Anglo-Britain in the face of the gradual devolution of the UK, and increasing Europeanisation and globalisation processes. Euro 96 was therefore thought to make
for a highly relevant and timely context in which to investigate the construction and representation of national identity by media-sport; as discussed in the next chapter. This was especially true since the tournament pitted the England football team against some of the nation's political and economic rivals, both past and present, and so provided a potential mediated 'hotbed' for the (re)assertion of national identities.

Designed to contribute to and supplement existing literature on the broad subject matter of sport and national identity, this study employs work from the process-figurational perspective (see Chapter 1 for outline of theoretical framework). Furthermore, the research will add more generally to the sociological study of sport, especially with regard to media-sport, particularly in terms of understanding the content and codes of mediated sports texts. In addition, the study will help to shed light on a relatively under-researched aspect of media-sport: that of the production codes associated with the institutions and personnel who create media texts.

3ii. Theoretical Concerns of the Process-Sociological Approach

The broad theoretical framework in the context of this thesis is that of process-sociology. It is therefore necessary to address some of the main ontological and epistemological concerns of Elias' approach since these impact on the methodology employed in the research process. However, the intention is not to force the process-sociological approach into a particular enclave within the paradigmatic debate. Rather, the purpose is to locate the use of the perspective – in terms of its ontology and epistemological position – in and through this study.

Chapter 1 addressed some of the Eliasian concepts pertinent to the theoretical framework of this study, most notably those of habitus and established-outsider relations. In order to explicitly identify aspects of Elias' thinking regarding his theory of knowledge and his understanding of the social world, it is necessary to highlight
certain additional aspects of his work. Van Krieken (1998: 44) assists with this in his review of Elias’ contribution to sociology:

His work consists in large measure of an argument for a particular sociological vocabulary and conceptual framework, which in turn has embedded within it a form of social perception he believed would get closer to the reality of human life. A number of concepts are important here: figuration, process, habitus, civilization, relation, network/web, power-ratio, interdependence, established-outsiders, involvement/detachment, not only in themselves, but also as radical alternatives to the standard concepts used by most sociologists in the second half of the twentieth century.

Put simply, Elias wanted to overhaul the usage of what he considered to be philosophical terms in sociology. What now follows is an introduction to some of the as yet unvisited Eliasian concepts by way of indicating the process-figurational theoretical position on human society and providing an insight into Elias’ theory of knowledge.

There are several major interconnected concepts underlying Elias’ sociological approach that shape his understanding of human society and social relations and also his theory of knowledge. Elias was highly critical of what he saw as oscillating debates in traditional sociology about dichotomies of, for example, agency and structure (Elias, 1978). One of Elias’ main concerns was with individual autonomy and independence. He argued that although societies are made up of individual human beings who engage in intentional action, the combination of human actions often results in consequences which are unplanned and unintended. According to van Krieken (1998: 6), the subsequent task for sociologists is to ‘analyse and explain the mechanics of this transformation of intentional human action into unintended patterns of social life’. This must involve an appreciation of history, since these ‘blind processes’ take place over very long periods of time.

A socio-historical or developmental approach characterises Eliasian sociology. Elias and subsequent subscribers to this perspective (for example, Goudsblom, 1977;
Dunning, 1992, 1999; Mennell, 1989, 1990; Maguire, 1995, 1999) are highly critical of the ‘retreat of sociologists into the present’. Maguire (1995: 7), in his attempt to highlight the ‘common ground’ between sociology and history, called for more historical sensitivity in sociological inquiry. He maintains that:

...in order to understand present social structures and patterns of action, an understanding of the past is not only desirable, it is a necessity. Such an approach would facilitate an analysis of how the present is connected to the past and how exponents of these disciplines need to examine the structured processes within which sport development has occurred. One of the hallmarks of research informed by such a developmental perspective therefore is the extent to which the researcher stresses the ways, and the extent, in which the relation of action and structure is to be understood as a matter of process in time and space.

In terms of research, a necessary starting position from a process-figurational perspective would be that in order to explain the subject under investigation, it is first important to acknowledge the phenomenon as a product of both long-term intended, and unintended, historical processes.

Elias related the principle of unplanned/unintended actions to patterns of interdependence which, he argued, characterise all of human social life: ‘Underlying all intended interactions of human beings is their unintended interdependence’ (Elias, 1969: 143). As was noted in the previous chapter, at the crux of Eliasian thought is the concept of ‘figurations’, his term for a network of interdependent human beings. This conceptualisation was the key to Elias’ thought. Van Krieken (1998: 61) has observed: ‘All of the rest of his theory flowed in one way or another from this starting point’. Rather than seeing human individuals as having an autonomous identity, Elias maintained individuals could only be understood in terms of their interdependencies with each other. Individuals do not interact with others or engage with society in isolation. Society is not something that is separate from the individual or, by implication, ‘out there’ for study in the abstract. Such a sterile concept would be of
the realm of the positivist paradigm. Elias (1978, 1991) contended we are 'social' to our very core: we only exist through our relations with others. It is in these figurations of interdependent individuals and groups that our habitus develops. The relationships between individuals form the interdependencies that are the framework of the figurations that comprise human society. These figurations, like the balance of intended and unintended actions and outcomes, can only be adequately understood processually, over very long periods of time, illustrating the constant process of flux.

These principles form part of Elias' debunking of what he called the *homo clausus*, or 'closed personality' image of humans which emphasises autonomy and independent agency, and the separateness of the individual and society. The alternative that Elias argued for is worth citing at some length. The *homo clausus* model should, he urged (Elias, 1994: 213-4), be replaced with:

...the image of man as an 'open personality' who possesses a greater or lesser degree of relative (but never absolute and total) autonomy vis-à-vis other people who is, in fact, fundamentally orientated toward and dependent on other people throughout his life. The network of interdependencies among human beings is what binds them together. Such interdependencies are the nexus of what is here called the figuration, a structure of mutually oriented and dependent people. Since people are more or less dependent on each other first by nature and then through social learning, through education, socialisation, and socially generated reciprocal needs, they exist, one might venture to say, only as pluralities, only in figurations.

Connected with this is Elias' contention that sociologists should refrain from seeing human social life in terms of states or objects. Instead, social life, and therefore reality, should be understood as 'relational', and in terms of those relations, with an emphasis on their processual character. Consequently, Elias' work should be read as a critique of the *homo clausus* model and the tendency towards Zustandsreduktion (process-reduction) in sociology.

Elias' relational-processual approach is especially important with regard to understanding power, for power, according to Elias (1978: 74), is not a 'thing [to be]
carried about in [one’s] pocket'. Rather we should refer to the ‘relational character of power’ (Elias, 1978: 75) and power itself should be seen in terms of constantly changing power-ratios or ‘shifting balances of tensions’ (Elias, 1994: 145). Elias explained the processual nature of figurations and how these webs of human relations change with the constant (re-)distribution of power through the dynamics of games. He likened being embroiled in a figuration to participation in a game where the actions of individuals are constrained and/or enabled by the planned and unplanned actions or ‘tactics’ made by both their team-mates and opponents. Elias employed a series of ‘game-models’. That is, models of contests, like those of sporting contests. In such a situation, two or more individuals in a competitive nexus test and measure power-ratios between them. These models graphically analyse figurational dynamics.

So far, only the major ontological concerns of Elias have been highlighted. Another key principle of Elias’ approach to sociology, and one which helps to shed light on the epistemological position of the process-sociological perspective, is the problem of ‘the changing equilibria between... involvement and detachment’ (Elias, 1967: 227). Unlike natural science where there is more opportunity for detachment, the fact that social scientists investigate fellow interdependent human beings means that they are part of their object of study. Given this, the social scientist cannot avoid a degree of involvement in their research. In fact, in order to understand social life they have to be involved. As established earlier, social scientific knowledge develops within the social reality it is part of, not independently of it (van Krieken, 1998: 7). Writing on the ‘double-bind’ of the researcher as a social actor, Elias (1956: 234) explained the task they are faced with:
The task of social scientists is to explore, and to make men understand, the patterns they form together, the nature and the changing configuration of all that binds them to each other. The investigators themselves form part of these patterns. They cannot help experiencing them, directly or by identification, as immediate participants within; and the greater the strains and stresses to which they or their groups are exposed, the more difficult it is for them to perform the mental operation, underlying all scientific pursuits, of detaching themselves from their role as immediate participants and from the limited vista it offers.

The social scientist is therefore confronted with an added problem, though some might argue, advantage, when attempting to meet the challenge of combining theoretical insight and empirical inquiry in the quest for verifiable approximations to the ‘truth’. Elias saw this as the pursuit of ‘reality-congruent’ knowledge, with the main challenge being to steer a ship between the traditional dichotomies of scientific objectivity and subjectivity, with potentially value-laden meanings.

This was crucial to Elias’ epistemological position, at the crux of which was his belief that ‘scientists are destroyers of myths’ (Elias, 1978). He went on to explain that:

By factual observation, they endeavour to replace myths, religious ideas, metaphysical speculations and all unproven images of natural processes with theories – testable, verifiable and correctable by factual observation (Elias, 1978: 52).

Significantly, Elias added a qualifier to this by noting that ‘science’s task of hunting down myths and exposing general beliefs as unfounded in fact will never be finally accomplished… [since] people are always turning scientific theories into belief systems’ (Elias, 1978: 52). Therefore, the researcher, be they from the social or natural sciences, can only aim to progress by contributing to the stock of existing knowledge.

There has, however, been some criticism of Elias’ general approach to sociology, especially with regard to how sociological research should be conducted in practice. Van Krieken (1998: 82), for example, contends that:
His essentially Weberian position on scientific 'value-freedom' and his emphasis on 'detachment' regarding the politics and social context of sociological theory and research give us very little purchase on either the rough and tumble of social scientific practice, or the impact and effects on social life of sociology itself.

Similarly, Rojek (1986: 591) has argued that Elias never explicitly told us what constitutes involvement or detachment and provided 'no guidelines, no mechanisms, no drill for attaining detachment'. This, he suggests, is unhelpful to sociologists wishing to practice methodological detachment. Dunning (1992: 254) accepts his observations on the lack of a link between Elias' twin-concepts and the practicalities of social research, commenting that Rojek has: 'correctly identified an area to which figurational sociologists need to devote a great deal more attention'. To date however, this has been largely unforthcoming, apart from some notable exceptions.

Dunning (1992, 1999) has himself offered some thoughts and 'rules' which he understands to be implicit in Elias' teaching and research practice in response to Rojek's charges. Dunning (1999: 243) explains Elias' (1967) empirical approach of a 'detour via detachment' as the way in which a researcher/theorist should attempt to hold his/her passions and emotions momentarily in check in order to maximise the chances that he/she will be able to develop as 'realistic', or better, as reality-congruent picture as possible of the social process(es) in question. This, he suggests, is not out of the ordinary since, 'Research and writing is, in fact, classical detour behaviour. They involve striving momentarily to keep one's passions in check' (Dunning, 1999: 245). The aim, he contends, should be to 'move away from the mainly ideology-derived 'solutions' on which we remain reliant in the social sciences and which, when applied, frequently result in pernicious, disastrous and destructive unintended consequences' (Dunning, 1999: 243). Instead, Dunning (1999: 244) explains how Elias advocated the development in sociology of standards, institutions and modes of proceeding similar to
those of the more successful natural sciences, but moulded to the specific properties of humans and human societies.

Maguire (1988) too has attempted to respond to some of the difficulties that people have when encountering process sociology. Among the issues he addressed, was that of the methodological concerns arising from Elias’ sensitising concepts. He offered some useful preliminary observations in this context, suggesting that ‘being both relatively involved and detached in order to grasp the basic experience of social life... is a question of balance’ (italics in original). He continued by explaining that: ‘The sociologist-as-participant must be able to stand back and become the sociologist-as-observer-and-interpreter’ (Maguire, 1988: 190). A failure to do this reduces what should be a reflexive research process to simple ‘two-way’ traffic between theory/observation or narrative/analysis techniques. This would represent a rather oblique approach to the study of culture. Once again the key to avoiding Zustandsreduktion (process-reduction) is the adoption of a long-term, developmental perspective.

More recently, Waddington (2000) has also stressed the value of striving for the right balance between involvement and detachment when undertaking research, especially that which focuses on sport. Waddington (2000: 4) emphasises the importance of recognising ‘that the relatively high level of emotion which surrounds sporting issues often has the effect of hindering, rather than helping, the development of a more adequate understanding of modern sport, and of the relationships between sport and other aspects of wider society’. This is an important consideration that needs to be adhered to in a research study such as this. By aiming to control one’s emotional involvement with the processes under study, we are more likely to develop a more realistic, or ‘reality-congruent’, analysis of those processes, and therefore more adequate conceptionalisation of our ways of thinking about the world.
Generally, however, those of a process-sociological persuasion have tended to lead by example, rather than offer formal, practical advice, in their interpretation of Elias' guiding epistemological principle (van Krieken, 1998). It is only through a 'detour via detachment' (Elias, 1967) and the practice of 'active reflexivity' that the researcher can employ a more disinterested stance, thus reducing the possibility of bias. In doing so, they strive to attain a higher degree of reality-congruence that, over time, becomes 'more extensive, more correct, and more adequate' (Elias, 1978: 54, italics in original) than previous understandings. It is with this in mind that a research strategy was formulated. This was also informed by previous research into media-sport.

3iii. Media-Sport Research

As was outlined in Chapter 1, Wenner (1998) has highlighted the growing linkages between sport and the mass media which have led to what he considers to be a new form of sports experience, that of 'media-sport'. He breaks the study of media-sport into three broad, but inter-dependent areas, explaining that 'the world of media-sport comes about through the interaction of institutions, texts and audiences' (Wenner, 1998: 8). A prime illustration of this interaction in practice is the revolutionary innovation by BSkyB introduced in August 1999. This brought new interactive technology that allows the audience to view a match from the camera angle of their choice, and call up statistics, or replayed highlights, with a digital satellite remote control handset. The three main areas in the study of media-sport: the production of mediated sport (i.e. by media-sport institutions); the messages or content of mediated sports texts (i.e. media-sport texts per se); and audience interaction with mediated sports texts (i.e. media-sport audiences) will now be briefly outlined.
Research into the production of media-sport texts is concerned with the politico-economic context in which mediated sport is created and with the technical processes used to produce it. Analyses of media-sport production processes and codes consequently investigate how political, economic, ideological and technical forces combine in a whole variety of ways to shape media-sport (Boyle & Haynes, 2000). Gruneau (1989: 135) has suggested that most analyses of media-sport have 'tended to downplay analysis of the political and economic limits and pressures that operate as context for television sports production, and have all but ignored analysis of the actual technical and professional practices - the labour processes - involved in producing sports for television'. Maguire (1993) has also commented on the lack of studies that have empirically analysed the conditions of cultural production and the labour processes involved in the creation of meaning.

There are some notable exceptions, for example, Gruneau (1989) and Maguire (1990, 1993b) themselves, and, more recently, de Moragas et al. (1995), MacNeill (1996) and Silk (1999). The development of research in this area is encouraging for, as Duncan (1993) has observed, media texts are inextricably linked to the processes by which they are produced. Any separation of these, she warns, necessarily places somewhat arbitrary limits on the analysis.

The study of media texts is by far the largest area of research into media-sport (Kinkema and Harris, 1998). This research usually involves an analysis of the content and codes present within a specific text, together with the aim of locating and identifying the 'preferred' meanings of the text, as intended by its producers. Although it is clear that audiences have the potential to interpret media texts in a variety of ways, texts are thought to sway audiences towards particular interpretations, i.e. those 'preferred' meanings intended by the producers (Fiske, 1987; Jhally, 1989; Kinkema and Harris, 1998). These 'preferred' meanings often represent the dominant ideologies
found within society (Rowe, 1999). As Boyle and Haynes (2000: 8) observe: 'the media, television and the press in particular, are playing a crucial role in producing, reproducing and amplifying many of the discourses associated with sport in the modern world'.

Research in this area has included studies concerned with the salient themes of: race relations (e.g. Andrews, 1996a, 1996b); gender relations (e.g. Duncan, Messner and Jensen, 1994); commercialisation (e.g. Sage, 1996); violence (e.g. Hutchins and Phillips, 1997); and global, national and local relations, the subject of the present project. Content analysis in this area can be quantitative and/or qualitative in nature, and tends to vary considerably in terms of the extensiveness of data collected, the level of systematic analytical rigour achieved, and whether due attention is paid to the codes and processes of production.

The study of audience experiences is becoming an increasingly popular area of media-sport research. Traditionally, audience research has been primarily guided by social psychological interpretations of audience 'consumption', with a focus on how media-sport messages influence audiences. This has taken two forms: 'effects' research, found in the work of Bryant (1989), in a study of the consumption of violence in mediated sport; and 'uses and gratifications' research that has generally investigated the factors that motivate audience consumption and enjoyment of media-sport. Duncan and Brummett (1989) employed this last approach in their exploration of the 'voyeurism, fetishism and narcissism' of televised sport. More recently, there have been some developments in the theoretical frameworks used for audience research with a focus on ideology in an attempt to examine how audiences make sense of media-texts (e.g. Davis, 1997; Whannel, 1998b).

Importantly, there is not, nor should there be, a strict demarcation between these three major foci in the study of media-sport. A content analysis of media-sport
texts alone can be limited and isolatory if it is not linked to a study of the production processes or to audience consumption (Duncan, 1993). The most complete and desirable research would involve an analysis of the inter-relationships of all three within the framework of the 'media-sport production complex' (Maguire, 1993b; Jhally, 1989; Kinkema and Harris, 1998). This would combine a textual content analysis, with a study of the location of the conditions and influences under which the production of the text(s) took place, and an inquiry into the audience receptivity of the mediated sports texts. Boyle & Haynes (2000: 12) applaud how Wenner (1989, 1999), Whannel (1992) and Blain et al. (1993) have all attempted to 'bridge the analytical gap through a mixture of political economy, textual reading and aesthetic concerns'. However, such a comprehensive study of media-sport, incorporating analysis of the complete 'production-content-audience' model represents a considerable challenge, and is beyond the scope of one doctoral study. Consequently, it was necessary for the purposes of this thesis to delimit the research to a concentration on two foci of media-sport: media-sport texts and the production codes underpinning them.

That media-sport texts often reflect, and even reinforce, the dominant ideologies of nations makes their analysis particularly useful as a means of exploring the construction and representation of national identities. The content analysis of the media coverage of Euro 96 was therefore deemed to be a key method of inquiry with which to investigate the problematic, complemented by an exploration of the manifest production codes that generated the specific texts to allow for a consideration of the 'preferred' ideological meanings of the producers. It was this delimitation that dictated the research strategy employed.
3iv. The Research Strategy

Guiding the research strategy was an underlying aim to identify and explore the major figurations and dynamics involved in the relationship between sport, national identity and the media. Figure 1 provides an overview of the interdependency chains between these figurations. From this diagrammatic representation it is possible to identify components requiring examination (given the imposed delimitation), crucial to which is English media-sport.

![Diagram of Figurational Dynamics](image)

Figure 1: The Figurational Dynamics Involved in the Research Problematic.

Given that the ‘triangulation of method, investigator, theory and data remains the soundest strategy of theory construction’ (Denzin, 1989: 236), the intention has been to adopt a multi-disciplinary mode of research for data collection. A triangulation of research methods, drawing primarily on qualitative methods, was considered the most appropriate for acquiring a ‘better fix’ on the multi-directional relationship between football, national identity and media-sport. However, this has not meant ignoring quantitative methods to investigate the problematic. The research strategy I
have followed involved distinguishing the two main empirical components that were
designed to test the theoretical framework, which was expounded in Chapter 1.

As I stated earlier, a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the media
coverage of a specific sports event was deemed most suitable for the purposes of the
present study. The selected event was Euro 96; the reasons for which have been
identified. The content analysis was employed to explore the formation, construction,
representation and re-presentation of national (sporting) identities by media-sport
personnel. Both the newspaper and television coverage of the competition were
analysed.

As argued above, the production codes underpinning the content and messages
found within the mediated sports texts should not be ignored. Digel (1995: 79) has
argued that any study of media-sport should include a consideration of the following
issues:

Individual-psychological, socio-psychological and sociological factors, such
as the personality of the communicator, his self-image, his ideas about his job,
his position and his duties, his opinion about the institution he works for, and
about society in general, pressures which are entailed in the media and also
the image the communicator has of its clients [sic]...

An exploration of these was therefore seen as necessary to gain a more complete
understanding of media-sport in the context under examination. Ethnographic research
was therefore carried out to explore the role that media personnel perceived
themselves as having in the provision of sports-texts. More specifically, this allowed
the researcher to establish the media personnel’s own understandings of their position
in the production of the relationships between sport, national identity and media-sport.
The ‘intended actions’, in terms of their plans for the coverage of the tournament,
were recorded by means of interviewing prior to the tournament. The interviewing of
Glen Kirton, the tournament director of Euro 96, was also considered to be a useful
exercise to gain an insight into the ‘official line’ on hosting the competition, and more importantly, extending hospitality to visiting national teams and their supporters. The combination of ethnography and media analysis, used to provide a degree of triangulation both within and between the research methods, will now be looked at.

4. Analysis of Media-Sport Production Codes

Analysis of the processes and codes involved in the production of the mediated texts of Euro 96 was achieved through the conduction of interviews with media personnel. This section details the process of interviewing within this project as a means of investigation. After initially discussing ‘field interviewing’ as a social scientific means of data collection, a variety of interviewing techniques available to the researcher are addressed. Issues of schedule design are considered, in addition to the interpretation of the interviews. As such, this section provides an outline of interview practice ‘in the field’, decisions made in the course of the research process on elements including strategy design and data analysis, as well as a discussion of the problems encountered in the course of the research.

4i. Investigation Using Interviewing: An Introduction

Interviewing has a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses (Fontana & Frey, 1998: 46). Its extensive use in many forms of research identifies interviews as an invaluable research tool for data collection and as a means of investigation. Defined by Berg (1995: 29) as a ‘conversation with a purpose’, interviews can help the researcher to ‘yield rich insights into peoples’ experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings’ (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994: 109). As such, Ackroyd & Hughes (1983: 66) have noted that interviews are
... encounters between a researcher and a respondent in which the latter is asked a series of questions relevant to the subject of the research. The respondent’s answers constitute the raw data analysed at a later point in time by the researcher.

To ensure that the raw data gained through interviewing are fruitful, due care must be taken with how the interview itself is conducted in the field. The selection of the most appropriate form of interview, and an awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in interviewing technique, are therefore crucial. For as May (1995: 97) observes: ‘Interviews are social encounters not simply passive means of gathering information’. The interpersonal skills of the interviewer are very important. May (1995: 195) explains the skills demanded of the researcher:

Essentially skilful interviewing is characterised by the extent to which the investigator can establish rapport, elicit information without excessively controlling the nature or flow of that information, and record it accurately.

Thus the interaction between interviewer and interviewee is the key to acquiring rich data through this form of investigation. This can help prevent cautious, tense or superficial responses from the interviewee. From a process-sociological perspective, the researcher must also be conscious of involvement and detachment issues (Elias, 1967, 1987), as discussed earlier in the chapter.

Consequently, there has developed a wealth of literature, from a range of paradigms and perspectives, on the interviewing process, detailing what constitutes being a good interviewer. Yet no consensus has emerged on interview methodology. That said, there remain four broad categories of interview methods, despite the numerous variations in, for example, the position of the interview in the research strategy, the nature of the questions asked, the extent of the interviewers’ control, and the size of the sample group. The broad categories represent the four most popular
types of interview and they exist on a continuum from the structured to the unstructured interview.

Structured, or standardised, interviews are closely aligned to questionnaires in that the data collected are based on a set of limited response categories. Berg (1995: 32) explains how

... standardised interviews are designed to elicit information using a set of predetermined questions that are expected to elicit the subjects' thoughts, opinions and attitudes about study-related issues.

The interviewer exerts a considerable degree of control over the interviewee using this method because of the standardised and methodical manner in which the interviewee is expected to address the pre-established list of questions. This allows for little interaction between the interviewer and interviewee that can have positive or negative results. However, the uniform structure does allow for comparisons to be made between subjects' responses from which worthwhile generalisations might be taken if a suitably sized sample group has been involved in the investigation.

At the opposite end of the continuum is a 'focused' or 'unstructured' interview. As its name implies, this type of interview does not employ a rigid, predetermined structure and as such, has an essentially open-ended format. Unstructured interviews are conducted to provide qualitative depth by allowing the interviewee to talk about a given topic area in their own frames of reference. This approach allows for greater flexibility and discovery in exploring the responses of an interviewee and has been likened to a 'conversation'. It is more regularly used by ethnographic researchers using participant observation techniques. Social interaction and the founding of a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee become of paramount importance to the eliciting of information.
Group or ‘focus group’ interviewing allows for the investigation of group
dynamics and interaction, as well as group norms. Fontana & Frey (1998: 55) explain
how:

The group interview has the advantages of being inexpensive, data rich,
flexible, stimulating to respondents, recall adding, and cumulative and
elaborative over and above individual responses.

This form of interview can therefore be very useful in providing the researcher with an
alternative perspective on the issues under study and, additionally, the social dynamics
that are present. A disadvantage is that a ‘leader’ can often emerge from within the
group who dominates proceedings, so that only the leader’s views are evident. The
success of such interviews in gaining useful data depends largely on the quality of the
interview process and that in turn depends on the degree of control the interviewer can
maintain over the group’s interaction. This relates to the size of the focus group.

The semi-structured interview is located between the two extremes of the
unstructured and structured interviews. Offering a more flexible version of the latter, a
predetermined schedule is still in evidence, but the interviewer can be reflexive by
using follow-up questions, probing a particular line of inquiry and allow for digression
in a more conversational format. In this way, a dramaturgical approach (Berg, 1995),
which stems from the symbolic interactionist perspective, can be adopted. The
interview is guided by fundamental questions, but there is the opportunity for the
interviewee to confirm or expand on their answers and for the interviewer to pursue a
response of particular interest to the investigation. This form of interview was
considered the most appropriate for the purposes of this study and was subsequently
adopted. That is, semi-structured interviews allow for a more focused approach while
maintaining an unstructured component and so, a degree of flexibility.
4ii. Designing the Interview Schedule

This section focuses on the process of design, scheduling and implementation of the interviews used in this research project. Berg (1995: 57-58) offers a ‘Ten Commandments’ of interviewing. These are: establish a rapport with the subject; remember your purpose; present a natural front; demonstrate aware hearing; think about your appearance; interview in a comfortable place; don’t be satisfied with monosyllabic answers; be respectful; practise; be cordial and appreciative. If all are observed, the outcome should be a successful interview that, by implication, will elicit useful responses and gain the knowledge sought. These recommendations were followed as much as possible in the course of the interviews carried out in this study.

Initially an outline was drawn up based around the broad themes related to the investigation. This allowed for the formulation of a set of questions pertinent to these themes, and, a general ‘running order’ for the schedule itself to be established. Underlying this was the objective of getting media personnel to comment on possible links between football, national identity and media-sport, and their perceived role in this connection. Furthermore, the intentions of their respective newspaper or television broadcaster for the forthcoming coverage of Euro 96 were probed, so that the production codes they were using could be investigated.

After systematic re-drafting, the interview schedules began to take shape: one for the press reporters, the other for the television representatives, although there was a significant degree of overlap between them. The first section of each of the schedules was designed to initiate the ‘conversation’ by asking the media personnel to describe some of the organisation that goes into the strategic planning for the coverage of a major tournament such as Euro 96. This way into an interview is common to help get the interviewee at ease and comfortable with what is often for them a somewhat unusual situation. This was not such a concern for the interviews with media
personnel, since interviewing is a common feature of their job, albeit usually in the role of interviewer rather than interviewee!

There followed a series of questions about the house-style of the respective newspaper or broadcaster, and the perceived role, duties and responsibilities of the journalist and the media more broadly. These were designed to ascertain some of the codes and processes that underpin the production of media texts. In this connection, the media personnel were asked about the playing styles and associated national character traits of teams competing in Euro 96. They were also asked about the use of stereotyping and labelling of nationalities, as well as the use of personal pronouns and war imagery in sports reporting. This was to gauge their line on the use of such linguistic styles and to elicit information on the construction and representation of national identities.

The next set of questions focused on Euro 96 itself, particular fixtures dictated by the tournament draw, and potential opponents. This line of inquiry involved a discussion of how the much anticipated England versus Scotland match would be covered and how a possible encounter between England and their 'old adversaries', Germany, would be framed. The media personnel were also asked to comment on whether the performances of national teams could be seen as a barometer for the state of a nation as a whole, and also if Euro 96 could/would be framed as anything 'more than' simply a sporting contest. The interview schedule was concluded with a consideration of the perceived highlights of the forthcoming tournament; how coverage might change should England be eliminated after the first round stage; and what was deemed to be the ideal scenario, with a view to 'good copy', for the semi-finals and final itself, in terms of the teams to be preferably involved.

Aside from their content, the actual phrasing and framing of interview questions, in language that the subject understands, is of paramount importance to the
interviewing process (Berg, 1995; Fontana and Frey, 1998). Questions are generally either ‘directive’ or ‘non-directive’ in nature. Directive questions only require a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, whereas non-directive questions allow for more latitude in the response. The latter are usually included as a follow-up to a simple directive inquiry. Questions also fall into one of four more specific categories. ‘Essential’ questions are designed to establish particular information, and cover fundamental issues that are integral to the research problem. ‘Extra’ questions supplement the essential questions by rewording them, so as to test the reliability of the original responses. ‘Throwaway’ questions are ordinarily included at the beginning of an interview to help put the interviewee at ease and establish rapport. They are therefore usually incidental. Such questions can also be included at various junctures throughout the interview to vary its pace and intensity.

Finally, ‘probing’ questions are used by the interviewer to gain a fuller, more detailed response from the subject on a previously asked question. Shatzman and Strauss (1973: 73) identified four types of probes: ‘chronology (... and then?; What was that?), detail (Tell me more about that; That’s very interesting), clarification (I don’t quite understand?; But you said earlier...) and explanation (Why?; How come?). A combination of these types of questions and probes was used to design the interview schedule.

With the schedule in place, the next issue was the selection of media personnel to be targeted for interviewing and how these interviews could be administered. Wenner (1998: 10) has warned of the difficulties with this, noting how: ‘Gaining access to media workers, and more significantly to candour about their relationships to their employers, can be problematic’. Consequently, efforts were made to establish who was the most appropriate to approach within television and the press. Eventually, interviews were requested with Niall Sloane (editor of the BBC’s Sportsnight and
Match of the Day programmes) and Jeff Farmer (Head of Football at ITV), both with responsibility for their broadcasters' coverage of Euro 96. The latter's response was initially positive, but gaining an interview with him did not prove possible. However, one was secured with Niall Sloane at Television Centre, London (1 March 1996).

The Chief Football Correspondents from the major daily English newspapers were also contacted with a request for an interview. These were: Henry Winter (Daily Telegraph); David Lacey (Guardian); Glenn Moore (Independent); Rob Hughes (Times); Steve Curry (Daily Express); Neil Harman (Daily Mail); Brian Woolnough; (Sun) and Harry Harris (Daily Mirror). Positive responses were received from all but two of the Chief Football Correspondents (Rob Hughes of Times and Harry Harris from the Daily Mirror). The interview with Henry Winter was conducted at his home in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire (12 March 1996). Arrangements were made for the remaining five interviews to be held during an England squad training session at Bisham Abbey. This situation was made possible through negotiations with the journalists themselves and Clare Tomlinson, the FA's Media Relations Officer who granted the author a two-day press-pass (19-20 April, 1996). Issues and problems arising from conducting these interviews 'in the field' are discussed below.

4iii. Practical Problems

The somewhat unusual situational context of a face-to-face interview can be a cause of anxiety for an interviewee and also sometimes, for the interviewer! Location and spatial relations are therefore very important since they can influence the social interaction, and rapport, between interviewer and interviewee. The use and subsequent positioning of a tape recorder in relation to the two participants is also a highly sensitive issue as it may be a cause of intimidation. Fortunately, most of these usual concerns of interviewing that should be considered by a researcher, did not apply due
to the nature of the interviewees' work and their familiarity with the interview situation. It was therefore possible to record, verbatim, all of the interviews conducted with the media personnel onto audiotape. These were then transcribed at a later date. They were supplemented with additional notes made in the field on non-verbal clues, such as the facial expressions or body-language of the interviewee, the spatial-setting and any interruptions that occurred. A further issue of interviewing protocol is offering the interviewee the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. However, again due much to the nature of their job and relative 'public status', all of the media personnel interviewed were content to have their names cited as representatives of their respective newspaper/broadcaster.

The only issues to really affect the interviewing process concerned their location and settings. The invitation from Henry Winter to his home allowed for a very relaxed, conversational, semi-structured interview. However, while there was no pressure on time, there were some domestic interruptions that interfered with the fluidity of the interview on occasions. When this occurred, the dictaphone was paused. The location of the other press interviews, however, proved to be more problematic, and was added to by some time constraints.

The interviews with Neil Harman and David Lacey were conducted in their cars in a pub car park, near to Bisham Abbey. This was not the most comfortable environment in which to carry out the interview and both journalists were in demand, either on their mobile phones or from people beckoning through the windscreen. Glenn Moore and Steve Curry were interviewed in a pub. This proved to be a very difficult setting, both at the time and afterwards during the transcribing due to the general hub-bub of noise, even though efforts were made to find a table in a quiet part of the bar. The last of the journalists, Brian Woolnough, was interviewed outdoors in the grounds of Bisham Abbey. Again, while an attempt was made to find a quiet area,
the interviewee was still distracted at one point as he tried to secure an interview himself with the England coach, Terry Venables, who passed by. Pressures on time on the part of the journalists necessitated the shortening of some of the interviews (Woolnough’s in particular). When called for, an abridged version or re-ordering of the schedule was employed.

The interview with the BBC’s Niall Sloane took place in his office at Television Centre in London. He was generous with his time, and asked his staff not to allow him to be interrupted. However, he called himself for refreshments to be brought at one point, and was also required to take an urgent telephone call, both of which caused a blip in the flow of the interview. As highlighted, there were some minor disruptions to some of the interviews. These were arguably only to be expected, given the demanding working environment of the interviewees. Overall, the interviews were carried out successfully, with the schedule suitably covered.

4iv. Interpreting the Interviews

The complete ‘interview complex’, that is ‘the relationship and interaction between the: questions; interviewer; interviewee responses; and response interpretation’ (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989: 84), must be taken into account for an investigation using interviewing to yield rich data. Each figuration of the ‘interview complex’ is interdependent and therefore integral to the whole. The final component, and also final stage of the interviewing process, that needs to be discussed is the interpretation of the interviews.

An underlying concern during the interpretative stage is how to appraise and analyse the views and statements of interviewees about the topic under investigation. Again, reflexivity is demanded of the researcher. It must be appreciated that the context-setting, ulterior motives, or a desire to tell the interviewer what they think
they want to hear, could have influenced an interviewee's responses. The researcher must be aware of these issues, and other possible factors, and be wary of misinterpreting interviewees' responses or reading too much into them.

Interviews produce data that are transferred into 'texts' by recording and transcription, which then require interpretation. Flick (1998: 29) explains the importance of the interview text:

> Texts serve three purposes in the process of qualitative research: they are not only the essential data on which findings are based, but also the basis of interpretations and the central medium for presenting and communicating findings.

A systematic way of ordering or coding the texts is subsequently required. The organisation of the taped recordings, field notes and the transcripts as they are produced, fully labelled and in chronological order, is an important early stage in this process. Burgess (1982: 121) suggests that:

> The indexing system should evolve in line with the type of analysis the researcher eventually intends to make. In this way, the process of indexing the materials is in effect a preliminary analysis of the data.

The indexing then, is largely at the discretion of the individual researcher since it is this coding that helps to facilitate the actual content analysis of the interview text. An index should, however, involve an element of data reduction, since transcripts tend to be very long. Henry Winter from the Daily Telegraph highlighted this issue during interview in relation to the subtle 'editing' involved in his own work. He explained:

**HW:** A straightforward transcript of someone's conversation is a pretty ugly thing so you have to improve people's language because if I actually quoted someone verbatim - if I quoted Terry Venables verbatim - people would go 'what?' because in any conversation there's gonna be 'ums' and 'ahs' and people backtracking on sentences and going forward again. But you never actually change it; you can never change the sense, never doctor a quote.
On this basis, indexing can help to produce a more ‘tidy’ and manageable, yet comprehensive record of the collated data.

An elementary system of coding was employed in the interpreting process of this study. It was preliminary because the purpose of the interviews was essentially exploratory, designed to get a ‘better fix’ on the plans, intentions and codes that media personnel work to during the processes of producing media-sport. The transcribed interview texts were broken down into their different sections to allow for more effective cross-comparisons to be made between them. A content analysis based upon variables associated with the prevalent themes of the research project was then undertaken. These included the use of personal pronouns, national stereotyping and established-outsider relations, as contributors to the construction and representation of national identities. The analysis also involved the scrutiny and appraisal of the interview texts for statements directly shedding light on the planned and intended framing of Euro 96 and the codes and processes that would underpin the production of mediated sport texts throughout the tournament coverage. In this way, generalised approximations could be made about the ‘preferred’ ideological meanings of those texts.

The findings from the interviews undertaken can be found in the following chapter. It investigates the contextual backdrop against which Euro 96 was played. The interview content helps one to locate the cultural and politico-economic conditions under which the production of the media coverage, and the associated meanings of these texts, took place. Statements derived from the transcribed interviews are also included in the results of the content analyses (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). In this way, a degree of triangulation is used to cross-reference the intentions of the media personnel with the outcomes, in the form of the content of the actual
texts. The methodology associated with the analysis of these texts will now be addressed.

5. Analysis of Media-Sport Texts

An extensive content analysis of the mediated sports texts generated from the coverage of Euro 96 was arguably the major component of this research project. Analyses were undertaken of the newspaper and television coverage of the tournament. One of the leading debates among users of content analysis is whether the analysis should be quantitative or qualitative (Berg, 1995: 175). In this study, both forms of analysis were employed for the press coverage, while the television analysis was mainly qualitative. The reasons for this are documented below, along with details on precisely what was analysed and how.

5i. Content Analysis: Quantitative or Qualitative?

A derivative of the broader qualitative versus quantitative debate in social scientific research concerns the form that a media content analysis should take. Quantitative analyses provide an insight into the structure of a text, and measure the frequency with which a specific variable is present. In this way, such a form of analysis presents a 'measurable', quantifiable account of the manifest content of a text (Berg, 1995). A qualitative analysis is more concerned with the latent content of texts in terms of the signifying codes and textual messages contained within them.

Gruneau, Whitson and Cantelon (1988) present a very interesting and useful discussion of the merits of quantitative and qualitative analysis in the light of their own research experience. Their observations are worth citing at length:
... what was striking was the limited character of the logic of quantitative content analysis, and its inability to deal with the connotative aspects of visual signs, or the meaning of predominant discursive forms in the text. Quantitative content analysis emphasises manifest content at the expense of a concern for underlying structuring principles and connotations. Related to this, quantitative content analysis is generally unable to apprehend meanings in a text that are 'unspoken'. It assumes that whatever has the greatest numerical presence in any text also has the greatest audience impact. The determination of significance in discursive analysis becomes reduced simply to the analysis of frequencies (Gruneau et al. 1988: 271).

These remarks raise some pertinent issues in relation to the particular strengths of qualitative media analysis vis-à-vis quantitative research.

A study of the manifest content of a text is useful for gaining an understanding of elements that are physically present and countable (Berg, 1995). However, it is arguably more revealing to extend the analysis to gain an insight into the text’s latent content. This involves an interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the physically present data. Berg (1995: 176) explains how ‘manifest content is comparable to the surface structure present in the message, and latent content is the deep structural meaning conveyed by the message’ (italics in original).

This links with a point made by Gruneau et al. (1988: 271) cited above, that is, the ‘inability of quantitative analysis to deal with the connotative aspects of visual signs’. An introductory outline to semiotics is required at this juncture to shed light on a key concept of qualitative media analysis. Stemming from the Greek word ‘semeion’, meaning ‘sign’, semiotics is the science of signs: how they work and the ways we use them (Fiske & Hartley, 1990: 37). Its fundamental concern is to apply linguistic concepts to analyse how meaning is generated and conveyed through a particular media text (Barrat, 1990).

Communication is understood to work through ‘sign-systems’ that carry meanings, both denotative and connotative. Fiske & Hartley (1990: 41) explain the system of signs and the varying levels of meaning(s) that they are accorded:
When a sign carries cultural meanings rather than merely representational ones, it has moved into the second order of signification. In this movement the sign changes its role; the sign of the particular soldier becomes the signifier of the cultural values that he embodies in [a] news-film.

They clarify the concept of 'cultural meaning' with the illustrative example of a military general's uniform which denotes his/her rank, in the first order of significance, but also connotes the respect accorded to it, as a second order sign.

In terms of the coverage of Euro 96, the media framing and representation of the England versus Germany semi-final was not simply about reporting the match result. Rather, the texts can present sign-systems that generate messages relating to the construction of national identities and habitus codes, as well as established-outsider relations. A qualitative analysis can therefore help one to look beyond a number count of the variables present, and investigate the latent meanings of a text, so exploring the sign-systems.

Gruneau et al. (1988) promote this form of qualitative analysis using the analogy of a Shakespearean play where a single sentence is used as a unit of analysis:

... [C]ounting instances of literary devices, or even thematic elements (would it really matter how many metaphors there are in Othello?) runs the risk of losing all sense of the meanings and associations created through the use of specific literary forms, and conjunctures and disjunctures in the text (Gruneau et al. 1988: 272).

They continue their analogy with reference to Shakespeare's Othello, suggesting that it is likely that a single metaphor can have a much more powerful resonance than any number of those detected via a quantitative analysis. Applied to the content analysis of the Euro 96 media coverage, the quantitative analysis might inform us that x percentage of newspaper articles contained war vocabulary or militaristic imagery. However, a single headline or front-page may carry a more complex and potent system of signs, generating different meanings, as potentially intended by the media personnel.
that produced them. This reading of media texts and the appreciation of the latent meanings of the textual signs are therefore a much more revealing form of analysis. This is not to forget the highly subjective nature of this style of research, as it relies heavily on an individual's interpretation.

Despite the indicated strengths of qualitative, semiotics-based analysis, Smith (1975) suggests that both a qualitative and quantitative media analysis should be employed. The reason for this, he argues, is 'because qualitative analysis deals with the forms and antecedent-consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis deals with duration and frequency of form' (Smith, 1975: 218). Berg (1995: 175) also recommends a blend of qualitative and quantitative emphasis to produce a more complete understanding of textual content. Others, like Bryman (1988) and Alasuutari (1995), share this view that, while there are important differences between quantitative and qualitative analysis, there are some common issues that bring them together in the interests of a more adequate, critical form of understanding.

This was the policy adopted for this study. Rather than simply being concerned with the manifest content of the Euro 96 coverage, the project explores the latent content by examining the denotation (literal meanings) and also connotation (culturally symbolic or ideological meanings) of the texts. This can be linked to the preferred meanings of the texts, as intended by their producers, the media personnel. Aspects of semiotics have consequently been adopted within the qualitative analysis to make sense of the construction and representation of national identity in media sport texts.

5ii. Quantitative Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of Euro 96

In this study, five newspapers were subjected to quantitative analysis. Two tabloids: the Sun and the Daily Mirror. Also studied were their Sunday sister papers, the News of the World and the Sunday Mirror; and three broadsheets, again with their
Sunday equivalents, namely: the Daily/Sunday Telegraph, the Guardian/Observer and the Times/Sunday Times. The newspapers were kept in these weekday/Sunday equivalent pairings for purposes of the study. They were analysed for a period of twenty-five days during the Euro 96 Championships, that is from the day before Euro 96 commenced to the day after the final match (7 June - 1 July 1996 inclusive). This resulted in a total of 125 newspapers being analysed. Only articles concerning Euro 96 were subject to a coded content analysis. The English broadsheets generated a total of 931 Euro 96 articles or 'texts'; the English tabloids, 1280. All 125 newspapers were ‘archived’ in chronological order to form a ‘reference library’ that provided a resource for the in-depth study of a particular newspaper when demanded. This proved to be especially useful during the stage of qualitative analysis because it meant that newspapers could be revisited. Chapter 4 provides a more detailed breakdown of the amount of coverage given to Euro 96 by the respective newspapers.

The methodology for the analysis was based on a codebook, devised originally by Hackforth, Maguire & Whannel (1994) and later developed by Maguire, Tuck & Poulton (1996); a copy is included in Appendix 1. The coding system allowed for both a qualitative and quantitative picture of newspaper coverage to be systematically gained. The codebook contained four levels of analysis: copy/edition of newspaper (Level 1); article indexing (Level 2); analysis of the manifest content, which also allowed for a preliminary qualitative analysis (Level 3); and illustrations (Level 4). Level 1 referenced the particular newspaper as a whole. Level 2 was concerned with analysing all articles/texts featuring Euro 96 and also identifying those that focused on the England team for the purposes of the qualitative analysis. The Level 3 analysis was designed to assess and quantify the manifest presence of certain discourse variables in each Euro 96 text. The chosen variables were based upon common discursive ‘themes’ with which the research project is concerned: personal pronouns; narcissism and war
vocabulary/militaristic imagery (relating to the linguistic style and use of language in the press coverage); national stereotypes; nationalistic sentiments and national symbols (concerned with national identity-related discourses); and nostalgia, invented tradition and habitus codes (all with an historical concern). Level 4 focused on any Euro 96 textual images, including cartoons and photographs.

Maguire (1993b, 1994a) originally identified many of the research elements and variables upon which the content analysis was based. They are explored more fully in his later collaborative work (Maguire and Tuck, 1997, 1998; Maguire, Poulton & Possamai, 1999a, 1999b). These themes and discourses are explored in depth both conceptually in Chapter 1 and on a more practical level in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. To avoid repetition, these will not be redefined again here. The variables were quantified as being in evidence ‘often’, ‘occasionally’, or ‘not at all’. The ‘often’ and ‘occasionally’ references were combined to measure the frequency occurrence of the various discourse variables. It was, therefore, possible to identify the broad nature and structure of the tabloid and broadsheet coverage of Euro 96. The trends identified in the quantitative content analysis could then be examined and illustrated by comparison to the results found through the qualitative analysis.

The quantitative analysis undertaken on the five newspapers throughout the tournament was manually recorded as part of a codification process, and then entered onto file by a professional data entry service. The data were then ‘parsed’ using Microsoft Office tools. Finally, the SPSS package was used to read the files produced by the above mentioned process to effect the required calculations. The results are presented in Chapter 4 where the frequency of reference to each discourse variable is shown as a percentage figure. This allows for the differences between the newspapers to be accounted for, in terms of the number of Euro 96 articles they generated.
As Gruneau et al. (1988) have warned, quantitative analysis still ‘require[s] a degree of subjectivity and arbitrariness in coding that [is] at odds with the precision that quantitative methods are designed to afford’. Given this, it is important to stress that the results from the full content analysis, the qualitative in particular, but also the quantitative, are the author’s own ‘reading’ and interpretation of the textual content. No single meaning can be attached to the content and codes of a particular text. Nor is it possible to impose a rigid, ‘objective’ meaning on a text. All texts are polysemic, and therefore have numerous potential meanings that are open to further comment and interpretation.

What is offered in this study is a relatively adequate account of the meanings that can be associated with the media-sport texts from Euro 96. These ‘readings’ are reflexive of theory and previous analyses of this kind, and have involved a suitable blend of involvement and detachment during the research process. This upholds Elias’ quest for more reality-congruent knowledge through approximations to the ‘true’ meanings of the texts under investigation.

5iii. Qualitative Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of Euro 96

The newspapers subjected to qualitative analysis involved the original five, i.e. the Sun; the Daily Mirror; the Daily Telegraph; the Guardian and the Times, along with their Sunday equivalents, plus the Daily Express; the Daily Mail; and the Independent. They were analysed over the same period as the quantitative analysis: that is, from the day before Euro 96 commenced to the day after the final match (7 June - 1 July 1996).

Level 3 of the codebook, used for quantitative study, provided the foundations for the qualitative analysis, as it produced illustrative examples to support the quantitative findings. A secondary stage of the qualitative analysis involved the use of
index cards to record further illustrative examples of the discourse variables present in
the Euro 96 texts. In this context, I focused in particular on texts concerned with the
England team and their opponents. Once indexed in terms of newspaper, edition date
and page number for citation purposes, the cards were filed thematically, so they were
readily accessible for ‘reading’ and interpretation. These research methods were in
keeping with the strategies employed by Berg (1995); Billig (1995); Blain et al.
(1993); Whannel (1992) and Fiske (1991) for the purposes of qualitative content
analysis. Some worked examples of the coding system can be found in Appendix 2.

My interpretation of the qualitative findings, drawing on some concepts of
semiotics, can be found in Chapter 5. The concern was not so much with syntax, the
sequencing of prepositions, grammar or individual clauses, as some textual analyses
are. Instead the interest was more with the diction, imagery and evocative language
that was employed, and how the texts could be read as contributing to the
construction and representation of national identities.

5iv. Qualitative Content Analysis of the Television Coverage of Euro 96

I discussed the debate about quantitative and qualitative content analysis
earlier. In light of this discussion, I concluded that I would employ both for the
analysis of newspapers. However, the nature of the television medium does not lend
itself so well to quantitative analysis. As Gruneau et al. (1988: 272) have indicated,
although quantitative content analysis has contributed useful information about
numerically dominant tendencies in television sport coverage in the past, these
techniques ‘actually work against an understanding of many of the most important
discursive features of sport programming, precisely because they require that one
decontextualise in order to quantify’. Goldlust (1987), Whannel (1992), Blain et al.
(1993) and Boyle & Haynes (2000) all offer comprehensive overviews of the
techniques, codes and conventions of the communicative process of televised sport. Whannel (1992: 60), for example, illustrates how the professional ideologies of sports broadcasting are a fusion of journalistic practices of objectivity, entertainment practices grounded in the principles of 'good television' and dramatic practices which involve the audience in a narrative. In light of such considerations, I decided that a qualitative analysis would be more revealing about these complex discursive practices, and, therefore, more appropriate as part of my overall research strategy.

The qualitative content analysis was undertaken on the television coverage of Euro 96 by the BBC and ITV, the dual host broadcasters of the competition. All television programmes relating to the tournament (including, previews, live games, highlights and discussions) were videotaped to facilitate their analysis 'off-tape'. This allowed for the replaying of certain units and the use of slow-motion to ensure that the whole of a programme could be effectively analysed.

The coding system and subsequent findings from the content analysis of the press reporting of Euro 96 helped to structure my analysis of the television coverage. The pervasive discourse variables and themes of the newspapers were applied to the qualitative investigation of the television coverage. This made it possible to assess whether there was a similar or contrasting content in the electronic media as in the print medium. Commentary that referred or alluded to the relevant variables was transcribed for analysis. The transcription process also included the design and adoption of a set of codes and conventions to identify intonation, pauses, emphasis and other dynamics of the spoken text. A key to this is presented prior to the results provided in Chapter 4.

To maintain some form of consistency with the content analysis of the Euro 96 press coverage, it was decided to focus on the televised games that involved England. Therefore, all England matches that were shown either (exclusively) 'live' by a
broadcaster or subsequently broadcast in a ‘replayed’ form ‘as live’, or as ‘highlights’, by the other channel were subject to analysis. These are shown in Figure 2. The analysis of both the ‘live’, and replayed ‘as live’ broadcasts, or ‘highlights’ programmes of each of England’s matches allowed for a comparative study of how the BBC and ITV respectively framed the same matches, and in so doing, contributed to the construction and representation of national identities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Match</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>ITV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England v Switzerland</td>
<td>(highlights)</td>
<td>Exclusively Live Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England v Scotland</td>
<td>Exclusively Live Coverage</td>
<td>(replayed ‘as live’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England v Holland</td>
<td>(highlights)</td>
<td>Exclusively Live Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England v Spain</td>
<td>Exclusively Live Coverage</td>
<td>(replayed ‘as live’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England v Germany</td>
<td>Live Coverage</td>
<td>Live Coverage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: The Matches Subject to Content Analysis

There was one notable difference between the analysis of the press and television coverage, and it was apparent from the outset. It is a consequence of the television medium’s multi-dimensional format with its mixed modes of transmission. As Whannel (1992: 104) has expressed it: ‘A key characteristic of television is the assemblage of its production - the process whereby programmes assemble sets of diverse audio-visual elements in various combinations’. This is in obvious contrast to newspapers that just offer the written word and static illustrations. The very nature of
television with its moving images, different camera angles, editing and slow-motion techniques, graphics and sound, including that of the spoken word, background noises, music and more, means that a single minute segment of a broadcast can present all manner of multi-layered 'texts'. Boyle & Haynes (2000: 80) contend that:

There can be no doubt that television coverage of [global sports events] has produced some of the most enduring images within twentieth century popular culture... [I]t is not merely the visual mediation of the athletic ability [of sporting individuals]... that is recalled in popular memory, but also the descriptive narratives of the commentary which provide the bases of such communication.

Further to this there are numerous possibilities for inter-textuality, where more than one of these texts is present at any one time. This intertextuality was especially present through audio-visual references to national symbols. Therefore, all 'sightings' of national symbols during the television coverage of the tournament had to be recorded. Analysis focused on the appearance and prevalence of national signifiers such as anthems, flags and emblems, as images or in spoken form, since discourses within the moving image and the commentary texts can 'create their own powerful communicative poetics' (Boyle & Haynes, 2000: 80).

5v. Practical Problems

The media analysis took place after Euro 96 had finished. This meant that all of the media evidence could be collected and collated before the analysis began. There were no real problems or issues arising from the analysis of the newspaper coverage of Euro 96, other than that already highlighted in relation to the partly subjective nature of this form of research. This was particularly relevant since the study was part of a broader project on European media-sport that involved two additional researchers in the quantitative analysis of the press. Consequently, it was important to come to an agreement on what constituted an instance of, for example, national stereotyping in a
newspaper text, thus enabling the author to access the other researchers' data. Doing this also arguably gave the analysis a more verifiable, if not 'objective' dimension, as it drew on consensus during the interpretative process. This 'tested' analysis could then be applied to the qualitative analysis of both the newspapers and the television coverage.

The television analysis caused a few problems of a technical nature, mostly over recording issues. The videotaping of the matches demanded a highly organised and structured schedule to facilitate the recording. The schedule was designed to involve people other than the author in the recording of matches, especially when BBC and ITV simultaneously broadcast a match, as was the case for the semi-final. Complications also arose from the pre-set recording of some matches, when no one was available to record them manually. Problems arose in this context, for example, when games over-ran into extra time and penalty shoot-outs. This meant that, occasionally, the full programme was not taped. Similarly, the pre-set method sometimes meant that the first few minutes of broadcast were missed due to timing discrepancies between the advertised and actual time of the programme. For example, the recording started late for ITV's exclusively live broadcast of England versus Switzerland (8 June 1996). Consequently, the opening titles sequence and the presenter, Bob Wilson's, welcome were missed. The extended length of the England versus Germany match, as it went into extra-time and then a penalty shoot-out, also caused problems. The tape of the BBC's broadcast finished, which resulted in some of the end panel discussion being omitted. With these exceptions, the analysis of the media sport texts was smoothly executed.
6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has dealt with a range of methodological issues, approaches and concerns of the research strategy and processes that underpin this project. It has provided a theoretical explanation of the methods and techniques deemed most appropriate in order to generate and justify the knowledge required. In so doing, the chapter has considered the competing qualitative and quantitative research paradigms and identified the key epistemological and ontological concerns pertinent to this investigation, given its theoretical framework. The design of what is deemed to be an effective, reflexive and practical research strategy for an investigation into the interdependent relationship between sport, national identity and the media is outlined. This incorporates a discussion of the combination of actual methods used (and problems negotiated) in the course of the empirical research: those of ethnography and textual analysis. An explanation of the multi-disciplinary mode of the research used in the data collection is also provided. This stemmed from a wish to avoid a strict paradigm affiliation, and subscription to a restrictive set of methodological assumptions. Instead, it allowed for triangulation both within, and between, the research methods employed and, as such, a means of verification.

The relative strengths and weaknesses of the research strategy, and of course the validity of the results that it generated, are comprehensively discussed in the concluding chapter. A general observation at this juncture, however, is the strength of the study in covering two of the three major foci of media sport research (i.e. media-sport production processes and codes, and the content of media sport texts). A regrettable weakness is the lack of an investigation into the audience receptivity of the texts that were analysed. That lies outside the parameters of this doctoral study.

This possible shortcoming aside, the methodological discussion and the research strategy presented here, offer a highly appropriate and valid means of testing
the theoretical framework detailed in Chapter 1. The use of a content analysis of the media coverage of a major sports event, coupled with an examination of the relevant production codes, should yield fruitful results in the pursuit of a higher degree of reality-congruent knowledge concerning the inter-relationship between sport, national identity and the media. The results are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The next chapter will add further gloss to the introductory remarks provided at the outset of this research project. It considers some of the figurational dynamics that concern the study as it serves to contextualise the men’s European Football Championships of 1996.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the historical background to the paradigmatic debate and details of the debate itself, see Tesch, 1990; Sparkes, 1992; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 1998.
CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUALISING EURO 96

1. Introduction

It was noted in the previous chapter that any analysis of media-sport texts should preferably involve a consideration of the processes that produce them (Gruneau, 1989; Maguire, 1993; Duncan, 1993). Silk (1999: 114) has also recently repeated this ‘need for empirical studies that locate the cultural conditions under which the production of meaning takes place’.

Consequently, in Chapter 3 I shall seek to locate the media coverage of Euro 96 within the cultural conditions under which it was produced. In the first instance, this will involve an examination of the concurrent socio-cultural and politico-economic context in which England played host to the European Football Championships of 1996. However, given the developmental approach that broadly characterises the theoretical framework underpinning this study, it would be improper to undertake an investigative study of this nature without first locating the focus of the research project, Euro 96, in some kind of historical context to help to explain the identity politics and the socio-political climate that were involved. This is the overriding intention of Chapter 3.

The first section therefore includes a consideration of the impact of the ‘Beef Crisis’ on English society, and how this made for a particularly tense and fractious political climate in which to be holding the competition. The ensuing controversy over the television broadcasters’ choice of theme music is also outlined. The objection to the BBC’s use of Beethoven’s Ode to Joy was to set the scene for some of the anti-German discourse that became manifest in the media coverage of Euro 96.
The next section presents the thoughts of Glen Kirton, the FA’s director of Euro 96, on organising the tournament. Kirton’s reflections were acquired through an interview, and offer some useful insights into the responsibilities involved for a host nation prior to, and during, an international sports event. The final section focuses on the ‘making’ of Euro 96 by the media institutions, and considers the media personnel’s intentions for their coverage of the competition. Rowe (1999: 6) contends that ‘economic forces’ are ‘central to the form and content of media-sport texts without establishing absolute powers of determination over them’. This section, accordingly, includes an overview of the television deal brokered by the BBC and ITV for the shared broadcast rights to the tournament. The results of my interview with the BBC’s Niall Sloane on the subject of the BBC’s plans for their tournament coverage are also featured.

The consideration of the intended production codes and conventions associated with the institutions and personnel who created the Euro 96 texts is extended to representatives from the press. As was explained in Chapter 2, interviews were also conducted with the Chief Football Correspondents from six daily newspapers to discuss their proposed reporting of Euro 96. The results of these interviews conclude the chapter and involve a detailing of the cultural conditions that underpinned the newspaper coverage of Euro 96.

2. Euro 96 in Context

In this section, I shall contextualise Euro 96 by firstly outlining the important political backdrop against which the tournament was played. Boyle & Haynes (2000: 154) have observed how ‘the images and imaginings of a country’s past, present and projections of its future, come together to underpin the mediation of sporting
discourses'. As Elias’ (1996) work, *The Germans*, emphasises, these images and imaginings emerge out of a nation’s history and pattern of social development and are sedimented as part of the habitus of the members of the nation. Boyle & Haynes add that ‘at certain specific political, economic and cultural moments these [discourses and the national we-image that underpins them] can come together around one sport or sporting event and be evident across both sports and media institutions’. Maguire’s (1993) study of Queen Elizabeth II’s state visit to Australia, which coincided with England’s 1992 men’s cricket World Cup win over the Commonwealth nation, and which took place in a context of strained Anglo-Australian relations due to Australian calls for a referendum on the future of the monarchy, is a case in point.

Similarly, the months prior to Euro 96 and indeed during the tournament itself, were a time when the mediation of sporting discourses centred around a particular set of politico-economic circumstances; the catalyst of which was the ‘Beef Crisis’. This was to have significant socio-cultural ramifications, as will now be evidenced.

2i. ‘Mad Cows and Englishmen’ [sic]¹

England hosted Euro 96 in a fraught political atmosphere, charged with highly antagonistic anti-European sentiments, played as it was at the height of the media-labelled ‘Beef War’. The controversy stemmed from a European Union ban on the export of British beef products. This action followed concern that livestock were infected with BSE, popularly known as ‘Mad Cow Disease’, amidst speculation regarding a possible link to a strain of CJD, the human form of the disease. The imposed export ban, together with a reduction in British fishing quotas by the EU, and on-going debate about plans to introduce a single currency, fuelled other,
predominantly right-wing fears, about a loss of sovereignty to a Franco-German dominated Brussels.

These fears were compounded by fall-out from the long-term trauma to the I/we identity of the English stemming from the loss of Empire and which were particularly strongly felt in some quarters (Maguire & Poulton, 1999: 21). Furthermore, while sections of the English were attempting to come to terms with this shock to their ‘fantasy shield’ and erstwhile group charisma, they were also faced with the reassertion of Scottish and Welsh national identities in the early moves towards devolution. These factors together gave rise to the exaggerated sense of anxiety and dislocation among some of the English population, that sometimes manifests itself as an ethnic assertiveness/defensiveness.

Recent defeats in sport, perceived by many as the last remaining cultural realm in which to salvage some national pride (Maguire 1993, 1994; Poulton, 1999), exacerbated these anxieties. Maguire’s (1994) examination of political and sporting discourses in the English media during the early 1990s identified a linkage between England’s decline on and off the sports field. He highlighted how regular defeats in male versions of the national team sports of football and cricket have prompted a sense of national angst, malaise, and a longing for some mythical golden age which was/is both reflected in, and, in turn, fuelled by the media. In this connection, it has been suggested that international sporting contests, such as Euro 96, can reawaken ‘sleeping memories’ within a person’s national habitus and that sporting success can facilitate the enhancement of the fantasy shield of people’s imagined charisma (Maguire, Poulton & Possamai, 1999a: 441). This helps one to understand the high hopes and expectations for English success at the championships.
The anxieties and resentment revolving around ‘Europe’ were commonly expressed in the Tory-sympathetic, Euro-sceptic press. An editorial on St. George’s Day, 1996, read:

We are hurtling towards a European super-state that would destroy the essence of our national life: Our Parliament, our laws, our people’s will would count for nothing... Once Europe was a joke. We had a good laugh at ‘Up Yours Delors!’ and stories of straight bananas and square strawberries. But now we can see the serious side. Our fishing industry has been sunk while Spaniards get a freehand to plunder our waters. Our beef industry is in peril and we are powerless – or gutless – to do anything about it. A single currency would destroy thousands of jobs, trigger recession and take away our ability to run our economy for our own benefit... No one’s laughing now. Britain has become a puppet of Europe (Sun, 24 April 1996: 6).

Illustrating these views was a cartoon of a father and son surveying a quintessentially English country landscape, with the caption: ‘One day, my son, all this will be Helmut Kohl’s’.

Such were the anti-European sentiments expressed in the tabloid press in particular, that even the sports pages were utilised as a vehicle for agenda-setting and criticism of the British Government’s perceived concessions to the EU. An analogy was drawn with the tactical formation employed by the England football team’s coach, Terry Venables. As John Sadler, under the headline: ‘EU Have to Be Joking: British Beef is the Best’, lamented:

That on St. George’s Day of all occasions, he should tinker with his international strategy and name a line-up that confirms all the speculation that... It could be EU! It is! ENgland has become EUland overnight. As Britain’s political influence faces increasing threat from Brussels and beyond, England’s football coach has now gone and joined the ‘European Union’. We’re going continental [in tactical play by changing the formation from the traditional ‘4:4:2’ formation] against Croatia at Wembley tonight (Sun, 24 April 1996: 35).

Such discourse was not restricted to the tabloid press. A Times article (15 May 1996: 1) reported how the German football squad ‘will eat no British beef’ during...
Euro 96 and how instead they ‘will munch their way through 90lbs of meat a day during the Championship, all imported from a Bavarian butcher’. This report arguably carries some rather antagonistic connotations by its implication that the German’s were shunning British produce during their stay, in favour of their own.

The Conservative Government’s response to the ‘Beef Crisis’ and, more broadly, to the on-going debate over possible further European integration, was a cause of more discontent. Their party was derided by pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics alike, for its leadership and policies towards Europe. These issues were also a cause of in-party schisms, as well as criticism from the Opposition parties and various sections of both the Europhile and Europhobic press. The latter’s reporting of subsequent developments was in some instances particularly xenophobic and contained overtly nationalistic sentiments. The controversy was framed increasingly as akin to a military conflict and thus dubbed the ‘Beef War’. O’Sullivan, Dutton & Rayner (1998: 75), writing on press reaction to perceived attempts to dilute national identity or sovereignty, cite this controversy, noting how: ‘many newspapers portrayed the British Government’s stand against the EU as virtually a declaration of war’.

The political situation was further exacerbated following the failed efforts to lift the ban on exported beef products. On 20 May 1996, the EU Agriculture Commission announced that there was insufficient scientific evidence to merit the ban on British beef (Times, 22 June 1996: 2). A majority of the EU member-states subsequently voted to lift the ban on tallow, gelatine and semen. However, a blocking minority of seven nations, notably led by Germany, insisted the ban should remain. The British Government responded with a policy of non-co-operation by refusing to
pass any EU directives unless the ban was lifted. This was seen by critics as a ‘flag-waving strategy to boost Tory election hopes’ (Guardian, 23 May 1996: 9).

In this situation, anti-European and especially anti-German feeling among the English intensified. This was evidenced in a series of headlines and editorials from the right-wing press. The Sun (23 May 1996: 12-13) led the way with a resounding ‘Bullocks to the EU!’ and a headline announcing ‘War Cry from PM’ as ‘John Major appointed a War Cabinet yesterday and sent his troops to Europe for the first skirmish in the battle for British Beef’. The same edition carried congratulatory articles by renowned Euro-sceptic Conservative back-benchers, Norman Tebbit and John Redwood, the latter declaring: ‘Bully for Major’s Blitz on Brussels’. Readers were urged to ‘Join the Battle for Our Cattle’ and offered complimentary beef-burgers in conjunction with the supermarket chain, Asda. This was the latest in a series of other campaigns, such as ‘I’m Backing British Beef’ and ‘Save Our Pound’, together with call for a referendum on the ‘euro’ (Poulton, 1999: 124). The tabloid also featured a cartoon depicting three cows marching with rifles, singing the caption: ‘Who do you think you are kidding Chancellor Kohl, if you think old England’s done!’ (Sun, 23 May, 1996: 11).

A few days later the political antagonism between the Major Government and the European Commission was exacerbated still further. This was caused when plans to cut the British fishing fleet by 40% were announced, while the Commission President, Jacques Santer, denounced the UK’s policy of non-co-operation as ‘deplorable hostage-taking’ (Guardian, 30 May 1996: 1). The Sun’s (30 May 1996: 6) reporting on the further reductions to Britain’s fishing quotas, which were perceived to be benefiting Spain, was rather more direct: ‘Armada Most Foul: EU Helps Spanish Plunderers Put Our Fishermen on the Dole’.

110
Figure 1: The *Daily Express* (2 June 1996: 2) Dad’s Army-style Map Depicting the British Government’s ‘Offensives’ in the ‘Beef War’
Which side was your newspaper on in the Great Euro War of 1996, daddy? Roy Greenslade provides a paper-by-paper guide while, right, Ulrich Schilling, a London-based German journalist, scans a painful press

With some guns blazing
In a similar vein, the Daily Mail (30 May 1996: 1), a newspaper that had long-championed the anti-European cause, ran scare stories to undermine any possible move towards a closer union with Europe, such as: ‘EURO WAR: Brussels Targets Britain Over Fish, Beef and Even Baby Milk’. The same newspaper celebrated the Government’s policy of non-co-operation with: ‘Major Goes To War At Last!’ (22 May, 1996: 1). On the same day, both the Sun and the Daily Express expressed similar nationalistic sentiments with front-pages announcing: ‘Major Shows Bulls At Last’ and ‘Major Speaks For Britain’ respectively. The latter featured a photograph of the Prime Minister against a backdrop of the Union Jack.

The Sunday Express’s coverage also appeared to extol John Major’s ‘war’ on Europe. The newspaper featured a Dad’s Army style map [see Figure 1], complete with arrows depicting forthcoming British Government offensives where ministers were to implement the British veto on EU directives, titled ‘Battle Plans to Save Our Beef’ (Sunday Express, 2 June 1996: 2). Despite this discourse, the Mail on Sunday (2 June 1996: 1), addressing the perceived threat of trouble from visiting ‘hooligans’ during Euro 96, claimed that ‘Violence was a major threat even before the ill-feeling of European fans was inflamed by anti-British sentiments in their press over the Beef Crisis’. However, other sections of the press took exception to the apparent xenophobia of the headlines and editorials in newspapers such as the Sun and Daily Mail.

It should be indicated at this juncture that the anti- and pro-European newspaper stances were not simply reflected by a strict tabloid/broadsheet demarcation. In this connection, Roy Greenslade (Guardian, 3 June 1996: 14), provided a review of all the major dailies as he satirically attempted to answer the question: ‘Which side was your newspaper on in the Great Euro war of 1996,
Daddy?\(^6\), giving each an Europhobic and/or Europhilic rating [see Figure 2]. The Daily Mirror, for example, stood as the lone tabloid favouring Europe, declaring: ‘Britain Needs EU’; while the Daily Telegraph was the leading Euro-sceptic of the broadsheets, presenting the most powerful arguments, especially over the potential loss of sovereignty (Guardian, 3 June 1996: 14).

The Independent (23 May 1996: 1), while not adopting an explicitly pro-European position, mocked the jingoistic line of some of its counterparts in the press with the front-page headline: ‘Oh What a Lovely War!’ The irony continued with:

There they go, there they go, there they go! Over the channel, and through the Tunnel, pour the massed battalions of the British Eurosceptic Expeditionary Force (BEEF). Over the coming weeks, they will fight them in the committee rooms, in the council chambers, in the summits, in the newspaper columns...

The article plays on the famous Churchillian speech, ‘We will fight them on the beaches...’ The opening line of the article represents a clever reworking of a common football chant: ‘Here we go, here we go, here we go’. This appears to be a reversal of frequent attempts to make a sport-war connection through likening a football match to war with the use of militaristic words and imagery (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6) and suggests an awareness of the imminent kick-off of the European Championships. It also arguably reinforces Boyle & Haynes’ (2000: 54) suggestion that sporting discourses can come together at certain political, economic and cultural moments, and indeed centre on a particular sporting event, being evident across both sports and media institutions. A satirical cartoon [see Figure 3] in the Guardian (3 June 1996: 10) evidences this further. It depicted rabid, salivating ‘mad cows’ wearing the England football strip, while a depressed-looking Terry Venables sat in the dug-out alongside John Major who stated: ‘And in line with our policy of Non-Co-Operation, we’ve
dropped the goalie!' Beneath was the caption: 'Watch Out, Fritz! It's the SPIRIT of '66!'

Certainly, the media and public interest in the tournament was becoming vividly evident at the time. This was reflected in the numerous newspaper supplements and special editions of magazines previewing the event. Many contained high expectations and a 'wilful nostalgia' (Maguire, 1994) for 1966 when *We Won the Cup*, the title of an ITV documentary screened to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the victory on 12 June 1996. Given these factors, it was arguably not a socio-political climate conducive to welcoming the national teams and fans of Britain's EU opponents to the country. This was a point raised elsewhere in the media. ITV's Kevin Dunn, reporting for *News at Ten* (28 May 1996) on measures to prevent public disorder during Euro 96, commented: 'One factor police could not have predicted is the current anti-European feeling whipped up by some politicians, and sections, of the press that experts fear might sour the atmosphere of the championships'.

Similarly, the *Guardian*'s Martin Kettle (23 May 1996: 19), in a considered piece of commentary - worth quoting at length - warned of how tabloid talk of 'Frogs and Krauts Fill Heads With Hate'. He observed:

It comes as a shock to be reminded just how easily the British can don the mantle of a nation at war. You spoke for Britain, Nicholas Winterton told John Major in the Commons on Tuesday, consciously repeating the resonant words which Leo Amery uttered during the real crisis of 1940. Many who listened to Major's statement also caught echoes of Neville Chamberlain's broadcast of September 1939. If nothing else, the last forty-eight hours offer a very salutary reminder of the grip in which the Second World War still holds large and influential sections of the British nation. To those who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, the war seemed to be a parental business, not ours... Now, fully fifty-one years after the end of the last European war, an even more bizarre mutation of the bull-dog spirit is on view in the battle for British beef.
Kettle makes a pertinent observation here about some Britons’ apparent fixation with the twentieth century’s second great European conflagration, a vivid feature of the national habitus. Since then, Michael Naumann, upon his appointment as the German government’s Minister for Culture, has similarly identified this national trait, while reflecting on the English (note not ‘British’). He claimed: ‘There is only one nation [England] in the world that has decided to make the Second World War a sort of spiritual core of it’s national self-understanding and pride’ (Sunday Times, 14 February 1999: 1). He added that this obsession with the war, the centrepiece of English national identity, was most evident in relation to football, citing terrace chants, xenophobic headlines, and the general use of language, as revealing an inability to think of the Germans without reference to the war. The press coverage of Euro 96 certainly seemed to bear testimony to Naumann’s comments. It also illustrated the importance sections of the media place on the sport-war connection to the national habitus of sections of English people. This is examined in Chapters 4 and 5.

The weekly pan-continental broadsheet, The European (30 May-5 June 1996: 1), also highlighted the particular channelling of anti-German sentiments found within the reporting of the ‘Beef Crisis’:

British tabloids and Europhobes in the Tory Party climbed to new heights of xenophobia, and – entirely predictably – the main guns were directed against Germany. They enjoy getting an angry reaction in order to get another opportunity to hit back even more brutally and senselessly. Again they must have been disappointed. No counter-attack in similar style just words of surprise.

As will be seen, such anti-German sentiments were to manifest themselves during the media coverage of the ensuing football tournament. The first vivid indications of what was to come became evident in the criticism that followed the BBC’s selection of a German composed piece of music to accompany its coverage of Euro 96.
2ii. Striking a Wrong Note?

Controversy ensued as the BBC's choice of Schiller's Ode to Joy, from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, was revealed as the musical accompaniment to their opening and closing credits of their tournament broadcasts. The Sun (27 May 1996: 1), mainly responsible for instigating the issue, carried the story as front-page news with the headline: 'STORM AS BBC PICK GERMAN TUNE FOR EURO 96'. The tabloid's grievance over the BBC's selection was clearly evident, especially given its anti-Europe stance. The newspaper's displeasure was based on the grounds that, not only was it a 'German fanfare', but that: 'To rub it in, the music is the official anthem of the European Union' (ibid.). The Sun's (27 May 1996: 6) editor, Stuart Higgins, considered the BBC to be 'unpatriotic':

You have to wonder how much agonising over political correctness went into choosing Ludwig van Beethoven's Ode to Joy as the theme music for the BBC's coverage of Euro 96. What was wrong with Edward Elgar or William Walton?

Some Tory backbenchers also took exception to the theme music on the 'Euro-sceptical grounds that it [was] also the anthem for the dreaded EU' (Independent, 30 May 1996: 18). The Conservative MP, John Butcher, was reported to be writing to the BBC for an explanation, claiming the Corporation was 'run by people who think that patriotism is dangerous' (Sun, 27 June 1996: 4). A cartoon encapsulated such reaction to the BBC's choice in the Sun (26 May 1996: 6). It presented three stereotypically German figures (Hitler, Moltker and a Teutonic character bedecked in traditional Bavarian lederhosen) as the new BBC commentary team [see Figure 4]. This discourse was to set the tone for much of what followed during Euro 96 itself (Maguire et al., 1999a: 442).
Figure 3: A Guardian Cartoon (3 June 1996: 10) Reflecting Some of the Concurrent Issues Surrounding the so-called 'Beef War' Prior to Euro 96
Figure 4: The *Sun* (28 May 1996: 8) Mocks the BBC’s Selection of Beethoven to Accompany its Coverage of Euro 96
Columnist, Stewart Steven, agreed that the BBC had made a ‘ridiculous mistake’ in their musical selection. However, he explained that his criticism was not because Beethoven was German, ‘the grounds upon which some of our nastier newspapers and their MPs objected’ (Mail on Sunday, 2 June 1996: 31). Instead, Steven argued that, since the ‘matches are being played in Britain, British music should have been used’. The precise location of the tournament was of course actually England. Interestingly, Steven was not satisfied with ITV’s choice of music. He explained: ‘I am sorry that Jerusalem has been chosen by ITV. That stirring piece of music has been hijacked by our Right’. His suggestion: ‘Greensleeves – magical, evocative and wonderfully English’.

Despite the criticism levelled at the BBC, its musical selection appeared to be grounded in very specific intentions. As one of the broadsheet newspapers, taking a less impassioned and more neutral stance, reported:

As John Major marches with a new boldness against Europe, the BBC is trying to hold Europe together by commissioning strictly non-jingoistic words to accompany the theme music for its coverage of Euro 96. The Corporation is already facing criticism for choosing a German, well Beethoven, and his Ode to Joy for the European Football Championships. It has now commissioned a new translation of the German words which is ‘non-jingoistic and broad based’... after deciding the original words by Schiller sounded stilted and were inappropriate for a football programme (Independent, 30 May 1996: 3).

This commentary makes an interesting reference to the Government’s assertive policy of non-co-operation with the EU, confirming once again how politico-economic issues can become crystallised around sport, often aided by the media.

The issue over the BBC’s choice of the Ode to Joy is considered in further detail in Chapter 6. Consideration is also given to ITV’s choice of Jerusalem, another that was not without its critics. For example, a writer in the Independent (30 May 1996: 18) suggested that: ‘Surely it is time to consign Land of Hope and Glory,
Jerusalem and Rule Britannia to our imperial past'. Carrington (1998) has also questioned its suitability for the welcoming and staging an international football tournament, given its Anglo-centric connotations. These observations support the earlier contention that Euro 96 was about to be played in a context that did not particularly lend itself to welcoming the nations of Europe.

In much reporting of international sport, the language and images used to make sense of the event are steeped in wider cultural and political references (O’Donnell, 1994; Blain & O’Donnell, 1998; Boyle & Haynes, 2000). The debate over the broadcasters’ musical selections for their Euro 96 coverage is indicative of this. It represents a further dimension to the ‘shifting balances of tensions’ (Elias, 1994) that formed the backdrop against which Euro 96 was played. It is therefore important in helping to gain a better understanding of the texts that were to characterise the media coverage of the tournament. In order to explore these figurational dynamics further, some of the issues concerning the official organisation behind Euro 96 will now be considered.

3. Hosting Euro 96

In the previous section it was suggested that the political atmosphere in England at the time was hardly ideal for hosting an international sports contest. The man charged with organising and administrating Euro 96, and with responding to the challenge, under the circumstances, of ensuring that it passed off smoothly, was the director of the tournament, Glen Kirton. In Chapter 2 I outlined how an interview was conducted with him to investigate the ‘official line’ on hosting the competition, and on extending hospitality to the participating national teams and their supporters.
3i. Kirton on Football’s ‘Homecoming’

Some questions on the planning and organisation that went into holding Euro 96 in England initiated the interview with Glen Kirton. Kirton told how this had effectively begun in June 1990. This was when the FA and the Football League started to consider putting in a bid to UEFA to host the 1996 Championships. The timing of the bid was significant following what Kirton referred to as the ‘various disasters of the 1980s’, notably at Bradford; Heysel and Hillsborough, as well as wide-scale incidents of ‘football hooliganism’. These had culminated in UEFA’s ban on English clubs participating in European competitions, which was finally rescinded in 1990. Kirton explained: ‘Our clubs were being invited back into European football on an experimental basis, and it was time for us to demonstrate to the world that that period of rehabilitation was complete. We were now in a fit state to take part in international football, not just as a participant, but as an organiser’.

Questioned over the ‘real significance of hosting Euro 96 for the nation’, Kirton made some pertinent observations about the state of ‘British’ sport. His suggestion was that hosting Euro 96 might remedy its poor standing:

_GK:_ This is now an opportunity to go forward, to move our status in world football on to a higher level. There’s undoubtedly the case that British sport in general at the moment is held in low esteem. Our cricketers are failing, our rugby is going through a period of transition, our athletics is hovering below the best that it could be... At sport in general in this country we’re hovering below the best. The Government recognises that as an issue and has said that we need to do certain things with regard to sport. Staging an excellent Euro 96 gives us the opportunity, at least in football but I think it would rub off on the rest of sport and on the community in general, to move us that little bit higher.

An emphasis on ‘opportunity’ was a recurring theme in Glen Kirton’s responses. He stressed how the hosting of such a prestigious sports event was:
GK: An opportunity to be centre stage. To have the world focus on you as an entity, on the concept of England. It’s an opportunity to show how well things can be done, to impress in other words. It’s a commercial opportunity because it will attract a large number of people into the country who will spend a large sum of money over and above what the normal tourists spend. It’s an opportunity to be open, international, to show that one can be a good host...

While acknowledging that there were economic motives behind the bid to be tournament hosts, Kirton also appeared to be driven by an ambition to ‘show that one can be a good host’. He regularly spoke of a desire for the tournament to reflect a sense of ‘internationality’. Kirton was very sure of his intended meaning here. Quizzed as to whether he actually meant ‘Europeanism’, given that it was the European Football Championships, he confirmed:

GK: Well I do mean internationalism because we’re not just talking about the European Community. This is a Europe-wide event but it’s involving a large number of countries that are not part of our political unit and I wish the tournament to open minds to the fact that we are part of a much wider world, that in certain cases things are done better elsewhere than they are here, that football and sport in general is as much an expression of being part of that wider context as it is of yourself as having a national identity.

This statement affirms that Euro 96 was in no way ‘officially’ intended to be associated with European politics. The organisers, while keen to reflect the pan-Europeanism of the tournament, through the coming together of the sixteen participating nations, wanted to extend this sense of unity to a more global level of internationalism. In doing so, we might suppose the tournament could have a greater appeal and, consequently, greater (paying) television audience.

The message of internationalism was another common theme in Kirton’s answers. This message was evidently intended from the outset of the official televised draw for the tournament in December 1995. Kirton demonstrated an awareness of the
production codes that shape mediated sport as he explained the planning behind the
televising of the draw. He told how:

**GK**: *We wanted it to say this is football in England rather than this is showbiz in
England but it had to be a good TV show because there's no point in putting football on TV unless it's good TV. It could be good football but crap TV and you've lost the
purpose of the exercise. So we worked on that basis.*

He then offered an insight into the preferred meanings that the organising team wished
to communicate by using children during the draw:

**GK**: *We wanted the children because that conveys the right message providing it’s
not too twee and we wanted the children to represent the community as a whole, boys
and girls, all ethnic backgrounds, and we wanted to be able to demonstrate that we
were international enough, despite England's reputation, to be able to welcome
people in their own language.*

Again, Kirton's key concern was to 'demonstrate that we are international' to counter
any ideas to the contrary. This internationalism was also reflected in the organisers’
choice of theme song, *We're in This Together*, by Simply Red, which was sung at the
close of the draw. Kirton observed: 'although the song was written about South
Africa, the message seemed to apply to soccer as well'. Having a theme song was part
of what Kirton defined as 'the simple marketing need to brand an event... so that you
can establish its credibility and thinking to sell tickets to the public and commercial
opportunities to TV and sponsors'. Arguing counter to these objectives, a writer in
the *Daily Telegraph* (25 June 1996: 23) dismissed the song as 'another syrupy
internationalist theme'. The critic added, 'we prefer to interpret it as an unintended
tribute to the astonishing diversity of British peoples, united by a common history'.
This presents an interesting re-interpretation of being 'in it together', rather different
from Kirton's preferred meaning.
Another component in the branding of the event was the slogan ‘Football Comes Home’. Revealing that there were ‘unfortunately not hours and hours of philosophical debate’ in coming up with the slogan, Kirton explained its origins:

**GK:** In America [during the 1994 World Cup] it was something about leaving a legacy, I forget what the exact phrase was, but it was something about ‘tomorrow’, we thought, yeah, that’s fine, we’re about tomorrow as well, but we’re about history. This is where it all started, 133 years ago by the time the tournament starts, so that’s a fairly long period of sporting history. It all began here, so we need something that reflects that and, without undue modesty, I thought of it around a table with everyone saying ‘what sort of strapline should we have?’; I said ‘what about football comes home?’

This message was present in the plans for the tournament’s Opening Ceremony. Kirton outlined how:

**GK:** The principle will be this is a football festival, this is gonna be fun, there’ll be a little bit of English historical pageant but nothing that talks about our historical military victories. We’re not going to have this is England slamming Napoleon, this is England slamming the Germans or whatever... basically it’s gonna be about football. Football coming home...

Despite this rationale, the slogan was criticised by journalist Mark Perryman prior to the start of Euro 96. While acknowledging that there had been some significant, and welcome, changes in football in the recent years, he argued that much of this had failed to be reflected in the dominant images of Euro 96. Perryman contended:

Euro 96, in its marketing and presentation, goes with the grain of petty-minded Englishness, rather than celebrating England’s coming of age as part of Europe. The marketing slogan says it all: ‘Football Comes Home’. Let’s reassert all that history, those far-off days when we invented every game known to mankind, then taught Johnny Foreigner how to play it (New Statesman and Society, 24 May, 1996: 25).

Others were more receptive and positive. Neil Harman, Chief Football Correspondent for the Daily Mail, remarked during his interview that it was a ‘nice slogan’ and
demonstrated a keen awareness of the concurrent political climate outlined earlier in the chapter. He commented:

**NH:** *We’re the mother country, as they say, and it would be good if we could show Europe a good time because you get the feeling it’s a bit ‘them and us’ at the moment in political terms. We’re on the outside saying ‘we don’t wanna do this or that’, but I think at a social level, I’ve always found the English get on very well with most people.*

Polley (1998) also offered a contrasting reading of the slogan to that of Perryman. His interpretation suggests that ‘Football’s Comes Home’, ‘rather than being nostalgically backward looking to a golden age, and resistant to contemporary trends, revisits and recycles the past in a celebratory manner as an inspiration for the present’.

This reading appears to be close to what Kirton actually intended. When asked what kind of emotions or sentiments the slogan was supposed to evoke, he summarised the official intentions behind the phrase. His thoughts are worth citing at some length:

**GK:** *The emotions, I would say, are a pride that the game began here. A recognition of the concept of a family growing up. We gave football to the world and the game is now very much world-wide and our children have grown up and in most cases do it better than we do, therefore that’s a cause for pride as well as concern. I don’t think anybody should be upset when something they have a historical stake in actually proves to be done better by somebody else. The West Indies become the world best cricket team, the Americans become better golfers than the Scots, the Indians become better hockey players than ours, the Australians become better rugby players than us. So it’s an incentive to say: our children have now set better standards, we need to aspire to that, we need to compete with them again, but let’s not forget that these people who’ve taken the game that we invented still look upon us with a great deal of respect simply because that’s where it all began... It all started here.*

Clearly, Kirton’s objective was far removed from Perryman’s critique. This demonstrates how, despite the preferred meaning of a particular message, there is always a multiplicity of potential readings. Consequently, there is the very real chance that intentions can be ‘misread’. What was meant to communicate a concept of the
international football 'family', as Kirton inferred, was deemed by some to reflect Anglocentricism.

With Kirton having acknowledged that football can be an expression of one's national identity (see above), he was asked how he proposed to cope with the potential contradictions of the national fervour generated by sporting contests and the internationalism that he had frequently spoken about. Kirton spoke extensively about his 'desire to divorce sport from any sort of jingoism, any sort of excessive nationalism'. He accepted that 'when the matches get started the crowds are going to polarise into two very distinct factions who would regard themselves as being national'. However, it was his hope that:

... both sets of supporters will see themselves as part of the wider context which is this great event, which is about international communication, not about national differences... I think it's the context that deals with that, it's people coming together in a situation that might be regarded as conflict but actually being able to grasp the philosophy that that conflict takes place within a structure, within rules and that it's not the be all and end all.

Once again, the emphasis was on 'international communication'. To this end, Kirton expressed a concern for ensuring that the correct atmosphere was created and maintained in the build-up to Euro 96. He stated: 'I believe it's our job, it's my job and our media people's job to keep on conveying this message of being the host, not the enemy, although I don't think we need to say it to the vast majority of people'.

The fact that Kirton should have placed some responsibility on the media is of great significance. This viewpoint was explored through additional questioning:

EP: The media are often responsible for accentuating national differences and arousing, encouraging the potentially over-zealous patriotism that you say you want to avoid. If the media do start painting a too 'nationalistic' picture, will you step in to redirect them?
GK: I will as far as it's in my power to do so, yes. It depends on the circumstances doesn't it? It normally focuses around tabloid wrath and hysteria when the national team doesn't do particularly well and that tends to be aimed at the people who they perceive as being responsible for that. I don't know that sporting victory actually produces the sort of lurid nationalism that you get for example when you've got a national crisis on such as the Falklands or the Gulf War, but I see my role as Tournament Director as being the public voice of the event, saying what I think the event needs to say... I would always hope to be able to put it in its context, which is to establish, or to state that this is a football tournament, this is not a clash of patriotic philosophies, it's a football tournament that involves teams representing nations and that we need to see it in that context.

This response arguably sums up Kirton's personal, but also official objectives, for the hosting of Euro 96. As he said, it was simply a football tournament and while this 'involves teams representing nations', it should not be about national differences or a 'clash of patriotic philosophies'. Instead, Kirton's intention was to promote 'internationality'. We can only speculate on how Kirton might have reacted to certain headlines and rhetoric in the newspaper coverage of the tournament a few months after the interview. Unfortunately it was not possible to do a follow-up interview, post-Euro 96, to discover his thoughts on the press reporting, or to find out whether he chose to intervene, and counsel the media at all, during the tournament. It is to the media's 'making' of Euro 96 that we now turn.

4. 'Making' Euro 96

If, as Johnson (1986) contends, cultural forms - in this case media texts - should be looked at from the perspective of their production, then there is a need for a study of this kind to locate the cultural (and politico-economic) conditions under which the production of meaning takes place. The following section presents an interpretation of the insights gained from interviews with media personnel, firstly from the press, and later television. These interviews helped me to explore the
organisational structures and professional ideologies that shaped the production of the media-sport texts of Euro 96. The objective was 'to acquire the critical means to establish an authoritative grasp of the structural, institutional and organisational framework governing their production, dissemination and reception' (Rowe, 1999: 8). This contributed towards a better understanding of the 'making' of the Euro 96 texts.

Following this, an overview of some of issues concerning the political economy of media-sport is provided. Rowe (1999: 65) has identified how: 'the media are both the driving economic and cultural force in sport because they provide (or attract) most of the capital that in turn creates and disseminates the images and information, which then generate more capital and more sport, in an ascending spiral'. Consequently, it is useful to examine the major institutional and economic groupings involved in the media 'making' of Euro 96. This involves a consideration of the ways in which these groupings co-operated, and conflicted, over the broadcasting rights to the tournament, and the possible consequences of this economic activity on the production of media texts and more broadly.

4i. Reflections from the Press Corps

Claeys & Van Pelt (1986) have highlighted the diversity of sports journalists, debunking a common perception that they are a homogenous group. They contend:

Sports journalism is anything but standardised. It is a conglomerate of multiple forms of expression, styles and methods and people, that, as in sports, for reasons of simplification, is given a common denominator. A certain uniformity has grown up in sports news and reports, but differences still remain. The alloys and combinations differ, with the result that personal accents are given prominence and different profiles are created. Sports journalism has many different faces, each of which satisfies the expectations of different tastes.
The sample of Chief Football Correspondents interviewed were drawn from a cross-section of the major daily selling newspapers in England and represented the tabloid, broadsheet and 'middle market' press. As such, the individuals concerned were representative of contrasting linguistic and journalistic styles. This, predictably, was reflected in some very different thoughts and beliefs, as the line of questioning during the interviews sought to examine some of the 'sociological and socio-psychological constellations determining the development of statements made in the media' (Digel, 1995: 76). The interviews also probed the codes and conventions involved in the production of the media texts that were to be analysed. In doing so, some of the structural, editorial and personal conditions that influence sports reporting were explored.

Early in the interview, the football correspondents were asked what, if any, service they considered themselves and their newspaper as providing. This helped to gain an understanding of the journalists’ self-assessment of their own, and also their counterparts’, professional practices. As Corner (1984) has observed, 'Sports journalists are not expected to simply transmit an ongoing sports event. Instead they must transform interactions between sports teams and between athletes into an entertaining sports spectacle' (cited in Bourgeois, 1995: 199).

The Guardian’s David Lacey summed up a common observation made by some of his counterparts as he commented on contemporary media-sport. He noted: ‘Well of course, in these days of TV, in many cases you’re telling people what they’ve already seen, so you’re giving your impressions of something they’ve seen, your impressions, your opinions and at the same time getting the salient facts across.’ Glenn Moore from the Independent believed the service he provided was ‘basically to inform people what’s going on and do so in a relatively entertaining way’. This was the
general consensus among the correspondents, which conforms to Corner's (1984) contention. Steve Curry of the 'middle-market' Daily Express added to this basic service, claiming: 'The essential function is to act as a link between the game and its supporters, particularly with the national team's supporters, even more so'. In saying this, Curry is actively locating himself and his newspaper in the relationship between sport and national identity.

Following on from this, the correspondents were questioned about the house-styles of their respective newspapers. Curry believed that 'some of the broadsheets in this day and age tend to be a bit too tactical and look to educate which I'm not sure is our function'. He said that his newspaper preferred to concentrate on the 'personalities of the game'. However, Henry Winter told how his broadsheet, the Daily Telegraph offered: 'comprehensive, intelligent, honest reporting without any speculation, opinion from me and Paul Haywood [the sports editor], good quality straightforward reporting from the other five guys, with the feature writers in there as well'. David Lacey defined the Guardian as having a 'slightly ironic style which puts sport into perspective'. He added: 'I've always believed you should let the words work for you and not strive for effect'. Lacey's aversion to striving for linguistic effect was echoed by Neil Harman. He gave a clear outline of what his 'middle market' newspaper stood for, stating: 'The Mail believe in certain principles of covering sport: good writing, good investigative journalism, good stories but truth and sometimes I think some of our competitors wander somewhat, shall I say, from the truthful line just for impact'.

Harman's suggestion was that other, unidentified, newspapers sometimes deviated from a truthful representation to achieve an effect or make an impact. Steve
Curry also raised this issue, suggesting that this was a result of economic forces. He was more explicit in naming some of the tabloids as he observed:

SC: Well, the Sun and the Mirror unfortunately are involved in their own personal circulation battle and in my experience in that battle, the truth tends to get a little bit distorted and I find that can be a bad influence... the Sun and Mirror guys are just after the sensational story.

Asked if he wrote with any sense of duty or responsibility to his readers, Curry made further comments about the tabloid press. He confirmed:

SC: Very much so yeah, that’s why I would fall out with the Sun, the Mirror, the Star. I think you have to show a sense of responsibility in terms of writing honestly and truthfully and I don’t think all of my profession do that all the time and I think that’s one of the sadder aspects of the ways the game’s changed.

The Sun’s Brian Woolnough arguably did not appear to conform to Curry’s perception of tabloid journalists. He spoke of writing with a sense of ‘tremendous responsibility’. He explained:

BW: I feel tremendous responsibility because I think it’s very wrong of newspapers to mislead, misguide and tell people things that aren’t the truth. It’s probably old school, but I was brought up in journalism not to get involved in things that you didn’t believe in and I think it’s very sad that that now goes on and I think writing for effect is bad as well.

Winter also felt responsible for ‘reporting things correctly’. He claimed: ‘I think every journalist has that. I would be very surprised if any of the guys out in the field doctored stuff’. However, he added:

HW: Where I think stuff does get doctored in newspapers, particularly the tabloids, is back on the Desk. Alex Ferguson could say something like ‘I didn’t think that was a very good decision the referee made’, which is a totally innocuous comment and certainly wouldn’t bring in a disrepute charge because it’s a straightforward opinion and probably right. On the Desk you will have someone put a certain adjective in front of Ferguson’s name, so you’ll have ‘an angry Alex Ferguson said’ which of course totally changes it.
This provides a valuable insight into how copy-editing during the production of media-texts can sometimes have an impact on their content. Woolnough confirmed these production practices, as the following extract from his interview illustrates:

**EP:** You have said that you write with a 'tremendous sense of responsibility'. Is this still the case when you're writing about other nationalities, other national teams? It seems to be very much the Sun's house-style to talk about 'Frogs' and 'Krauts' and the like.

**BW:** I know what you mean. I think you'll find that more in headlines and sub-headings. I don't think I've ever written 'Dagos' or 'Yids' and 'Frogs' and all that in any piece I've written, but I'm sure on top of a piece I've written there's been 'Frog This!' and 'Frog Off!' and that kind of thing.

This admission from Woolnough validates to some extent Curry's claim that 'the Star, the Sun and the Mirror can out-do each other on the nastiest headlines sometimes'. Speaking on his own newspaper's house-style on writing about other nations, Curry maintained: 'We wouldn't be disrespectful in headlines and certainly not in the words, I wouldn't'.

The line of questioning about writing on other nationalities developed into a discussion on whether the playing styles of a respective nation can be linked to broader national traits or characteristics. Curry was very much of the opinion that there was a connection. He answered: 'Well, yes, I mean the Spaniards are Latin and fiery, the Germans are arrogant, which they are as a nation, we all know that, and confident'. The broadsheet writers, however, were not as convinced. Glenn Moore accepted that there is sometimes a tenuous link, buoyed by what he called 'popular mythology'. He observed:

**GM:** Only very loosely. The nations of England and Germany traditionally are very good at not giving up; constantly battling, more inclined perhaps to be more organised. The Latin countries are often more, well they can be more flamboyant, have more individualist skills. But there're always exceptions; there have been very organised hard Italian defenders. So loosely you could say that, but only quite loosely. Sometimes there's an element of truth in it.
Moore and the two other broadsheet writers were of a similar opinion on this subject. Winter believed that ‘sport deals too much in clichés’. Lacey, too, commented:

DL: They’re big clichés aren’t they? All this stuff about the Italians showing the white flag; well you wouldn’t say that if you’d been tackled by Maldini. I’m not saying I never use it, all these things we use, we do get a bit sloppy sometimes.

Moore acknowledged how national stereotyping was prevalent in some sections of the press. He noted:

GM: It happens, especially when we play South American teams who are regarded in the popular mythology as being a bunch of dirty hackers. It can happen, with Germany, say, and with the Italians, the Spanish, the French, Gaflce flare and stuff, it happens.

However, he indicated that such stereotyping ‘is not something that tends to happen so much with the broadsheets’. Moore offered an insight into some of the professional conditions that influence sports reporting in the broadsheet, as he explained:

GM: We try to avoid it, it doesn’t really occur to you as much, it’s clichéd, so not something we tend to go for. The odd jokes might slip in along that basis but it’s not something we go for as a general rule. It’s just something that goes with the general broadsheet papers that you wouldn’t be talking about stereotypes.

Notably, both Moore and Lacey conceded that sometimes they might use the ‘odd joke on that basis’ and that ‘we do get a bit sloppy sometimes’ with reference to using national stereotypes. These admissions regarding linguistic style could be useful when interpreting and attempting to ‘read’ the latent meanings of the media-texts.

The journalists’ use of another form of evocative language, militaristic imagery and war vocabulary, was to surface as the correspondents were asked how they anticipated framing particular matches during Euro 96. All six shared Neil Harman’s view that England’s match against Scotland was ‘potentially the biggest match of the tournament’. This, he explained, was because the fixture ‘provokes so much emotion,
hysteria and national pride: there’s a lot of pride at stake – are there any two nations in the world who would prefer to beat each other more?’ Harman was subsequently asked how he envisaged framing the match. Although getting confused with his history, he spelt out the Daily Mail’s general approach:

**NH:** You build it up as you would any big match but aware of course that it means more than most in the circumstances. But we don’t go in for pictures of, you know, someone dressed up with a kilt on one side and someone dressed up as William the Conqueror with a bloody arrow in his eye on the other, but I’m sure there will be some who will go barmy on it but that only antagonises people.

A discussion ensued over the use of war vocabulary in sports reporting. The following excerpt demonstrates some of Harman’s professional values:

**NH:** If you’re gonna use warlike terms involved in football, what terms do you use when there actually is a war? You’re in danger of building the public lip into such a frenzy.

**EP:** Does that mean you would avoid phrases like ‘battle of pride’?

**NH:** It will be a ‘battle of pride’ but what I’m saying is that you don’t play that kind of warlike thing for all that it’s worth and turn it into more than what it is. In the end it’s 90 minutes of sport that will either determine which one of the two sides has a better chance of winning the European Championships. Of course it has a special unique atmosphere, its played in a unique atmosphere and you reflect that, but you don’t go over the top, I think that’s very dangerous.

Lacey intimated that ‘echoes from past encounters may come into it’ when asked how he intended to represent the match. Questioned whether he meant ‘past footballing encounters’ or otherwise, Lacey was quick to clarify:

**DL:** Footballing encounters, yes, oh not all this about Culloden and God knows what, where the so-called English army were mainly German anyway, and half the Scots were fighting with the English and this stupid bloody business about William Wallace. I won’t go and see that film [Braveheart] because it’s so historically inept. Robert the Bruce fighting for the English, for Christ’s sake! It really is mythology, isn’t it? Ok, you’ve got to acknowledge the mythology and play along with it a little bit, but as far as I’m concerned... my prime concern would be what it means to both teams, how they both set about it...
Again, these comments should be useful during the content analysis. It will be informative to cross-reference to the correspondents’ responses to help gain a ‘verifiable’ reading of the texts they have produced. Winter also made some interesting observations about how he thought the match should be framed. He noted:

**HW:** *I think you have to capture the atmosphere of a Scotland-England game which is spectacular. You have to reflect the history in these things and you have to reflect the fact that there is a great rivalry between England and Scotland that transcends sport, so you have to take that into account. But you can’t write ‘this is gonna be Culloden in boots’. You can in the tabloids because there’s an element of sports in cartoon out there, so you can use images like that.*

His expression ‘sports in cartoon’ in reference to the tabloids arguably encapsulates a feature of tabloid reportage. Winter illustrated what he meant by this further as he predicted how the tabloids would represent the fixture while confirming his own approach to the match:

**HW:** *There’ll be, you know, two sides pitching up for war, with the Bull-dogs on one side and the Bravehearts on the other with the coloured faces and it’s actually quite easy to slip into that imagery, but I think the event is so colourful in itself. You can describe the whole pageant without actually making it some medieval barny.*

This is another admission by a broadsheet writer that it is ‘easy to slip into’ a certain linguistic style, which they would ordinarily try to avoid. Woolnough appeared to confirm what Winter had implied was the Sun’s propensity to represent ‘sports in cartoon’. He revealed: ‘Going into the game, it will be full of Sun-type headlines. Hugely funny, in a good humoured, light-hearted look at the game.’ This statement is arguably revealing in terms of identifying a particular genre through his reference to ‘Sun-type headlines’. Woolnough told how the match would draw headlines like ‘Battle of Britain – that’s how it will be looked at’. He explained: ‘You don’t go out to create a nasty situation, its just ‘we’ll beat the Jocks’ and ‘they can’t play football’,

136
that kind of stuff'. Asked if similar war imagery and terminology would be used in reference to the Germans, should England encounter them, he replied:

**BW**: Yeah, I'm sure, I know in Italia 90 when we got to the semi final with Germany, all those things came out again and inevitably they'll come out again. I'm sure it'll go on, there's no point in me lying.

Henry Winter had predicted as much during a discussion about the coverage of a potential England versus Germany match, as the following lengthy, but informative passage shows:

**HW**: You get it from the Sun. I think most people would laugh if they read that kind of stuff, you know: two World Wars, one World Cup. Football does reflect, to a certain extent encourage, slightly frightening traits in our society but then I think it's more a reflection on our society. I don't know when Stuart Pearce or that lot went out in 1990 for the semi final, I don't think they were thinking 'Christ, this is revenge for Dunkirk!'

**EP**: Yet this is the kind of thing we frequently get evoked in the press.

**HW**: Yes, I mean you've got to remember that sometimes journalists might not believe these things but they will write them because it's good copy, evoking the 'Agincourt spirit' and such.

**EP**: What's the Telegraph's house-style on this then?

**HW**: I can't believe that people on the Desk would actually let something like that go, I mean to use the word 'war', which would be just crazy because it patently isn't a war. I would never use a war image knowingly because I think that football should know its place. You can't 'blitz' people or things like that, not when people have died from something like that. We tend not to use war images. I think anyone with any intelligence who's a journalist tends not to use them. The tabloids use them a lot. There's a real blurring, I mean football is war for some of them. It's a great sport, but it's still only sport. No one, people tend not to die during football matches actually on the field, so you can't use the images of a battlefield. I think anyone who's been near a war zone would say look, there's slightly more important things than football.

These thoughts echo the similar sentiments expressed by Harman, which were cited earlier. Winter also intimated that real conflicts could be devalued through the use of
warlike terms in media-sport. Moore revealed something of the Independent’s house-style on this issue when he remarked:

**GM:** *I don’t think we’d be starting off too many intros about ‘putting the steel hats on and going into the trenches to fight the Germans’ and that sort of thing, but you’d probably make reference to the fact that there is a traditional enmity between the two countries. I don’t think we’d be coming up with a World War II song. It may get a mention, certainly we’ve mentioned it when supporters are singing those songs, so sometimes it gets mentioned.*

As with the admission about the occasional use of national stereotypes, Moore’s response reveals that his broadsheet is not totally against the deployment of militaristic imagery. This will also be examined in the content analysis.

Having investigated some of their attitudes and values concerning linguistic style, the correspondents were asked if they intended to strike a patriotic tone during their reporting of Euro 96. Lacey and Harman shared a desire to remain as neutral as possible. The latter explained: ‘I might have a burning desire to see England do well, but I hope that that will not interfere with my ability to write objectively’. Winter articulated similar sentiments and emphasised the need for ‘detachment’. He commented:

**HW:** *I won’t, I don’t strike patriotic tones. I adore England, I couldn’t think of anything better than England winning, but you can’t. If you’re a journalist, you have to be detached and I will look on Croatia’s chances just as much as England’s chances. It’s not my job to sound a clarion call the night before, I’m not Henry V or anything, that’s not my job, that’s Venables’s job.*

In contrast, Steve Curry felt that ‘in a national sense, its our duty to fly the flag a bit’ and guaranteed that ‘there’ll be a bit of up and at ’em boys!’ Although conscious of a need to ‘write it as it is and as you see it and criticising team selections or performances if need be’, Curry said that ‘all the while you would obviously be
wanting England to win and writing as encouragingly as you can'. These views again
directly involve Curry in the relationship between national identity and media-sport.

Reflecting on whether the European Championships could, or would, be
framed in terms of a coming together, or union, of Europe, the correspondents had
different views. Harman, for example, saw Euro 96 as ‘a chance for sport to do what
politics sometimes can’t: bring nations together’. While Woolnough and Lacey were
adamant that the tournament should not be seen in these terms, Glenn Moore was
interested by the suggestion. He mooted:

**GM**: In terms of the EEC and so on? It might help; it might increase the sense of
being a part of Europe. Certainly there’s a lot of stuff going on in schools about the
countries coming. Depends a bit on how it goes regarding the crowds and how the
foreign teams are received and so on. It also depends how England go. If we win it,
there’ll be a sense of ‘we’re better than all this lot, why do we need them?’ It’s
difficult to tell, I’m not sure that it would affect the result of a European Referendum,
but it might increase very slightly a sense of being part of Europe.

Henry Winter, however, was cynical of Euro 96 being anything ‘more than’ a football
tournament. He argued: ‘You have to look at it purely from a footballing context. To
actually use it to reflect any sort of changing political or economic spectrum is
nonsense’. Winter gave a further fascinating insight into some of the production
practices involved as he highlighted how it was usually feature writers, rather than
sports writers, who were more likely to use such political allegories. He elucidated:

**HW**: I don’t think readers are simple enough to think that their football team is a
sort of sporting expression of politics or economics... But people have got so much
space to fill and people are looking for something different and you get feature
writers coming in and they’ve got a broader range of interests. You certainly
wouldn’t get that analogy made by football journalists. There are a lot of feature
writers who get involved and just write absolute nonsense. Editorials on football are
normally so far off the mark, they’re comical.

Despite this, Winter anticipated that such articles would be prevalent in the press
coverage of Euro 96, and that the England team was likely to be represented as a
barometer for the state of the nation more broadly. Certainly, this appeared to be the
case prior to the tournament, as was illustrated at the beginning of this chapter. Fellow
broadsheet writer, David Lacey, shared Winter’s views. However, Steve Curry,
enthusiastically recalling what he described as the ‘buzz’ after the 1966 World Cup
success, claimed that ‘the whole country picks up if your country wins: you go about
with a bounce in your step’.

The reflections from members of the press corps yielded a wealth of
information on some of the production codes and conditions that influence sports
reporting. As Digel (1995) has indicated, these conditions can be structural (involving
practical or economic factors); based on editorial values and objectives; or personal,
depending on ideas about the duties and responsibilities of a journalist and sense of
professionalism. All six correspondents came across as confident in their self-image as
a journalist for their respective newspaper. Their manner and their actual responses
suggested that they were very ‘open’ and unaffected by the interview process. They
had firm ideas about what their job involved, as well as their counterparts’ work
activities and professional practices on rival newspapers to their own.

In this sense, they revealed how they consciously adopted or refrained from
using certain production codes and practices, for example, in their linguistic style. The
Sun’s Brian Woolnough, for instance, was explicit in anticipating his newspaper’s
intended use of war imagery. It was also apparent, however, that sometimes the
intended meanings of the sports writers’ articles could be altered through other
production processes beyond their immediate control. The so-called ‘doctoring’ of a
piece or the adding of particular headlines by copywriters on the editorial desk, as
revealed by Winter and Woolnough, is a case in point. In summary, the information
obtained through the interviewing of the correspondents provides an invaluable insight
into the ‘making’ of media-texts by the press corps. How the television broadcasters produced such texts is examined below.

4ii. The BBC versus ITV

Sports events, according to Jhally (1984), have become ‘spectacles of accumulation’, meaning that media-sport, television in particular, produces significant economic capital. MacNeill (1996: 103), employing this concept, examined how television networks, through the purchase of exclusive media rights, strategically employ sport as a ‘spectacle of accumulation to boost ratings, expand market positioning, and to attract sponsors, while blocking media competitors’. This has led to the ‘cut-throat competition’ and multi-million dollar and pound investment involved in acquiring such mega sports properties as the broadcast rights to international sporting events (McKay & Rowe, 1997).

Such inflated figures were involved in the securing of the television coverage of Euro 96. The European Broadcasting Union paid £44m for the broadcasting rights, with the two British terrestrial companies, the BBC and ITV, spending a total of £10m for their share of the rights and costs as joint-host broadcasters (Times, 30 January 1996: 1). The power of economic forces, and production of capital, through spectacles of accumulation was demonstrated further as the primary sponsorship and television rights for the rest of the world were sold for £24.4m (Times, 30 January 1996: 1).

The agreement drawn up in January 1996 between the BBC and ITV ensured the two broadcasters would share the live coverage of all 31 matches in Euro 96. The deal guaranteed that there would be no duplication of live games until the final stages of competition. Both companies would screen the final, but the BBC were to have
first choice of the quarter-final matches; both would screen a semi-final involving England or Scotland; and each broadcaster had the first option to screen highlights of matches they did not cover exclusively live. Media commentators saw the deal as particularly significant. Russell Thomas of the Guardian (30 January 1996: 1) observed how: ‘the shared coverage of England’s biggest soccer jamboree since 1966 presents terrestrial TV viewers with rare blanket coverage of top-class football’.

BSkyB, who had enjoyed extensive coverage of live football since 1992 when they won exclusive rights to matches from the newly formed English Premier League, only had news access to Euro 96.

ITV’s Head of Football, Jeff Fanner, was said to be ‘delighted with ITV’s package’ having ‘negotiated a sensible arrangement with the BBC’ (Times, 30 January 1996: 1). However, the latter was generally seen to be the victor in the deal. The Corporation had previously struggled to match the inflated prices of the commercial networks for live sport (in particular football) and subsequently found its sports portfolio shrinking year-on-year (Boyle & Haynes, 2000: 211). Thomas, reporting on how the BBC had hailed its capture of the England-Scotland match as the ‘potential coup of the tournament’, commented:

In claiming the game’s oldest international on June 15 at Wembley, the BBC has salvaged some pride after the recent devastating loss of the FA Cup final, its exclusive property for more than fifty years, to ITV from 1998 (Guardian, 30 January 1996: 1).

The BBC’s Niall Sloane explained during interview (1 March 1996) that: ‘That game started the negotiation. When we saw how the games pan out, everybody saw England versus Scotland; you cannot get away from that game. That game was at the top of the pyramid for the first phase. That started the negotiation with ITV… The nation will stop that afternoon’. Asked which nation he meant, Sloane pondered:
‘What is a nation? What is a country?’ before confirming ‘England and Scotland, Northern Ireland and bits of Wales will stop’.

Sloane privately conceded that ITV had ‘very marginally’ a better package ‘because they’d been given two England games and two Scottish games’ relative to the BBC’s single fixture involving the two British nations, albeit the actual encounter between the two. However, in public it was reported how: ‘BBC chiefs were ecstatic about securing the all-British contest’ (Guardian, 30 January 1996: 1). Brian Barwick, Head of Production for BBC Sport, was quoted as stating: ‘It is a massive match - the focus of the opening round’. Barwick seemed content that, to some extent, the BBC was appearing to justify ‘the institution’s claim to be reflecting the cultural life of the UK’ by delivering a key sporting event to the national audience: ‘one of the cornerstones of its Public Service Broadcast remit’ (Blain & Boyle, 1998: 367).

Sloane added further gloss to the importance of the deal during his interview (1 March 1996). He explained:

NS: It’s massively significant for us and I think it’s massively significant for the British public because if other people had of got hold of those events [Euro 96; France 98 and the Olympic Games until 2008] rest assured you’d be paying big sums of money for it. If they choose to offer Bruno - Tyson for £10, how much would the final of the 100 metres in the Olympics be? How much would the final of the World Cup be? You’d pay a lot of money in those terms.

EP: So it’s important that you’re still providing the British public with a service?

NS: I feel it is. You’ve seen yourself the continuing row within the National Heritage Committee into it and all about the list of events and what can be protected, it’s massively significant. It’s a very, very big debate.

These comments would appear to be indicative of the contention that the BBC and public-service broadcasting in general is struggling to redefine itself as the ecology of broadcasting in Britain rapidly alters in the late 1990s (Goodwin, 1998). Terrestrial television companies, especially the publicly funded BBC, can rarely compete with the
economic might of the major global networks and multi-media cartels, especially following the innovations of cable, satellite and digital services. Sloane clearly did not underestimate the acquisition of the broadcasting rights to Euro 96. Additional views and thoughts of Niall Sloane, obtained through an interview prior to Euro 96, are discussed below.

4iii. Sloane on the BBC's Production of Euro 96

Sloane was initially asked whether he deemed the BBC to have a distinctive style. Sloane clearly sought to define the BBC's 'particular style' in juxtaposition to the Corporation's (unnamed) competitors. He explained:

NS: I think our style tends to be to let the sport happen and then make some television. I think other broadcasters tend to make television around the sport. We, I think, treat sport with slightly more respect than others. We get accused of being boring and bland and conservative, but I think over the years our style has been appreciated by the British public and even in the face of increased competition it is still appreciated. Other broadcasters are a little bit more, to use the ghastly quote, 'in your face' than we are.

This definition provides a useful insight into some of the production codes that shape the BBC's programming. The key to this, claims Sloane, is the principle of 'letting the sport happen and then making some television' rather than 'making television around sport' in what he reluctantly described as an 'in your face' way. Following his definition of the BBC's broadcasting style, Sloane was asked to comment on how, in light of the Corporation's mission statement to 'Inform, Educate and Entertain', he intended to achieve this during coverage of the European Championships. Again, his response was very revealing in terms of the production codes that can be associated with BBC television:
NS: ‘Inform’: we’ll cover the tournament comprehensively, matches, news, whatever goes on around it. Let’s go to ‘Entertain’ next: we would hope that with the quality of broadcasters that we have, entertainment doesn’t mean people giggling, it’s people seeing product and enjoying it, with the quality of broadcasters we have... we would hope that people will be very much entertained by what they see and hear. There will also be hopefully a couple of comedy items within it, but I think part of the BBC’s brief in the past has not been to chase that for the sake of it. If it’s there do it, if it’s not don’t invent it. ‘Education’: I think we’ve got quite a good track record. We’re the company that sent people into Croatia pre-Christmas to say the Croatians are coming to this country. This is the war torn nation but this is how they play football and how a player like Boban can strike a policeman on the pitch in the middle of the war and still get away with it and how you’d use the current situation. I don’t think too many other companies in this country would have made that sort of item.

Sloane was subsequently asked whether any other educational features on Croatia, or other nations, similar to the one mentioned, were planned. Sloane’s answer outlined the BBC’s position on such content in sports programming: ‘I don’t think that’s necessarily our brief in terms of what happens in that country economically, politically, socially, culturally’. Invited to expand on this, he explained:

NS: When they get here we will concentrate on the football, I mean there’s no point saying ‘Italy are a wonderful football team, but the political system’s knackered and there’s yet another general election going on’. Do we say, ‘oh look, the Germans are playing very well but economically they’re a bit shagged at the moment’. I don’t think people watching sports programmes want to be brought into that. There is some point in saying ‘Croatia have achieved wonders given the problems that they’ve had as a nation’ but I don’t think anything in greater depth is our province.

While media analysts have identified how political, economic and cultural moments or issues from the broader society can be reflected or amplified in media-sport (Boyle & Haynes, 2000; Maguire, 1993a, 1994; Blain et al., 1993), Sloane here categorically distances the BBC from such an intended practice.

It was suggested to Sloane that politics often become embroiled in sport, and that the media frequently frame sports in political terms. The England versus Scotland fixture was identified as a match that would predictably be represented in this way because of rivalries, past and present, from on and, more significantly, off, the sports
field. When Sloane was asked how he foresaw the BBC’s coverage of the match, he stressed a need ‘to get the thing in perspective: it’s a game of football, its entertainment, it should be fun’. He continued:

NS: We know wars have started because of football but you’ve got to get the thing in perspective. It’s a game of football, it’s entertainment, it should be fun... It’s traditionally been a very passionate encounter. There’s been a long history of rivalry and long may that continue...

Asked what he thought was at stake for the nations involved, Sloane observed:

NS: The stake is, you could call it national pride. It’s good for the man in Glasgow to say ‘Hooray! We beat the English!’, good for the man in London to say ‘Hooray! We beat the Scots!’ In all walks of life, with England and Scotland, there’s a bit of rivalry. Like there’s a bit of rivalry between England and France. That exists, that isn’t going to go away and that’s not unhealthy. What is unhealthy is for the passion to boil over into anger.

Questioned further, it became evident that Sloane would actually counsel his commentary team to avoid references to war or militaristic imagery, especially in relation to Germany. Anticipating how the BBC would cover a potential England versus Germany match, he stated:

NS: We would say this game will obviously stir up passion, here we are again, England versus Germany, it’s a fixture that always stirs up passion, we know that. We wouldn’t go into the reasons why and we won’t promote it. That would be very wrong.

Sloane also indicated his aversion to the use of national stereotypes: ‘I’m not a great fan of that. I’m not a fan of labouring it. I’m not massively impressed by it. If you see Cantona do something with massive flair... I don’t think it’s because he’s French full stop. It’s because he’s been coached in a certain way’. This led on to a discussion about European football during which Sloane told of his personal enthusiasm for the continental game and how that had influenced the BBC’s football coverage. He explained:
NS: I've always been keen on the European aspect of football in what may have been deemed quite an insular sports department in the early 80s when I got charge of my first football programme which was 'Football Focus'. I got in as much European football as I could which hadn't really been done before within the BBC. I've always been keen on it. I like European football and I like European aspects. I like the differences in the cultures.

In light of these sentiments, Sloane was asked how this might be reflected in the BBC's reporting of Euro 96. Sloane told of his intentions to present a 'European perspective' in the Corporation's coverage and explained: 'I am keen that we show this tournament in England as being part of the European context, European football'. This, he maintained, should have nothing to do with European politics, or be couched in terms of a coming together of European nations in any political sense. Sloane's simple intention was that: 'we will promote the joy of having a European tournament'. These sentiments were evidently behind the BBC's adoption of Ode to Joy, which was the cause of the controversy outlined previously.

As with the journalists' interviews, the meeting with Niall Sloane proved to be highly informative. Sloane was very interested in the research project and appeared to given 'open' and uninhibited answers. He was able to illuminate some important production codes and conventions of broadcasting generally, including those specific to the BBC. Some of these were based upon what was considered to be a distinctively 'traditional' BBC broadcasting style, while others were evidently directly influenced by Sloane's editorial whims. His constant emphasis on his desire for the BBC's Euro 96 coverage to reflect 'internationalism' is a case in point. This concern, and others such as his brief to commentators to avoid war imagery and national stereotyping, will be discussed further during the analysis of the television coverage of the tournament in Chapter 6.
5. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have looked at the political, economic and professional processes that shaped the hosting of Euro 96 and making of the media-sport texts from the tournament’s coverage. This began with a briefing on the difficult politico-economic context that marked the backdrop to Euro 96. The ‘Beef Crisis’ and the issue of ‘Europe’ more broadly compounded other dislocating trends in English society. This seemed to provoke an aggressive ethnic assertiveness/defensiveness from certain quarters. The media-framed ‘Beef War’ was a common feature, not just in mainstream news reporting that regularly employed sporting metaphors, but increasingly in the sports coverage itself, so establishing the tone for what was to come during Euro 96 a few weeks later. This illustrates how sports events can become steeped in wider cultural and political references in media discourse. In this connection, the codes involved in the framing of sporting contests in this manner can stimulate dormant memories or sentiments. An example of this is the anti-German tones that emerged in the rhetoric of the ‘Beef Crisis’.

The chapter has also explored some of the figurational dynamics pertinent to this study. This involved presenting an interpretation of the responses gained from interviews with key actors involved in the hosting and mediation of Euro 96, namely Glen Kirton (the Tournament Director) and significant media personnel. The revelations from the interviews were very informative. A good rapport was struck with all of the interviewees who appeared willing to help. As such, they all seemed to talk openly and candidly.

The media personnel in particular gave an invaluable insight into the codes, conventions and processes that underpin the production of media-sport texts. Consequently, this also gave an idea of the ‘preferred meanings’ behind their
forthcoming coverage of Euro 96. These insights and the detail given on the economic forces involved in media-sport will be most useful during the content analysis of the Euro 96 texts in the next two chapters. Rowe (1999: 97) has indicated how:

Suitably equipped with an appreciation of the forces and processes of varying magnitude that go to produce media sports culture, it is important to understand something of how its texts are structured, the forms they adopt, and the ways in which those texts work in connecting sport's processes and audiences.

With the former accomplished, the structure and form of those texts are the subject of the quantitative analysis in the chapter that follows.

Notes

1. 'Mad cows and Englishmen' is adapted from the lyrics of a Noel Coward song: 'Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun!' Its use in this sub-heading is not meant to be negatively 'gendered' in any way.

2. 'Up Yours Delors!' is an infamous Sun front-page message from November 1990, directed at the Frenchman, Jacques Delors, who was President of the European Commission, which was responsible for planning the introduction of European monetary union. Four pages of anti-French 'jokes' and stories followed it.

3. Helmut Kohl was the ruling German Chancellor at the time. The intended meaning here, one assumes, is that national sovereignty is being ceded to a German-led European super-state.

4. This plays on the theme tune of Dad's Army, a long-running BBC television comedy series about the exploits of the Home Guard during World War II. Its theme contains the lyrics: 'Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler, if you think old England's done?'

5. In addition to its popularised theme music, the BBC's comedy Dad's Army, is also associated with its opening titles that feature a map with flag-tipped arrows showing the direction of invasions and counter-attacks during the war effort. Such a map was also utilised by the Independent (23 May 1996: 1, supplement). The familiar flag-tipped arrows were used to depict the potential arrival of Italian, French, Dutch and German 'Barmy Armies'. The feature went on to address the concurrent scare-mongering by some newspapers about the possibility of public disorder by 'football hooligans' during Euro 96. For example, the Times (29 May 1996: 8) warned how 'Rival Gangs Plan Fights by Fax and Mobile Phone', while the Daily Telegraph (3 June 1996: 1) led with 'Fascist Fear Over Euro 96 Tickets'. The Independent's article (23 May 1996: 1, supplement) concluded: 'The reality, however, is not that Britain needs to brace itself for invasion from hooligan armies, but that the 350,000 overwhelmingly polite, well-behaved and well-heeled foreign visitors will need protection from a significant threat to their well-being: the locals'.
6. This headline offers some clever word play on a well-known wartime phrase. It arguably illustrates the importance of the sport-war connection to the national habitus of sections of the English.

7. The BBC has not screened live domestic English football since 1988 when ITV brokered a four-year deal with the Football League. When negotiations began for live coverage of the new Premier League in 1992 – won comfortbly by Rupert Murdoch’s BSkyB – the BBC was not even a viable player (Boyle & Haynes, 2000: 211).
CHAPTER 4

THE ENGLISH PRESS COVERAGE OF EURO 96:
A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines and offers an interpretation of the quantitative results from a content analysis of the English newspapers’ coverage of Euro 96. The aim is to gain a preliminary insight into the framing, construction and representation of national identities, and identity politics more broadly, in the press coverage of the tournament. The quantitative analysis provides a basis for understanding the character of the press coverage by presenting measures of the frequency with which specified discourse variables appeared. However, as was established in Chapter 2, a quantitative content analysis alone gives us only a limited understanding of the precise nature of the newspaper coverage (Gruneau et al., 1988). In order to understand the newspapers’ framing of Euro 96 more fully, the analysis is supplemented with a detailed qualitative analysis of the textual codes and messages. This is provided in Chapter 5.

The proceeding chapter is divided into specific sections. The first of these looks at the structure of the press coverage. Initially, this concentrates on the amount of newspaper coverage given to Euro 96, in terms of the number of articles, or ‘texts’, analysed. The gender of the articles’ authors is also noted. This involves a discussion about the arguably gendered nature of the reporting. The chapter then moves on to record the key journalistic styles and themes in the press coverage, citing common trends in content and subject matter. The leading ‘national character’ which was the subject of the texts is also quantified.

The remaining sections are themed around particular discourse variables. The linguistic style and use of evocative language deployed by the media personnel are
considered. This includes a quantification of the prevalence of personal pronouns, narcissism and war vocabulary/militaristic imagery. On this basis, an examination of the prevalence of discursive themes explicitly related to national identity is then undertaken. Specifically, this involves a calculation of the amount of articles containing national stereotypes, national sentiments and national symbols. Finally, before a concluding summary on the overall findings and observations, attention is given to the degree to which historical references are made, especially relating to nostalgic discourse, habitus codes and invented traditions.

The research methods adopted for the quantitative analysis have been detailed in Chapter 2. However, some issues do need to be re-emphasised. Firstly, the frequency of reference to each discourse variable is presented as a mean percentage figure. This is to allow for disparities between the respective newspapers, in terms of the varying number of Euro 96 texts that they generated, to be accounted for. Secondly, the results provided in this chapter are sometimes displayed in 'tabloid' and 'broadsheet' groupings in order to engender comparisons between the two journalistic genres. Lastly, the results give an overview of the whole 25-day tournament in June 1996. They also allow for a week-by-week breakdown and therefore provide a further comparative element. These weeks are defined as follows:

- Week 1: Friday, 7 June - Thursday, 13 June
- Week 2: Friday, 14 June - Thursday, 20 June
- Week 3: Friday, 21 June - Thursday, 27 June
- Week 4: Friday, 28 June - Monday, 1 July.

Weeks 1, 2 and 3 were full seven-day weeks, whereas Week 4 was just four days owing to the end of the tournament then being reached. The division of the results into
the respective weeks becomes significant when one considers the progress made by
the English national team into the later stages of Euro 96 and similarly, England's
opponents in the particular weeks. For example, during Week 3 the England team
played against Spain and Germany in the quarter and semi-finals respectively, so the
frequency of some of the discourse variables became more pronounced. The
implications of this will be explained in more detail during the course of the chapter.

2. The Structure of the Euro 96 Press Coverage

This section outlines how the press reporting of Euro 96 was structured. The
results highlight some of the distinguishing characteristics between tabloid and
broadsheet newspapers. It also presents a breakdown of the amount of coverage given
to the tournament. This includes a record of the number of pages allocated by the
newspapers to sport and the actual texts within these pages focusing on Euro 96. The
gender of the texts' authors is also noted. This leads on to a discussion about the
gendered framing of Euro 96 by some newspapers and their journalists.

This section also provides an insight into the prevalent journalistic styles and
themes within the press coverage as it details some of the trends in content, subject
matter and the leading national character of articles. This involves a consideration of
Rowe's (1992) four typologies of sports journalism. Rowe classifies previews, post-
match analyses, and results as 'hard news': a staple feature of all sports coverage in
whatever genre of the press. This is in contrast to 'soft news' which characterises
tabloid reporting. 'Soft news', according to Boyle & Haynes (2000: 174) works in the
realms of 'infotainment' producing the latest 'scoops' or 'exclusives' as it trades in
'star gossip' and a biographical interest in key personalities in sport.

Another common feature found within sports journalism is what Rowe defines
as 'orthodox rhetoric': the critical comment offered by most sports writers, columnists
and correspondents. Rowe suggests that this tends to be rather conservative and conventional. In contrast, ‘reflexive analysis’ addresses the real problems of the sports process, eschewing any simplified celebration of sport as a socio-cultural good (Boyle & Haynes, 2000: 176). This mode of analysis is more regularly found in the broadsheets and is written not only by sports writers, but also by features writers. These typologies can be recognised in the structure of the press reporting of Euro 96, as will be highlighted below.

2i. Quantifying the Euro 96 Texts

Chapter 2 revealed that the broadsheets produced a total of 931 Euro 96 written texts, while the tabloids generated 1280. This is illustrated in Figure 1, which also indicates how many texts each of the respective newspapers produced. The number of texts confirms that the tabloid press gave the most extensive coverage to Euro 96, although broadsheet interest was still considerable. This is also evidenced, firstly by the number of pages given to sport by the newspapers (see Figure 2) and secondly, by the number of texts, written and visual, dedicated specifically to Euro 96 (see Figure 3).

Some 63% of all tabloid sports articles written in this period were concerned with Euro 96, compared to 41% of those in the broadsheets. The Daily/Sunday Mirror gave the most comprehensive coverage, with 78% of its sports articles and 83% of its sports illustrations related to Euro 96. The Sun/News of the World came second with 48% of its sports articles and 61% of its sports illustrations featuring Euro 96. The Daily/Sunday Telegraph had the smallest ratio with 42% of their sports articles focusing on Euro 96, while the Guardian/Observer had Euro 96 as the subject matter in well under half (42%) of its sports illustrations.
It is significant that the tabloid newspapers generated more texts than their broadsheet counterparts. This is due to the tabloids' stylistic nature, and their tendency to run shorter, smaller articles and features. The broadsheets also appear to have allowed their wider coverage of other sports and events to continue during the tournament, since over half of their sports articles were not based on Euro 96 (see Figure 3). This is perhaps understandable given that the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, Test match cricket, and some important pre-Olympic athletics meetings, were also taking place during June 1996. In spite of this, the tabloids, it would seem, allowed Euro 96 to dominate their agenda.

Only the main body of each newspaper edition was counted in terms of the number of pages per newspaper. This is particularly relevant when considering weekend newspapers, since the numerous additional supplements were omitted. Furthermore, weekend newspapers, particularly on a Sunday, tend to be longer. This affects the average number of pages per newspaper overall. The special sports supplements were usually run during the weekend by the respective newspapers and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>No. of EDITIONS ANALYSED</th>
<th>No. of EURO 96 ARTICLES ANALYSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Times / Sunday Times</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily / Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian / Observer</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sun / News of the World</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily / Sunday Mirror</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Broadsheets</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>931</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Tabloids</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>1280</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>2210</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
also, on Mondays; several newspapers also ran these supplements to preview, for example, the quarter- and semi-finals in which England appeared.

Figure 2: The Newspapers’ Page Dedication to Sport during Euro 96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF PAGES IN PAPER</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF SPORTS PAGES IN PAPER</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF PAGES IN SPECIAL SPORTS SUPPLEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Times/Sunday Times</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily/Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian/Observer</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sun/News of the World</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily/Sunday Mirror</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: The Newspapers’ Number of Sports Articles Dedicated to Euro 96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF SPORTS ARTICLES PER NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF EURO 96 ARTICLES PER NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF SPORTS ARTICLES DEDICATED TO EURO 96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Times/Sunday Times</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily/Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian/Observer</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun/News of the World</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily/Sunday Mirror</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 refers to the number of Euro 96 sports illustrations. These included anything visual rather than text-based, for example: photographs, graphics, logos and cartoons. Logos in particular featured frequently, with newspapers repeatedly utilising the official Euro 96 logo and also employing their own. This was especially prevalent in the tabloids where there was an abundant use of the Cross of St George. The Daily Mirror, for example, ran a logo featuring the English flag on many their sports pages with the slogan ‘We did it in ‘66, We’ll do it in ‘96!’
Figure 4: The Newspapers’ Number of Sports Illustrations Dedicated to Euro 96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATIONS PER NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF EURO 96 ILLUSTRATIONS PER NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATIONS DEDICATED TO EURO 96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Times / Sunday Times</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily / Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian / Observer</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun / News of the World</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily / Sunday Mirror</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sports articles and sports illustrations usually tended to be located in the sports pages. However, as Euro 96 unfolded, articles and illustrations were also found throughout the main body of the newspapers. It seemed that both the tabloids and, to some extent the broadsheets, were attempting to convey the message that football was ‘coming home’ and the whole English nation was getting behind the England team. ‘It was a night the nation will never forget’, said the Daily Mirror of England’s victory over Holland (19 June 1996: 1). Reporting on the England-Spain match, one of the broadsheets claimed that after David Seaman’s match-winning penalty save ‘the nation went crazy’ (Sunday Telegraph, 23 June 1996: 4).

These are just two examples of how both sections of the press attempted to mobilise their English readership into a unified, homogenous nation of football supporters, with Euro 96 allowed to dominate the front as well as the back, i.e. traditionally sports, pages. However, as Horne et al. (1999) have indicated, these attempts to construct a collective ‘us’ tended to conflict with the masculine-centredness of following sport. This issue is discussed below.
2ii. A Man’s Game?

In keeping with sports reporting more broadly, the majority of Euro 96 articles were written by male journalists. The statistics suggest that despite having more male-written articles, the broadsheets employed slightly more female writers than the tabloids: 7% of broadsheet Euro 96 articles were written by women compared with 6% of the tabloids’ (82% of broadsheet and 64% of tabloid articles were written by men). The Times/Sunday Times contained the most articles regarding Euro 96 (11%) written by a woman. This was probably due in the main to a daily sports column written by Lynn Truss throughout the tournament, as well as to Alyson Rudd and Louise Taylor being on the regular sports staff. It should be noted that 30% of tabloid articles were written by persons of unspecified gender, in contrast to just 11% of broadsheet articles. This might explain the differences between the broadsheet and tabloid articles’ male-female author ratio. The reason for the large proportion of articles written by persons of unknown gender in the tabloids is largely due to the numerous small articles which characterise tabloid reporting, but which tend to go unaccredited.

A further common trend in the tabloids was that the female-written articles tended to be located in the main body of the newspaper rather than in the sports pages. There were no named female sports writers in the tabloids; female journalists were either news reporters or feature writers. Their articles were often glossy features in terms of journalistic style, and concerned with a ‘human interest’ angle, detailed in the next section. Some of these articles were actually located on a specifically designated ‘Women’s Page’, such as ‘Sun Woman’ in Wednesday editions of the Sun or the daily column by agony aunt ‘Marje’ in the Daily Mirror.

The ratio of male-to-female journalists becomes particularly relevant when one assesses the potentially gendered nature of the way that Euro 96 was framed. Rowe et
al. (1998: 126) suggest 'the sporting nation is constructed by the media in a highly gender specific manner'. Consideration is given here to whether or not the constructions and representations of national identities in the press coverage were inclusive and embracing of both genders, or whether there was evidence of any gender exclusivity.

Euro 96 was specifically marketed as a family occasion, with women specifically targeted by an FA publicity campaign. Despite this, images and words used in the newspaper coverage, particularly in Weeks 1 and 2, reinforced an impression of Euro 96 as a heterosexual, male-defined event. As is the norm in sport and media-sports, the asymmetrical gender marking (Duncan & Messner 1998: 170) of male and female sports events was evident. The competition was never referred to as the Men's European Football Championships. The assumption was evidently that it was a male event since gender marking usually occurs in the labelling of female sports events. Repeated references were made to the fervour required of all 'Englishmen' in backing their team (Sunday Times, 9 June 1996: 24 - italics added). Seldom did the increasingly patriotic discourse embrace both genders.

A rare exception was found in the Independent (20 June 1996: 3), which reported how: 'There was a spring in the step of Englishmen and women yesterday after the success of their no-hope, drunken, burnt-out football team'. The tabloids especially - with the Sun in particular - tended to include men only in its attempts to mobilise 'the nation', excluding and disregarding any possible female support. The newspaper employed 'Page 3 legend' Samantha Fox to endorse its supporters campaign to 'Bang the Drum For Our Boys'. A front-page headline, laced with sexual innuendo, stated: 'England Expects Every Man to Do His Beauty: Wam-Bam Win It For Sam' (Sun, 15 June 1996: 1). The article was illustrated with a photograph of the
buxom model in a tight-fitting England football shirt beating a big-bass drum. Reference to ‘our boys’ was common, as was the general usage of personal pronouns to define allegiance and rivalry.

The Sun frequently used its infamous topless ‘Page 3 lovelies’ who ‘donned England football colours and painted their faces with the cross of St. George as Euro 96 fever swept the nation’, to promote support for the England national side. The tabloid even offered step-by-step instructions on ‘How to Put on Phwoar-Paint’² (Sun, 21 June 1996: 2-3). Whether these innovations can be interpreted as intended for the benefit of female readers, or instead for men, given the sexualised presentation, is cause for debate. For example, one edition on the day of the England-Germany semi-final had a photo of two women carrying the flags of these nations, and wearing only knickers, football boots and replica socks of the England and Germany teams. Beneath was the caption: ‘Fritz Out For the Lads’ (Sun, 26 June 1996: 3). Here, the Allies derogatory wartime name for the Germans (‘Fritz’) was adopted in a play on the macho call of ‘Tits out for the lads’.

In a revealing editorial, the Sun again, echoing the war-time orders given by Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar, offered the following advice to English supporters: ‘England expects every fan to do his duty. Get behind our boys at Wembley today... Let’s show Europe that the people who invented the game can still play it the best’ (Sun, 8 June 1996: 8). In addition to the gendered nature of this reporting other issues are revealed. The ‘call to arms’ has a wartime resonance to it and the notion of ‘us’ (the English) and ‘them’ (the Europeans) is also present through the inferred use of personal pronouns. The use of such pronouns has been highlighted by Elias through his work on established - outsider relations. These discourses will be revisited later.
The definition of Euro 96, football and perhaps sport more broadly, as a ‘male preserve’ was neatly encapsulated in a cartoon published in the Sunday Telegraph (9 June 1996: 10). In this, a ‘husband’, is seen entering his house with a crate of beer. A television set showing Euro 96 coverage is visible through the front window. In the caption, the man speaks to his ‘wife’ and says ‘I’m just going inside - I might be sometime’. This illustrates Horne et al.’s (1999: 180) contention about the construction of a masculine-centred sports fandom: ‘Men are portrayed as rooted to televised sport, whilst women fumed at being deprived of their favourite soaps in their normal slots’. Such gendered discourse was to be a consistent theme throughout the media coverage of Euro 96. There were numerous other cartoons dealing with a similar theme. For example, the Daily Mail (26 June 1996: 2) on the day of the England-Germany semi-final, ran one of a woman visiting a bookmakers, asking the bemused bookie, ‘What are the odds on my husband taking me to the cinema tonight instead of watching the match?’ Both of these cartoons illustrate how women were assumed to be, or at least portrayed to be, uninterested in Euro 96 and football in general.

An example of the way Euro 96 captured the imagination of the tabloid ‘human interest’ story-writers can be seen in the way that national allegiances were deemed to be a problem for marital relations. The Sun (20 June 1996: 4) urged English readers involved in Anglo-Spanish marriages to ‘Tell Us of Your Olé Deadlock’. Spouses were encouraged to telephone a special hot-line to tell how they intended to cope with the ‘family friction’ if ‘shouted down by partners displaying their famous fiery tempers’. Printing some of the responses a few days later, the Sun (22 June 1996: 4) announced: ‘Soccer Wives at War With Señors’. Such ‘problems’ were also highlighted against other opposition.
Sympathy was also given to the so-called ‘football widows’ - women who the tabloids assumed would be neglected for the duration of Euro 96, but with which their partners would be so besotted. In an article entitled ‘Time For Revenge’, the Daily Mirror (20 June 1996: 2) presented female readers with the following scenario: ‘The telly’s on. The man of the house has a lager in one hand and you are in for another 90 minutes of football fever’. The feature then presented ‘10 ways to pass a self-indulgent 90 minutes until the world returns to normal on July 1’. Such discourse arguably serves to stereotype males and females into ‘gender appropriate’ behaviour and interests, reinforcing Euro 96 as a male-defined event. Indeed, reaffirming the editor’s assumed female antipathy to Euro 96, the ‘Female’ supplement in an edition of the Daily Mail (27 June 1996: 1) was advertised on the front page of newspaper as a ‘Guaranteed Football Free Zone’.

Despite this, the ‘women of England’, were called upon by the agony aunt ‘Marje’ from the Daily Mirror. They were advised to be dutiful and sympathetic wives should ‘masculine pride be wounded’ were England defeated in the semi-final against Germany:

At such a moment of national disaster our men, usually so proud and upstanding, will fall into an abyss of despair. And at such a moment, they’ll depend on the women of England for their very survival... Women will already be aware of the disastrous effects this shameful defeat could bring. They’ll first notice the symptoms at bedtime, for it’s not only their spirits that will droop...The tried and tested method of flattery will get you everywhere. It rarely fails...and remember to put his favourite scoff on the table... The gentle whiff of sausages, beans and chips could have the desired effect and stir his senses. Buy a few girlie mags and entertaining videos on the off chance. You never know, his glazed eyes might show a trace of the old sparkle... But I must stress - don’t rush him. His masculine pride will reassert itself in time (Daily Mirror, 26 June 1996: 5).

Any remote female interest in Euro 96 and the actual football itself, was reduced, at least by the tabloids, to how sexually attractive the players were thought to be. This view was demonstrated before the tournament had even begun:
There’s more than one reason to tune into the Euro 96 championships. For the true fan it may all be about goals, complicated off-side rules and dodgy referee decisions. But soccer widows can still turn on for an eye-full of football’s finest thighs and beautiful behinds. To help we’ve picked our own fantasy football team from some of the sexiest studs on show - and we don’t mean the ones on boots! (Daily Mirror, 3 June 1996: 8)

Having challenged the potential for any female knowledge of the game itself, the article then previewed a selected ‘fantasy football team’, employing double entendres to describe the chosen players. Paolo Maldini, for example, was said to ‘firm in the tackle’. As the tournament went on, the Sunday Express gave weekly updates on their ‘Euro 96 Hunk Watch’, again suggesting that if women were interested at all in the football, it was in the footballers’ physical appearance, rather than footballing prowess.

As the England team progressed, the media in general appeared to attempt to mobilise the whole nation into a patriotic fervour and support for the national team. This, arguably, brought a change of tack from the tabloids, who began inviting the ‘other half’ of the population to join the ranks. In ‘the offer you never thought you’d see in Sun-Women’, the newspaper offered its female readership the chance to win Euro 96 tickets as it asked: ‘Wanna score with the lads, girls? Win our Euro 96 tickets and they’ll be over the moon’ (Sun, 19 June 1996: 7, female supplement). ‘Sun-Woman’ also advertised a ‘super England supporter’ bra set complete with ‘a St. George Cross on each cup’ (Sun, 21 June 1996: 3), as it encouraged women to ‘Give ‘em a Cheer Girls’.

As football’s homecoming was increasingly framed as ‘getting nearer every day’ (Sun, 23 June 1996: 4), numerous female columnists professed to have undergone something of a ‘conversion’. Jane Moore, the Sun-Woman Editor, for example, announced in a headline: ‘EN-GIRL-AND - Now Even I’ve Stopped Hating Footie and Gone Euro 96 Loopy’ (Sun, 26 June 1996: 7, female supplement). Similarly, self-professed former ‘soccer hater’ Mary Kenny, in the Daily Express
declared: 'I Repent! I Recant! It's Not So Bad a Game After All'. She explained, in a somewhat patronising tone, that this was because she had been impressed by 'the effect Euro 96 seems to have on people, particularly young men, who are in some ways the most problematic group in our society today... It lifts their spirits. It gives them confidence. It provides them with a sense of pride in themselves and in their nation' (Daily Express, 22 June 1996: 8). She added however, that football was a 'masculine thing' and a forum for male 'bonding'. This echoes much of the previously illustrated gendered discourse surrounding Euro 96 that defined the tournament as a 'male' event.

An interesting 'conversion' was that of Lynn Truss. Truss was a weekly broadsheet sports columnist who, despite this fact, always appeared somewhat disinterested and dispassionate about sport, especially football. Her column articulated an apparently 'typical female' attitude of ambivalence and apathy towards Euro 96 from the outset, then gradually and reluctantly, attempted to come to terms with the way she was becoming swept up in the fervour that began to envelop the tournament. Throughout, however, she remained somewhat reserved and aloof:

Football's coming home, la, la, la. Football's coming home, dee-dee-dee. Honestly, what on earth am I doing here? What has happened? The Times sent me out and about to Brighton pubs on Saturday to watch the England versus Scotland match on television... and now I wander in a state of identity amnesia, trying to pull my old football-ignorant self safely around my shoulders again, like a - well, like a slippery old cardigan. I try saying 'Euro 96? What's that?' but I can't get the words out any more (Times, 17 June 1996: 27).

Some of her observations also reinforced socially determined gender-appropriate interests in a way not too dissimilar to the discourse found in the tabloids. She enquired, for example: 'why are football souvenirs so tacky? Is it because men don't know about shopping?' (Times, 26 June 1996: 50).
As the England team progressed through the tournament, media and popular interest in Euro 96 seemed to grow, actually embracing both genders. Amy Lawrence, a regular football correspondent for the broadsheet Sunday newspaper, the Observer, noted:

The Wembley crowd has had a noticeably different flavour during the tournament, the almost exclusive image of the young, white male replaced by a welcome cross section of age, sex and colour (Observer, 23 June 1996: 3, sport supplement).

Similar observations were made by a male counterpart, Paul Hayward from the Daily Telegraph:

Last night there were men dressed as lions - and sweating gallons with it, too - and men with specially commissioned Gazza haircuts... And it has not been solely a male phenomenon. New Laddism may be one of the corollaries of football's renaissance, but the terraces are increasingly packed with women eager to share football's ever mounting dramas (Daily Telegraph, 27 June 1996: 28).

These excerpts are hardly a substantive basis for making a sociologically sound judgement regarding the social composition of crowds or television audiences. However, there appears to be some sense of recognition by these observers that Euro 96 was not perhaps the exclusively male-defined event that was constructed and represented by the tabloid press, particularly during the early stages of the tournament. Despite this development, as the tournament went on the press coverage of Euro 96 overall ensured that the tournament was framed in highly gendered terms. This arguably demonstrates MacNeill's (1996: 104) contention that 'sporting spectacles contribute to the legitimization of select elements of a national and highly gendered culture'.
2iii. Common Trends in Content and Subject Matter

There were some predictable stylistic and thematic distinctions between the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, reflecting their respective ‘house-styles’ that were defined by the football correspondents during interview (see Chapter 3: 4i). However, there were some thematic similarities between the broadsheets and tabloids in their Euro 96 coverage. Both the broadsheet (17%) and tabloid (19%) articles had impressions/points of view (i.e. ‘orthodox rhetoric’) as their main themes. This was followed by match preview and match highlights (i.e. ‘hard news’).

The broadsheets and tabloids also employed some similar journalistic styles in their coverage of Euro 96. The most prevalent journalistic styles in the Euro 96 articles were match reports/commentaries (‘hard news’) and comment/opinion columns (‘orthodox rhetoric’). In the broadsheet coverage, 38% of Euro 96 articles were match reports/commentaries and a further 19% were comment/opinion columns. In slight contrast, fewer tabloid articles (19%) were match reports/commentaries, whereas more tabloid articles were comment/opinion columns (23%). Other common tabloid styles were short news items (14% compared with only 6% in the broadsheets) and articles that were styled by gloss (10%, in contrast to just 2% in the broadsheets).

One of the most distinctive differences between broadsheets and tabloids is the latter’s preference for ‘soft news’ (Rowe, 1992). This is manifest in the human interest stories and ‘glossy’ journalistic style, which is characteristically more frivolous, populist and partisan (Blain et al., 1993: 59). Brian Woolnough of the Sun explained during interview that his newspaper’s approach to football was of a ‘good humoured’ nature, and that they presented a ‘light-hearted look at the game’. The quantitative results confirmed this. In terms of journalistic style, 10% of tabloid articles were ‘glossy’, in contrast to just 2% of the broadsheets. There was a similar trend with the main theme of Euro 96 articles: some 14% of tabloid articles contained a human
"interest story" as their main theme, compared with just under half that (6%) of broadsheet articles. The small amount of broadsheet articles written, either in a 'glossy' style, or with a human interest story angle, tended to look at one of the national teams' experience of their English training camp, and English hospitality, or profile a leading player, looking at both his professional and domestic life. Such articles contrasted considerably however, with those found in the tabloids.

A whole variety of strategies were used to convince readers that 'we' were all 'in it together'. This was part of a common attempt to appeal to 'human interest' and to 'mobilise' support for the national team. A regular tactic to this end was obtaining celebrity endorsements to capture the public imagination. The Daily Mirror for instance employed the 'psychic powers' of Uri Geller who 'returned England's World Cup winning football to its Wembley home and urged Mirror readers to join him in willing the nation to victory' (Daily Mirror, 26 June 1996: 2). The England players themselves were also involved in the mobilisation of the nation's support. Paul Ince urged Sun-readers to 'Roar us to victory - you are now part of the team' (Sun, 25 June 1996: 3). The tabloid circulation contest that Steve Curry from the Daily Express had highlighted (see Chapter 3: 4i) was vividly in evidence. Free gifts were distributed to entice readers. The Daily Mirror gave out whistles to readers while the Sun, in conjunction with the confectioners Mars, gave out white plastic bowler hats emblazoned with the Cross of St. George.

An interesting attempt to mobilise its readership by the Sun was the resurrection of a motto that the tabloid created during the Falklands war. The newspaper back then claimed to be 'The paper that supports our boys' (Beard, 1998: 42). This slogan was featured with a minor alteration on its front-page title graphics during the later stages of the tournament as: 'The newspaper that genuinely supports
our boys'. This intensely patriotic use of personal pronouns was clearly intended by the Sun to promote itself in the tabloid circulation stakes. Whether the slogan was knowingly borrowed from its coverage of a military conflict is unclear.

Another thematic difference between the newspapers was in the 11% of broadsheet articles featuring analysis, compared with the 8% of tabloid articles. These findings are significant given the traditional journalistic features of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. The broadsheets are reputed to have a more 'sober' and 'objective' character (Blain & Boyle, 1993), hence their propensity for more formal (reflexive) analysis (Rowe, 1992).

It is of little surprise that the most common nation to dominate the written Euro 96 texts (i.e. the leading national character of the text) in the English newspapers was the home nation. England featured in 53% of the articles (see Figure 5). Yet, there was a considerable gap between England, and the second most frequently featured leading national character. This was Germany, who defeated England and went on to become the eventual winners of the championships. This partly explains why they were second-placed, albeit in only 7% of all articles. Scotland, an opponent of England and a constituent member of the United Kingdom, accounted for 6% of the articles. Holland, Spain (two more of England's opponents), Italy, France (a semi-finalist) and the Czech Republic (the losing finalist) each appeared as the leading nation in 3% of the articles. The Swiss (England’s first opponents) appeared in just 1%. The other nations' appearances were negligible.

This means that only nine of the participating nations recognisably constituted the leading national character in any of the Euro 96 articles. Turkey; Croatia; Denmark; Portugal; Russia; Bulgaria and Romania did not feature as the leading national character to any significant degree (see 'others' in Figure 5). A tentative
correlation might be drawn here with the fact that those nations, with the exception of Portugal, were non-member states of the EU. However, this is not necessarily to suggest that preferential treatment was given to member-states. Indeed it is more likely that nations featured more if they were successful and progressed into the later rounds of the tournament.

Evidently, as can be seen with reference again to Figure 5, the most common nations in Euro 96 articles were England and England’s opponents. With this in mind, it is worth noting the sentiments towards these leading national characters and how they were evaluated and written about. For example, 62% of all articles focusing on England were of a positive nature; 12% were negative and 26% were neutral. This is in keeping with Billig’s claim (1995) that nations tend to compare themselves positively with contrasting national groups. It also supports the Eliasian concept of a
nation's construction and representation of a 'fantasy image of one's own greatness' (Elias, 1996: xliii).

The negative articles written about England tended to be in Week 1 when there was still much criticism following the national team's behaviour on a pre-tournament training trip, coupled with dissatisfaction at their opening match performance. It is somewhat difficult, however, to compare the proportions of positive and negative sentiments written about England's opponents because of the disparities between the amount of articles written about the respective nations. For example, of the 3% of articles with Holland as the lead nation, 31% were positive about the Dutch; 8% were negative and 61% were neutral. With regard to the 3% of articles with an emphasis on Spain, 19% were positive; 18% were negative and 63% were neutral. Finally, Germany (the leading nation in 7% of all Euro 96 articles) had the fewest number of articles containing positive sentiments (28%), with 13% of articles being negative and 61%, neutral. These statistics should be considered relative to the proportion of actual articles concerned with the respective leading national character to allow for the differential between England, in particular, and the other most common leading national characters.

The sentiments expressed towards the different nations are explored in the qualitative analysis findings presented in Chapter 5. These are useful for evaluating the kinds of sentiments with which the respective nations were written about. The hostility aimed at the England team's opposition (Germany in particular) is symptomatic of Elias' understanding of established-outsider relations, outlined in Chapter 1. This tendency towards marking out other nations as different, or inferior to England, by articulating negative sentiments can be seen in an example with regard to Germany. The Daily Mirror (24 June 1996: 2) referred to the nation as 'England's old enemy -
defeated in two World Wars and one World Cup'. Such discourse serves to accentuate these established-outsider relations.

3. Linguistic Style and Evocative Language

In this section, the linguistic styles and use of evocative language in the respective newspapers are analysed. Once again, some marked differences were evident between the tabloids and broadsheets (see Figures 6, 7 and 8). Both the tabloid and broadsheet newspapers showed considerable evidence of the use of evocative language in their coverage of Euro 96. However, it was the tabloids that tended towards a greater usage of such discourse, as the revelations from the interviews with the football correspondents had suggested. This included the use of personal pronouns, narcissism and war vocabulary and/or militaristic imagery. These will now be discussed in turn.

3i. 'Them' and 'Us'

The newspapers' use of personal pronouns (‘we/they’, ‘us/them’) was considerably pronounced. This might have been expected from the tabloids, which have a tendency toward accentuating the differences between rivals and competitors (Blain et al, 1993; Blain & O'Donnell, 1998; O'Donnell, 1994; Tudor 1992). However, the use of these personal pronouns in the broadsheet newspapers was perhaps more surprising. As Figure 6 demonstrates, nearly a quarter of all broadsheet articles regarding Euro 96 featured the use of personal pronouns, while 39% of tabloid articles used such language. While the majority of Euro 96 texts evidently did not employ such pronouns, a significant proportion still did. Furthermore, we also need to bear in mind the latent content of the texts, which is considered more fully in the next chapter.
The use of personal pronoun pairs, such as 'we/they' and 'us/them', can have a powerful effect in generating feelings of inclusion and exclusion. As Elias & Scotson (1994) point out, one of the crucial problems in a study of inter-group relations is to establish how, and why, humans perceive one another as belonging to a 'we' group (the 'established'), while simultaneously excluding others and referring to them as 'they' (the 'outsiders'). The sports press has an influential role in the propagation of 'us/them' discourses through the language used in their reports (Blain et al, 1993; Blain & O'Donnell, 1998; O'Donnell, 1994; Tudor, 1992; Tuck, 1996). The prevalence of such discourses is potentially, therefore, 'flagged' in the minds of their readership. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

3ii. Simply the Best!

The tabloids' indulgent use of evocative language was particularly noticeable in the frequency with which narcissistic sentiments were expressed. Self-aggrandising sentiments were found in 22% of tabloid articles compared with 11% of broadsheet articles (see Figure 7 below).
Narcissism, manifest in extreme expressions of arrogance, assumed superiority and self-aggrandisement, was especially prevalent in the discourse reported in the tabloids. Journalists used language that exhibited a confidence, which verged on arrogance, as the England team progressed through the tournament, with more and more instances of these sentiments evident. This is demonstrated through looking at the newspaper coverage week-by-week (Figure 8). The broadsheets, it can be observed, tended to be more restrained. The highest proportion of narcissistic articles was in Week 3. This can be explained by the fact that in the third week of the championships, the England
team, having defeated Holland with an impressive 4-1 victory, then went on to beat Spain in the quarter-finals, earning them a ‘confrontation’ with old rivals, Germany. Self-confidence and optimism that football was indeed, ‘coming home’ were therefore running high. ‘We’ll Klin It Now!’ bragged the Sun (24 June 1996:32), punning on the surname of the German captain Jürgen Klinsmann.

It is also interesting to observe from Figure 8 how the tabloid coverage in Week 1 involved only a small amount of narcissistic articles. This was due to the tabloids’ vociferous criticism of the England team’s behaviour during their flight back from their pre-tournament Far East tour. ‘Cathay Clowns are a First Class Euro Disaster’ declared a Sunday Mirror headline (9 June 1996: 76-77), referring to Cathay Pacific (the airline used by the England team), after England’s opening draw with Switzerland. However, as the tournament unfolded, the national team appeared to redeem themselves with their performances and results. In Week 4, then, although Germany had defeated the England team, narcissistic articles were still present in the tabloids. This can be seen in the Sun’s proclamation of ‘LIONKINGS’ following England’s defeat by the Germans (Sun, 27 June, 1996: 1). The broadsheet journalists, who had joined in with the hyperbole and plaudits in Week 3, took a more reserved approach during the final week.

3iii. ‘Fighting Talk’!

As Figure 9 indicates, just over a quarter (26%) of all the tabloid Euro 96 articles made use of war language or adopted military metaphors, with the broadsheet articles containing slightly less in comparison (18%). Again, while the majority of articles refrained from using this kind imagery, a significant proportion of articles contained did contain such imagery. The qualitative findings presented in the next chapter are, therefore, perhaps more revealing in terms of the nature of some of the...
press coverage. For example, in arguably the most graphic headline of Euro 96, the Daily Mirror (25 June 1996: 1) declared 'Football War' on Germany, demanding on its front page 'ACHTUNG! SURRENDER'. Many broadsheet writers subsequently criticised the Daily Mirror for such jingoism. An example of this can be seen in the Times (25 June 1996: 56) observing how 'the heavy artillery of the tabloids went to work with their dismissal of Fritz, mock addresses from war bunkers and cartoons of England players in tin hats'.

Given the nature of the coding used in the content analysis, it should be noted that the data shown in Figures 9 and 10 include these instances where newspapers reviewed or commented on other sections of the media and their use of such discourse. As Chapter 5 explores further, some of the broadsheet articles classified as utilising war imagery were, in fact, commenting on the war-mongering carried out by their tabloid counterparts. This became particularly pronounced around the time of the England-Germany match. Consequently, the already smaller percentage of articles in the broadsheet newspapers containing evidence of war vocabulary would be reduced, if those articles concerning the tabloids' usage of war vocabulary were discounted. Unfortunately the coding system did not allow for this to be registered.

Figure 9: To Show the Percentage of EURO 96 Articles Employing War Vocabulary / Militaristic Imagery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Newspaper</th>
<th>% of Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tabloids</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadsheets</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

175
Figure 10 highlights the use of war vocabulary and militaristic imagery week by week throughout Euro 96. As with the escalating appearance of narcissistic articles during the course of the tournament, a similar trend can be recognised with more usage of war-imagery as Euro 96 progressed. Again, it is Week 3, in which the England team played Spain and Germany in the knock-out stages, where we find the most evocative use of such language. Some 23% of broadsheet articles and 34% of tabloid articles contained militaristic references, examples of which are given above. These will be examined extensively in Chapter 5 when the results of the qualitative analysis are presented.

This section has shown how evocative language was a distinctive feature of the press coverage of Euro 96. Broadsheets and tabloids alike recorded a considerable proportion of articles using personal pronouns, narcissism and war vocabulary/militaristic imagery as Figures 6-10 testify. The presence of these discourses suggest that the newspapers were vividly framing, constructing and reinforcing national identities in their coverage of Euro 96. This was done through reference to 'us' and 'them', as discussed by Elias and Scotson (1994) in connection
with established-outsider relations; through indulgence in plauditry regarding the England team (often at the expense of the opposition); and through an aggressive ethnic assertiveness with the use of the words of war. These discourses will be examined further in the following chapter. Now, however, we turn to even more explicit references to national identity.

4. Constructing and Representing National Identity

A discussion of the conceptualisation of national identity was presented in Chapter 1. The relationship between national identity, sport and the media was also undertaken in that context. The findings of the quantitative analysis reveal that discursive themes relating to national identity were highly evident in the press coverage of Euro 96. This was manifested explicitly in the deployment of national stereotyping (Figure 11); nationalistic sentiments (Figures 12 and 13) and through reference to national symbols (Figure 14).

4i. The Branding of Nations

Perhaps the most revealing results obtained in this study concerned national stereotyping (see Figure 11). National stereotypes present crude generalisations regarding the supposed national character of a respective nation (Tajfel, 1982; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Cohen, 1994; Billig, 1995). It is therefore interesting that the broadsheet articles featured more of these simplified images than the tabloids, given that the latter are often associated with a more 'chauvinistic' and 'bigoted' journalistic style (Boyle & Haynes, 2000; Blain et al., 1993). Indeed, broadsheet newspapers are ordinarily distinguished from the tabloids by their more impersonal, formal and detached mode of address (O’Sullivan et al., 1998: 136). Both the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers contained a sizeable amount of articles stereotyping national
characters. However, it was the broadsheets that most frequently deployed these stereotypes, with nearly a quarter of all articles on Euro 96 including stereotyped descriptors and images. This is compared with one fifth of tabloid articles (24% and 18% respectively, see Figure 11).

However, some of the 24% of broadsheet articles deploying national stereotypes were, in fact, commenting on the more explicit examples found in the tabloid press, such as the News of the World (23 June 1996: 4) branding the Spanish: ‘paella-eaters’. This helps to explain why the broadsheets recorded the highest percentage of stereotypical references. However, Chapter 5 will also show that although the broadsheets may have been subtler in their use of language and imagery, their reporting style arguably reinforced national stereotypes in ways not dissimilar to the tabloid press. Comments like ‘the mercurial Spain’ (Daily Telegraph, 19 June 1996: 48), emphasising the alleged volatility of the Spanish, and ‘Scottish doggedness’ (Daily Telegraph, 24 June 1996: 47) can potentially serve to reinforce crude images about the national character of other peoples.

![Figure 11: To Show the Percentage of EURO 96 Articles Containing National Stereotypes](image_url)
While a degree of sociological caution needs to be exercised, it could be suggested that because the broadsheets' stereotyping is not as obtrusive, or derogatory, as the more explicit examples in tabloids, the former may therefore have potentially more of an effect on readers' opinions of outsider groups. This hypothesis will be considered in more depth in Chapter 5.

4ii. Banging the Drum for England

The discourse variable concerned with nationalistic sentiments/nationalism included references of both a positive and negative nature in the coding system. Instances of its use were recorded both in reference to a newspaper's own nation/national team (which were ordinarily positive and prevalent in the broadsheets, but predominant in the tabloids) and also with regard to the opposition. References to opposing teams were more often negative and more common in the tabloids. Examples of positive nationalistic sentiments can be understood as the assertion of one's own national identity. This is illustrated by the Sun (15 June 1996: 1) calling on readers to 'Bang the Drum for Our Boys'. In contrast, negative nationalistic sentiments, or nationalism, tend to be derogatory and hostile towards other nationalities. For example, on the eve of England's meeting with Spain, a columnist for the same newspaper celebrated the opportunity that he believed the match presented. He observed: 'Our football team finally gets the chance to do exactly what our politicians are too scared to do, and stuff it right up Europe!' (Sun, 22 June 1996: 35). This remark was characteristic of the Sun's continued anti-European stance.
Billig (1995) has acknowledged the distinction between positive and negative nationalistic sentiments. He claims that when asserting a positive national identity of their own, nations/groups ‘tend to compare themselves positively with contrasting groups and that they do this by selecting dimensions of comparison on which they will fare well’ (Billig, 1995: 66). He suggests this might be done through the construction and re-presentation of ‘flattering stereotypes of themselves, and demeaning stereotypes of other nations with which they compare themselves; this aids the maintenance of the positive self-image’ (Billig, 1995: 66). This connects with the discourse variable of national stereotyping previously discussed (see Figure 11). In sum, then, the use of nationalistic sentiment in the English newspapers followed a more expected pattern, with the tabloids showing more evidence of it, especially of a negative form. As Figure 12 informs us, some 26% of tabloid articles contained examples of nationalistic discourse, compared to 18% of those in the broadsheets. Looking at the tournament coverage on a weekly basis, it is apparent that, as with narcissistic comments and war imagery, the newspapers in Week 3 proved to contain the highest percentage of nationalistic discourse (see Figure 13). This was true of both
broadsheets (23%) and tabloids (34%), with the latter again containing considerably more.

**Figure 13: To Show the Percentage of EURO 96 Articles Containing Nationalistic Sentiments / Nationalism (Week-by-Week)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Broadsheets</th>
<th>Tabloids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4iii. Flying the Flag

Figure 14 shows the percentage of Euro 96 articles making reference to national symbols, i.e. to flags, emblems or anthems. Euro 96 saw a media-generated re-emergence of the Cross of St. George, and the three lions, as the English flag and emblem. The Cross of St. George had been so often neglected in the past. Instead the Union flag of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which in effect had been misappropriated by the English as their own, had been preferred. Likewise, the 'British bull-dog'. In this connection, it has parallels to the synonymous use of 'England' and 'Britain' by many English people and foreigners alike, as if Britain was a monolithic state. This issue was raised by a commentator in a right-wing broadsheet who wrote 'Those responsible for marketing tournament paraphernalia are to be commended for their sensitivity in not exploiting the Union flag for a provincial interest' (Daily
Telegraph, 25 June 1996: 23). Making another astute political observation, Matthew Engel of the left-wing Guardian wrote:

This new cult of St. George, previously only invoked in the annual April 23 piece in the [right-wing] Telegraph or Mail moaning that no one takes any notice of him, seems more agreeable than the old union-jackmanship that used to accompany the England football team (Guardian, 24 June 1996: 8, sports supplement).

Broadsheet and tabloid writers agreed that, in the words of the Daily Mirror (24 June 1996: 7), ‘for too long the flag of St. George has been hijacked by the xenophobes of the Right’. The bull-dog emblem had also been associated in the past with neo-fascist bigotry.

Numerous articles commented on, and arguably further amplified, the revival of the English national symbols. The Sun actively encouraged and attempted to mobilise the use of the Cross of St. George, exhorting at the start of the tournament through the use of accentuated personal pronouns: ‘Let’s be proud of our country and our flag’ (Sun, 8 June 1996: 6). The tabloids employed a variety of techniques to promote the flag and avoid the use of the Union flag. Cut-out-and-keep coloured flags of St. George were commonplace, as were illustrations of England players or other sporting celebrities draped in the flag. The popularity of the flag was confirmed by the Sunday Times (23 June, 1996: 24), which reported: ‘Patriotism is suddenly back in vogue. Turtle and Pearce, a flag maker at Tower Hill, London, has had its busiest time since the Queen’s Silver Jubilee in 1977’. Newspaper photographers caught pictures of supporters ‘flying the flag’ and graphics departments produced banner headlines containing, within the emboldened lettering, the red and white cross, as in the case of ‘GOALÉ!’ after England’s victory over Spain on the back-page of the News of the World (23 June 1996: 88). Indeed, national symbols featured regularly in the form of sports illustrations. The Sun, for example, ran a regular graphic of the Cross of St.
George, emblazoned with a lions head and the caption 'ROAR FOR ENGLAND!'

Overall, 18% of broadsheet articles and 20% of tabloid articles referred to national symbols.

It is evident from these results that there was an active construction and re-presentation of national identity through a variety of related discursive themes in the press coverage of Euro 96. There was a particular prevalence of national stereotyping, more so in the broadsheets than the tabloids. This, rather unexpected result, has been explained by the fact that some of the broadsheet articles contained stereotypes as they commented on the tabloids' unsubtle deployment of such images. This will be explored further in Chapter 5. Nationalistic sentiments (both positive and negative) and reference to national symbols was also notable. The latter will be revisited in the next section that looks at how the newspaper coverage made regular references to the past.
5. Lest We Forget: The Prevalence of Historical Discourses

A key feature of the press coverage of Euro 96, in the tabloids and broadsheets, was a keen interest in history, both socio-political and sporting. The prevailing historical discourses coded in the content analysis were references to nostalgia, national habitus and invented tradition (see Figures 15, 16 and 17). The presence of these discursive themes in media-sport and their role in the construction and representation of national identity has been discussed in Chapter 1. Some of these conceptual issues will be re-addressed during this section detailing the prevalence of recalling the past, and reminiscing by journalists during Euro 96.

5i. 1966 and all that...

There was a particularly nostalgic character to all of the newspapers, as memories of the English World Cup victory of 1966 were rekindled. There seemed to be a hope that such success might be repeated thirty years on and that football, in keeping with the tournament slogan, would ‘come home’. Figure 15 shows how 15% of broadsheet articles and 16% of tabloid articles embraced this nostalgia for a former glorious age when the English nation enjoyed success, and power, not just on the football field, but in the political, economic and cultural spheres, as well.

Typical of such reporting was a tabloid editorial on the opening day of the tournament: ‘Euro 96 is the greatest sporting event we’ve seen in thirty years and with your support, we could win it... Let’s rekindle the glory days of 1966 and give the nation a huge dose of the feel-good factor’ (Sun, 8 June 1996: 6). The broadsheets shared similar sentiments. Henry Winter wrote with poetic verve:
The time has come for 11 Englishmen to relight the fire. Thirty years have crawled by since the game’s founders last progressed to a podium, pain following potential like locusts before harvest-time. Three years have passed since those who gather under the banner of St. George last ventured into a match of any competitive significance. England’s opportunity to restore the pride begins at 3pm sharp. Where else but Wembley, the venue for 1966 and all that, could England attempt their rehabilitation (Daily Telegraph, 8 June 1996: 30).

This eager sense of anticipation and expectation, coupled with the nostalgic reminiscence of the victorious year of ’66, was further reflected in the official song of the England team, Three Lions, with its mantra-like chorus of ‘It’s [football’s] coming home’. This appeared to capture and articulate the English national mood - at least as it was framed and represented by the media - as it reflected on ‘thirty years of hurt’ in which the England team had failed to achieve any notable success. The song celebrated golden moments alive in the memories of England football fans, and urged that football should ‘come home’, by means of victory in Euro 96.

The press played a role in popularising Three Lions as ‘the song caught on nation-wide’ (Daily Mirror, 27 June 1996: 2). The Sun, for example, endorsed the pop song by printing the ‘the words the whole nation must sing’ twice for its readers (Sun, 20 June 1996: 4 and Sun, 26 June 1996: 1). The song certainly appeared to be more popular than Ode to Joy, which, in addition to being used during the BBC’s tournament coverage, was played in the stadiums as the teams walked onto the pitch. This was seen in a report describing the build-up to the England-Spain quarter-final:

There was only one piece of pre-match entertainment which the fans really wanted and, eventually, they had it: Three Lions rang through the tannoy and England’s 70, 000 were off... ‘They can hear you in the dressing rooms’, the announcer yelled above the tune, driving the crowd to their vocal limit... The two teams, it was announced, would be led out by two local children sporting T-shirts with the message ‘Europe for Sports, Tolerance and Fair Play’. ‘England for England’ was the dominant sentiment as the teams appeared to a cacophony worthy of 70, 000. The din meant that Ode to Joy, the accompanying anthem of the European Union, was ignored. Three Lions was duly screamed forth as the appropriate welcome (Daily Telegraph, 27 June 1996: 3).
The passage also contains some interesting revelations about the patriotic feelings among the English crowd. It would seem that Glen Kirton’s wish for a sense of ‘internationality’ (see Chapter 3: 3i) had little resonance for many in the English crowd. At a more profound level, this could be interpreted as an example of a habitus code operating to entice a re-awakening of the ‘imagined community’ of the nation, thereby helping to confirm to members of the nation who they are. This is an example of the interplay between the practical and discursive levels of consciousness (Giddens, 1984), with the latter inspiring a more ‘active’ response from members of the nation through the singing of the pseudo national anthem.

5ii. Recalling the Past

Elias (1996) and Hobsbawm (1983) have respectively highlighted the importance of national habitus codes and invented tradition in the maintenance and promotion of national identity. Habitus, as discussed in Chapter 1, refers to the modes of conduct, taste and feeling which become internalised in socialisation processes and
predominate among members of particular social groups. The habitus of one’s own group/nation appears innate and natural, thereby rendering the other group’s difference abnormal (Mennell, 1994). Habitus codes, as was explained in Chapter 1, can be understood as ‘codes of being’, which are built around a core of significations, helping to shape our dispositions, embodied feelings and discursive practices. Maguire & Poulton, 1999).

Elias’ (1996) examination of the development of German habitus emphasises the importance of historical events in the construction, representation and perpetuation of a nation’s habitus, as widespread reactions to these or the level of feelings become deeply sedimented in the national character. While the Germans have experienced an altogether very different history, one that is marked by continual defeat and occupation by conquering powers, Elias’ observations about the Germans could tentatively be applied to the English and their national habitus. Elias contends that a (fallen) nation’s dream of their special charisma is ‘kept alive in a variety of ways - through the teaching of history, the old buildings, masterpieces of the nation in the time of its glory, or through new achievements which seemingly confirm the greatness of the past’ (Elias, 1994: xiiii).

Nostalgia is very much bound up with this process. Sports journalists can teach, or remind, people of their national sports teams’ past glories. Sporting experiences then - like that of England’s 1966 World Cup triumph - are a part of the national history of a country, and therefore, of the fabric of the national habitus. Sporting memories can often be sedimented as deeply as those of a socio-political origin (for example, world wars) in an individual’s I/we identity. The significance of sport was highlighted by Henry Winter in the Daily Telegraph (20 June 1996: 32). He noted how: ‘Sport can etch a collection of minutes into millions of memories’.
The way in which the year of 1966 is synonymous for so many English people with Bobby Moore victoriously lifting the Jules Rimet trophy is testimony to this. Any reference to ‘66 and all that can awaken a host of sleeping memories for the English (sporting) nation. There are many other readily available images associated with that golden day that are regularly evoked by media-sport. The Sun (8 June 1996: 34) observed how, if England were to win Euro 96, the ‘sight of him [Tony Adams, the England captain] lifting the trophy at Wembley on June 30 could become as indelibly etched on the memory as the image of Bobby Moore three decades ago’. Similarly, the Daily Mirror (22 June 1966: 1, Euro 96 supplement), reported how ‘fans are rushing out to buy replica red shirts, as worn by Sir Alf Ramsey’s World Cup winners thirty years ago’.

Figure 16 displays how 14% of broadsheet articles and 11% of those in the tabloids in some form sought to stimulate the national habitus. Although perhaps not representing a vast proportion of the newspapers’ total coverage, the results of the qualitative analysis indicate that this relatively small number of articles nevertheless contained some powerful evocations of the past and also the national habitus.

![Figure 16: To Show the Percentage of EURO 96 Articles Making Reference to National Habitus](image-url)
5iii. Celebrating Tradition

In Chapter 1, I examined how national symbols, a sense of a common history, heritage and tradition form the very fabric of a national character and confer meaning on what it is to be part of a nation. These national characteristics provide the focus of a national identity (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Calhoun, 1995; Gowland et al., 1995; Elias, 1996). Many national 'traditions', however, have been said to be ideological or 'invented'. Hobsbawm has best articulated this idea. He defines an 'invented tradition' as:

... a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to include certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983: 1).

Media-sport discourse draws upon such practices and rituals, which have come to symbolise what it is to 'belong' to a particular nation. Figure 17 indicates that 8% of broadsheet and 11% of tabloid articles made reference to various invented traditions. Although these percentages are not huge, the number of articles containing such references was not insubstantial. More interesting and revealing than the quantity of articles referring to invented traditions however, is the actual discourse and latent textual meanings, which Chapter 5 explores.

References to invented traditions in the Euro 96 newspaper coverage included the theme of football’s ‘homecoming’ to Wembley stadium, the heart of the English ‘motherland’ (Sunday Mirror, 16 June 1996: 82). Many journalists wrote with reverence about Wembley. This can be seen in the following example, which entwines the discourse of invented tradition, regarding the status of Wembley stadium, with nostalgia: ‘They flocked to the Venue of Legends, intent on acclaiming eleven new ones to add to the list of those who have graced the place during its glorious past’ (Sun, 27 June 1996: 53).
Other evocations of invented traditions were found merged in the references to the renewed popularity of the St. George’s Cross as the English flag. The Opening Ceremony put on by the organisers of Euro 96 also provided a wealth of images as traditions were re-invented as the Wembley crowd saw ‘dancers depict the legend of St. George and the dragon’ (Sunday Times, 9 June 1996: 1). This, in turn, provided ample scope for the newspapers to utilise the imagery further: ‘after the dragon was slain, England did battle with Switzerland in the first match of the biggest football tournament for thirty years. This time St. George’s men managed only a 1-1 draw’ (Sunday Times, 9 June 1996: 1).

In this section I have shown the extent to which historical references were made in the press coverage of Euro 96. There was little contrast between the broadsheets and the tabloids in the percentage of articles that contained nostalgia, stirred national habitus codes or evoked invented traditions. Nostalgia-fuelled hopes and expectations for football to ‘come home’ through English success in the tournament accounted for a large proportion of the recorded articles. This nostalgic discourse for sporting success also appeared to be mirrored by a longing for success in
the politico-economic arena. Chapter 3 presented some illustrative examples of these emotions. This will be demonstrated further in the following chapter.

The prevalence of these historical references arguably suggests that the Eliasian contention that nations’ ‘dreams of their special charisma’ and the fantasy images they have of themselves, can be reflected in and reinforced by media representation. The presence of nostalgia (see Figure 15) is further testimony to the way in which people from specific nations keep their dreams of special charisma alive. However, Elias warns that:

... the discrepancy between the actual and the imagined position of one’s group among others can also entail a mistaken assessment of one’s resources and, as a consequence, suggest a group strategy in pursuit of a fantasy image of one’s own greatness that may lead to self-destruction... The dreams of nations... are dangerous’ (Elias, 1994: p. xliii).

Here, Elias captures the idea that the members of nations have a tendency to construct inflated opinions of themselves which are often unfounded, or are based on narcissistic notions of former greatness. The initial results from this first stage of the content analysis seem to support this notion in relation to England. This idea is developed further in the concluding section.

6. Findings and Observations

In this chapter has sought to provide and interpret the results of the quantitative analysis undertaken to establish the content of Euro 96 articles in the English newspapers. In so doing, the objective has been to identify the structure of reporting and the repetitive or prevalent nature of certain discourse variables within the press coverage and to highlight possible differences between the tabloids and broadsheets. The following chapter will serve to substantiate this analysis by exploring the textual codes and messages of those discursive themes quantified as being
substantially evident in the newspapers. The quantitative content analysis of the English newspaper reporting of the tournament therefore presents several useful findings.

First, we can see how the tournament commanded a large share of the newspapers’ coverage of sport during June 1996. This was especially true of the tabloids who dedicated over half of their sports articles and sports illustrations to Euro 96 (see Figures 3 and 4). Male journalists produced the majority of these Euro 96 texts. This arguably accounted for the gendered framing of the event by sections of the press. In connection with the newspaper content, similar journalistic styles and themes were prevalent throughout the newspapers. Broadsheet articles more generally tended to be stylised by an emphasis on detailed match reports, comment and opinion columns, and were thematically concerned with analysis, impressions and points of view (i.e. ‘hard news’, orthodox rhetoric and reflexive analysis). A distinguishing feature of the tabloids was their focus on ‘soft news’ that regularly featured ‘human interest’ stories.

Second, with regard to some of the discourse prevalent in the newspapers, both the tabloids and broadsheets were very evocative in their linguistic style and use of language. There was significant use of personal pronouns, narcissism and war vocabulary/militaristic imagery, as Figures 6, 7 and 9 indicate. These discourse variables were found slightly more in the tabloids. Further to this, Week 3 was found to feature the most extensive use of such language. This was especially true in relation to the number of articles containing narcissism (see Figure 8) and war vocabulary (see Figure 10). From the quantitative analysis alone, then, it appears that Euro 96 served to reinforce national identities – at least as they were framed by the press – through the use of personal pronouns which emphasise us-them, established-outsider relations (Elias and Scotson, 1994). This is demonstrated further by the extensive amount of
narcissistic articles, the essence of which promote ‘us’ - in this case England/the English football team - at the expense of ‘them’, the opposing nations. The large amount of articles containing war vocabulary suggests a distinctive aggressive character to the English newspaper coverage that will be investigated in the subsequent qualitative analysis.

Thirdly, similar quantitative trends were observed with reference to the deploying of national stereotypes, nationalistic sentiments and national symbols (see Figures 11, 12 and 14). This discourse also figured more in Week 3 when the England team played their quarter and semi-final matches (see Figure 13). The frequent presence of these discourse variables, coupled with that of personal pronoun usage, narcissism and war vocabulary, suggests that the press coverage was also characterised by an ethnic assertiveness/defensiveness. It is suggested that this served more to divide rather than unite the nations of Europe through any feeling of being ‘in it together’, which the organisers’ official tournament song had attempted to evoke. This also went counter to Glen Kirton’s wish to promote a sense of ‘internationality’. The quantitative findings also reveal that the national identity of the English was represented and reinforced around common, unifying national symbols, stereotyped perceptions of ‘outsiders’ and expressions of nationalistic sentiment (both positive towards ‘us’ and negative against ‘them’).

Finally, the Euro 96 articles in the tabloids and broadsheets were also characterised by an interest in history, both sporting and socio-political. There was a notable number of references to the past and (invented) traditions, mixed with a wilful nostalgia, as the press corps recalled former glories. As a result, the media-sport texts performed the function that Elias detected about national identity politics and socialisation practices more broadly. That is, media-sport discourse reinforced invented traditions, but also national habitus codes, through the evocation of historical
moments and their associated emotions. This might be expected of a nation such as England since the ‘fantasy shield of their imagined charisma as a leading group may give a declining nation the strength to carry on’ (Elias, 1994: xliii). The English press coverage of Euro 96 appears typical of the response of nations whose former power superiority in relation to others has been lost. A ‘fantasy shield’ entailing an ‘imagined charisma’ is constructed, for example through narcissism, nationalistic sentiments and nostalgic glorification of past glories and power, reinforcing the belief that the nation is still great. This also manifests itself in a hostile reaction to more powerful contemporary nations, like Germany - arguably the dominant force within the EU and of course, the eventual Euro 96 champions - in the form of national stereotyping, the use of personal pronouns and of war vocabulary. The results of the quantitative analysis confirms this was a feature in the press coverage of Euro 96, both in the broadsheets, but more so in the tabloids.

Despite these findings, the quantitative content analysis can give us only a limited understanding of the precise nature of the newspaper coverage of Euro 96 in terms of (i) the frequency that a discourse variable may have appeared and (ii) general structure of the reportage. The methodological shortcomings of this have been outlined in Chapter 2. In order to understand fully the newspapers’ framing of Euro 96 and, more specifically, the construction and representation of national identity, a detailed qualitative analysis of the latent textual meanings is required. This level of analysis can investigate the sign-systems that generate messages relating to the construction of national identity and habitus codes, as well as established-outsider relations. This is the focus of Chapter 5 that follows.
Notes

1. McCann-Erickson, on behalf of the FA, ran a series of three advertisements aimed at women in Elle, Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire and Options (glamorous style magazines for the female market). They featured photographs of female models - who had to be genuine football fans - all sporting inscrutable expressions and accompanied by the salient captions: ‘How can I lie back and think of England when Venables hasn’t finalised the squad?’, ‘You’d rather spend next June going to see football than going on holiday? ... I don’t believe it. He said’; and ‘I fancy the Italians because in Ravanelli you have a proven strike force working in front of a fluid 4-4-2 formation’ (reported in the Times, 19 January 1996: 8). A spokesman for the advertising agency, Chris Aldhous, explained ‘we tried to turn around the stereotypes’ (Independent, 30 January 1996: 17, Section Two).

2. ‘Phoar’ is an informal term of exclamation used to express desire, usually of a sexual nature. It was included in the latest edition of the New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998) as a new word of the 1990s.
CHAPTER 5

THE ENGLISH PRESS COVERAGE OF EURO 96:
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

Chapter 4 presented an interpretation of the results of the quantitative analysis undertaken to establish a measurable and verifiable account of the content of Euro 96 texts in the English newspapers. This identified the structure of the reporting and the repetitive or prevalent nature of certain discourse variables within the press coverage of the tournament. It also highlighted particular contrasts and comparisons between tabloid and broadsheet coverage. However, that level of analysis can give us only a particular type of understanding of the precise nature of the newspapers in terms of the frequency that a discourse variable may have appeared, and general structure of the reportage. Because of some of the small percentages of discursive themes that were recorded as appearing in the texts, it also arguably gives a misleading impression.

In order to more fully understand the newspapers’ framing of Euro 96, and gain an appreciation of the latent meanings within the media texts, a detailed qualitative analysis is necessary. This will also allow for comparisons to be made with the apparent ‘preferred meanings’ of the texts, as revealed by the football correspondents during interviews about their intentions for covering Euro 96. This chapter seeks to do this by substantiating the quantitative results with an investigation of the textual codes and culturally symbolic messages within the press reporting of Euro 96. The methodological merits of this approach and the research methods employed to do this are explained in Chapter 2.

Those discourse variables confirmed as being substantially evident in the quantitative analysis are to be the focus of the qualitative analysis. Consequently,
Chapter 5 reflects the broad structure followed in the previous chapter. This allows for cross-referencing between the quantitative and qualitative results. As such, the first of these examines the deployment of personal pronouns and war vocabulary/militaristic imagery and the presence of narcissism within the language of the Euro 96 newspaper texts. Consideration is given to how the use of this evocative language contributed to the framing of national identity. The second section discusses the more explicit construction and representation of national identity. This examines, in turn, the use of national stereotypes and nationalistic sentiments.

Media discourse of this kind can be understood as part of an active construction of ‘fantasy group charisma’ that is based on both the ‘invention of tradition’, and, at a deeper more enduring level, the habitus codes that underpin the ‘national character’ of the English (Maguire, 1999: 183). Consequently, the newspapers’ fascination with the past is also investigated during the course of the chapter. Polley (1998: 2) has observed how ‘the past can be mobilised in sport’s present’. This was proven to be the case through the quantitative analysis that revealed a particularly nostalgic character to the reporting of Euro 96.

Overall, the aim of this chapter is to gain a more complete understanding of the framing, construction and representation of national and European identities during Euro 96 as it unfolded in the atmosphere of heightened political tension detailed in Chapter 3. Once the framing and construction of identity are understood, the thematic question of who exactly was ‘in it together’ can be addressed. Was Euro 96 an arena for the local ‘we’, the nation, being in it together as a united, homogeneous ‘imagined community’ in antipathy to ‘them’, Europe? Or was there any sense of an international ‘we’ – the intention of Glen Kirton – being in it together? Could football, as Umbro claimed in one of their advertisements, unite Europe?
2. Linguistic Style and Use of Evocative Language

Both the tabloid and broadsheet newspapers showed considerable evidence of the use of evocative language in their coverage of Euro 96, with the tabloids tending towards a greater usage of such discourse, as the quantitative results in Chapter 4 testify. These discourses included the use of personal pronouns, narcissism and that of war vocabulary and/or militaristic imagery. More revealing however, are the actual texts, the ideological messages they contained, and the latent meanings of the language itself.

2i. 'Us' Against 'Them'

The use of personal pronoun pairs such as 'we/they' and 'us/them' has a powerful effect in generating feelings of inclusion and exclusion since grammatically, such pronouns serve to demonstrate contrast. Elias (1994) highlighted their usage in cementing both I/we and us/them identities during his exploration of established-outsider relationships, as discussed in Chapter 1. The newspapers' use of personal pronouns during their coverage of Euro 96 was particularly prevalent in the tabloids. This might have been expected due to the tabloids' partisan nature and tendency to emphasise the differences between rivals and competitors (Blain et al., 1993; Blain & O'Donnell, 1998; O'Donnell, 1994; Tudor 1992). However, they were also prevalent in the broadsheets, which was perhaps more surprising. A quarter of all broadsheet Euro 96 articles featured the use of personal pronouns, with 39% of tabloid articles using such linguistic discourse.

The utility of personal pronouns and in this connection, possessive pronouns, was evident from the outset of Euro 96, with the expectancy that: 'This should be our finest hour' (Sun, 8 June 1996: 6). There was frequent identification with the England team, who were constantly referred to as 'our boys' by the tabloids and urged on with
headlines like ‘SHEAR WE GO!’ (Daily Mirror, 19 June 1996: 3); this example playing with the name of the England striker, Alan Shearer. Great pride was taken in the reporting of an English victory, with personal pronouns commonplace. A former England football team coach, Bobby Robson, wrote in his column:

England’s victory against Scotland means that the balance of power in this European Championship has shifted. We won and, in the end, we won with style. Suddenly, teams that we think of as the favourites, countries like Italy and Germany, will be putting us in the same category as them. They will all have a feeling of trepidation about us now (Times, 17 June 1996: 26).

In defeat, the accentuation of difference imparted through personal pronoun use was perhaps more vivid and poignant. The Sun (27 June 1996: 5) lamented:

They did it to us again, the Germans. In 1990 it was the distraught Stuart Pearce who had to live with the horror of failing from the spot at that most vital of moments. This time it was Gareth Southgate... We thought the luck was with us, and then it swerved away. We thought football was coming home, but it turned out to be just another stranger at the door.

Such words of encouragement and praise can be seen as positive and relatively inoffensive. However, other usage of personal pronouns in headlines found primarily on tabloid back-pages – while containing elements of crude attempted humour in the wordplay – were more negatively nationalistic. This is exemplified in the messages aimed towards the Scots, such as: ‘We Will McDuff You Up!’ (Sun, 13 June 1996: 64). Other opponents received similar sentiments. On the day of England’s match against the Dutch, the Sun (18 June 1996: 1) enthused: ‘Go Give’em a Clogging England!’ After an English victory over Spain, the News of the World (23 June 1996: 1) gloated: ‘Eee-ay Adios We Beat Them Again’. Likewise, a page border framing a particular tabloid’s preview of the England-Germany match, had the message ‘Herr We Go! Herr We Go! Herr We Go!’ (Daily Mirror, 26 June 1996: 2-6). These examples demonstrate how media-sport discourse can engender both a sense of
contrast, and inclusion, through the selection of particular grammar like personal pronouns and permeate other themes evident in media reporting.

2ii. Super England!

The tabloids’ extensive use of evocative language was particularly noticeable in the use of narcissism, while the broadsheets tended to be more restrained. Although this is evident in the quantitative results, which show that 22% of tabloid articles, and 11% of the broadsheet articles, contained narcissistic, self-gratifying language, a qualitative analysis of the textual messages is more informative. We can see this more vividly by looking at some illustrative examples.

After the perceived debacle of the opening draw with Switzerland, the consensus in the press was that it was ‘pay-back time’ (Daily Express, 8 June 1996: 85). England’s first opportunity for redemption was their match against Scotland. During the game, Paul Gascoigne, the main butt of the criticism thus far, scored a widely acclaimed winning goal. This produced much elation among the press corps, with even one of the usually more reserved broadsheets declaring: ‘Pure Gascoigne, Pure Genius’ (Sunday Times, 16 June 1996: 28). In characteristic tabloid style, the News of the World (16 June 1996: 70-71) celebrated with the tartan emboldened headline: ‘Gazza Hits Jockpot!’ England’s last match in the group qualifying stage of the competition was against Holland. One of the tabloids, seemingly attempting to instil some confidence into their readers, proclaimed the England team: ‘The UnDutchables’ (Daily Mirror, 18 June 1996: 36), punning on the notion that they were ‘untouchable’. Such confidence began to verge on arrogance following the 4-1 English victory, with the tabloids in particular, predictably excessive in their self-gratification. This can be seen in the Daily Mirror’s (19 June 1996: 35) boast of: ‘4-Ever England: Now for Spain!’ The Sun (20 June 1996: 4) similarly indulged as it alleged it enjoyed
the media acclaim from abroad: ‘The new might of English football was praised across Europe yesterday’. Using national symbolism with regard to the three lions, the tabloid was in an upbeat mood: ‘The three mighty lions of England are roaring with pride. Now the world knows we’re a force to be reckoned with. Beating the Dutch was only the start. El Tel and his boys can’t wait to reign over Spain and then go on to glory’ (Sun, 20 June 1996: 6). This narcissism was not confined to the tabloids.

The broadsheets also heaped praise following the ‘emphatic victory’ (Times, 19 June 1996: 52). The report continued: ‘With a display of pace, passion and power, England trounced Holland at Wembley last night, earning them the right to play Spain in the quarter-finals... The lions were rampant, Holland were wilting, and the best night English football has known for many years was developing’. Writing on the day of the Spain match, Rob Hughes suggested that the England team were at a crossroads: ‘Today could bring confirmation of the new, super England, or it could bring the end of a short-lived fantasy’ (Times, 22 June 1996: 56). The Sunday Telegraph (23 June 1996: 3, sports supplement) was in a more confident mood. The broadsheet threw down the gauntlet, declaring: ‘Spanish Seen Off - Bring On the Germans!’ Meanwhile one of the tabloids, with predictable narcissistic zeal, crowed: ‘Super England blasted Spain out of Euro 96 as they marched into the semi-final’ (Sunday Mirror, 23 June 1996: 1).

This victory appeared to convince sections of the press that the nostalgic longing for a repeat of the 1966 success was about to be realised, and that football was indeed ‘coming home’. The discursive sub-text of the coverage suggests that the nation was crying out for some success. A tabloid article on the day of England’s semi-final match articulated these emotions as it hailed the England team. Reflecting on English national identity, and its relationship with football, the Daily Mirror editor celebrated nostalgia as a national characteristic. In so doing, the editorial also
acknowledged how the England team had ‘stirred our memories’. This demonstrates how identity codes were being utilised by journalists, whether consciously or not, in their reporting:

[The] national football team has been a reflection of all that is good in this country. Seaman, Gascoigne, Shearer, Pearce, Adams and the rest have given us a glimpse of this nation’s heart... They have stirred our hearts and our memories. For to be English is to feel nostalgic for past glories - be they on the field of battle in 1942 or the field of dreams in 1966... The English squad have given pleasure beyond measure. And as they have evolved into a focus of national identity, they have also given us a vision of England as it once was and how it could be again. Football couldn’t be coming home to a better place! (Daily Mirror, 24 June 1996: 7)

While this editorial evidently displays some narcissistic discourse, and positive nationalistic sentiments, it is debatable whether nostalgia is really a positive national attribute. A nation that dwells on the past, seeking solace from former glories - in the sporting arena or on the battlefield - suggests a nation not content with its present, seeking to re-affirm a fragile national identity or ‘we-image’.

Despite this, even after the England team had been eliminated, narcissistic articles were still present in the tabloids. This can be seen in the Daily Mirror’s claim of ‘Still Greyt!’ following England’s semi-final defeat (Daily Mirror, 27 June, 1996: 1) - a reference to the grey/indigo blue shirts that the England team wore. The Sun (27 June 1996: 5) heralded the England team as the ‘Lions of Gongleat’ ['Longleat' being a famous English stately home and safari park renowned for its pride of lions], honouring ‘our heroes’ with ‘special medals’. Indeed, similar ‘lionising’ of the England players in text and illustration had been a common theme in the tabloid reporting. In contrast, the broadsheet journalists, who had joined in with the superlatives during the victorious third week of the tournament, took a much more reserved approach in the final week.
The presence of narcissistic discourse in the press can be read as a way of (re)constructing and reinforcing the ‘we-identity’ of the (English) nation. This was grounded in the promotion of the nation as superior in sporting terms, perhaps to compensate for England’s status in the politico-economic sphere. Rowe et al. (1998: 120) have highlighted the ‘key mythologising role of the media’ in what they term the ‘symbolic process of nation-making through sport’. The Eliasian concept of established-outsider relations - a model which investigates power differentials between groups - is also useful in explaining the processes at work here. The ‘we-image’, in this case of the national established group, is positively constructed and represented often at the expense of the negative construction and representation of ‘them’ - in this case England’s defeated opposing nations in Euro 96. For it is when the established group is confronted with others that habitus codes tend to harden and become more defined. The assertion of a complimentary ‘we-ideal’ – through, for example, narcissistic media discourse – therefore helps to re-emphasise the differences between established and outsider groups, especially when coupled with disparaging remarks about the latter, as will be illustrated further during the chapter. This promotion of an enhanced ‘we-ideal’ consequently serves to bolster the established group’s self-image and ‘fantasy charisma’.

2iii. War Minus the Shooting?

George Orwell’s (1945) famous notion of sport as ‘war minus the shooting’ is commonly employed by the media to dramatise sporting contests. The vocabulary of war and militaristic imagery is often used to ‘hype up’ sporting encounters, so linking the two areas of life where the nation is the primary signifier: sport and war. Beard (1998: 35) has noted how: ‘In international competition, metaphors of war appear
most frequently when the media can equate the sporting contest with the actual wars
which have taken place’.

This sport-war connection was vividly evident in the press coverage of Euro
96, as many of the football correspondents had forecast during their interviews.
Indeed, 26% of all the tabloid Euro 96 articles made use of war language or adopted
military metaphors and imagery, with the broadsheet articles containing slightly less in
comparison (18%). Chapter 4 explained how the coding included instances when the
broadsheets commented on the tabloids’ ‘war-mongering’. This accounted for the
substantial quantity of broadsheet articles containing such discourse. However, the
broadsheets, in their reviews and criticism of their tabloid counterparts, attempted to
claim the moral high ground by condemning the tabloid excesses, while simultaneously
utilising the war vocabulary, and military imagery, they were criticising. This served to
actually reinforce the same sport-war connection. Let me demonstrate how this was
the case.

The broadsheets and tabloids followed a similar theme, with military imagery
to the fore. Such references, anchored in the language of sport, can reinforce and
amplify national identity, especially when traditional rivals or ‘old enemies’ meet. This
can be seen from the opening day of the championships. A tabloid journalist
commented: ‘we are better equipped than ever before to rule Europe... I have seen
nothing so far to suggest the continental invasion includes any team we need go in fear
of’ (Daily Mirror, 8 June 1996: 7). England’s first match against Switzerland,
however, did not attract the war vocabulary and militaristic imagery that was to
characterise the press coverage of England’s other matches. This may have been due
to the fact that there is no history of hostility between the two nations. It was in the
coverage of the next match, against Scotland, where the use of war language emerged.
Both tabloids and broadsheets framed the match as 'the Battle of Britain' (Sun, 15 June 1996: 34 and Times, 15 June 1996: 56) and a 'war game' (Daily Mirror, 14 June 1996: 45). Indeed, such discourse had developed since the draw for the Championships back in December 1995. In this battle between the 'Auld Enemies', (Daily Mirror, 14 June 1996: 46-47), the broadsheets appeared to equally relish the opportunity to evoke military metaphors. A front-page headline from the Times (15 June 1996) declared: 'Scots Invaders Take the Capital'. The report proclaimed that 'a Tartan Army was encamped in England's capital last night after eight years of uneasy soccer peace' - 1989 being the last time the two countries had met before the previously annual fixture was abandoned due to incidents of crowd disturbance. The Observer (9 June 1996: 7, sports supplement) previewed the match under the headline 'Auld Enemies with Old Scores to Settle', suggesting that 'England v Scotland was never going to be just another game'. Rather it was to be, according to another broadsheet writer, a 'patriot game' (Daily Telegraph, 15 June 1996: 28).

Military imagery of this kind was underpinned by discourse that emphasised that the game was a 'passion play' involving 'tribalism' (Times 15 June 1996: 56), where 'ancient hostilities' would be replayed (Times, 14 June 1996: 46). Reference was repeatedly made to battles fought between the English and the Scots, notably Bannockburn (1314) and Culloden (1746). On the day of the match, the Daily Mirror warned how 'The Tartan Army always sound a stirring battle cry and vow to avenge all the English wrong-doings from the pages of history' (Daily Mirror, 15 June 1996: 5, sports supplement). While this suggests Anglo-Scottish encounters hold more symbolic meaning for the Scots than the English, this did not seem to be the case as far as the Sun (17 June 1996: 35) was concerned in its reporting of the match:
Dates are everything in Anglo-Scottish history - 1314, 1746 and now 16.39. Forget Bannockburn and forget Culloden. In years to come students will be schooled in the precise moment Scottish forces were so heroically repelled by Lord Admiral David Seaman at Wembley on June 15. Seaman stood strong a mere twelve yards from the massed Caledonian cannons... The lesson will go on to explain how shortly afterwards, in 16.41 - or just gone twenty-to-five - General Sir Gazblaster Gazza of Gascoigne led a one-man onslaught on the Tartan defences, which routed them once and for all.

Once again, while there is arguably an element of humour evident here, this article is evidently steeped in militaristic imagery, as it apparently attempts to instil this particular sporting moment into the English, and, possibly, Scottish, nations’ habitus.

As some of the interviewed journalists had predicted, players were cast in the roles of being either ‘Lionhearts’ or ‘Bravehearts’ (Daily Mirror, 15 June 1996: 4 and 36) and there was a common reference to the movie of the latter name. In the same vein, some of the Scottish players were depicted as famous Scottish historical figures, such as Rob Roy and William Wallace, the hero of the film, Braveheart. The English player, Paul Gascoigne was featured alongside ‘William Wallace’ (aka Gary McAllister, the Scottish captain), as Henry V in a strange intermeshing of historical periods, with the re-worked quotation from Shakespeare’s play about this monarch: ‘Cry God for Gazza, England and Tel’ (Sun, 15 June 1996: 36). Colin Hendry was, according to one of the broadsheets, ‘with his mane of blond hair and often a warrior’s headband, Braveheart personified’ (Times, 15 June 1996: 56). Drawing together this historical legacy, war vocabulary and invented tradition, the Daily Mirror (15 June 1996: 4) ran the following story: ‘Scotland’s Braveheart brigade are on the march and supposedly striking terror in the enemy camp. If you believe all the hype, the England lads will be cowering in a corner at Wembley this afternoon just waiting for Colin Hendry’s claymore [sword] to come crashing down’. Meanwhile, on the back page, the newspaper employing a personal pronoun, gave the war-cry: ‘Put ‘em to the Sword!’ (Daily Mirror, 15 June 1996: 36).

206
As an example from the Daily Telegraph further demonstrates, the England-Scotland match involved something more than football for both broadsheet and tabloid correspondents. In one lengthy article that linked the game to a clash of cultures and historical rivalries, the writer observed that the game was ‘a momentous internal clash that will be recalled and raked over for generations’ (Daily Telegraph, 15 June 1996: 24). Robert Phillip, a Scottish columnist writing for the Times (14 June 1996: 46), confirmed ‘Scotland-England was always far, far more than a mere football match’. However, the match was not only framed as an encounter between two rival nations from within the politico-economic state of the United Kingdom. There was also the sense that the match made for a form of ‘union’ between the two competing nations - with the game an exclusively ‘British’, as opposed to European concern. Broadsheet writers frequently made the analogy to European politics, as this example demonstrates:

This afternoon some two dozen young men will kick a ball, and occasionally each other, around in order to decide Britain’s future role in Europe. Or at least that part of it which applies to the remaining fortnight of the 1996 European Championship. A referendum will not be necessary, the Thatcher Foundation need not be disturbed... (Guardian, 15 June 1996: 24).

As it turned out, English national pride was secure, with Scottish defeat, according to a Sunday Times writer, entailing ‘the routing of the clans’ (16 June 1996: 28). As England progressed through the tournament, their matches against a series of ‘old enemies’ and contemporary rivals in the European political scene became increasingly framed as ‘patriot games’, opportunities to ‘settle scores’ with adversaries - both sporting and political - by the tabloids and broadsheets alike. To this end, a Daily Telegraph (25 June 1996: 23) editorial argued that the English were not as concerned about winning the Scotland match in comparison with those they were to play against other opposition. It suggested: ‘English nationalism, such as that expressed on the
football terraces, is not directed at other component parts of the kingdom, but rather at historical enemies from beyond these islands'.

While this is an interesting argument, born out in many respects, as we will see in the ensuing chapter, it does not, however, explain the discourse framing the England-Scotland match itself. Similarly, although the Dutch and English have fought against each other in several wars, memories of these events appeared to have dimmed and bear little of the emotional resonance that other battles with 'historical enemies from beyond these islands' do (Maguire & Poulton, 1999: 23). Why this should be the case is not exactly known, but may be linked to there being no contemporary threat or rivalry (at least not politically or economically) from the Dutch. Any recent Dutch threat has only come from the football field, not from the European political arena. Revenge was therefore sought for memorable footballing defeats; especially for when the Dutch 'controversially knocked England out of the 1994 World Cup qualifiers' (Daily Mirror, 19 June 1996: 36). This stimulated a series of powerful evocations and references to national habitus codes. The most eloquent and poignant examples were found in the broadsheets, as the following example illustrates:

... England face Holland, their serial tormentors from the past eight years. From Dusseldorf to Rotterdam, English dreams have disappeared in a cloud of orange dust. A nation's collective consciousness has been too regularly, and too recently, assailed with cruel images, of Marco van Basten and Denis Bergkamp playing the silent predators, of Marc Overmars falling, of Jan Wouters' elbowing, of Ronald Koeman escaping punishment... (Daily Telegraph, 18 June 1996: 40)

With the Dutch defeats avenged, England moved on to face Spain. However, the jingoism that was relatively absent against Holland was evident in both tabloid and broadsheet coverage of this quarter-final match. While conflicts against the Dutch had appeared to have faded from the collective memory of the English national habitus, the historical legacy of Anglo-Spanish struggles was clearly a central part of the press
agenda with repeated references to the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. In this connection, the *Sun* (20 June 1996: 2) adopted as its slogan, 'Drake says sink the Señors'. Both the *Sun* and the *Times* were in agreement over the significance of the game. For the *Sun* (20 June 1996: 30), 'the match promises to be the biggest battle since Sir Francis Drake saw off the Spanish Armada', while the *Times* (22 June 1996: 1) noted that the contest was 'the most important between the two countries since 1588'. When reports arrived that the Spanish FA had returned five thousand tickets for the match, the Spaniards were seen to be 'in retreat'. The *Sun* (21 June 1996: 1), again reinforcing the link to past hostilities, declared: 'It's the biggest retreat since Sir Francis Drake sent the Spanish packing in 1588'. In more subtle language, the *Times* also continued this theme. Commenting on the arrival of the Spanish media intent on interviewing officials of the England national team, the newspaper noted:

The journalists and television crews streamed through the gates and into the interview tents not with the arrogance of their armada, but with the exaggerated respect of an invader who fears he is about to be repelled (*Times*, 20 June 1996: 48).

Here then, we can start to see evidence of how broadsheet reporters utilised the war vocabulary and military imagery they were actually criticising. A commentator in the *Daily Telegraph* (25 June 1996: 35), for example, lamented how 'Spain, regular hosts to millions of English holiday-makers every year, were greeted with contempt in the quarter-finals'. Meanwhile, the *Guardian's* David Lacey penned an article on 'why England should forget military history as they plan strategy for the Wembley battle with Spain', which although satirical and perceptive, toyed with militaristic imagery itself:
People who remember dates and battles will already be comparing England’s advance to the quarter-finals of the European Championships with a potted version of English history. Having settled the marauding Scots and quelled the Low Countries, Terry Venables’ hearts of oak are about to take issue with Spain. Germany and France, moreover, could lie ahead. Even if the sequence is historically awry it cannot be long before the spirits of Drake, Wellington and Montgomery are called upon to support our boys (Guardian, 21 June 1996: 25).

Lacey here mobilises a range of images, which although ostensibly football-related, still draw on European military history. A writer for the Times (20 June 1996: 20) actually appeared to explicitly advocate the framing of the England-Spain quarter-final in terms of past antagonisms from off the playing field, by musing:

What has all this to do with football? Everything and nothing. Nothing because football is ‘just a game’ and everything, because it is the underlying history of two nations which brings to life a sporting contest. This is not a perverse intrusion of politics onto the pitch, but exactly as it should be... Spain and England have no special history of rivalry on the football field, but their centuries of rich competition away from it... will give an awkward grace to Wembley on Saturday.

In the ways illustrated then, it seems that broadsheet writers were flagging up the sport-war connection which they were vilifying their tabloid colleagues for doing. Further confirmation of this is evident in the following example. In acclaiming the fact that the English goalkeeper, David Seaman, had saved a decisive penalty against Spain, a Sunday Telegraph (23 June 1996: 1) headline echoed the nautical connection to the Armada that had been a prominent feature of media discourse and proclaimed: ‘Spain still can’t beat an English Seaman’ [italics added]. The Observer’s headline similarly noted: ‘Seaman Sinks Armada’ (23 June 1996: 10, sports supplement – italics added). That save inspired a further broadsheet headline that evoked images of war: ‘New Wembley Appointment as Seaman’s Save Keeps the Home Fires Burning’ (Daily Telegraph, 24 June 1996: 1, sports supplement). As we will now see, such
headlines were not dissimilar in tone to the coverage of the semi-final against Germany.

Take, for example, the following reference to ‘England’s old enemy, defeated in two World Wars and one World Cup’ (Daily Mirror, 24 June 1996: 2). This description of Germany employs lyrics from the ‘baiting chants and songs about two World Wars and one World Cup [that] were echoing across the crowded platforms of Wembley Central Station within an hour of England’s victory over Spain’ (Times, 25 June 1996: 36). The fact that a (minority) section of English supporters were reported as singing this song, thereby actually articulating these negative nationalistic sentiments, suggests that such discourse was not, therefore, just mediated. It arguably indicates a reflection of part of a deeper habitus in certain sections of the nation. The interplay between ‘discursive’ and ‘practical’ consciousness (Giddens, 1984) illustrates how the individual and social (national) habitus are interlinked (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). This demonstrates further how the I/we-identity is constructed through a blend of discursive practices (for example, in media-sport production and consumption) and practical (actual or ‘real’) actions, like the singing of the overtly nationalistic song.

The above excerpt also serves to reinforce how, with the coverage framed as it was, it appeared as if one by one, England’s European adversaries - historical and contemporary, real and imagined - were being symbolically defeated. The Sunday Times (23 June 1996: 24) concluded:

Those feet that may have walked upon England’s mountains green have done it again. The countenance divine of William Blake’s Jerusalem shone through the clouds at Wembley... The statue of Lord Nelson, victor over the French and the Spanish fleets at Trafalgar, gazed down on hundreds of celebrating fans in Trafalgar Square last night as pundits looked forward to the prospect of a Euro-sceptics’ dream semi-final against Germany.
Echoing similar concerns, a writer from another broadsheet, the *Guardian* (24 June 1996: 1), also chose to employ similar militaristic imagery and European political comment to articulate their point:

And so it came to pass, to the dismay of those keen to develop closer relations with mainland Europe, that England proceeded to their appointed meeting with Germany in the semi-final...We are in for two days of unashamed Hun-bashing. The spirit of the Blitz and El Alamein will be invoked...Spitfires will once more do battle with Messerschmitts in the skies over Wapping. And much, much worse.

Going further, David Lacey in the same newspaper warned that 'no doubt the next 72 hours will see certain sections of the media resorting to the kind of childlike jingoism which should have gone out with Biggles' and advised readers to 'Beware of the Hun in the Sun' (*Guardian*, 24 June 1996: 3, sports supplement).

Lacey's prediction could not have been more accurate. Jingoism was commonplace in the newspaper coverage building up to the England-Germany semi-final, especially in the tabloid press. Celebrating the English victory over the Spanish, an editorial in the *Sun* (24 June 1996: 6) was already contemplating the next game in the following terms: 'So now the stage is set for a *hundinger* of a match against old foes Germany'. Meanwhile the *Daily Mirror* (24 June 1996: 1) was announcing that 'Football War is now Declared', with its controversial accompanying headline: 'ACHTUNG! SURRENDER - For You Fritz, Ze EURO 96 Championship is Over' – see Figure 1. Illustrating this front-page ultimatum, which urged 'every loyal subject' to display it prominently, were the faces of the England players, Paul Gascoigne and Stuart Pearce, with tin helmets super-imposed upon their heads. Also on the front-page was an editorial in the style of Neville Chamberlain's 1939 declaration of war:

It is with a heavy heart we print this public declaration of hostilities... May God bless you all. It is evil things that we shall be fighting against - the brute force, the high tackle, the unfair penalty, the Teutonic tedium of their tactics and the pretence of injury after a perfectly legitimate English tackle. Against these evils I am sure that inside right will prevail.
Inside the newspaper, the *Daily Mirror* journalists maintained a war-time style, filing reports from Berlin, ‘deep in enemy territory’ and telling how ‘now that England is at war with Germany, the *Daily Mirror* has infiltrated behind enemy lines... to perform a task of national importance’. This involved the distribution of fliers emblazoned with the Cross of St. George and the ‘ACHTUNG! SURRENDER’ message. One of the reports noted a ‘strange smell... and it’s not their funny sausages. It’s a smell of fear because they know, deep down, that we’re going to beat them again. This is why the *Daily Mirror* has penetrated the Fatherland. To shake the nerves of the so-called indomitable Jerries!’ (*Daily Mirror*, 24 June 1996: 2).

A cartoon in the newspaper further emphasised the importance the media placed on the sport-war connection to the national habitus by rewording a famous war-time propaganda slogan to, ‘What did you do in Euro 96, Daddy?’ (*Daily Mirror*, 24 June 1996: 6). Such a cartoon gives the idea that the mobilisation of the imagined community of the nation, in support of the national football team, was akin to that of a war-effort. The back-page of the same edition ran a banner headline in a *Dad’s Army*² style: ‘Ve are Not Fooled Fritz! Who do you think you are kidding Mister Hitman?’ [see Figure 2]. This challenged the German camp’s announcement that their striker Jürgen Klinsmann was injured and would miss the semi-final. This insidious doubt was mirrored in one of the broadsheets, in the headline: ‘Vogts Milks the Klinsmann Calf’ (*Guardian*, 26 June 1996: 29).

Meanwhile, the *Sun* (24 June 1996: 4) was exhorting: ‘Let’s Blitz Fritz’. Significantly, while utilising the vocabulary of war, this headline featured several pages into the newspaper and fronted an article reporting how the newspaper had ‘sign[ed] up Jake the Lion to maul Germans’ as a lucky mascot. The tabloid’s main agenda of the day was boasting about how its distribution of hats had helped England defeat Spain. Yet the *Sun* (24 June 1996: 1) actually led with a non-sports related ‘human
interest’ story. In this way, the Sun appeared to deliberately avoid the war-mongering
instigated by its tabloid rival, the Daily Mirror.

Unlike previous reporting of England’s games against other ‘old foes’, the type
and sheer scale of the reporting on the semi-final against Germany prompted a wide-
scale backlash. This involved not only the broadsheet newspapers, seen for example in
the Times’ (26 June 1996: 25) headline: ‘Day the Daily Mirror Went Right Over the
Top’ - note the use of militaristic imagery with ‘over the top’. Criticism was also
levelled by politicians, the Press Complaints Commission, the police (‘Police Fear
Euro 96 Hysteria in the Daily Mirror May Cause Violence at Semi-Final’ - Daily
Telegraph, 25 June 1996: 10), academics and disturbed members of the public
(‘Letters to the Editor: Euro 96 and Tabloid Press Jingoism’ - Times, 25 June 1996:
21). Vauxhall Motors, one of the official sponsors of Euro 96, protested by
withdrawing its advertising from the Daily Mirror for the remainder of the tournament.
Action by Vauxhall was also taken against the Daily Star for front-page headlines
exclaiming: ‘Mein Gott! Bring On the Krauts!’ and depicting Terry Venables, the
England coach, as Earl Kitchener from the First World War (reported in the Times, 26
June 1996: 25). The Vauxhall advertisement, however, was not without nationalistic
sentiments, or political comment itself. The message read: ‘Germany: Prepare for
Some Good Old British Beef!’ (featured in the Guardian, 26 June 1996: 9; Daily

In a series of broadsheet articles on the eve of the match (24 June 1996),
journalists and politicians complained of the tabloid ‘hun-bashing’, of jingoism and
‘hysteria in the tabloids’ and of ‘xenophobic triumphalism’. Yet these newspapers, as
we have seen, did so in appearing to claim the moral high ground, whilst actually
indulging in militaristic imagery of their own, as they reported on the tabloid excesses
and condemned them for their war-mongering and xenophobia. This is demonstrated
in the following passage from the *Times* (25 June 1996: 56), who in a disapproving
tone, confirmed the broadsheet fears and 'predictions' of the day before:

Yesterday the heavy artillery of the tabloids went to work with their dismissal
of 'Fritz', mock addresses from war bunkers and cartoons of England players
in tin hats. The mobilisation against Germany is well and truly under way.

This quotation illustrates how the broadsheet journalists were able to condemn the
tabloids - branding them, for example, 'the advance shock troopers of modern tactical
warfare' (*Times*, 24 June 1996: 1) - while patently utilising the war vocabulary and
military imagery they were actually criticising. The *Times* (24 June 1996: 1) loftily
observed that each game was 'Another Day and Another Enemy for the Press Corps',
despite carrying the following headline: 'Sammer Leading the Battle on Two Fronts'
(*Times*, 25 June 1996: 49). Several days later in similar fashion, the *Times* (27 June
1996: 1), reporting that the streets of London had been deserted during the semi-final,
rann a headline: 'All Quiet on the West End Front'. The *Guardian* followed a similar
reporting pattern, despite taking possibly the most outspoken stance against the
tabloids' gun-ho and jingoistic reporting. For example, an editorial stated that
'Sporting events don't have to generate trench warfare' and warned how 'everyone in
the media should be conscious of the role they play' (*Guardian*, 24 June 1996: 10).
Despite this, and the plea for 'an escape from the tabloid agenda', the newspaper was
responsible for labelling the German coach 'General Vogts' (*Guardian*, 24 June 1996:
1). Further to this, in a criticism of the England team's grey/indigo blue change of strip
for the semi-final, David Lacey described it as being 'kitted out like the Waffen SS'
(*Guardian*, 25 June 1996: 24). In this way the broadsheets, albeit with greater
sophistication and subtlety, were responsible for flagging up the very sport-war
connection for which they were vilifying their tabloid counterparts for doing.
Figure 1: The Daily Mirror (24 June 1996: 1) Declares 'Football War' on Germany
Figure 2: The Daily Mirror (24 June 1996: 63) Challenge the German Striker's Injury Claim
In a less antagonistic article in the *Times* (25 June 1996: 1), it was suggested that ‘sport should not be connected with a war, which, for the Germans is a very strong reminder of a past that they do not brag about’. Matthew Engel, writing for the *Guardian* (25 June 1996: 17), rebuked the *Daily Mirror* for its ‘second-world-war-style-German-baiting-edition’, branding it ‘coarse and demented journalism’. He suggested that there was a strong case for saying the newspaper should be prosecuted under the Public Order Act of 1986 for the incitement of racial hatred\(^3\). He also expressed fears regarding the potential for the ‘obscenely irresponsible journalism’ inducing hooliganism. Engel’s most perceptive observation articulated some of the social currents discussed in Chapter 3, and the Anglo-British propensity for nostalgia in a knee-jerk response to contemporary inadequacies. He observed:

The Germans can probably take it. They will assume this is yet another British tragedy: the fact that we have achieved so little since 1945 and hark back for solace (*Guardian*, 25 June 1996: 17).

Engel’s comment also highlights the idea that fallen nations, such as Anglo-Britain, which have known power and status in the past, have outdated and therefore illegitimate superiority complexes (Elias, 1994: x1iii). Consequently, they struggle to deal with their lost established power status. This situation can engender an unjustified arrogance, manifested in an ethnic defensiveness/assertiveness, often intermeshed with nostalgia, as has been found in the coverage of the England-Germany match in particular (Maguire et al., 1999a; 1999b).

Another considered criticism came from Henry Winter, the *Daily Telegraph*’s Chief Football Correspondent, who claimed ‘putting the bomb in bombastic is both offensive and potentially inflammatory’. He suggested that the tabloid reporting ‘did not reflect the reality’ of Euro 96 which appeared to have been in keeping with the
organiser’s intention to celebrate ‘internationality’, being ‘in it together’, and also with
Umbro’s claim that ‘football unites Europe’:

The sad irony is that yesterday’s ‘ACHTUNG!’ headlines do not reflect the reality of Euro 96 which has been an international knees-up, not punch-up... By bringing the imagery of war to a sporting event, by perpetuating grievances and exaggerating stereotypes, the Fritz-blitzers do football a disservice. The emphasis should be on promoting national pride, not prejudice. If England lose to Germany, the fear is now that a whipped up resentment may come seeping out of the small-minded... The practice of imposing jingoism on football also ignores the changing face of the English game, now a multicultural, multilingual success (Daily Telegraph, 25 June 1996: 35).

Generally, however, broadsheet discourse continued to set an agenda that ‘played with’ war vocabulary and militaristic imagery, as well as national stereotyping, while also making more subtle allusions to historical events, and invented traditions. Column space was also given to feature writers and editors who highlighted issues of British/English and European identity politics. These will be considered in the later section on discourses of nationalistic sentiments.

Given the criticism received by the Daily Mirror, it appears that Piers Morgan, the editor, had clearly miscalculated the public mood. This was particularly strange given the fact that the tabloid had stood alone in presenting a pro-European stance during the press-led ‘Beef War’. The day after the ‘ACHTUNG!’ headline, the Daily Mirror, still remarkably maintaining the sport-war connection announced ‘Peas in Our Time’, having presented the German team with a ‘goodwill Harrods hamper stuffed with traditional goodies, including the finest English garden peas’. The newspaper dismissed the previous day’s coverage as a ‘cheeky challenge’ which was taken by the Germans ‘all in the spirit of sporting rivalry’ (Daily Mirror, 25 June 1996: 1). Morgan in his defence commented:
Some people have been offended, but we intended this purely as a joke... Our pro-European stance is well known and we have flown the European flag for some time, but for football we decided to make an exception. Some people have laughed, others have been offended by the tone of our coverage, but that was not the intention. If they think we went over the top, then I can only apologise (Daily Telegraph, 25 June 1996: 10).

Interestingly, the Sun (26 June 1996: 4), relishing the fact that the Prime Minister had joined MPs from all parties to ‘slam the Daily Mirror for turning Euro 96 into a re-run of World War II’, and attempting to secure its own defence for its ‘Let’s Blitz Fritz!’ headline, distanced itself from the criticism being directed at its circulation rival. The Sun editor, Stuart Higgins, revealed something of their own agenda when he argued: ‘The Sun has maintained a jingoistic approach, rather than a xenophobic one. I think we can get away with blitzing Fritz, but talk of war is slightly in a different league’ (reported, under the ironic headline which also deploys war vocabulary: ‘Editor Waves White Flag After Euro 96 Blitzkrieg’ in the Times, 25 June 1996: 1).

As has been illustrated, there was comprehensive condemnation of the Daily Mirror from all quarters, particularly for its ‘declaration of football war’. However, what such criticism again overlooked was how other tabloids, and as has been shown, the broadsheets to a considerable degree, were using the game with Germany to develop their own agenda regarding Europe and national identity politics. The Times (24 June 1996: 1), for example, demonstrated the alternative agenda-setting regarding the match for the newspaper editors:

London’s fury with Bonn over the beef war has only added spice to this match. Clausewitz was wrong: it’s not war that is the continuation of politics by other means. It is football that is the continuation of war by other means.

This philosopher’s maxim was recalled again by an academic commentator, Professor D.E. Cooper, whose observations were published by the Daily Express (26 June 1996: 8) on the day of the semi-final:
If Clausewitz were around today, and a reader of our tabloids, he might conclude that football, not diplomacy, is the continuation of war by other means. England, it seems, is not playing another team this evening but an enemy - not even Germans but 'Krauts' and 'Fritzes'. It is less the 'spirit of 1966' recalled than that of 1939.

These remarks seem incisive given the comments made by a fellow writer in the Daily Express (26 June 1996: 4) who noted, 'A football match is over in an evening. Germany is also playing another, longer game. It is this one they are truly determined to win'. This will be addressed further in considering the presence of nationalistic sentiments. However it is notable that this proposed role of sport as a substitute for war has some similarity with the Orwellian contention that international sport is 'war minus the shooting'. Given some of the press coverage of Euro 96, it might be mooted that at times in the press 'cross-fire', the only thing missing was indeed, the weapons. In agreement with this premise was David McKie, a columnist in the Observer (23 June 1996: 31), who claimed that 'Euro 96 is better than Euro 39-45':

Certainly the rituals have inescapable echoes of war. There's been nothing like it since England won the World Cup in '66, the tabloids say, uncharacteristically forgetting how, under team manager Thatcher, we hammered the Argentines in 1982. The rhetoric of yesterday's media warm-up, with its jokes about donkeys and castanets and evocations of Francis Drake, belong to the same world as 'Gotcha!' Even those who recoil from this pumped up xenophobia identify with the cause. It's appeal is the oldest in the book: us versus them.

Here McKie acknowledges both the conscious usage of personal pronouns by journalists and the alternative agenda-setting opportunity that a football tournament can present to the media.

The England team eventually lost to Germany after a penalty shoot-out competition. The response to this defeat will be discussed in detail in the section on nationalistic sentiments (3ii). Suffice to say for the moment, there was a considerable backlash in the press against Germany, perpetuating some of the jingoistic and
xenophobic themes that have already been identified. The Guardian (27 June 1996: 1), however, perhaps gave one of the most insightful reflections on the national identity politics that framed the match, and international relations in general, between England and the 'old foe':

It can be said with certainty, though, that if there ever is to be a federal Europe, England v Germany is going to provide inter-provincial rivalry for most of the next millennium.

England's defeat prompted various responses elsewhere. An emergency meeting of the cross-party National Heritage Select Committee, one of whose responsibilities is to scrutinise matters relating to the press, was commissioned on 27 June 1996 to discuss the tabloid press coverage of Euro 96. A report was subsequently filed expressing 'disgust at the xenophobic, chauvinistic and jingoistic gutter journalism perpetrated by those newspapers' (House of Commons 1996: Fourth Report, Minutes and Proceedings: p. III). It intimated that this 'may well have had its effect in stimulating the deplorable riots following the German victory in the semi-final' (House of Commons 1996: Fourth Report, Minutes and Proceedings: p. III). The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) was called upon to 'consider these issues as a matter of urgency' - see the discussion in the concluding chapter.

The rioting referred to by the National Heritage Select Committee occurred in town centres nation-wide after the England team's defeat. German manufactured products were the focus for the purging of ill-feeling and anti-German sentiments: 'Mercedes and Volkswagen cars became targets for attack... Vandals smashed the window of a BMW dealership in Birmingham city centre and attacked the German-owned Aldi supermarket' (Times, 28 June 1996: 4). Perhaps more disturbing was the incident of a 'Russian Stabbed for Sounding Like a German' (Times, 28 June 1996: 4) and an attack on 'a coach carrying German students from the match' (Guardian, 28
June 1996: 3). While the Prime Minister condemned the ‘disgraceful soccer riots’, Jack Straw, Labour’s Shadow Home Secretary, placed the blame firmly with the tabloid press whom he urged to ‘reflect upon the irresponsible attitude they showed in advance of last night’s [England-Germany] game’ (Daily Telegraph, 28 June 1996: 6). The newspaper’s own reflection on the match result, and subsequent trouble, made some astute observations about English national character and nationalistic sentiments, while making a subtle attack on the tabloid press, albeit with the use of a militaristic metaphor:

England is a nation unhealthily obsessed with the Germans, who must hear the mindless chants, read the xenophobic headlines and think ‘get a life’. Their sporting ambassadors could not have been more impressive... Up in the terraces, Germany’s supporters resisted the opportunity to gloat, perhaps wisely given English volatility. They applauded and departed. Germany’s respectful attitude should be reciprocated with more than Dambuster tunes and tabloid tanks preparing to roll (Daily Telegraph, 28 June 1996: 48).

These observations echo those of Michael Naumann, the German Minister for Culture, presented in Chapter 3. Michael Glover, of the Independent (29 June 1996: 9), also blamed the ‘crudely nationalistic rhetoric on display in the tabloid press’, specifically for its role in generating an over-confidence through their concerted efforts to mobilise a patriotic fervour and support for the national team:

The tabloid press played a significant role in raising the public’s expectations that England not only could but also deserved to win this competition; and that to do so was a matter of national pride and honour. When the team, in spite of its collective energy, courage, talents and commitments failed to meet these expectations, an orgy of frustration and violence was the consequence. The commentators, those irresponsible rabble-raisers, were clearly to blame for some of this.

These are astute observations and criticisms, although unsubstantiated without extensive ethnographic research into football related disorder. The cause-effect links between audience exposure to aggression in media-sport and greater violence in society at large would also need to be investigated (Coakley, 1988-1989).
Despite the eloquence of some of the broadsheet writers’ commentaries on tabloid excesses, we should be aware of their respective agendas and note again their own extensive use of war vocabulary and nationalistic sentiments. This appeared to be over-looked in the wide criticism of the tabloids. Of course, as has been illustrated, a considerable proportion of the 18% of broadsheet Euro 96 articles containing war vocabulary and militaristic imagery, can be accounted for as being commentary on the tabloids’ excessive use of such discourse. Yet, this meant that in practice, the broadsheets were able to indulge in the very language they were supposedly deploring.

David Lacey, of the Guardian, maintained in his interview that he was primarily interested in past footballing encounters, yet admitted he sometimes might ‘play along with the mythology’ of past military encounters. However, Lacey in particular seemed to indulge in such imagery as he deplored ‘those whose attitudes have taken root along the Siegfried Line’ (Guardian, 25 June 1996: 24). While this might, in some cases, be interpreted as clever irony and satire, on other occasions, broadsheet writers were deploying such discourse in ways not too dissimilar to the tabloids.

During interview, the Sun’s Brian Woolnough recalled how the language and imagery of war had been a feature of the tabloid coverage of the Italia 90 World Cup, when England and Germany again met at the semi-final stage. A Sun headline at the time read ‘We beat them in ’45, we beat them in ’66, now the battle of ’90’ (cited in Blain et al, 1993: 37). Woolnough anticipated that this would be repeated if England were to face Germany again. It was therefore to be expected that the sport-war connection would again be evident in press coverage of the England versus Germany semi-final in Euro 96, although nobody perhaps anticipated to what degree. The change may be due to the fact that the 1996 tournament was played on home soil, and so more vividly caught the national imagination. Another, perhaps more significant factor, might be connected with increased anxieties over a loss of sovereignty due to
further European unity following the Maastricht Treaty (1992), and newly intensified disputes between Britain and her Spanish, French and German neighbours. In this context, several social currents crystallised around the press coverage of Euro 96, especially the England-Germany semi-final as this section has sought to demonstrate, and which will be developed further in the following sections.

3. Constructing and Representing National Identity

Whannel (1992: 121) has noted how important national identity is to the construction of media-sport and, conversely, how important media-sport is to the construction of national identity. Certainly, the quantitative results of my research showed that discursive themes relating to national identity, those concerned with national stereotypes, nationalistic sentiments and national symbolism, all featured significantly in the press coverage of Euro 96. This section looks beyond the number count denoting the prevalence of these discourse variables to explore the connotative meanings of the national stereotypes and sentiments present in the Euro 96 texts. Attention is also given to the concept of national identity. This stimulated much discussion and debate over its nature, meaning and manifestations in editorials, opinion columns and commentaries as a 'feel-good factor' appeared to generate through the English nation as Euro 96 unfolded.

3i. Bravehearts, Brave Bulls and Mad Cows

One of the processes in the construction and representation of one's own national identity (or 'we-mage') and that of other nations (a 'they-image') is seen in the portrayal of certain traits popularly deemed to be national characteristics. The perpetuation of these generalisations of the assumed national character of a particular nation reinforces national stereotypes (Tajfel, 1982; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Cohen,
1994; Billig, 1995). This is a common feature of media-sport reportage (Blain et al., 1993; O'Donnell, 1994; Tudor, 1992; Tuck, 1996; Maguire et al., 1999a, 1999b). Indeed, during Euro 96, both the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers contained a substantial degree of articles deploying such stereotypes.

National stereotypes 'work' as possibly one of the most visible habitus codes, mobilising citizens at both a physical and ideological level (Rowe et al., 1998). The tendency of media-sport narratives is to evoke positive attitudes about 'us', while invoking negative attitudes towards 'them' in order to reinforce a feeling of national well-being (Billig, 1995; Beard, 1998). A link can be made here with Elias' work on established-outsider relations that highlighted the development of a power balance in which a 'minority of the best' is juxtaposed against a 'minority of the worst' (Mennell 1994). This fluid contradistinction, framed by and within a collective mythology, becomes 'active' through habitus codes that harden and serve to stigmatise the 'other'. This process is seen through national stereotyping, which ordinarily expounds the virtues of one's own established group, and denigrates those of outsider groups.

The media have a key role here in that they can stimulate and draw upon popularised ideas and images from the national habitus, and help to foster a wider feeling of collective identification amongst members of an in-group, especially when it is confronted by outsiders. This is frequently the case in sport, when 'we' encounter and compete against the opposing 'them'. Feelings of national belonging, or the exclusion of outsider groups, can be powerfully activated through the use of stereotypes, as well as, for example, personal pronouns and narcissism. These discourses help to concretise the established group's 'we-image' (and 'we-ideal'), in contrast to a 'they-image'.

Newspapers commonly employ this tendency, especially the tabloid press. Somewhat surprisingly, given their usually less partisan nature, it was the broadsheets
which most frequently deployed these stereotypes (see Chapter 4: 4i). Although
generally more subtle in their use of language and imagery compared to the tabloids,
the broadsheet writers arguably reinforced and developed national stereotypes in ways
not too dissimilar to the tabloid press. This is seen, for example, in the reference to
‘Germany’s renowned resilience’ (Times, 28 June 1996: 33) which infers an implicit
stereotype. Similarly, sports writer Martin Thorpe, commenting on the injuries to two
of the German squad’s forwards, noted: ‘Given the traditional harmony of its industrial
relations, Germany usually counts on its shortage of strikers’ (Guardian, 25 June

In this way, the broadsheet writers were playing with stereotypical images (as
they did with the imagery of war – see the previous section) despite numerous articles
casting the tabloids’ often derogatory use of them. For example, in an article
headlined ‘Spain Have a Beef with the Tabloids’ Beasts and Butchers’, columnist
Richard Williams observed that: ‘Since the middle of the week when the identity of
England’s opponents became known, the Spanish jokes have kept on coming: waiters,
bull-fighting, wineskins, Spanish fly’ (Guardian, 22 June: 21). Similarly, in a feature
actually addressing the issue of national stereotypes entitled, ‘Germany Offer Usual
Answer to Question of Stereotype’ [italics added], the Times (24 June 1996: 27) was
able to deploy such stereotypes (and in so doing, nationalistic sentiments) at will:

...German football teams never quite slide into self-parody. Certainly it would
be amusing to see them as a series of blonde machines, mindlessly fulfilling
their coaches aspirations, men without flair or creativity. It is still true, and
surely it always must be true, that a German team inspires in outsiders respect,
rather than affection, admiration, rather than awe. No Englishman feels about
the Germans as he does about the Brazilians...

The last lines of this extract also illustrate the gendered discourse that was a feature of
the Euro 96 press coverage, which was discussed in Chapter 4: 2ii. The broadsheets’
use of stereotyping will be considered in more detail as we chart the England team's progress in Euro 96.

Writing on the morning of the opening match, sports columnist James Lawton, reflecting again on need for the England team to redeem themselves for their pre-tournament controversies, utilised a host of relatively inoffensive stereotypes about the national playing character of some of England's rivals:

Some things we cannot really expect from Terry Venables' men at the bright and sunny dawn of Euro 96. We cannot expect them to touch the silky, unforced skills of Italy or Romania or even Croatia. We cannot hope for the invention of the Dutch, the subtlety of the French or the tactical rhythm of the Germans. But we can hope, indeed we can demand, the best of English football. We can presume nerve, power and, surely, a burning sense of debt to Terry Venables, for whom the last few days have been a nightmare of compromise and cover-up (Daily Express, 8 June 1996: 85).

Such stereotyping introduces some of the preconceptions some English people have about those respective nations' football teams. O'Donnell's (1994) study of the 'geopolitics of national sporting stereotypes' examined 'those relationships of political and economic power which can be seen to draw these into a discursive network (a macro-discourse) generating extended meanings at the local level'. However, while this is a useful starting point, the contention here is that the local level also involves national habitus codes working at the discursive level of consciousness (Giddens, 1984). Preconceived notions of what particular nations and nationalities are like are, therefore, potentially stored at this local level in a deep seated 'memory bank' and ordinarily learned as one grows up through socialisation processes. While politico-economic issues may influence these images at particular moments, the origin of a stereotype is likely to be constructed and re-constructed over time, through long-term processes.

England's first opponent was Switzerland. As stated above, historical and contemporary relations with the Swiss appeared to ensure that there were no overtly
anti-Swiss sentiments and none of the newspapers portrayed the Swiss in strongly negative terms. However, this did not prevent the tabloid press, in particular, from deploying a series of stereotypes about them. The stereotypes that were evident centred on 'chocolate, watches and very nice cuckoo clocks' (advertisement for Ladbrokes in Daily Mirror, 8 June 1996: 2), with one of the tabloids referring to ‘the men from the land of mountains and cuckoo clocks’ (Daily Mirror, 8 June 1996: 3). Other advertisements, like the following from a pillar of the Establishment, the Royal Mint, played the patriot card by declaring: ‘Let’s hope their defence is like their cheese... full of holes’ (Daily Mirror, 8 June 1996: 2).

The Sun meanwhile was hoping for an ‘early deposit in the Swiss bank’ (Sun, 8 June 1996: 33). Given the result (the game was drawn 1-1), the English defence proved to have as many ‘holes’, as the Swiss’ and their Emmental. This prompted a backlash from the tabloids and broadsheets alike. There was a negative reaction to the perceived poor English performance that had failed to redeem the England team for their pre-Euro 96 misdemeanours. It was in this context that further stereotypes were used. An Observer (9 June 1996: 1) headline stated: ‘It really should have gone like clockwork’, while the Sunday tabloid, the News of the World (9 June 1996: 86), referred to the England team as ‘Cuckoo Clots’!

As the football correspondents had predicted, the next match against Scotland appeared to provide ample scope to employ stereotypes relating to the movie, Braveheart, about the life of William Wallace, a Scottish national hero for his leadership in a revolt against the English. Scottish players and supporters were portrayed in text, and image, with blue and white daubed face paints, as donned by the actor, Mel Gibson, who played Wallace in the movie, and were commonly referred to as: ‘Scotland’s Braveheart brigade’ (Daily Mirror, 15 June 1996: 4, sports supplement). Newspapers also played on the image of the raucous, kilt-wearing
Scottish supporters, the self-labelled 'Tartan Army', bedecked in ginger wigs and tam o’shanters (national symbols of the Scots in terms of dress). Meanwhile, the *Daily Mirror* (14 June 1996: 2) offered some advice in the form of a 'sporran pack', claiming it contained ‘what Scots need to get over losing to England’. This included whisky ‘to drown their sorrows’, and a video of *Braveheart* ‘for inspiration’, before quipping ‘och nae, the wicked English beat the Scots in that one too!’ This appears to provide evidence for Henry Winter’s observation that the tabloids have a tendency to represent ‘sport in cartoon’ (see Chapter 3: 4i).

As with the previous matches, in the days preceding the next game, that against Holland, the press focused on evoking stereotypes about the Dutch opponents. Images and national signifiers of clogs, cheese (Edam and Gouda in particular), tulips and windmills were commonplace, and a target of systematic cultural ridicule, albeit sometimes with an element of humour. The *Daily Mirror*’s (18 June 1996: 36) message to the Dutch was ‘Button Tulip or We’ll Give You a Good Clogging!’. A front-page editorial provided readers with ten things they could do to ‘help defeat the Dutch’, including: ‘Don’t go anywhere near a windmill; Draw a moustache on any Van Gogh you see; Call the Dutch Embassy and ask for the number of the Dutch Mountaineering Club’ (*Daily Mirror*, 18 June 1996: 1). Also reinforcing a stereotype of the Dutch, the *Daily Telegraph* noted: ‘For a nation of cyclists, the Dutch should be used to be back-pedalling’ (19 June 1996: 48). This latter example demonstrates the broadsheets’ more subtle employment of stereotypes.

The quarter-final against Spain presented the opportunity, as noted earlier, for references to the Armada. Perhaps as a consequence of the historical hostilities between the two nations and the more recent controversy over the EU’s fishing quotas for the respective countries, a series of negative stereotypes as well as ‘jokes’ and ‘puns’ about the Spanish also came to the fore. The *Sun* (23 June 1996: 5 – italics
added) teased: ‘For the nation that nicked our fish, there will be no plaice in the semi-finals’. Headlines such as ‘Give ‘Em a Spainking’ (Sun, 20 June 1996: 1) and ‘You’re Done Juan’ (Daily Mirror, 20 June 1996: 1) were an indicator of how the content of the articles would be set. The latter’s front-page pictured a London Beefeater about to behead a Spanish matador [see Figure 3]. Indeed, the match against Spain somewhat marked a watershed in the press coverage, at least for the tabloids, as a more aggressive xenophobia became a feature of the discourse. There were ‘Costa Crackers’ (Daily Mirror, 20 June 1996: 5) in abundance about Spanish women being overweight with excessive facial and armpit hair, and about promiscuous, womanising Spanish men. A tabloid cartoon, for example, depicted a Spanish waiter seducing an Englishwoman, with the caption: ‘England may have won the football, but wait ‘til your husband finds out about this game’ (Sunday Mirror, 23 June 1996: 8). This also demonstrates the gendered, male-defined nature of some of the coverage as discussed earlier.

While the tabloids and the broadsheets appeared to stereotype the Spanish by making suggestions about the temperament of the ‘Latin opposition’ (Times, 22 June 1996: 55), criticism of the tabloids’ stereotyping by broadsheet writers began to emerge. One commentator observed:

The Armada spirit sweeping England before this afternoon’s Euro 96 match against Spain threatens to leave high streets deserted, pubs packed and diplomats faced with a fence-mending operation. Spain has been shocked by the outburst of Hispanophobia here, much fuelled by the tabloid press (Daily Telegraph, 22 June 1996: 1).

However, while the broadsheets revelled in criticism of the tabloids’ cultural denigration of the Spanish and xenophobic tendencies, it appears they themselves were not entirely faultless. Several readers sent letters of complaint to the Guardian (25 June 1996: 16), critical of the newspaper’s own coverage. One Scottish reader wrote:
'Your coverage of Euro 96 reveals that the Guardian, like the rest of the English media, has deep Little Englander prejudices'. Another letter read:

Richard Williams lays into the tabloids for all the Spanish jokes ('Spain Have a Beef With the Tabloids', 22 June 1996: 21) [see above]. If he wants to see more of this stuff, he should read David Lacey over the page ('Venables Stokes the Home Fires'). 'Spain failed to stop a game of bowls... This is not Fawlty Towers... The Spanish may not be as overtly cynical as the Argentineans'. The Guardian should look to its own backyard! (Guardian, 26 June 1996: 18)

It would appear that David Lacey had become what he described during his interview prior to the tournament as 'a bit sloppy' in his writing style, by allowing national stereotypes and militaristic imagery to creep into his reports.

The Spanish were perceived by the media to have launched a 'counter-attack', as Spain’s national coach, Javier Clemente, stereotyped English football supporters during comments at a pre-match press conference. He remarked: 'We will have no support - it will be 2,000 of us against 70,000 drunkards'. The broadsheet reporting of this particular incident was more reflective and reserved. A Daily Telegraph (21 June 1996: 44) reporter observed: 'Inaccurate as Clemente maybe, that is the sad, if understandable perception many from overseas have of English supporters'. In contrast, the story provoked a defensive backlash in the tabloids, as demonstrated in the headline: 'You're All Drunkards - Outrage as Spain Boss Brands Fans' (Daily Mirror, 22 June 1996: 4).

Tabloid journalists took further offence, ironically in response to the Spanish reaction to the treatment of their nation by the English press. The Daily Mirror (21 June 1996: 2) reported how: 'Stormy señorita Marien Amat took one look at our Costa jokes yesterday and reckoned they were like red rag to a bull!' Using a similar stereotype, the same newspaper labelled the Spaniards, 'The Raging Bulls' (Daily Mirror, 22 June 1996: 28-29) after complaints in Spain about the anti-Spanish feelings
in the English press. Interestingly, a play on the same imagery was found in a report filed from the Spanish resort of Benidorm, popular with English holidaymakers. It noted how the local press had billed the match as: ‘The brave bulls versus the mad cows’ (Observer, 23 June 1996: 1). The Spanish stereotype of the English as ‘mad cows’ was clearly derived from the EU’s ban on the export of British cattle amidst claims that it was infected with BSE, otherwise known as ‘Mad Cow Disease’ - see Chapters 1 and 3 for further discussion. The Spanish evidently thought some of the tabloid journalists had contracted the human form of the mental illness from some infected beef!

England went on to defeat Spain, prompting a further deployment of stereotypes involving ascribed Spanish characteristics and cultural interests as ‘our boys got the result that matadored’. The News of the World (23 June 1996: 4-5) was in celebratory mood: ‘It was the day the roar of England’s lions saw off the Spanish bulls. The day we sent the paella-eaters packing’. Another tabloid front-page headline was emblazoned with the Cross of St. George and the message: ‘ADIOS AMIGOS!’ (Daily Mirror, 22 June 1996: 1). However, given the tabloid framing of the game, with the excessive war imagery of the Armada, the xenophobic sentiments, and the somewhat distasteful stereotyping of the Spanish nation, it is questionable whether many Spanish ‘amigos’ were acquired, at least by the English press corps, during the contest.

The same might be said in light of the coverage of the semi-final against Germany, with similar hostile stereotyping of the German nation evident. A common theme was the perception of the German national character as efficient, organised and humourless. The Daily Express (26 June 1996: 35) spoke of the ‘grinding, but industrious Germans’. Even before the Germans’ semi-final victory, the Sunday Express (23 June 1996: 5) ran an article on ‘Why the Germans Are So Hard to Stop’.
It described them as a 'mean machine' that was 'rolling towards the final' and listed among their attributes: 'efficiency, concentration, physical and mental strength... organisation and commitment'. One of the more pro-European broadsheets was in agreement with this description, referring to the 'Germanic ruthlessness' (Guardian, 26 June 1996: 25). With England defeated in a penalty shoot-out, another newspaper noted the predictability of 'the accuracy and the efficiency of the German [penalty] takers' (Sun, 27 June 1996: 55).

The examples presented here seek to illustrate the actual form of national stereotyping in the press coverage of Euro 96, as revealed through the qualitative analysis. Some of the stereotypes were evidently more derogatory than others, the Spanish and Germans being the targets of some particularly offensive descriptors. Lawrence James of the Daily Mail (25 June 1996: 8) made the astute observation that:

Present tensions in Europe have made it easy to transfer political antagonisms over cattle and fish to the soccer pitch. Football has been the first casualty in this mock war and has all but been forgotten as we listen, in some quarters, to sneering recitals of all that was and is wrong with England's adversaries: Holland, Spain and Germany. Old national stereotypes are brought out, dusted down and displayed, and not just for amusement.

Billig (1995: 66) is here shown to have been proved correct in his contention that nations often attempt to assert a positive identity of their own nation through the employment of 'flattering stereotypes of themselves and demeaning stereotypes of other nations' to distinguish themselves more positively. However, it is debatable whether a positive image of a nation is presented by one that does so at the expense of others in order to bolster its own 'we-image'. Rather, it smacks of a nation with a low self-esteem and a fragile national identity of its own. In this connection, we can refer once again to Elias' notion of the 'fantasy images' of nations and the lengths representatives of a nation may go to preserve their 'we-image' at the expense of others.
Figure 3: The Daily Mirror (20 June 1996: 1) Send a Message to Spain
3ii. Patriotism versus Xenophobia

The discourse variable concerned with nationalistic sentiments/nationalism included references of both a positive and negative nature in the coding system, although these unfortunately could not be distinguished in quantitative measures. Such a distinction is better appreciated qualitatively through a textual analysis. Positive nationalism can be understood as the patriotic assertion of one’s own national ‘we-identity’. This process is a further example of the active construction of ‘fantasy group charisma’.

Whannel (1992: 121) has observed how the imaginary coherence of the nation can help to mask real underlying patterns of social relations, through the binding of media-sport discourse. This is reinforced through negative nationalistic sentiments. These are ordinarily derogatory and hostile toward other nationalities, so aiding the (re)construction and reinforcement of a ‘they-image’. As outlined above, Billig (1995) acknowledges this distinction between positive and negative nationalistic sentiments, arguing that in the assertion of a positive national identity of their own, nations tend to distinguish themselves with contrasting groups by selecting comparative dimensions that will make them fare better. Similar ideas can be found through drawing again on Elias’ study of established-outsider relations (1994). In this sense national identity construction and representation operates through contrasting the best attributes of the established group/nation (‘us’) with the worst of the outsiders (‘them’). National sentiments are also communicated through narcissism and the deploying of the vocabulary of war/militaristic imagery which were discussed earlier. Here, attention is given to reporting that fits into neither of those categories, but which nevertheless displays nationalistic sentiments through the positive promotion of one’s own nation and also negative textual messages directed at others.
Through the quantitative study of the tournament coverage on a weekly basis, it is apparent that - as with narcissistic comments and the use of war imagery - the newspapers displayed nationalistic sentiments more often during the third week. This was evidently because the England team played both Spain and Germany in important knock-out stages in this week, where a place in the semi-final, and then the final itself, were at stake. Nationalistic sentiments were consequently to the fore within the press, particularly in the tabloids. Interestingly, some of the journalists themselves appeared to make a distinction between positive and negative sentiments, and comment was given on what was deemed ‘acceptable’ in media-sport reporting. The following excerpt offers definitions of ‘patriotism’, seen as a positive sentiment, and negative sentiments, labelled as ‘nationalism’:

Nationalism is the political reaction of a threatened people, or a nation struggling for freedom. Many history books juxtapose nationalism and war - rightly so; in modern history nationalism and war are close kin. But patriotism is a gentler emotion... Patriotism does not need to strut; it can lie contentedly on the hearth rug, like an old bulldog - always ready to rise up if the household is under threat (Sunday Times, 23 June 1996: 16).

It is useful to note how some newspapers in effect attempted to self-regulate their own reporting - at least in theory - by means of providing such distinctions. Whether they maintained the standards they expounded will need consideration during the course of this section. Sports columnist Lawrence James also provided some useful media working-definitions:

The xenophobe can find no virtue in any country but his own, defines his nation in terms of others’ short-comings and is always on the look-out for some physical proof of national superiority. Patriotism is, by contrast, a positive emotion which takes pride in national achievements and those values which provide what is best in national character (Daily Mail, 24 June 1996: 8).

Xenophobia here is deemed to be a negative nationalistic sentiment. Yet such discourse was prevalent in the press coverage of Euro 96, particularly in the tabloid
reporting of the matches against Spain and Germany. There is also the intimation in James’ definition that the exhibition of xenophobia - or negative nationalistic sentiments - indicates a fragile ‘we-image’ of one’s own nation that extends to hostility towards others that it may feel threatened by. Patriotism, as James notes himself, is ordinarily recognised as a positive sentiment, more concerned with the celebration of one’s own national identity, regardless of others. An example of ‘positive’ nationalism can be seen in an article entitled, ‘The Night Three Lions Brought Wembley War Back to Life’ by Henry Winter of the Daily Telegraph. Winter reflected on the (re)emergence of a positive English national identity and patriotism:

The celebration of Englishness, as tens of thousands did so deliriously following the 4-1 vanquishing of Holland at Wembley, is a rare phenomenon nowadays. There are annual pageants, like Royal Ascot which honour English traits and traditions, but not England herself. Most countries have annual outpourings of pride when a nation reminds itself of its identity. Andrew, David and Patrick all have their day in the sun, but not poor George. Until, that is, representatives of the national obsession, football, start knocking over the foreigners ... (Daily Telegraph, 20 June 1996: 32).

Underpinning this observation are also discourses concerning invented tradition, nostalgia, habitus codes and internal British tensions and rivalries. As we have seen, these themes surfaced regularly throughout the press coverage, in broadsheet editorials and commentaries, as well as the tabloids. The following example is testimony to this:

The England football team’s wonderful victory against Holland released something not often seen in this country. Pride. The Scots have it and so do the Irish and Welsh. Pride not just in their sporting teams, but in their nations. Yet something has happened in England since winning the World Cup in 1966. The sense of nationhood has slipped away... The new spirit which has swept the country since 7:30 on Tuesday night must be held on to. It shows there is still the old feeling, the old sense of pride. Let it roar out at Wembley and through the land (Daily Mirror, 20 June 1996: 6).

Other columnists appeared to sense ‘the great rush of genuine pride... an atmosphere not seen for generations’ (Sunday Telegraph, 23 June 1996: 3, sport supplement) as
the England team progressed through the tournament. Such emotions gathered pace following the victory over the Dutch, which the Sun (19 June 1996: 35) heralded as:

‘Our finest hour? You had better believe it, baby. The future, as it turned out, was not orange. It was red, white and glorious blue. England turned in the greatest performance since, dare I say it, 1966’. The result and the performance that achieved it led to talk of a ‘feel-good factor’ throughout the nation. This became a dominant theme in feature articles and editorials:

England awoke yesterday in a state of disbelief. Few could have predicted the result against the Netherlands. Nobody could have guessed its impact on England’s citizens, even those with little time for the game... From the boardroom to the bedroom, folk are likely to be performing better. Good news for soccer widows then, themselves becoming turned on to Euro 96 (Guardian, 20 June 1996: 1).

The last point made here is another example of a gendered comment, disregarding the possibility of any genuine female interest in the football tournament.

A common theme was reflection on the up-beat atmosphere in the nation which, in spite of the concurrent European political climate, was increasingly framed as attributable to the football:

England’s soccer heroes gave the nation what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been struggling to provide for years - the feel-good factor... And don’t we all feel we deserve it? Mad cows, enemies in Brussels... we could forget them all last night as we showed the entire world how to play the game we invented (Daily Express, 19 June 1996: 8).

Likewise, the Times (20 June 1996: 1) observed how: ‘In ninety minutes, and four goals, football had done what a thousand speeches by government ministers, and a hundred election promises by Tony Blair, have all failed to do. England feels great about itself, almost invincible - not just on the football field, but in business, the Olympic Games, politics, you name it’. An adjacent political cartoon, however, tempered these positive sentiments. The satirical illustration showed two cows reading
of the impending ‘extensive cattle cull’, with one cow remarking ‘Takes the edge off the feel-good factor’. The Sun (22 June 1996: 6), meanwhile, took the opportunity to maintain its anti-European agenda and criticism of the British Government: ‘Tel and his boys are going for victory in Europe and nothing less... Unlike some politicians we could mention’.

The manifestations of positive nationalistic sentiments escalated still further with the English victory over Spain which qualified England for a place in the semi-finals: ‘at last English football was a legitimate source of pride again’ (Sun, 23 June 1996: 24). The broadsheets similarly showed their excitement and national pride in the English win as ‘... the country went crazy...’ (Sunday Telegraph, 23 June 1996: 4).

However, the proverbial ‘bubble’ of high hopes and expectations was to finally burst with England’s defeat by Germany. Yet as the obituaries were written about the departing coach, Terry Venables, the discourse still contained some of the positive nationalistic sentiments that had characterised the press coverage of Euro 96 thus far. The coach was praised for giving the nation the general feeling of well-being, and the cause to re-discover its pride and identity: ‘Venables’ legacy is that he made a nation smile, gave English people an opportunity to celebrate their cultural identity, even if for less than a month. Organising five St. George’s Days in one month is a remarkable achievement’ (Daily Telegraph, 28 June 1996: 48).²

Whereas the example presented here implies an uplifting, patriotic and essentially, positive national feeling, manifest in the discourses within the press coverage, this was countered by some starkly contrasting negative sentiments towards England’s opponents as the team progressed through the tournament. For example, in explanation of the long-standing English-Scottish rivalry, Paul Hayward of the Daily Telegraph offered comment on the domestic ‘clash of cultures’. He welcomed the ‘renewal of historic rivalry’ in what he saw as ‘this increasingly standardised society’.

240
It is a source of bewilderment on the Continent that two regions of the same state can have worked themselves into such a frenzy over an ancient and often dimly understood historical rivalry. The sight of men in ginger wigs and kilts descending on London, and the English puffing their chests to full imperial measurements, will do nothing to alleviate European anxiety over BSE. Look at that lot, they will say in France and Germany. Shut all the ports! ... Anglo-Scottish sporting duels are a mostly innocent and enjoyable manifestation of Britain’s peculiar political history... In an age where so much of British life is becoming homogenised - high streets, roads, television, fashion - the differences between us become ever more important. In diversity is strength, as somebody once said (Daily Telegraph, 15 June 1996: 24).

Hayward here is promoting heterogeneity, and the accentuation of difference amid globalising trends within society, advocating the importance and significance of the individual national identities that form the constituent parts of the United Kingdom. Additionally, he makes interesting use of the pronoun ‘us’ to infer, not only the differences between ‘us’, meaning England versus Scotland (Hayward being English), but also to make the distinction between ‘us’ (England and Scotland) and continental Europe. This is part of the extended identity politics debate on the global-local nexus. For, as Maguire (1999: 212) has observed, ‘global sport fosters both cosmopolitan consciousness and stimulates feelings and expressions of ethnicity... highlighted... by the patriot games that underpin international sport’.

These pro-‘British’ sentiments were also evident in the tabloids, although articulated with more aggressive and negative undertones. Former England player and currently Sun columnist, Jimmy Greaves wrote, with considerable chauvinism and bigotry:

I’m not having a bet, but I do have a dream. Which is that, whatever the result, England and Scotland show Europe the best of British. I want our footballers to show that, even if the country is going to the dogs, the lottery money is going to one-legged lesbians against the bomb and our taxes are being used to backdate 800 grandsworth of dole-money, there is one corner of a Euro 96 field that will be forever Britain... Provided we both play the game the British way - with bravery, heart, spirit and skill - I will be happy (Sun, 15 June 1996).
However, most of the nationalistic sentiments framing the England-Scotland match were more concerned with general domestic rivalries, with British identity politics writ large. The discourse was pro-English and anti-Scottish to varying degrees. One sportswriter in the broadsheets, Frank Keating of the Guardian, caused controversy north of the border with his comments on the eve of the match between the ‘Auld Enemies’:

> The Scots should enjoy their own sounds and furies while they can - but they presage nothing but doom. For the blueshirts, methinks, are in for a black weekend, and from the soccer at Wembley and the rugby in faraway Dunedin, they will be sent home to their grim glens, cold crofts and chilblained lives ‘tae think again’ (Guardian, 14 June 1996: 26).

The last line of this excerpt is taken from the Scots’ national sporting anthem *Flower of Scotland*. Keating’s article presented a series of stereotypes and other negative nationalistic sentiments as it went on to talk of the Scots as ‘mean-spirited’, and bearing ‘resentful grudges’, and of ‘Scotland’s inferiority complex when it comes to ball games against England’. A series of responses from Scottish readers were printed the following day. One letter told how ‘Frank Keating’s racist spleen brought home to me the fact that the Guardian is an English newspaper, not a national one’. Another referred to Keating as a ‘narrow-minded Little-Englander’ (Guardian, 15 June 1996: 28).

The tabloids were more direct and succinct with their sentiments towards Scotland: ‘Blow Their Jocks Off!’ bellowed the Sun (15 June 1996: 39). The Scots were also confronted with readers messages, such as: ‘Let’s hit the Jocks where it hurts, not gonna lose to some fellas in skirts’ (Sun, 15 June 1996: 39). Following the English victory, the News of the World (16 June 1996: 72) indulged by mocking a famous piece of Norwegian radio commentary by Bjorge Lallelien in which he had listed the names of English cultural, sporting and political icons to celebrate a victory
over England in 1981. The Sunday tabloid’s caption boasted: ‘Robert the Bruce, Billy Connolly, Rod Stewart, Craig Brown - Your Boys Took One Tel of a Beating!’

The Dutch escaped with comparatively less derision - possibly, as has been suggested earlier, because historic conflicts with Holland seem to have dimmed in the national memory, and the country poses no real contemporary challenge in the European political climate. One of the exceptions included a photograph of the Dutch player Dennis Bergkamp’s head morphed into an Edam cheese. Beneath was the message: ‘Give ‘em Edam Good Thrashing!’ (Daily Mirror, 18 June 1996: 1). The Dutch faced further ridicule as the Sun (19 June 1996: 34) jeered: ‘Holland, the supposed super-team, wilted like their famous tulips’.

The Spanish, in contrast, faced a barrage of contemptuous and offensive sentiments. A favourite journalistic tactic of the Sun was to print what it claimed were genuine readers’ facsimile messages, articulating the apparent sentiments of the nation. Take this illustrative example: ‘Watch out for the English inquisition; McManaman will stretch them on the rack; Shearer will turn the screw; It can only be pain for Spain’ (Sun, 21 June 1996: 2-3). Recalling such unpleasant historical episodes as the ‘Spanish Inquisition’ would seem to have little relevance to a late twentieth century football match, yet this was also illuminated by the Daily Mirror (20 June 1996: 3) in a list of ‘Ten Nasties Spain’s Given Europe’. The list included: syphilis; Spanish flu; carpet-bombing; the Inquisition: ‘torture and murder supposedly carried out in the name of God’; bullfighting; paella, ‘otherwise known as pavement paella because of it’s habit of repeating’; and Flamenco dancing. This was an example of some of the excessively negative nationalistic sentiments that were characteristic of the Daily Mirror’s reporting of Euro 96 that appeared to disparage all things foreign.

Other examples of readers’ faxes featured predominantly in the Sun, highlighted the recent European political controversies. One urged: ‘Break the Spanish
nests and send the fisherman back to Spain', while another declared: 'They ban our beef. They take our fish. They try to change our law. Let them step on Wembley's turf and feel the lion's roar!' (Sun, 8 June 1996: 31). A degree of editorial selectivity in choosing which faxes to include may well have played a role for the purpose of establishing and reinforcing the newspaper's own agenda. However, while the 'Beef Crisis' (documented in Chapter 3) frequently featured in the press rhetoric, certain instances (like these readers' faxes) suggest that the controversy might well have interested some supporters as much as it did the politicians and newspaper editors. A photographic image in the News of the World (23 June 1996: 5) is another example of this. The photograph featured a hand-painted banner held up in the English crowd with the slogan 'Gazza Eats Beef!' Similarly, the Daily Telegraph (26 June 1996: 46) reported how some England fans were heard singing 'No surrender to the BSE!', in place of the right-wing chant, 'No Surrender to the IRA!'.

Other media-sport discourse analyses have found 'occasions where cultural or political references apparent in the data are reflected in the behaviour of football fans in the countries concerned' (Crolley, Hand & Jeutter, 1998: 174). This goes some way towards suggesting that while textual messages in the media can highlight for us salient issues or identity politics, the behaviour and sentiments of the citizens of a nation - in this case the newspaper readers who sent faxes and football supporters with the banner and chants alluding to the 'Beef War' - can reflect much deeper national habitus codes. This illustrates the inter-relationship between discursive and practical consciousness. Elements of the processes through which the national habitus/character is constructed and represented by and through the discursive practices of both the media is evident here. These are interwoven with the activities of spectators and supporters that occur at the level of practical, but also discursive consciousness.
Figure 4: John Major – Batting for Britain, but the ‘odd one out’ in Europe? (Times, 22 June 1996: 5)
Jimmy Greaves, writing in his daily tabloid column, articulated further ‘English grievances’ against the Spanish as he called for a winning performance from the England team against Spain. He wrote: ‘So for every holiday-maker who has ever found a hotel half built and the pool full of lizards, for every tourist who has ever been told Air Iberia are on strike, for all our Cornish fishermen, let’s stick it to Spain this afternoon!’ (Sun, 22 June 1996: 35). Further nationalistic discourse of a negative nature was found in what appeared to be the newspaper’s attempted provocation of readers through the printing of antagonistic sentiments from opposing nations, so stirring the European political cauldron to suit their own anti-European agenda. The Daily Express (8 June 1996: 4) reported how: ‘The Spanish soccer team are taking no chances as they prepare for Euro 96. Worried about the ban on British beef, they have brought along not only their own chef, but their own choice Spanish steaks for the duration of the tournament!’ (Daily Express, 8 June 1996: 4).

After the ‘welter of anti-Spanish stories in the tabloids’ (Daily Telegraph, 22 June 1996: 26), the ‘disturbing chauvinism’ (Sunday Times, 23 June 1996: 22) continued in earnest as England’s victory over Spain earned them a meeting with Germany. A feature writer in the Guardian (24 June 1996: 10) noted how the fixture provided ‘an opportunity for the shameful side of the national psyche to erupt in an excess of xenophobia, fanned by the newspapers’ compulsion to outdo each other’. For ‘national psyche’, we can read national habitus. Matthew Engel, the Guardian’s media correspondent, observed: ‘There were various T-shirts on sale round Wembley on Saturday. Some proclaimed We’ll Fight Them on the Beaches. Others said Bulldog Breed and VE Day. Now England have got to play Germany again, and in the next sixty or so hours, it’s all going to get much, much worse’ (Guardian, 24 June 1996: 8, sports supplement). Indeed, it did. One of the English tabloids considered the former England captain, Kevin Keegan, to be ‘Kraut of Order’ (Daily Mirror, 25 June 1996: 246.
for tipping Germany to win in his column in the German tabloid, Bild. Perhaps the most negative and hostile instance of nationalistic sentiment can be seen in the previously mentioned declaration of ‘football war’ on Germany by the Daily Mirror (25 June 1996: 1). The following day, the tabloid claimed that the Germans had ‘laughed off war-time jokes’ about the semi-final, and how ‘back in Germany, the country’s biggest daily newspaper had a humorous dig at the English’ by printing a list of questions:

Why do you drive on the wrong side of the road? Why can’t you pull a decent pint of beer? Why, as the birthplace of football, were you never European champions? Why do you wear bathing trunks in the sauna? Why do your electric trains still carry firemen? Why can’t you beat your former colonies at cricket? Why do you eat your lamb with mint sauce? Why do you look like freshly boiled lobsters after a sunny day on the beach? Who won the World Cup semi-final in 1990 - you or us? When was the last time that an Englishman won Wimbledon? Why are you the only people who still think the 1966 Wembley goal went in? (Daily Mirror, 26 June 1996: 4).

These pointed questions from Bild, articulating some nationalistic sentiments of the Germans’ own, were also carried by the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Express and the Daily Mail. Not to be outdone, the latter countered with some questions of its own for the Germans, displaying further nationalistic sentiments through the antagonistic lampooning of certain German customs and symbols. These included:

Why do you like wearing leather shorts? ... How come you think it’s a fair deal to sell two inches of froth on every half litre of beer? ... Why is German asparagus white and sauerkraut so sour? ... If all Germans can speak English, why don’t they? (Daily Mail, 26 June 1996: 3).

The Daily Express (26 June 1996: 8) also appeared somewhat indignant at Bild’s questions and responded with some rather vindictive answers, so adding to the hostility:
We were never European Champions because we are an outward-looking nation that doesn't think Europe is the centre of the universe... We are sorry that you do not understand that proper beer is served warm; why don't you wear proper trousers? ... When you stop squiring raspberry juice into your beer, we'll stop putting mint sauce on our lamb. At least our former colonies still want to play our national sport with us? Do any of your ex-colonies want to play yours with you? ... Our national character is pleasure-loving and undisciplined, and this means we cannot sunbathe systematically, unlike you... As for That Goal, we simply abided by the referee's decision.

Meanwhile, broadsheet journalists attempted to distance themselves from their tabloid counterparts, as they did with the tabloid journalists' excessive use of war language. They castigated their 'insistence on treating the match as a codicil to the Beef War' (Guardian, 22 June 1996: 21) and their treatment of the Germans. The Guardian quoted a German broadsheet, which had made a satirical comment in light of the BSE controversy surrounding British beef. The Cologne Express was cited as noting 'God Save the Queen - from her own subjects. The fatal defect in cows' brains seems to have transferred itself to the two-legged inhabitants on the island' (Guardian, 26 June 1996: 27). In a move towards countering the anti-German sentiment that abounded in sections of the English press, the Independent (25 June 1996: 1) ran a pro-German feature, with a front-page plea: 'Don't Be Beastly to the Germans'. The article cited Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, who deplored the xenophobic, war-mongering tabloid coverage of the impending England-Germany match, suggesting, 'It is about time we grew up and loved our country for what it is, rather than harking back, in insecurity, to past glories'.

Here, the emphasis is on displaying positive, as opposed to negative, nationalistic sentiments and avoiding a nostalgic outlook. This, Ashdown infers, indicates an 'insecure' nation: a nation with a fragile self-image and national identity, relying on a 'fantasy shield' to bolster it's 'imagined charisma'. Following the Independent's plea, the Daily Telegraph replied with an article charting the historical
animosity between England and Germany, claiming ‘We’re Always Beastly to the Germans’ and that ‘the anti-Teutonic broadsides of Britain’s football-crazed and war-fixated tabloids are nothing new’ (Daily Telegraph, 26 June 1996: 22). The broadsheet refers to ‘British’ newspapers in its headline. While this is technically correct, the ‘British’ press tends to be Anglocentric in nature, so a reference to the ‘English’ press might have been more accurate (see Note 6).

The reporting surrounding the England-Germany semi-final involved not only the English press’ pre-occupation with past wartime hostilities between the two nations, but also the contemporary European political climate. This was underwritten by a nostalgic evocation of ‘66 and all that. As Chapter 3 explored, the political situation underpinned an Anglo-British anxiety over the country’s current world standing. A victorious Euro 96 campaign by the England team and thus a fulfilment of a national sporting dream could go some way to restoring the English nation’s fragile we-image. Such themes were prevalent in the press coverage throughout the tournament, but were most evident in the reporting of the England-Germany match, due to the tense relations past and present with Germany. The contemporary issue of dominance in European politics was highlighted for example, in a cartoon in the Times (June 22 1996: 5). As Figure 4 illustrates, cricket enthusiast John Major was depicted going out to bat at the EU summit in Florence against a European football team led by the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl. The message was clearly that Major (and the British Government) was the ‘odd one out’ in (a German-dominated) Europe.

An article that appeared half way through the tournament, offered an explanation for the prevalent anti-German sentiments in the press coverage, and the nation more broadly, which is particularly interesting when considering the embodied emotions of nations. The writer attempted to chart how such sentiments and emotions can become manifest in what he terms the ‘folk memory’. He explained:
The language of today’s football hooligans is still remarkably similar to Second World War propaganda, according to the military historian John Ellis: ‘Logistically and economically the Second World War represented our greatest ever mobilisation and it included propaganda that left an incredible residue’, he says. ‘Although in 1940 army battle schools taught ‘hate’, it was quickly dropped because it was thought to be irrelevant - the troops were far more interested in survival techniques. So it was civilians who became the main propaganda targets and this is how it entered folk memory. Hell hath no fury like a non-combatant! Up to the early sixties, every boy’s comic had war stories holding the Germans up to ridicule, showing them either as evil or cringing, snivelling creatures. It’s this drip, drip effect which still makes us think of them as Krauts today’ (Independent, 19 June 1996: 4-5, supplement).

The journalists’ reference to a ‘folk memory’ could be understood in terms of the Eliasian notion of habitus that also embraces the idea of a social fund of collective memories. This linkage is enhanced by the writer’s recognition of an apparently gradual, but sustained ‘drip, drip effect’ – that might be likened to the processes of socialisation – which helps to re-construct and communicate images for a (national) group over the long-term. This helps to explain, in part, how the tabloids were able to tap into a series of national stereotypes and sentiments, readily available at their disposal.

However, the nationalistic discourse surrounding the coverage of Euro 96, particularly the Germany match, and events in Europe more generally, did not entirely involve negative sentiments. A strong ‘patriotic’ image of the English, was also sometimes evident. For example, the Daily Telegraph (21 June 1996: 22), while consciously pursuing its own anti-European agenda, noted ‘Euro-sceptics will be delighted that the invasion of fans has not led to an upsurge in Federalist fashion. The separate identity of nation-states is a key theme in these Championships’. The idea of the ‘separate identity of nation-states’ is celebrated here, but not in an overtly negative manner.

This section has illustrated the positive and negative manifestations of those nationalistic sentiments found to be evident in the press coverage of Euro 96 through
the quantitative analysis. A blend of these discourses contributed to the construction
and reinforcement of an 'I/we image' in contrast to a 'us/them image', re-awakening
hibernating habitus codes. While there was evidence of patriotic pro-English emotions,
and an up-beat spirit urging the England team to success in their Euro 96 campaign,
we also saw the more insidious face of nationalism - contemptuous, jingoistic and
xenophobic - which was characteristic of much of the tabloid reporting. As a
broadsheet writer, commenting on what he deemed the 'xenophobic triumphalism' of
the tabloids, contended: 'There is nothing wrong with patriotism, but why does it have
to invoke negative images of opponents rather than positive ones of England?'
(Independent, 24 June 1996: 3, sports supplement). A nation, or at least a national
press, that can only look for the shortcomings of others, and dwell on past hostilities
and scores to settle from anywhere other than the field of sport, arguably suggests a
nation with a very fragile, threatened sense of national identity.

4. Findings and Observations

This chapter has sought to investigate the construction and representation of
national identity and identity politics in the press coverage of Euro 96 through a
detailed qualitative analysis of the codes, significations and textual messages. A full
summary and interpretation of the results from this textual analysis will be presented in
the concluding chapter, but some general observations can be offered here. Habitus
codes have been identified as operating effectively at a variety of levels, helping to
instil a feeling of 'belonging' to the 'imagined community' of the nation. Through the
use of these codes, the nation is made to appear more 'real', and identifiable, through
the interplay between discursive and practical consciousness.

This was illustrated by the way some football supporters showed themselves to
be 'actively' responding to the 'Beef Crisis' - a common theme in the press reportage
- through their chants, facsimiles and banners. Such ‘codes of being’ appear to be built on a foundation of significations that generally stereotype in positive ways about ‘us’ and negative ways about ‘them’. The sense of belonging is stimulated further through the use of personal pronouns, nationalistic sentiments and national symbols which cement and bolster a ‘we-image’ in contradistinction to a ‘they-image’. Such a ‘hardening’ of national habitus can also be amplified through the use of war vocabulary and militaristic imagery, a heralding of tradition and the nostalgic remembrance of former glories and disasters from on or off the sports field.

The Euro 96 articles in the tabloids and broadsheets, characterised by a pervasive interest in both sporting and socio-political history, performed the function that Elias illuminated about national identity politics and socialisation practices more broadly. That is, such media-sport discourse reinforced invented traditions, but also national habitus codes, as it drew on a taken-for-granted storehouse of images and dates from the ‘folk memory’. This might be expected of a nation such as England, which once enjoyed a powerful global status in the political, economic and cultural realms, but does so no longer, since the ‘fantasy shield of their imagined charisma as a leading group may give a declining nation the strength to carry on’ (Elias, 1994: x1iii). The English press coverage of Euro 96 was a predictable response of a nation whose superiority in former international power-relations has been lost. While narcissism and nationalistic sentiments, (about ‘them’ and ‘us’), can help to bolster the ‘we-image’ of a nation at the expense of outsider groups, in this case the opposing teams in the tournament, there is also a revealing propensity towards the nostalgic glorification of past triumphs and status, and a celebration of history and tradition. This also manifests itself in a hostile reaction to more powerful contemporary nations, like Germany, in the form of an ethnic defensiveness, coupled with a particular aggressive assertiveness,
manifested in the deployment of national stereotypes, the use of personal pronouns and war vocabulary.

It is somewhat ironical, given what we have found, that the Sun (8 June 1996: 6) on the opening day of the tournament should tell its readership: ‘Treat our European guests with respect and affection. Don’t spoil the occasion with bad behaviour’. Elsewhere, an editorial in the Daily Mirror (21 June 1996: 6) urged Euro-rebels critical of the British Government for its concessions to the EU, to ‘adopt a less childish and xenophobic attitude towards Europe’. Given these two editorials, questions arise as to whether the tabloid press actually adhered to their own advice during their coverage of Euro 96. Indeed, it could be argued that the Daily Mirror’s treatment of opposing teams was itself particularly ‘childish’, ‘xenophobic’, and essentially, deeply offensive to the nationalities involved. This would support Blain & O’Donnell’s (1998: 45) contention that, ‘at times of international conflict, the language [of the tabloids] becomes very restricted, adolescently masculine, and idiomatic’.

We have seen in this chapter how there were some significant differences, as well as similarities, between the tabloid and broadsheet reporting of Euro 96. What follows in Chapter 6 are the results of the analysis of the television coverage of the tournament. This will allow for further contrasts and comparisons to be made in relation to the construction and representation of national identity during Euro 96, and the framing of the competition itself, by media-sport.

Notes

1. For an insight into the German press coverage, see Maguire et al. (1999a and 1999b).
2. This is another play on the lyrics from the Dad’s Army comedy series, which contains the lyrics: ‘Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler, if you think old England’s done?’

3. For a further insight into this potential legal breach, see the discussion in the concluding chapter.

4. The citing of ‘Gotcha!’ refers to an infamous Sun headline (4 May 1982) after the British Royal Navy torpedoed and sunk the Argentine vessel, the General Belgrano, during the Falklands conflict.

5. St. George’s Day (23 April) is the annually recognised patron saint’s day in England. It is generally observed by the raising of the Cross of St. George on flag poles across the country, Anglican church services and patriotic speeches/editorials by, more usually, right-wing politicians and journalists.

6. Blain et al. (1993: 173) have noted how ‘the Scottish media traditionally displays little sympathy with England football clubs and even less for the English national side, a tendency echoed in other sports like rugby union’. Blain & Boyle (1998) and Boyle & Haynes (2000) also discuss the Anglocentric nature of the ‘British’ press. While it was not in the remit of this thesis to undertake a full comparative content analysis of the Scottish press coverage of Euro 96, a general reading of the latter’s coverage confirmed these observations. For example, some Scottish newspapers publicly supported England’s opposition. As England faced Germany, the Daily Record (26 June 1996: 10-11) claimed ‘The Tartan Army will tonight form a new alliance - with the Germans... for us Scots it’s another chance to silence the frenzied gloating of the lucky Little Englanders...’ The Scottish press was critical of the English framing of their match with Germany: ‘billed as World War III by some people down south’ (Daily Record, 26 June 1996: 10). Another broad characteristics of the Scottish coverage was a widespread indignation at the ‘anti-Scottish drivel’ (Daily Record, 14 June 1996: 2) found in the English press, and an intolerance of ‘England’s jingoistic football juggernaut... Scotland will have to endure at least three more days of Anglomania’ (Scotland on Sunday, 23 June 1996: 1).
CHAPTER 6

THE ENGLISH TELEVISION COVERAGE OF EURO 96:
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

A qualitative content analysis of the national television coverage of Euro 96 is presented in this chapter to complement the results outlined in previous chapters on the press reporting of the tournament. This qualitative study will investigate the codes, messages and meanings employed in the construction and re-presentation of national identity as further signifiers of national habitus in media-sport. The methodological reasons why only a qualitative analysis was undertaken are explained in Chapter 2. That chapter also addresses the methods employed for this investigation, and other methodological issues that arose during the research process.

The first section of this chapter considers the multi-layered audio-visual texts that were characteristic of the television coverage. These were particularly common as signifiers of national symbols. The respective broadcasting styles of the two broadcasters, the BBC and ITV, are then examined before the results and observations from the content analysis are presented. A key to aid the identification of intonation, pauses and other dynamics of the spoken text in the passages of transcribed television broadcasts is presented in Figure 1. Unlike in the chapters concerning the press coverage, it was deemed useful to present the findings chronologically, match-by-match. In this way, the presence of the various themes and discourses can be explored as they revealed themselves during each match and as the tournament and national team progressed.

The findings from the content analysis of the press reporting of Euro 96 helped
to structure that of the television coverage. The pervasive discourse variables and themes found in the newspapers were applied to the qualitative investigation of the television coverage to test whether there was a similar, or contrasting, content in the electronic media as with the print medium. Those frequently characteristic thematic and discursive elements were the presence of: personal pronouns; narcissism and war vocabulary/militaristic imagery (all popular examples of the evocative language often used in audio commentary, as well as written journalism); national stereotypes and nationalistic sentiments and national symbols/symbolism (similarly evocative linguistically and specifically connected with national identity construction and representation, as has been already shown); and nostalgia and invented tradition (which draw on history). As was found in the press coverage, identity codes appeared to be intertwined with many of these other discursive elements.

These themes and discourses have been explored in depth both conceptually in Chapter 1, and on a more practical level, in Chapters 4 and 5. To avoid repetition these will not be redefined again here. They will be referred to when relevant during the course of the chapter. There was however, one significant difference between the press and the television coverage. That involved the television medium’s multi-dimensional format with its mixed modes of transmission and ‘diverse audio-visual elements in various combinations’ (Whannel, 1992: 104). This contrasts with newspapers, which only feature the written word, and static illustrations. There are, therefore, in telecasting numerous possibilities for intertextuality where more than one of these texts can be present at any one time. A text can gain meaning by referring to other texts that the producers assume the reader will be familiar with and recognise (O’Sullivan et al., 1998). This intertextuality was especially present through audio-visual references to national symbols, as the next section will explain.
Most punctuation, which is a feature of writing rather than speech, has been omitted. Capital letters have been used at the start of a turn, when a new sentence is clearly recognisable and for the large number of proper nouns. Apostrophes have been used for short forms, i.e. 'there’s', etc. Exclamation marks ‘!’ are included when excitement is apparent in the voice.

Silences are marked by a bracket () with () meaning a short pause and (...) for longer pauses. This is not to be confused with three unbracketed dots, which is the standard code for an omitted passage from a quotation.

Particularly loud speech has been written in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Where words have been particularly stressed, they are underlined.

Where a sound is drawn out or elongated, :: has been used.

*Italics* are sometimes included to emphasise or illustrate the point being made as part of the analysis, for example when highlighting the use of personal pronouns.

Since prosodic features of commentaries are difficult to convey to full effect even with the use of the listed conventions, the pace, pitch, intonation and loudness of the text will also be described as graphically as possible when relevant.

(Adapted from Beard, 1998: 70)

2. Audio-Visual References to National Symbols

Audio-visual occurrences or 'sightings' of national symbols during the television coverage of the tournament were noted in addition to the commentary 'texts'. Analysis focused not only on the spoken texts by commentary teams, but also on the visual appearance and prevalence of national signifiers such as anthems, flags and emblems, which the cameras of both the BBC and ITV liked to show. The most commonly referenced national symbols were, not surprisingly, flags. These were seen in large numbers amongst the crowd, and around the stadiums, and were typically focused on by the cameras, either after goals were scored (reflecting the nation which had triumphed), and often during lulls in play. During the BBC's exclusively live
broadcast of England v Scotland (BBC 1, 15 June 1996), their cameras frequently panned around the crowd showing fans of the respective nations, many with painted faces and flags. Some England supporters could be seen dressed in chain mail, like Richard the Lionheart, or in lion suits. Many of the Scots wore kilts, or other tartan attire, such as tam o’shanter with ginger wigs, and had their faces daubed in blue and white à la Braveheart. There were noticeably many flags on display. These were commonly the Scottish saltire, and Lion Rampant, and the English Cross of St. George. Significantly, there were very few Union flags in this meeting of these British nations.

Sometimes, it appeared as if particular camera perspectives were being selected in order to show the national symbols on display. This was also achieved through processes of intertextuality. For example, in the pre-match build up to England v Spain (BBC 1, 22 June 1996), the BBC presenter Desmond Lynam (DL) said to viewers: ‘Well we spend enough time looking at what the players do (. ) let’s have a look at the fans shall we?’ A montage of scenes showing England supporters, many with painted faces, singing, dancing and cheering in the Wembley crowd dominated by St. George’s flags, followed this ‘link’. These images were set to the anthemic Three Lions song. When the sequence ended, the picture returned to Lynam in the studio who said nostalgically: ‘There hasn’t really been a spirit like that since ‘66 really has there?’ Such a remark arguably served as a potential stimulus to the national habitus of watching England fans, jogging memories of the famous victory thirty years ago.

Both of Lynam’s comments ended with a question, one of several common techniques in the rhetoric of presentation highlighted by Whannel (1992). Whannel notes that a central point in media-sport presentation is its ‘dual relationship’,
expressed in the sense of 'we', both to the production team and the audience: ‘The presenter is able to appear both as a representative of the donors and as a personification of the recipients, and in the end serves to weld the two together into unity’ (Whannel, 1992: 111). This relationship, and the associated techniques that help forge it, will be addressed as examples arise in the course of the chapter.

3. Striking a Patriotic Note! - The Broadcasting Styles of ITV and the BBC

No firm distinctions of the kinds which hold good for tabloid and broadsheet newspapers can be made between the broadcasting styles of ITV and the BBC. That said, there are some generally recognised contrasts between the styles of the two broadcasters. These contrasts are essentially due to the BBC being a British public service, established by Royal Charter in 1926 with a mission, according to its charter, to inform, educate and entertain. Further to this, as Haynes (1999) points out, the sport of football has long formed an essential ingredient of the BBC’s public service remit with the first running commentary on a match, via radio, provided in 1927. The BBC therefore, is very much part of the ‘Establishment’ with a long and indeed respected tradition for sports coverage. As Goldlust (1987) has observed: ‘journalistic values emphasising accuracy and ‘objective’ reporting have become the established ethos within the BBC and a significant element of its institutional image’.

ITV, as its name implies, is an ‘independent’ network of commercial companies. It was established during the 1950s. As a result of this, ITV is usually seen to be more populist and often, therefore, arguably more partisan and nationalistic in its coverage. Similar observations have been made by Tuck (1999) in relation to ITV’s coverage of the 1995 Rugby Union World Cup. Indeed, Holt (1989: 321) cites a remark made by a recent Head of ITV Sport, who suggested, ‘In newspaper terms, the
BBC is much more *Telegraph* and we are the *Mirror* or even the *Sun*. Some of the commentary from the ITV team during the Euro 96 matches certainly seems to validate these generally recognised traits of their broadcasting style.

The contrast in styles was vividly demonstrated in the controversy that arose over the broadcasters’ selection of musical pieces to accompany their respective coverage of the tournament, addressed in Chapter 3. The furore was caused by the BBC’s choice of *Ode to Joy* by Beethoven for their Euro 96 programming. Not only was the composer *German*, which, as noted, rankled with certain right-wing sections of the tabloid press, but the piece was the anthem of the European Union. However, Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel (1999: 178) note ‘the BBC’s internationalism in selecting the European Anthem’, going on to observe that: ‘As if in response, ITV chose *Jerusalem*’, so enabling them ‘to occupy the patriotic highground’. This patriotic highground was achieved through their choice of the classic and most significantly, *English* hymn by William Blake, albeit in a remixed, up-tempo ‘pop’ format.

Niall Sloane confirmed the BBC’s intended internationalism during his interview (1 March 1996). He told how: ‘I’ve tried to secure the services of Ruud Gullit and Franz Beckenbauer because I want our coverage to be European as much as possible’. Sloane confirmed that their role as pundits would be to provide what he called a ‘European perspective’. From the criticism the BBC received, it would seem that Sloane’s intentions were not shared, or received, in the way that he had hoped by some people. This illustrates how preferred or intended meanings can sometimes have an unintended impact in terms of how they are received through different ‘readings’.

A similar issue over patriotism concerned the opening title sequences that the music was put to. Opening sequences, like closing titles, are intended to function to
‘whet the appetite’ of viewers. A typical combination of content elements in such sequences include: a reminder of peak moments of the event, past or present; a placing of traditions; a posing of key narrative questions; an introduction or reminder of the main characters who will be featuring; and an appeal to make the event part of your life for the next few days (Whannel, 1992: 119). In keeping with the BBC’s quest to reflect a sense of internationalism, Ode to Joy was set to a series of images presenting aerial views of the stadia hosting the tournament. The ‘pitches’ served as screens containing moving pictures showing shots of all the competing nations in action. The sequence finished with Wembley stadium, capturing the famous Twin Towers, then a graphic of the Henri Delaunay tournament trophy, enveloped by flags of the sixteen participating nations. In this way, the BBC produced a ‘classic’ opening sequence package, according to Whannel’s criteria.

The ITV production team meanwhile continued to strike a patriotic note, taking inspiration from the lyrics of Jerusalem by showing images of landmarks and idyllic countryside from England’s ‘green and pleasant land’. However, this sequence was not without its critics. Carrington (1998: 115) suggests that using ‘the strains of Jerusalem over-shot with the white cliffs of Dover... symbolised more Britain’s wartime efforts to keep out foreign invaders from our sceptred shores than the idea that England was a welcoming and staging an international football tournament’. Furthermore, Horne et al. (1999: 178) point out that the Anglo-centric images had to be ‘amended for Scottish audiences’.

Despite this, both ITV and the BBC followed the Scottish team’s progress, as far as it went, with great interest and enthusiasm. We can only speculate as to what would have happened had England been eliminated at the first round stage and Scotland had proceeded to the semi-final. It is worth noting, however, that BBC
Scotland were to have their own commentary teams and studio panels with Scottish pundits for certain matches in which the Scots had a vested interest. One such match was, unsurprisingly, that of the ‘Battle of Britain’, as it was framed elsewhere in the media (see Chapter 5). This arrangement aside, the BBC demonstrated a preference for a more cosmopolitan collection of pundits, perhaps reflecting the ‘foreign legions’ of British football’s respective leagues (see Maguire and Stead, 1998), as well as representing a broader cross section of participating nations. The introduction of the (black) Dutchman, Ruud Gullit, (Beckenbauer’s services were not in the end secured), brought a new continental perspective and flavour to the BBC’s studio panel, as Niall Sloane had wished. Gullit’s presence complemented the regular team of the former Scotland international Alan Hansen and the veteran player and manager, Englishman Jimmy Hill, alongside the Irish-born but very ‘English’ presenter, Desmond Lynam.

These international personnel appeared, on the whole, to help temper the more populist tone found on ITV. As will be illustrated shortly, ITV commentator Brian Moore received ‘a lot of criticism for his blatantly partial commentary on England versus Switzerland’ (Times, 24 June 1996: 35). Furthermore, the BBC viewing figures - which are given later in the chapter - appeared to benefit from their innovations towards more balanced presentation. Writing in this connection, Matthew Bond explained, the BBC ‘always does well when sport becomes a ‘national occasion’ and partly because its coverage and, in particular, its studio panel have been so warmly received’ (Times, 24 June 1996: 35). Similarly, Brian Viner of the Independent has talked of ‘the effortless superiority of the BBC in head-to-head matches with ITV’ (Independent, 3 August 1999: 2).

As was revealed in Chapter 3, an interview with Niall Sloane proved to be very revealing as a means of understanding some of the production codes and practices that
contribute to the particular broadcasting style to which the BBC aspire. He was especially keen that his commentary team and studio panel should avoid bias, and strove for 'balance', as this extract from the interview demonstrates:

**EP:** On Cup Final day you sometimes see rosettes or club ties and it can reveal the allegiances of the pundits: which team they are supporting, what their loyalties are. For an international tournament like this, do you prefer presenting a neutral stance or is it okay for there to be a level of sporting partisanship?

**NS:** It's not necessarily neutral. If somebody's English, they'll probably support England, that'll come out a little bit, but of paramount importance is they give a balanced view, not an English view. Tell us what happened, don't tell us 'oh dear me, England have lost a goal, it's terribly sad', tell me 'England have lost a goal'. Ha! I'm thinking of the criticism we get that we're England-centric. I don't want hear somebody say 'Go and win it England', I don't want to hear them say 'Go and win it Scotland', I want to hear them say 'England could win because of this, Scotland could win because of that'.

Given this view, Sloane was also keen that his studio team should resist using national stereotypes when comparing styles of play, tactics, formations or national character. He explained:

**NS:** Football clubs around Europe have different traditions of the way they approach the game. I don't wanna hear more phrases like 'Gallic flare'. I know we will hear it, I will tell the commentators and they'll forget about it, it'll come out. You'll read it in the newspapers, it's inevitable but it's not something that I particularly like.

**EP:** How does it work with the commentators then? Do you have meetings with them and talk about how to describe a theme?

**NS:** Yeah, I will ask them to avoid that sort of cliché. I'm quite keen on that.

It is noteworthy that one of the processes in the production of televised sport broadcasting actually involves meetings where style and production codes are discussed and mapped out. The content analysis of the BBC's coverage will reveal how successful Sloane was in setting out his stylistic blueprint, and whether or not commentators like Barry Davies and John Motson adhered to Sloane's guidelines and
preferences.

A key to achieving this style was seen to be through having Desmond Lynam in the presenting chair. Sloane spoke particularly highly of him during the interview when he remarked, ‘the beauty of Desmond Lynam is that he’s always paced it absolutely correctly: ‘this means a lot, but it’s a game of football’’. His praise of Lynam’s style was justified on numerous occasions during the BBC coverage. An example of this came during the half-time panel discussion of the opening game against Switzerland when pundit Jimmy Hill remarked: ‘If England did fail to qualify at home it would be a national tragedy, would it not?’ Lynam, without ridicule, placed Hill’s comment into perspective by agreeing, but with the caveat, ‘In a sporting context, yes’. In a magazine interview before the tournament, Lynam himself talked about the BBC’s production plans. Again, the sense of ‘balance’ that Sloane sought was evident. He remarked: ‘We’ll try and give it our usual brand of BBC professionalism, with a bit of humour and a bit of fun too. Although we take it seriously, it isn’t war, you know, hopefully nobody dies and we try and treat it as entertainment too, which is what it should be’ (The Official Football Association Guide: Euro 96, p. 84). It was this kind of thinking, under the supervision of Niall Sloane, that appeared to characterise much of the BBC’s broadcasting style throughout their coverage of Euro 96.

As was suggested earlier, ITV in contrast, adopted what might be described as a more populist and partisan approach to their coverage of Euro 96. ITV’s style was arguably due in part to the presence of completely British personnel. These were predominantly from England, and were openly very pro-English, clearly aligning themselves with the national team. There were occasional exceptions. For example, during the England versus Scotland match, two Scots (George Graham and Alex
Ferguson) were recruited to the studio panel and another, Ian St. John, served as a reporter.

Bob Wilson, usually fronted the ITV team. Wilson's biography is of significance in that, although 'English', he twice kept goal for Scotland, qualifying through his grandparents. The studio panel regularly consisted of John Barnes, a (black) footballer who was a recent member of the England squad and, probably for nostalgic purposes, Jack Charlton, a member of the World Cup winning team in 1966. Much was made of Charlton's experience as part of England's World Cup winning team. For example, Bob Wilson asked during the build up to the Holland game: 'Can I ask you Jack Charlton (. ) as someone who knows about 1966 and all that (. ) about the England fans? The momentum seems to be building up as it did thirty years ago?' (ITV, 18 June 1996). Finally, ITV's commentary team usually paired Brian Moore with either, Kevin Keegan (a former England captain), or, Ron Atkinson, (an Englishman who has managed several club sides) at home and abroad.

One of the most common forms of communicating patriotic allegiances in media-sport discourse is through the use of personal pronouns. Both the BBC and ITV, but especially the latter used these, as will be illustrated. This contributed to their image of stylistically being the most partial broadcaster. This can be seen in the interplay between the ITV commentator Brian Moore (BM) and Kevin Keegan (KK), his expert summariser, in the closing moments of their exclusively live televising of England's victory over Holland:

BM: One thing’s for sure now (. ) this will send ripples right through the tournament. They'll know that England mean business.

KK: Everything we’ve dreamed about is coming true tonight. (. ) This is one of the great performances (. ) I’ve played against the Dutch and they are the masters.

BM: England are rampant! ( . . . ) Guess where they’re from! [said gleefully as cameras pick up shot of Dutch fans looking glum] (. ) Well this is exhibition stuff and the crowd

265
are loving it. As Kevin was saying (.) one of the best England performances for many years (.) certainly in all the years he was playing as well as all the many many years I've been watching England I can't remember a better performance than this. We've made the Dutch look ordinary [final whistle blows] So England march triumphantly into the next round!

In the content analysis that follows, it will become evident that this excerpt from the match commentary transcript is typical of ITV's general broadcasting style. ITV's commentary team was much more prone to explicitly showing their allegiance to the England team through various discursive practices and techniques. This could, in part, be tenuously attributed to ITV's commercial nature and its adoption of 'aspects of BSkyB's entertainment-driven style' (Boyle & Haynes, 2000: 74). These issues will be revisited in the course of the chapter as the coverage of each of England's Euro 96 matches is examined in turn. As we will see, the tone and nature of the coverage was to change as the England team progressed. However, the tournament did not begin well for the English nation, as the next section will reveal.

4. 'A disappointing start for England...' and Echoes of '66

'A disappointing start', so concluded Barry Davies (BD) as the final whistle ended England's opening match with a draw against Switzerland (BBC 1, 8 June 1996). His ITV counterpart, Brian Moore (BM), agreed, although he seemed noticeably more disturbed by the score-line:

BM: 1-1 that's it (.) A sharp intake of breath from Terry Venables he can't hide his disappointment and it's a hugely disappointing result (.) at the very least now we must get a win over either Scotland or Holland but after today's performance there's a tremendous amount of work to be done.

Moore's downcast words suggest the partial nature of his 'involvement' with the game. He shows little professional 'detachment' as he bemoans the fact that 'at the
very least now we must get a win over either Scotland or Holland' [italics added to show the use of personal pronouns]. This is indicative of ITV’s style. Indeed, as was noted above, the Times (24 June 1996: 35) reported how Moore received criticism for his ‘blatantly partial commentary’ on this particular match.

This is not to say the BBC personnel were not ‘interested parties’ in the match outcome or England’s lack of progress. Again, it appears to be a case of different broadcasting styles. Barry Davies was not as dispirited as Moore, and as will be illustrated, his overall commentary on the match was not arguably presented in such an overtly biased manner. He optimistically pointed out in his post-match address that ‘perhaps it should be remembered that thirty years ago England also opened with a draw against Uruguay’, so potentially stirring memories of the 1966 World Cup victory. This nostalgic theme was further developed as Desmond Lynam signed off at the end of the BBC’s highlights programme, Match of the Day. He remarked, ‘In 1966 England began their World Cup finals campaign with an uninspiring draw against Uruguay. Some people thought it was all over. Mistake. Goodnight’.

Such a line is typical of Lynam’s ‘trademark twinkle and laconic delivery’ and ‘unmatched ability to speak for the nation’ (Guardian, 3 August 1999: 1) which enables him to ‘engage’ with the watching public. This engagement helps make the ‘imagined’ community seem more ‘real’ to the audience. In this instance, he succeeds in doing so by paraphrasing the famous soundbite from 1966 by the BBC’s Kenneth Wolstenholme: ‘Some of the people are on the pitch. They think it’s all over. It is now’. This piece of commentary, which heralded England’s World Cup victory, has become embedded in the English national memory and frequently serves as an active habitus code. Beard has noted how Wolstenholme’s words are ‘often idiomatically repeated in many different contexts and [have] even provided the name of a television
There can be no doubt that television coverage of [global sport events] has produced some of the most enduring images within twentieth century popular culture... [I]t is not merely the visual mediation of athletic ability... that is recalled in popular memory, but also the descriptive narratives of the commentator which provides the bases of such communication.

Barry Davies, on the BBC, also attempted to utilise Wolstenholme’s memorable narrative at the start of the match. He set a nostalgic tone and air of expectancy for the match’s duration. This was to build, as Euro 96 went on, helped by the framing of the tournament by both the broadcasters and the press, as demonstrated in Chapter 5. Davies enthused: ‘A new generation think that it’s all about to kick-off and it is now!’ Going on to make the ‘66/’96 connection more explicitly, he noted: ‘For the record only four of the England squad were born when Bobby Moore, Sir Alf Ramsey and company had that great day thirty years ago’ (BBC highlights: 8 June 1996). This theme was revisited frequently through Davies’ nostalgic discourse. As a shot by a Swiss player struck the crossbar, he remarked: ‘OH off the underside of the cross bar! ‘66 is still in the mind: it was that cross bar that Geoff Hurst hit and the ball went in (.) but it was hit in 1996 and the ball stayed out. (BBC highlights, 8 June 1996). Again, a particular set of emotions is being stimulated. Many of the football audience would know that Davies was referring to Hurst’s infamous goal, which has caused on-going controversy as to whether the ball in fact crossed the goal-line as it ricocheted off the cross-bar.

4i. England Expects…

ITV were also keen to play on the nostalgia and expectancy of the occasion.
As the teams were shown filing out of the tunnel on to the Wembley pitch to a rapturous reception prior to the England-Switzerland match, Bob Wilson linked to the commentary team, observing: ‘Thirty years ago Bobby Moore led England into an historic adventure. Today it's Tony Adams who bears those three lions on his shirt with equal pride’. The production team ensured cameras focused on the national emblem Wilson was referring to, as well as the many flags that were being waved by both sets of supporters. These images were developed further during the singing of the national anthems. The cameras panned along the team and around the crowd, zooming in on supporters with painted faces ardently singing, with flags and other national colours and symbols - like those of the Swiss cow-bells - the dominant subjects. The Swiss anthem was played first: ‘beautifully sung and very well respected by their English hosts’ according to Brian Moore, although the television sound booms clearly picked up some hostile whistling. After an audibly hearty rendition of God Save the Queen, Moore exclaimed: ‘My goodness! The expectations of the nation were heard in that singing of the anthem’. Evocative language of this kind arguably contributed to a hyping up of the hope that the England team would emulate the success of their counterparts in 1966. The press, as we have seen previously, also reflected, and arguably amplified, the apparent mood of national expectation. Newspapers frequently noted how ‘England Expects’, a phrase borrowed from Nelson's famous speech at Trafalgar, as was noted earlier.

What exactly 'England expected' was a subject of debate during the BBC half-time panel discussion. The following sequence raises some interesting issues concerning 'involvement and detachment' as the presenter and pundits (with different allegiances) consider England’s performance. The panel discussion provides a fascinating illustration of the intricacies of personal pronoun use and modes of address.
known within the media as ‘shifters’ (Whannel, 1992: 108). It also highlights the complex, multi-layered nature of personal identity through the inter-changeability of I/we/us/them by each individual. The BBC panel consisted of Desmond Lynam (DL); Ruud Gullit (RG); Alan Hansen (AH) and Jimmy Hill (JH), who was patriotically sporting a St. George’s Cross bow-tie.

JH: It was a messy performance (.) I just don’t know whether we expect too much from the manager and the quality of the players that we have.

DL: Aren’t we supposed (.) we sort of have a right to expect England to beat Switzerland at Wembley?

JH: Well yes (.) we were all dying for England to beat Switzerland at Wembley but in assessing it sanely (.) to say our most creative player [Gascoigne] (.) whether it is the heat or not can only last 55/60 minutes that’s not a very confident way to start is it?

AH: They (.) England can play better than that.

DL: Well they’ll have to won’t they!

JH: England has to beat Scotland now!

AH: That’s not going to be easy!

[... DL goes to a satellite link with the Scotland coach Craig Brown (CB)]

CB: Well I’m listening to Jimmy here thinking Scotland has to beat England now and that exactly is what we’ll be aiming to do.

The application of personal pronouns to concretise both ‘I/we’ and ‘us/them’ identities, as investigated by amongst others, Billig (1995); Elias (1978); Maguire and Poulton (1997, 1999); Maguire et al. (1999a, 1999b) and Mennell (1994), has already been examined at length in earlier chapters. However, as the above passage demonstrates, the presentation of media-sport - especially in television and radio forms - involves extra dimensions to the ‘we’ (us) and ‘they’ (them) image.

Whannel (1992: 108-111) has highlighted the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ by presenters (and to some extent pundits) in ‘shifters’, the various modes of address
through which they make contact with, speak to and position the audience, offering a way into the programme. ‘We’ is used to refer to the presenter, and the production/studio team, with the presenter merely the front-person, as in: ‘we have full exclusive coverage’ or ‘we’ll have all the highlights after the break’. Counterposed to this ‘we’ is a ‘you’, namely the audience. The audience’s presence is usually acknowledged at the start of a programme with a greeting from the presenter: ‘our very warm welcome to you, we’re glad you could join us’. This sets the audience up as distinct, but related to the ‘we’ of the television team.

This relationship is then continually referred to, and reinforced, throughout the presentation. For example, as a means of advertising a future broadcast, Desmond Lynam addressed the audience directly with the quip: ‘Just to remind you that both semi-finals including England’s of course will both be live uninterrupted (.) except by us of course (.) on the BBC’ (BBC 1, 22 June 1996). He stressed the ‘uninterrupted’ nature of the coverage to promote the BBC broadcast over that of ITV, which would feature commercial breaks during the programme.

The ‘we’/‘you’ relationship is one of ‘donor’ and ‘recipient’: ‘the language of presentation continually casts the production team as providers of a gift which is being given, or has been given, or will be given to the audience... [with] the audience positioned as the passive, but presumably grateful, recipients’ (Whannel, 1992: 109). However, this relationship is complicated by the position of the presenter. While the presenter is part of the production team’s ‘we’, another ‘we’ is also used, placing him or her with the audience as a fellow recipient, a fellow viewer. For example, in the transcript cited above, Lynam wonders whether, ‘we sort of have a right to expect England to beat Switzerland’. Used in this way, Lynam seems to join the audience (or even ‘the nation’) as just another supporter. According to Whannel, indeed, the
presenter becomes the personification of the audience: ‘we’ enjoy along with the presenter.

In this way, a presenter - or indeed a commentator or pundit - can comfortably reference ‘our’ shared experience as viewers and sport fans. Jimmy Hill did this as he ‘spoke for the national audience’ claiming: ‘we were all dying for England to beat Switzerland at Wembley’. This is actually a somewhat controversial use of ‘we’. Hill is assuming that the rest of the studio team, (including a Scotsman and a Dutchman), as well as the viewing public, all wished to be part of his collective Anglicised ‘we’ - no doubt to the dismay of some Celts tuned in to the British Broadcasting Corporation’s coverage!

The ‘shared experience’ is also expressed through ‘shifters’ where the presenter marks our anticipation of enjoyment, or indeed our fears, to come. These techniques were frequently used when it seemed the England team were struggling in a match, and when they were facing the prospect of penalty shoot-outs, as will be illustrated below. Whannel points out that the ease with which shared experience can be referenced serves as an entrance into the domestic routines of audiences, who are frequently being invited to rush home from work, settle down comfortably or stay up late to watch the sports event.

A key characteristic of this assumed shared experience - and the one that is most relevant for our purposes here - is that of ‘our’ patriotism. As Whannel (1992: 110) points out:

British competitors and teams are without dispute ‘ours’ and presenters have no difficulty in ‘speaking for all of us’ when they talk of ‘our’ current champions or ask what ‘our’ chances are or praise ‘our’ magnificent success.

Whannel adds that there are sometimes problems here due to the separate nations
within Britain: an issue that has already been raised. He notes that ‘an English success is not ‘ours’ to Scots’ (or the other Celtic nations), an issue discussed previously.

To return to the originally quoted discussion between the members of the BBC studio team: it is the shared experience and the patriotic ‘we’ that is used several times by both Lynam and especially Hill, as they ‘speak for all of us’. Lynam, however, also uses the pronoun ‘they’ in reference to the actual England team who, it is inferred, are expected to ‘play better than that’ on ‘our’ (his, the studio team and the audience’s) behalf. ‘They’ is also used by Alan Hansen. While he may do this in the same way that Lynam does, i.e. referring to the actual England team, he may also - as a Scot - be marking them as different from himself. The link to Craig Brown is interesting in this respect because he naturally adopts the pronoun ‘we’, but in relation this time to his own nation, Scotland. The aim here has been to illustrate the complex nature of personal pronoun use and a related issue: the intricate, multi-layered make-up of personal identities. The presenter, in particular, it seems can have many ‘we’ images, and in a multi-national studio team, even more meaning is communicated through the use of personal pronouns. More examples to illustrate this will be provided as we continue.

It was documented earlier that ITV’s Brian Moore was criticised for his chauvinistic commentary on the Switzerland game. His bias was seen in part through his regular use of personal pronouns. Moore regularly made comments like: ‘they’ve only beaten us once’ and ‘They certainly believe in defending in numbers’ and in the second half when the Swiss team was pressing for a winning goal: ‘Suddenly they’re in behind us again!’ Indeed, it was during the latter stages of the match that Moore explicitly showed his bias with anxious remarks like: ‘I’m not noted as an optimist but I do feel we’ll need a second goal (. ) TURKYILMAZ (. ) he’s the one who spells
danger for us! Don’t let him get onto that left foot of his! ... These are worrying times for England’.

Moore’s co-commentator, Kevin Keegan, was also actively partisan, although he tended to excuse himself with qualifiers like: ‘It would be a great time for another goal (. ) from an English point of view that is!’ When reviewing Switzerland’s award, and then conversion, of a penalty kick, Keegan added: ‘I’d like to see the penalty again (. ) it seemed harsh to me (. ) but then I’m English!’ A similar moment came during the BBC commentary when their summariser Trevor Brooking, talking through a replay of England’s goal, observed: ‘To me Teddy Sheringham and Alan Shearer were both in off-side positions when the ball was played but as its a home advantage I don’t think we’ll dispute it but I don’t think the Swiss’ll be that impressed’.

This is not to say that the BBC commentator Barry Davies was consistently neutral. He, too, appeared to be equally involved with England’s plight at times, sometimes - but not as often - employing personal pronouns denoting his allegiance: ‘Plenty of noise from the Swiss supporters and concern from the English. They’re dictating the style of play. It’s a question for England of battening down the hatches’. Then, after fearing Switzerland had been awarded another penalty, he exclaimed with obvious relief: ‘Well my heart missed a beat then!’

The post-match conclusions were discussed at the beginning of this section. Both ITV and the BBC showed their disappointment, although in different ways typifying their respective styles. ITV appeared to appeal to the more populist viewer; this was also evident in Moore’s commentary and his openly nationalistic sentiments in favour of England. Although Kevin Keegan made a sarcastic aside that: ‘You’ll need to speak four languages to speak to this Swiss side: German, French, you name it’, at no point did either broadcast station articulate any negative sentiments towards the
Swiss. The use of war vocabulary and militaristic metaphors was also avoided.

The early part of this section demonstrated how both broadcasters had framed their respective build-ups to kick-off by generating a sense of anticipation that England would start the tournament positively. With the England team failing to live up to that hope and expectation, both ITV and the BBC closed with similar montages, playing out with the official tournament song, *We’re in This Together*, rather than their individually chosen music. The BBC replayed the commentary on England’s goal, and Stuart Pearce conceding a penalty followed by its conversion, ending with Terry Venables looking glum on bench. ITV showed slow-motion pictures relaying scenes from the opening ceremony, highlights of the match, English and Swiss fans in their national colours, culminating in a disappointed-looking Venables leaving the pitch. We could infer from this that the message of both broadcasters was, ‘we’ - the production teams, the audience, and Venables and his team - were all still *in it together*. There were other matches to be played after all.

5. ‘Most football encounters have a past: England-Scotland has a history’

This was how Desmond Lynam explained the significance of England’s next match against British neighbours, Scotland. This led into a twenty-three minute piece on that ‘history’ of football encounters between the two rival nations, featuring a montage of images from some of the classic fixtures since the first ever international in 1872, complete with interviews from past players. In this way, the broadcasters treated the match in a way similar to how the press had framed it: as a fixture that ‘was always far, far more than a mere football match’ (*Times*, 14 June 1996: 46).

Consequently, as Chapter 3 outlined, getting exclusive rights to the televising of the game was recognised a something of a coup. The BBC hyped its exclusively live
broadcast of the match (BBC 1, *Grandstand*: 15 June 1996). On the eve of the match, the fixture was previewed on *Match of the Day*, hosted by Gary Lineker, who signed off with an air of anticipation: ‘Well that’s it for tonight and there’s now just a few hours to go before the biggest international match played in England for thirty years - and I’m not talking about France versus Spain!’ The programme then closed with a pop-song evocatively entitled *This is the One* by The Stone Roses, over-shot with footage of Wembley stadium, Tony Adams and Colin Hendry (the England and Scotland team captains), other significant players, black and white pictures from past encounters, and highlights from England’s and Scotland’s opening matches to serve as an ‘appetite whetted’ for the action ahead.

5i. Memories Are Made of This

The theme of the ‘grand occasion’ was developed further on the day itself. The BBC programme began with a dramatic opener from Desmond Lynam: ‘Good afternoon from Wembley. The first was in 1872 but this is the biggest’. Lynam later added: ‘Big occasion here today and in sporting terms (.) I can’t think of much bigger, unless of course it was the World Cup’. The ITV commentator Brian Moore spoke similarly as he welcomed viewers ‘for England against Scotland, the oldest international fixture of them all. First played way back in November 1872... As you’d expect from these very special occasions: an overwhelming atmosphere’.

The suggestion that this was something more than just a football match was also continued through Lynam’s observation: ‘England against Scotland: an old family argument as our foreign cousins look on probably bemused’. Such a comment also helped to mark out the game as a very ‘British affair’, a theme that had arisen in the press coverage of the match as well, as documented in Chapter 5. For example, Paul
Hayward of the Daily Telegraph (15 June 1996: 24) wrote that: ‘It is a source of bewilderment on the Continent that two regions of the same state can have worked themselves into such a frenzy over an ancient and often dimly understood historical rivalry’.

Questioned about his plans for the presentation of the England v Scotland match and ‘whether it would be important to get a balance of representatives with, for example, Alan Hansen involved to support the Scots’, Niall Sloane explained during his interview:

NS: No, although that’s a reasonable question. When we did the European Championship draw we had Gary Lineker and Ali McCoist. You see Hansen is our pundit throughout the year on everything. He’s our pundit on England. I wouldn’t want to get in the situation where in people’s mental perspective, Gary Lineker or Jimmy Hill is wearing a big England rosette and Alan is wearing a big Scottish rosette. I would like it to be balanced and considered and I wouldn’t tell Alan, wouldn’t presume to suggest ‘Alan, I would like you to support Scotland’, or ‘I would like you to support England’. I suspect he’ll support Scotland, it doesn’t matter to me.

Despite Sloane’s wishes regarding national signifiers, the BBC pundit team included Jimmy Hill, again wearing his St. George’s cross bow-tie, as he continued to do for all of England’s matches.

During the match commentary itself, the BBC’s John Motson appeared to revel in the aftermath of Gascoigne’s widely acclaimed goal. He excitedly enthused: ‘Some say he shouldn’t be in the team but how can you leave him out when he produces magic like that (. ) a moment that will live in the memory forever’. This hyperbole is also an example of the coded national habitus references that pervaded the television coverage of this ancient fixture. Motson can be seen as inferring that that the goal will become chronicled in the national (sporting) memory bank. Later during his summation of the game added that ‘Gascoigne has stamped his indelible mark on
Euro 96’. Likewise, Lynam had mused before the kick-off: ‘Whatever happens this contest will go down in the sporting history book’. Such comments go some way to logging the goal and the match itself in the storehouse of memories shared by many of the watching public.

Motson recovered himself to consult his co-commentator: ‘Now being strictly neutral (,) as we are (,) what do Scotland do in this situation?’ He and Trevor Brooking then proceeded to discuss Scotland’s tactical options in a considered, objective manner. Indeed, Motson’s earlier comments about the goal did seem to be a momentary lapse in an otherwise ‘balanced’ account of the match. It was ITV, once again, who showed themselves to be the more over-zealous.

5ii. ‘Pride, passion and no little prejudice’

Brian Moore’s partisanship was evident throughout his commentary. For example, England team attacks after a spell of Scottish pressure, were met with an enthusiastic, ‘This is more like it!’ His handling of Scotland’s penalty miss and England’s second goal which happened within minutes of each other, typified his partiality:

Now let’s see if McAllister’s nerve will hold (,) SAVED BY SEAMAN! A BRILLIANT SAVE! McAllister holds his head (,) and Scotland denied an equalising goal. Justice probably done (,) it certainly didn’t look a penalty to me (,) but David Seaman makes a masterly save... Oh there’s Gascoigne! [expectancy in voice] Gascoigne (,) he can finish it here (,) PAUL GASCOIGNE! 2-NIL! (,) WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT! (,) FROM ONE END OF THE FIELD TO THE OTHER (,) The crowd are in raptures (,) the England players too! When it could (,) so easily a minute ago been 1-1 (,) Seaman’s save kept England ahead and now Paul Gascoigne has increased it to 2-nil (,) and England are marching towards the quarterfinals.

Moore’s expert summariser in the commentary box, Ron Atkinson, also showed his nationalist sentiments in favour of England. This was especially notable through his
regular use of personal pronouns to accentuate his allegiance. For example, his tone and unguarded use of personal pronouns revealed how he was evidently anxious as Scotland pressed for a goal. He warned:

We’re ragged again (.). We’ve gone ragged. The Scots have got spirited and we’ve gone ragged. We’re letting them build up far too much possession at us (.). That’s understandable mind you (.). I mean we’ve taken the lead (.). They’ve got nothing to lose now the Scots (.). They’ve got to throw everything at us.

Atkinson was also the only member of either broadcasting team to mention the movie *Braveheart*, a theme that was very prevalent in the press reporting of the match. Clearly enjoying England’s commanding position as the end of the match approached, Atkinson relayed a story to explain what he saw as the significance of the fixture’s outcome:

I tell you what Brian (.). It’s the first time this game has been played for what (.). Six or seven years (.). This won’t half go round the dressing rooms all over the country next season you know (.). I mean (.). I remember watching you know that movie *Braveheart* and we [the football club of whom he was manager] were watching that on a coach going somewhere one day and we’ve got Strachan Telfer and Jess [Scottish players] and it was all this sort of winning (.). Beating the English troops (.). ‘We’ll give’em a good hiding’ and stuff. You know it’s like ‘oh it’s not the first time it’s happened (.). We’ve given you a good hiding before in the past’ and all that sort of thing. Yes so the 2-nil win for England today will reverberate when English and Scottish footballers meet in the dressing rooms for a long time to come that’s for sure.

Another popular theme in the newspaper coverage, that of the match being played between the ‘Auld Enemies’, was also only mentioned once, as ITV’s Brian Moore referred to Scotland, using a Scottish phrase, as the ‘Auld Enemy’. Interestingly, however, despite describing the pre-match handshakes between the two sides as ‘a prelude to the battles that will come ahead’, Moore actually attempted to play down the newspapers’ talk of ‘war’. As the teams prepared to kick-off, Moore mused:
The headlines of course call it a war but its not that by any means but it is a very important game of football for both nations always a very special place in Scottish hearts and it quite simply is the most important game England have played here for thirty years.

The only other use of militaristic images in ITV’s coverage of the match was by Ron Atkinson. He again showed his loyalties, albeit through a complex use of personal pronouns in reference to the England team, as he talked about England’s approach to the game: ‘I think from an English point of view the last thing the English want is a war. They want a committed game, but they wanna play with their heads as well’.

The BBC commentary team also used the vocabulary and imagery of war on a couple of occasions. Before the match commenced, John Motson referred to the ‘battle ahead’ which he claimed would involve ‘pride, passion and no little prejudice’. Then, in perhaps the most explicit use of such language, Motson began his sixteen-minute build-up to the match with the following evocative passage as he relayed an anecdotal story:

Just how do you measure an occasion like this without a hint of exaggeration The answer is you can’t. You’ve just got to go along with it rather like the Scottish supporter who stopped me outside the stadium earlier today and said the Scots took the lead at Bannockburn the English equalised a couple of centuries later at Culloden and then in 1872 they decided to settle it by playing football. Ha! Well here we are 124 years on and 107 matches later with England and Scotland meeting in the finals of an international competition for the first time.

With domestic identity politics obviously heightened by the fixture, the national symbolism surrounding the singing of the respective national anthems before the match could not be underestimated. One rather strange difference in the two commentaries came during this pre-match tradition. The BBC’s John Motson lamented: ‘Well the England supporters didn’t quite pay the respect to Flower of Scotland as the Scots fans did to the National Anthem’. Motson was referring here to God Save the Queen,
the official national anthem of all members of the Union, which may explain why the Scottish supporters did not boo it. However, the clearly audible booing and whistling of some English supporters was not noticed, or possibly ignored, by the ITV commentators. Instead, Brian Moore observed: ‘Both anthems superbly sung and respected by the opposing crowds just adding to the atmosphere here at Wembley’. This was perhaps indicative of the selective coverage that was to follow during the match, as has been highlighted.

Indeed, this was to continue until the close of the respective broadcasts. The BBC signed off with their *Ode to Joy* theme tune, and replayed action representative of both teams’ match highlights. In contrast, ITV’s closing montage appeared to revel in the English victory, setting its Anglo-centric collection of highlights to a song by the Indie group *Cast* entitled, *Fine Time*. Despite a potential British audience, the connotation of the song is overtly anchored in a very specific, English framework of meaning, with the suggestion that this was a time for enjoying the moment.

6. ‘A truly memorable night for English football’

If ITV’s playing of the Indie song *Fine Time* encapsulated the production team’s mood following their ‘as live’ broadcast of England v Scotland, their sentiments after their exclusively live coverage of England’s emphatic victory in their next match against Holland were similarly revealing. The ITV presenter Bob Wilson (ITV, 18 June 1996) left viewers with the nostalgic, memory-jogging question: ‘Shades of ‘66? (.) Who knows?’ before they played out with another evocatively titled pop song. This time it was, *Shed Seven’s, It’s Getting Better (All the Time)* over-shot with images celebrating the momentous night.

Indeed, it was reported in the press that television viewing figures during Euro
96 were growing as England’s performances and progress ‘got better’ in the
tournament: ‘nine million for England v Switzerland on ITV, 11 million for England v
Scotland on BBC and 14.7 million for England v Holland on ITV’ (Times, 24 June
1996: 35). England’s impressive win over Holland ensured that this trend continued as
interest increased further after what Bob Wilson heralded ‘a truly memorable night for
English football’. Gary Lineker shared Wilson’s view. Closing the BBC’s highlights of
England’s match and also Scotland’s exit from the tournament, he, too, hinted at the
legendary status this victory would acquire in the English national memory bank,
enthusing: ‘So what a night for football. For Scotland ( ) it was so nearly the
impossible dream. For England ( ) a night to remember’ (BBC, 18 June 1996).

6i. Reflections on the Press Corps

The England team had gone into the Holland game needing only to tie the
match to qualify for the next round, although a win would guarantee a better draw in
the later stages of the tournament. In a studio discussion before the match, ITV pundit
John Barnes spoke of the potential three-fold value of a victory. He argued: ‘It’s
important for us to win coz we want the press on our side. We want the country on
our side. We want everyone on our side going into the quarter finals coz I think we’ll
qualify but we need the win for the confidence’. Not only would a victory be good for
team morale but, Barnes claimed, it would be important to have the nation’s support,
and also that of the print media. Of course, England’s defeat of Holland achieved all
three of these, with the narcissism prevalent in the press reporting of the match, which
in turn appeared to help fuel the reported public ‘feel-good factor’ (see Chapters 4 and
5). However, it is interesting to note how a television pundit (and current footballer)
regarded the newspapers’ backing as so important.

282
For the ITV team, the press' 'role' was to be a continuous theme during the match. Expert summariser Kevin Keegan made a poignant comment, using a complex mix of personal pronouns, as he praised England's performance:

We've taken the knocks over the years. We've not done well in Europe. We've not qualified too well for major tournaments. But the plaudits they'll get after tonight's performance (,) they'll thoroughly deserve it. We've got to start building players up again coz we're so good at knocking them down (,) we're not so good at building them up.

Another ITV pundit spoke out against the fickleness of the press. In an apparent reference to the newspapers' criticism of the England team in the build-up to and then early stages of the tournament, Jack Charlton told how:

I would like to see how some of the Sunday newspapers get out of what they've said and whether they'll change their minds again tomorrow coz they'll all be heroes and this and that tomorrow but after all they've been through this is the greatest answer they could have given them in the world.

Chapter 5 confirmed that Keegan and Charlton were proved correct in anticipating plaudits from the press corps, who indulged in narcissistic reportage following England's win. The hyperbole, however, was similarly evident in the television coverage when the England team recorded their first victory over Holland for a number of years.

6ii. Avenging the Dutch

A common theme during the broadcasters' coverage of the match was the recalling of how Holland had, on numerous occasions in the past, been England's bête noir. Brian Moore, in his prelude to ITV's commentary, spoke with an air of reservation as he said: 'Well such critical matches with Holland over recent years and each time England have been left licking their wounds'. Later, calming down after
excitedly reporting England’s second goal, he warned: ‘Remember though (. ) England were 2-nil up in ‘93 in that World Cup qualifier and the Dutch came back from that’.

Comments like these may have helped to stir the memories of older watching England supporters, and to bring forward reminders of those occasions on which Holland had eliminated England. A similar evocation of previous unsuccessful encounters with the Dutch was evident as the BBC’s commentator, Barry Davies, concluded his coverage of the match with an uncharacteristic note of vengeance:

It has been a great night for the English! Payback time has been longing in the waiting but 2 goals for Shearer and 2 for Sheringham (. ) a fine performance anywhere you look in the England team and a victory by FOUR goals to one. ENGLAND GO THROUGH TO THE QUARTERFINALS ON A HIGH!

This triumphant piece of commentary is not what would usually be associated with the BBC given what has already been documented about Niall Sloane’s preferences and indeed their coverage of the tournament so far. However, this result and England’s performance in particular, appeared to genuinely excite the commentators from both channels, including the BBC, and it was celebrated accordingly with little regard for balance or neutrality. This was especially evident during the respective commentaries when goals were scored. Brian Moore’s excitement grew with each goal. So too did his narcissistic remarks and congratulatory superlatives, as can be seen from his commentary on England’s third goal:

Gascoigne (. ) Maybe he’ll make his imprint on the game tonight. Here he is again (. ) Gascoigne (. ) Sheringham in again (. ) AND SHEA(: RAH AND IT’S 3-NIL (. ) THIS IS A FANTASTIC ENGLAND PERFORMANCE NOW (. ) and remember (. ) this is against a side that came here as favourites to win the whole thing.

Barry Davies on the BBC was equally ecstatic: ‘The Dutch are watching someone else’s party!’ he said with obvious delight. He indulged in his own enjoyment further
still following England’s forth goal, chuckling ‘Ho-ho! () This is good to watch!’ Kevin Keegan on ITV also took great satisfaction from England’s display at the expense of Holland, boasting with particular emphasis and intonation on the personal pronouns he was using: ‘Bergkamp’s back defending! We’re doing to the Dutch what they’ve done so many times to us before!’

The final result left both studios on a high. After all the anticipation and expectation that had been dampened by the first game, and large parts of the match against Scotland, despite the victory and Gascoigne’s skilful goal, finally the England team were delivering and the television personnel could not disguise their pleasure. This was certainly the message coming from the BBC’s post-match panel discussion between Gary Lineker and Jimmy Hill:

JH: Its all so exciting isn’t it?!

GL: Its fantastic!

JH: They’ve revitalised the nation’s enthusiasm. We have trust and confidence and can’t wait for Saturday.

Indeed, the sense of anticipation exuded by Hill is perhaps the best indicator of the up-beat atmosphere that the game had generated among the two commentary and studio teams throughout their framing of the match. This was to continue for England’s quarter-final against Spain. It might be intimated that the national team’s success, aided by the media coverage of both the press and television, had awoken a web of identifications with the ‘nation’. England expected more.

7. ‘A potentially epic afternoon’?

As we saw during the content analysis of the press coverage of Euro 96, narcissism grew as the media rejoiced in England’s performance against Holland and
began to fuel the 'feel-good factor' which, we were relentlessly told, had begun to ignite across the country. When the day of the quarter-final against Spain arrived, the level of eager expectancy was well stoked. The BBC previewed its exclusive coverage of the match (BBC 1, 22 June 1996) by dramatically moving directly from its opening titles, straight into replays of the goals against Holland, complete with the original commentary. Steve Ryder, anchoring the BBC's *Grandstand* programme, encapsulated the 'national state of play', as he beamed: 'Four goals I am sure you are all familiar with by now. They've inspired the country and set English football up for a potentially epic afternoon'.

The BBC continued to frame the sense of occasion and capture the optimistic atmosphere as Ryder passed over to the regular Euro 96 studio team. Desmond Lynam began by underlining how 'the fans have played a vitally important part' in the tournament to date. What follows is Jimmy Hill's response:

Yes they have indeed and again like 1966 (.) the whole country has caught fire. The length of time we've had to wait to rejoice about something on the football field has resulted in the enthusiasm that we have seen. And the measure of it really is not with the fellas (.) the measure of it is when the ladies really get interested in it (.) I don't mean ladies who watch football normally (.) I'm talking about ladies like my wife who will never look at the television when football is on and who earlier asked 'what time is it this afternoon?'

Hill's reply contains various discursive themes and themes of interest. He begins on a nostalgic note by comparing the then current fervour to that of 1966, rekindling memories and perhaps the hope that the famous English victory may have been about to be emulated. His nostalgia continued as he attempted to explain the explosion of patriotism as due to the 'length of time we've had to wait'. According to the *Three Lions* song, the nation had endured 'thirty years of hurt'. Hill then proceeds to gauge the national interest in the England team by the growing amount of female interest in
the tournament. While this may be interpreted as rather gendered discourse, it is more likely given Hill’s veteran years, that he is not meaning to be controversial with his talk of ‘ladies’. Rather, he was actually making a valid point, albeit in perhaps a rather clumsy, ‘old fashioned’ way. As the press coverage suggested, female interest did gather pace as Euro 96 unfolded.

7i. Winning Over the ‘National’ Audience

Although, it is necessary to scrutinise the precise extent of the media-hyped national interest in England’s involvement in the tournament, general interest was apparently increasingly according to television viewing figures. It was reported that ‘a peak audience of almost 18m watched the penalty shoot-out’ that eventually decided the outcome of England v Spain (Times, 24 June 1996: 35). While this audience is not even half of the English population, more people were evidently tuning in to watch as England as they progressed.

Indeed, the BBC was evidently benefiting from the pre-arranged television deal outlined in Chapter 3. The Corporation attracted the largest audience so far in the tournament, with their exclusive live coverage of this match. However, this could also be connected to the public’s preference for the national broadcaster’s presentation style, above that of ITV. The media correspondent Matthew Bond pointed out how: ‘The BBC has been quick to realise that ‘time’ is its greatest asset’ (Times, 24 June 1996: 35). ITV’s coverage, of course, was peppered with commercial breaks. Bond explained how as a prelude to England’s match with Spain, ‘Lynam handed over to the match commentators a full 20 minutes before kick-off in a move designed to allow those of us at home to share in the increasingly extraordinary Wembley atmosphere’ (Times, 24 June 1996: 35). BBC cameras panned around the stadium, showing
viewers the crowd displaying their national colours and flags, singing along to the
Wembley stadium tannoy for much of this period. However, Bond lamented: 'But
once again you longed for a commentator who appreciated the sound of silence. By
his own standards, Barry Davies was positively restrained, but his words added next to
nothing' (Times, 24 June 1996: 35).

While critics may have found Davies words vacuous, some of his narrative
over the scenes from Wembley is extremely interesting for the purposes of this study.
Take the example of Davies' opening words after Lynam's hand-over. As the strains
of Elgar played in the background inside Wembley, he said:

Well (...) pomp and circumstance in the Land of Hope and Glory (...) but (...) to
borrow from the Prime Minister at the time of England's victory in the World
Cup (...) a week is a long time in football. This time last Saturday these
spectators (...) at least the English amongst them (...) were looking forward to a
match against the Auld Enemy with some concern (...). Since then England have
delighted (...) the whole nation has wrapped itself in the flag of St. George (...)
doubts have been turned into something pretty close to delirium (...) and while
the Spaniards have been preparing for battle (...) one assumes Terry Venables
has found time just to nip down to Plymouth Hoe for a game of bowls...

Davies used the piece of music as his 'in', playing on the title to help convey the
sentiments of the English supporters. His mention of England's victory in the World
Cup served to, yet again, nostalgically stir memories of '66 and all that and so the
'hopes' that this 'glory' could be repeated. With the expectant atmosphere his
pervading theme, Davies then appears to indulge in some vocabulary of war, and a
series of militaristic images, which had been absent from his commentary on Euro 96
until this point. This was first evident in his reference to Scotland as the 'Auld Enemy',
and then, most explicitly, with regard to Spain, as he alludes to Sir Francis Drake's
famous 'pre-match warm-up' before engaging the Spanish Armada.

Davies continued to paint a picture of the Wembley atmosphere later in his
narrative, highlighting its ‘joyous’ nature as he observed:

I can’t remember in the past there being so many flags of St. George rather than the Union flag (. ) got it right this time (. ) whether its painted on the face or carried on a pole (. ) and the best part about this atmosphere is that it is joyous (. ) we seem to have lost (. ) and long may it stay that way (. ) the feelings of aggression for which some England fans have been noted.

This is comment, whether made knowingly with political undertones or not, acknowledges the renewed popularity of the English flag. It would seem that Matthew Bond’s claim that Davies’ words ‘added next to nothing’ was misplaced. After all, the presence of the Cross of St. George was a constant theme in the newspapers, as we have seen. He also makes an informative observation about the ‘harmonious’ atmosphere. On other occasions during his voice-over, Davies made further observations about the sense of occasion, despite Bond’s longing for a commentator who ‘appreciated the sound of silence’. For example, discourse of nostalgia was present as he contemplated the rebuilding of ‘this wonderful old stadium’. As if paying homage, he noted wistfully: ‘It’s had many a tale to tell (. ) most notably the famous England victory of 1966. Is there more to come from this championship?’ In these ways, Davies’ narrative fulfilled the role of providing the television audience with a framework through which the event could be viewed interpreted and emotionally glossed (Tudor, 1992).

7ii. To be impartial, or not to be?

Bond was more generous in his review of Davies’ actual match commentary. In light of the criticism surrounding ITV’s Brian Moore partisan commentary on the Swiss match, Bond believed Davies ‘did a rather better job of disguising his true sentiments with some thorough research about the Spanish team’. According to him,
that was 'until the first of Spain's disallowed goals', when Davies reassured viewers: 'Don't worry. It's off-side' (Times, 24 June 1996: 35). Bond also highlighted another occasion when a Spaniard was felled by an English player, which arguably warranted a penalty kick, yet was described by Davies as follows:

Alfonso (.) beautifully away from Adams (.) and Gascoigne but (.) o:-h - (.) the fall was quite ridiculous (.) there's no other word for it (.) that was cheating and something as blatant as this deserves something more than the yellow card.

This example again raises the issue of partiality and, indeed, the role of a commentator. The actual incident was of course open to interpretation. Davies, in his capacity as commentator is in a position of power since his analysis can potentially influence the audience receptivity of an event. The issue then arises of how, if at all, a commentator has a responsibility to balance a 'detached' account of the action, with 'involved' opinion, however jaundiced.

It is interesting to note Matthew Bond's concluding comment in this connection. Despite his critique of Barry Davies' commentary, he wrote: 'I see nothing wrong in the gently partisan approach of either commentator. Television is about entertainment, not some dry, academic exercise in absolute impartiality'. Whannel cites the research of Comiskey et al. (1977) who see the role of the commentator as being 'to dramatise the event, create suspense, sustain tension and enable viewers to feel that they have participated in an important and fiercely contested event' (Whannel, 1992: 114). They argue that, as a result, there can be little doubt that commentary can substantially alter perception of play. In this way, Davies' commentary on Spain's 'controversial' penalty claims can be seen as providing the armchair fan with drama and entertainment. Neutrality and objectivity then, are not necessarily always a concern. It is something of an irony, however, that, like news
reporting, media-sport operates conventions of impartiality, upon which its claims to authoritativeness are often founded, and yet, the processes of framing place it in terms of the cultural attractions of particular kinds of entertainment (Whannel 1992: 112-113).

Overall, Davies commentary seemed balanced. He spoke on several occasions in defence of the Spanish team. In a pointed remark, presumably directed at some of the tabloid reporting in the days prior to the quarter-final, he said:

And you have to hand it to the Spaniards. They’re being rather treated in many areas as just a team to make up the party before England make it to the semi-final (.) some comments have been exaggerated and embarrassing in the run-up to the game.

He also appeared to show a degree of concern for the Spanish players during the penalty shoot-out competition that decided the match, as the following excerpt from his commentary demonstrates:

Hierro to face the boos (...) England stay in front after one penalty apiece (.) You have to have some sympathy for the Spaniards here (.) it would be nice if the atmosphere was more sporting but wherever this was happening in the world the home crowd would be reacting to kicks taken by the opposition.

It would seem that his comments before the match alluding to the joyous atmosphere that was free of aggression, had been somewhat premature.

Desmond Lynam’s role as presenter during the broadcast needs examination, given the nervous excitement surrounding the knock-out stage of the competition. This atmosphere requires consideration following the above discussion on partiality, juxtaposed with drama, and entertainment as vital components of the re-presentation or ‘packaging’ of televised sport. Presentation has a highly significant power to define, to frame and to set up the representation of sport that television provides (Whannel, 1992). Lynam was able to gradually build up the already present anticipation before

291
the match. He did this primarily through nostalgic discourse and the apparent activation of various shared memories. For example, he introduced the coverage with the following line: ‘There’s already an extraordinary parallel with what happened in the World Cup thirty years ago ( ) a draw followed by two good wins for England then and next was a tough quarter final’. The BBC then went straight to black and white footage of the 1966 match against Argentina. As the match went on, Lynam’s involvement became more evident as he attempted to forge the relationship with the audience further with friendly shifters. As extra-time beckoned, he confided with viewers by saying: ‘Well your nerves must be jangling at home ( ) ours certainly are here’. Such a conversational tone helps construct the presenter as a genial fellow fan, a skill that Lynam is popularly recognised as being particularly adept at.

During an appraisal of replayed highlights, the studio panel analysed a controversial offside call by the French linesman that had led to Spain being disallowed a legitimate goal. Lynam ‘spoke for’ all England supporters as he chuckled with evident relief: ‘Lucky, lucky, lucky!’ Jimmy Hill retorted: ‘If only the French would show the same supportive attitude over the beef!’ which was met with a guffaw of laughter from the panel. This politically charged comment - an obvious jibe at the ‘Beef Crisis’ - was the only one in all of the analysed television coverage.

7iii. ‘Moments and images we are unlikely to forget’

The penalty shoot-out, by its highly tense, competitive nature, readily provided the drama that television sport thrives on: action, unpredictability and immediacy giving a narrative an indeterminate quality, according to Whannel (1992). A comparison of the content and the phonological, as well as prosodic features of the commentary on the defining moment of the England-Spain match, exemplifies this.
First, let us examine Barry Davies’ report for the BBC’s exclusively live broadcast:

All the pressure on Nadal () has to score () AND DOES N’T () ENGLAND ARE THROUGH! All the substitutes are off the bench to congratulate David Seaman (). Everyone is standing and cheering () England are through in the penalty competition () Fortune only for the five penalty takers but you have to have sympathy for the Spaniards who probably over the 120 minutes shaded the match () but its England who’ll go through to the semi-final on a penalty competition.

Davies began almost in a whisper, building up the suspense as the Spanish player stepped up to try to save the match for his team. As the cameras showed Seaman’s save, Davies’ own emotions of relief and joy spilled out. His short clauses suggested an attempt to capture the ecstatic scenes that were unfolding on the pitch, as the cameras tracked the England players running to embrace the goalkeeper, and the jubilation amongst the English supporters. The lapses in correct grammar and syntax also convey Davies’ own excitement and pride, yet he manages to take stock and add in a considered reflection that England’s success is rather fortunate.

A recording of Brian Moore’s live commentary was relayed later that evening ‘as live’ in ITV’s replayed broadcast of the match:

Well if Nadal misses with this one England go through () well we hope so at any rate () O:H SEAMAN HAS SAVED SUPERBLY FROM NADAL AND ENGLAND GO INTO THE SEMI-FINALS OF THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP () SCENES OF FANTASTIC JOY HERE AT WEMBLEY AS ENGLAND’S GLORY TRAIL CONTINUES AFTER A PENALTY SHOOT-OUT AGAINST SPAIN () It’s England who go through into the semi-finals. Everything was right!

Moore also attempts to increase the tension as the Spaniard is seen walking up to the penalty spot. His involvement is evident, as is his self-declared partiality. This over-excited, hyperbolic style is not so evident in Davies’ reaction. Davies’ account appears to maintain the BBC’s desired code of ‘balance’ by being both excited by the result, whilst reporting apparently neutrally on the merits of the respective teams’ play.
Moore's sympathies, however, are self-evident as he conveys the opinion that everything had gone according to plan for England that night: 'everything was right.'

The BBC's live coverage was notable for the way in which it kept its cameras trained on the scenes in the stadium after the game to convey the post-match euphoria. In this way, comments from the studio personnel served to frame the accompanying pictures. Lynam's narration was typical of this:

... Well there haven't been scenes like it for years () we're close to singing along with them but we're resisting the temptation () How do you feel at home? We're absolutely drained here aren't we? () but it was just so emotional () those penalties () we're just delighted for Stuart Pearce aren't we () after the 1990 experience which was hanging over him a bit.

Lynam's amiable character is evident again here as he converses with both his fellow studio team and the audience, all fellow fans 'in it together', through inter-changing shifters. It is this shift in the sense of 'we' that presenters continually operate over, so enabling them to speak for 'us' in a form of 'populist ventriloquism' (Whannel, 1992). Lynam speaks for 'us', the nation, expressing relief, exhaustion and joy at the outcome.

Alan Hansen followed up Lynam's comment using several militaristic metaphors. This discursive theme was noticeable by its relative absence compared with the press coverage of Euro 96, with the odd exception as illustrated. Assessing Stuart Pearce's contribution, as he reviewed a replay of Pearce converting his penalty, the pundit celebrated the 'machismo' of the player's performance:

He's got so much bottle () to take this after what happened in 1990 and his reaction after sums it all up for me () if you were in the trenches with this guy you'd want him over the top first I tell you () and if you were fighting against him () the white flag would come up right away () and that's what England were all about today () guts and determination () they played their football against Holland () today it was all about spirit () today was more of a battle.
Hansen’s words would have resonance for many football fans. The mention of 1990 would evoke memories of Pearce’s vital penalty miss in the World Cup in that year. The vocabulary of war helps to convey the ‘machismo’ and ‘heroism’ of the player who has performed like a ‘soldier’ for his country, exemplifying the celebrated English characteristics of ‘courage, commitment and fighting spirit’ (Beard, 1998: 34). ITV’s Gary Newbon, adopted a similar national stereotype as he praised the England team’s ‘bulldog spirit’ because, he explained, ‘although Spain played very well the lads hung in there’.

Poetically drawing on lyrics from the crowd’s singing of You’ll Never Walk Alone, Barry Davies told how ‘England continue to walk on into the semi-final’, rhetorically adding, in another play on the words: ‘but what will there be at the end of the road?’ So, the suspense was sustained still further, through the evocative question. For the time being, however, both the BBC and ITV cherished the achievement of the day, both concluding their coverage with a celebratory collection of match highlights. ITV’s Bob Wilson captured the sense of ‘history-in-the-making’ as he introduced the montage with a congratulatory message of thanks ‘to Terry Venables and his team, who’ve yet again provided us with moments and images we are unlikely to forget’. Moments and images that the media were helping to instil in the national memory.

8. Don’t Mention the War?

The prevalence of potent elements of English national identity in the television coverage of Euro 96 continued in the run-up to England’s semi-final. Not only was England one match away from the final, and potential glory, but it was Germany who were the opponents. The framing of the match, by both the BBC and ITV, centred on what the latter’s Bob Wilson described as ‘the enduring story of these two proud
nations' (ITV, 26 June 1996). His BBC counterpart, Desmond Lynam, on the eve of the game, previewed it thus:

Tomorrow night at Wembley there is a football match (nothing more) (nothing less) the fact is though (however the turn out) the match will become part of the folklore of football (When countries meet on the football field) there’s usually a past (with England and Germany) there’s a history ... It all began 66 years ago with a 3-all draw between the countries in Berlin but of course its 1966 that we all remember. Much has changed in thirty years but the rivalry will never change. Those fortunate enough to have a Wembley seat that July day when football last came home were swept up in the same tide of pomp and patriotism that is washing over the country now.

This is another, cleverly enticing prologue, containing several of the thematic elements and discourse variables with which we are concerned. Lynam starts by telling us something of the ‘significance’ of the match, that it is only a game, but that the result will enter into the ‘folklore of football’ of the nations involved. As he claimed in relation to Anglo-Scottish encounters, Lynam goes on to suggest that England and Germany have more than a ‘past’: they have a ‘history’ and a long-standing rivalry ‘that will never change’. Significantly, the stress is upon on-pitch rivalry: ‘when countries meet on the football field’. Lynam informs us of how long ago this rivalry started with the first fixture and then recalls the nostalgia-filled year of 1966, when England beat Germany to lift the World Cup. His nostalgic discourse continues as he draws a direct parallel between the ‘pomp and patriotism’ back then, and that which is ‘washing over the country now’.

The BBC followed up Lynam’s introduction with a review of past meetings between the countries with reflections from the famous former players, Bobby Charlton and Franz Beckenbauer. The reporter Clive Tyldesley concluded the piece with the poignant words: ‘Thirty years of hurt (.) In all matches since ‘66 its England 2, Germany 8’. These statistics were commonly referred to during the coverage of the
match itself. ITV’s Brian Moore showed his colours as he told how: ‘Since that
glorious summer day here back in 1966 England have won only 2 of 13 matches
against the Germans so they’ve had their evil eye on us!’

One notable feature of the television coverage of this match was the absence of
the extensive use of militaristic imagery and war vocabulary, which had characterised
the press reportage. While the two television studios acknowledged the rivalry
between the nations, the past hostilities and present tensions over Europe were
roundly ignored. Only once did any of the television personnel raise the subject of the
war-mongering and xenophobia in other parts of the media. This came in the following
interplay between the ITV commentary team of Brian Moore and Kevin Keegan:

BM: You’ve said about the players having a lot of respect for each other and honestly
( ) the crowd at Wembley have a lot of respect for each other and all the xenophobia
we’ve had over the last few days ( ) I’ve had people phoning me up saying ( ) hey I
don’t feel like that you know ( ) we’ve enjoyed the competition ( ) its been played in
the right sporting spirit and please make that clear to everybody.

KK: That’s right and I think most people understand that ( ) yes well ( ) what I say
sometimes is that one man writing for five million people to read is dangerous
sometimes and we’ve had some bad journalism over this but the respect out there
between ( ) as you say ( ) the fans ( ) and that’s most important ( ) the atmosphere
outside was just playful banter and good humour.

The BBC’s lack of comment on the issue may well have been intended. The following
extract from the interview transcript with Niall Sloane indicates a wish to avoid
jingoism, and indeed, the potential presence of it elsewhere in the media:

EP: During the ‘66 World Cup, on the day before the final there was an infamous
newspaper editorial that ran, ‘if on the morrow we are defeated at our own game, at
least we can say that we’ve twice beaten them at theirs’.

NS: It’s an old joke, it’s horrible, that’s demeaning to everybody.

EP: But given this and that there is often hype about matches being a case of ‘them’
against ‘us’, is that something that the BBC will play on?

NS: You and I know if England play Germany in the final, you know how the nation
will react, that won’t be driven by us, I would avoid that but you know what it’ll be,
the newspapers will go down that road. The fans will go down that road because it's a bit of fun for the majority, some will regard it not as fun but as a real issue, England against Germany, we hate them, they hate us. We wouldn’t go near that... That would be very wrong.

Sloane’s message was clearly that of ‘don’t mention the war’. Certainly the previously cited match preview by Desmond Lynam seemed to follow these designs. Comment on the overtly nationalistic tabloid reporting of Euro 96 was predominantly left to the television news programmes.

8.1. Vying for the National Audience

While there was a much hyped rivalry on the pitch, there was also a form of rivalry between the two broadcasters since this was the first match during the tournament which allowed them to go head-to-head with simultaneous live coverage. Boyle & Haynes (2000: 212) have noted how the BBC repeatedly outperforms ‘its rival in the ratings for the World Cup finals held every four years’. Indeed, the BBC won the Euro 96 ratings competition comprehensively, suggesting a public preference for their presentation style. They obtained 63.3% of the total audience. ITV attracted the remaining 22.7%. The combined audience for the match was a record 26.23m television viewers; this exceeded the figure of 25.21m who watched the World Cup semi-final between England and West Germany in 1990 (Times, 28 June 1996: 4). This remains a record audience for a sports broadcast in Britain since only 23.78m watched ITV’s exclusive coverage of England versus Argentina during France 98 (source: <www.barb.co.uk>).

Viewing figures like these help to put into perspective the ‘inclusivist’ rhetoric of commentators who, in their hyperbole, make claims like ‘the whole nation are behind the England team’. Television draws upon verbal myths of collectivity and
unity through audio commentary emphasising the nation as embodied in its team representatives (Rowe et al., 1998: 129). Yet, evidently this is not the reality. The ‘whole’ nation does not actually follow the fortunes of the national team as these television audiences confirm, despite the ubiquitous metonym of ‘one team, one nation’, and the image of the nation as one sentient being. Indeed, even the record number viewers attracted to the Euro 96 semi-final, only represent just over half of the total English population.

Let us return to the screenings of the match itself and the cross-comparison between the styles of ITV and the BBC. Both broadcasters’ studio and commentary teams appeared to be unashamedly backing England for this semi-final match. ITV maintained its explicit partisanship, with their all-English pundits pledging their support for the national team. John Barnes stated beforehand how he was ‘definitely going for England tonight’, while Jack Charlton hoped ‘desperately that England will win’. Meanwhile, the BBC commentators also appeared to let down their guard, involving themselves with England’s plight much more than they had in previous matches. The BBC broadcast opened with Desmond Lynam who, in characteristically ironic style, quipped: ‘You’ve obviously heard there’s a football match on tonight’ before heralding the prospective fixture as ‘sporting history waiting to be made’. Jimmy Hill, he said, was ‘suitably attired’ as the camera moved in on the pundit’s patriotic bow-tie once again. As had become the BBC’s custom during the tournament, Lynam soon handed over to Barry Davies to communicate the Wembley atmosphere.

Once again, the content of Davies commentary displayed several of the discursive themes being examined. Acknowledging the mixed gender make-up of the crowd, he observed: ‘All the lads and lasses here and all the smiling and painted faces
all hoping that England’s summer carnival will continue’. Unlike before, Davies appeared to appreciate the ‘sound of silence’ which the media critic, Matthew Bond, had longed for. Rather than speak constantly, Davies paused for long periods to allow for full audio-visual coverage of the England supporters singing along to the Wembley sound-system. The tannoy announcer could be heard orchestrating the crowd by encouraging: ‘They’re gonna need to hear you in the dressing room’. Davies’ narrative served to frame the picture-story presented by the cameras, as they continued to capture the patriotic fervour by scanning the English supporters singing and waving flags. Davies applauded the supporters for generating the atmosphere below, and, as if to re-emphasise what a patriotic spirit there was, commented once again on the public display of the national flag and the popularity of the pseudo-anthem, *Three Lions*. This is a typical example of the repeated audio-visual references to national symbols that grew in multitude as Euro 96 had unfolded.

Barry Davies’ narrative for the BBC continued as the teams filed out of the tunnel onto the Wembley pitch. After a ‘hugely well sung’ rendition of *God Save the Queen* he expressed hope that ‘there is now respect for the German anthem’. The subsequent heckling, however, could be clearly heard. Upon its completion, Davies commented with a detectable exasperation in his voice: ‘those who felt it necessary to whistle we can leave to their own ignorance’. Once again, however, the ITV commentary team failed to acknowledge the disrespect shown by a minority of English supporters for their opponents’ national anthem.

8ii. The perfect start?

Within minutes of the kick-off, England scored. The reporting of the goal was indicative of the partiality of the commentators that was more evident during this
match than in those previously: a place in the final, with home advantage, was the prize after all. Brian Moore’s delight was obvious: ‘THE PERFECT START!’ he shouted with elation, adding ‘We couldn’t have hoped for anything better than that could we’. Barry Davies was equally jubilant, heralding it ‘a wonderful start’. Both of these responses demonstrate how commentators on international matches show a certain level of support for the national team, confident that most viewers will agree (Beard, 1998: 73). The assumption is that the goal was a ‘perfect’/‘wonderful’ start, although it was obviously quite the opposite for Germany.

The joy, however, was short-lived as the commentators recovered themselves, wary that it there was still most of the match to play. Utilising a stereotype, Moore warned: ‘Their spirit is unquenchable () the Germans () when it comes to football so please don’t start counting your chickens yet!’ Keegan, alongside him, agreed: ‘They don’t bottle it () they don’t lie down () they keep plugging away...’ Such frequent use of personal pronouns was a key feature of the partisanship evident throughout the commentaries by both ITV and, to a marginally lesser extent, the BBC. Exclamations of concern were commonplace. Take this example from Brian Moore: ‘If we concede free kicks just outside the box we are in real trouble () Seaman to clear () no mistakes here now () no good long clearance’. Here he expresses his fears as England concede a free-kick just outside of the penalty area and then wills the ball away to safety as the goalkeeper parries Germany’s effort. Barry Davies for the BBC showed similar anxiety. On one occasion he gasped in a raised voice: ‘OH! THEY OPENED ENGLAND UP THERE’.

The partisanship of the commentators was also sometimes evident through their employment of national stereotypes. These were far more common with regard to Germany than with any of England’s opponents in the previous matches. German
football teams often inspire eulogies from commentators steeped in the language of quality-made goods, built to last and unbeatable in the export markets. Beard (1998: 34) argues that 'the stereotype attached to German teams involves discipline, reliability, teamwork and efficiency - many of the qualities said to belong to German manufacturing'. The use of such stereotyping was common in the press coverage, as Chapter 5 has detailed. Blain et al. (1993: 44) contend that the codes of British media-sport show an admiration for German technology, while appearing resentful of post-war German prosperity. Some of the descriptors used in relation to Germany in the television coverage certainly appeared to conform to this stereotype. Barry Davies described the German team as 'calm and comfortable', with his co-commentator adding: 'So composed () they’re very solid aren’t they? At the moment England are just finding it difficult to prise them open'. Brian Moore on ITV cited the German sweeper Sammer as 'coolness personified' while Jack Charlton noted: 'The Germans are so resilient'.

In this connection, the 'English' playing style was celebrated, none more so than when 'the old war-horse', Stuart Pearce, as Brian Moore called him, was on the ball. Kevin Keegan spoke of how:

The crowd love it whenever Stuart Pearce gets involved coz he is them out there you know () that’s how they would be out there () they’d play like that you know () he wears his heart on his sleeve and gives it everything he’s got.

All of the idealised attributes of the English stereotype of themselves are evoked here: courage, commitment and fight. Indeed, Moore saw Pearce's conversion of his penalty later in the match as 'the spirit of England in every sense!' These qualities were also applauded by Keegan who, noting an attacker in a defensive position, claimed: 'That typifies English spirit - McManaman getting back there'. The German players in
contrast were portrayed as dishonourable, indulging in gamesmanship. The following commentary of Brian Moore barely conceals his overtly nationalistic sentiments: ‘Reuter went down as if he was pole-axed but you’ll not be surprised to know he’s straight back up on his feet again’. The message was clearly implying that the German player was a cheat.

Partisan reactions were also vividly evident during the ‘golden goal’ period when the German team had a goal disallowed. The prosodic features of the commentators’ coverage of the incident were particularly revealing. ITV’s Brian Moore sounded almost childlike as he reported the over-ruling of the goal, bragging: ‘NO NO () THERE WAS PUSHING! ITS NOT BEEN GIVEN THERE WAS SOME PUSHING!’ Barry Davies on the BBC mirrored this in his commentary:

BD: And its curling () and its in! NO! A PUSH A PUSH! It’s not going to be allowed () huge applause () free-kick to England () Well goodness me! [with relief] the country’s pulse rate must be beyond natural science!

These example demonstrate O’Sullivan et al.’s (1998: 134) observation about how commentators ‘shift from a detached and neutral form of address to a more partisan and emotional delivery’ when describing their own nation’s plight.

The ‘country’s pulse rate’ was to be tested for the remainder of the match. The ‘golden goal’ period was marked by the mounting tension instilled by the commentators, pundits and presenters alike. The BBC’s Barry Davies announced its arrival, drawing on the emotions embedded in habitus codes, with a reminder of some of the history behind encounters between these: ‘Two old adversaries () the contests go back to 1938 in Berlin and a three-all draw () surely again we’re not going to have a repeat of the World Cup in Turin when the penalty spot will decide the outcome’.

The fear that the match would go to a penalty shoot-out was vivid, with images of the
1990 defeat regularly evoked. All hopes were for a ‘golden goal’, with Bob Wilson (ITV) making the aside: ‘As long as it’s England’s that’ll be fine’. Kevin Keegan mused: ‘I don’t know what will happen if we should get a golden goal (.) well if they do there’ll be silence apart from on that small corner over there with the German fans’.

8iii. Penalties Again...

As full-time approached, Brian Moore spoke for the nation as he urged, ‘Can we yet snatch a winner?’ before sighing with an air of resignation: ‘It’s going to be one of those nights - we’re on the edge of our seats here too’. Then, as the final whistle sounded, he confirmed, ‘Just as we had in the 1990 World Cup semi in Turin, we have penalties against Germany in a major competition’. As both production teams returned to their respective studios for comment, the presenters adopted a sympathetic manner, as if to play further on the suspense. For example, Desmond Lynam warmly greeted viewers by confiding: ‘Well this is almost too much to ask of you (.) I wouldn’t blame it if you wanted to duck down behind the sofa really while this is going on those of you at home’. Then, so as to ensure viewers did not hide and stayed with the BBC, he enthused: ‘What an occasion this is though (.) I mean of all the sporting events I’ve been to (.) the mood here tonight compares with anything’.

Both studios also took this period before the penalty competition to tell how they believed England should win. In a display of vivid narcissism, the ITV pundit John Barnes declared: ‘Regardless of what goes on we’ve been the best team in the tournament and deserve to win it’. It seemed as if the broadcasters were trying to reassure the national audience that England were the better, more deserving team but at the same time prepare them for the worst, as this inter-play between the BBC panel illustrates:
AH: I think England have played well enough not to lose this game Des (. ) I don’t think they deserve to lose this game (. ) Venables will be saying ‘Go on you can win it you’ve done everything possible’. The nation will be happy.

DL: The nation will be in despair if they go out this way!

AH: Well I think they will be but I think they’ll be happy the way they performed.

DL: Well its agonising for the players to have to go through this again and its tough on us all!

The ‘despair’ that Lynam warned of was blatantly evident in the commentary on the decisive penalty kicks. This is best exemplified in the words of the BBC’s Barry Davies:

Gareth Southgate (. ) [penalty is saved] OH N::O! (. ) You can have nothing but sympathy (. ) poor fella (. ) poor coach (. ) the other players going to try and console Gareth Southgate but there is no consolation unless he can be saved by David Seaman (. ) its all down to David Seaman who faces Andreas Möller (. ) who scores! The Germans go through again, England again suffer the torment of losing a penalty shoot-out in a semi-final to the Germans... And now the Germans come forward collectively to take a bow not entirely appreciated by the majority [boooing audible] but they’re entitled to support from their followers (. ) and yet again they’ll go onto the final ... Perhaps there is to be a third time lucky (. ) maybe in the next World Cup who knows.

Davies’ was able to convey a whole gamut of emotions as he attempted to ‘speak for the nation’. As Southgate stepped up, there was expectancy in his intonation. With the penalty saved, a change in his voice immediately communicated the disappointment. He expresses his sympathy for the player and the rest of the team, but admits that the match is all but over unless the England goalkeeper can defy the odds. As the German penalty was successfully converted, Davies’ despondency was evident. Acknowledging that Germany continued to be England’s ‘bogey’ team, he stressed almost ruefully, how ‘again’ Germany go through, ‘again’ England suffer what he describes as the ‘torment’ and ‘again’ the result is decided by a penalty competition in a major tournament against Germany. Having already appealed to the viewers’
emotions, he closes by appealing to fate, and suggesting that perhaps there will be a ‘third time lucky’. Many England fans would be able to identify with his words.

During this commentary, the cameras for the first time in the match gave full attention to the German fans and their celebrating players. However, they regularly switched to show the England fans applauding the England players, Terry Venables consoling Southgate, and finally the England captain leading Southgate by the arm on a lap of honour. ITV cameras carried almost identical scenes with a similarly dejected narrative. When ITV returned to the studio, the atmosphere was visibly subdued. Bob Wilson said unashamedly: ‘There’s no hiding the disappointment on the faces in this studio coz Germany are in the final not England’. Bitter memories were potentially stirred among members of the audience as he emphasised the sense of ‘1990 re-visited’ in signing off, and spoke of the match being an ‘epic’:

But tonight for England its been a repeat of Italia 90 (.) only Germany stood between us and a place against the Czech Republic in the final (.) but its been a tale of penalties again (.) this time the agony belonged to Gareth Southgate (.) Köpke with the decisive save and then minutes later Andreas Möller made it six out of six for the Germans. It’s been an epic but England are out of Euro 96.

This is another example of how the media-sport attempts to sow the seeds that embed particular moments and images into the national (sporting) memory bank. In this connection, Brian Moore during his match commentary, had stated: ‘Whatever happens tonight you can be sure people will be talking about it tomorrow and for a long time after’. Indeed, there was a mutual sense that this match would, as Desmond Lynam had predicted at the outset, ‘go down in the folklore of football’.

9. Findings and Observations

The objective of this chapter was to explore the latent textual messages
present in the television coverage of Euro 96, in order to extend the examination into the construction and representation of national identity by media-sport. Some general observations can be made at this point in the light of the findings. Most of the discursive and thematic elements that were prevalent in the press reporting of the tournament proved to also be evident in the television coverage, although there were some distinctions between the mediums.

As was found in the press coverage, personal pronouns were regularly employed by the television commentators and pundits to denote allegiances and help reinforce ‘we’ and ‘they’ images. The prosodic features of the commentary reinforced these further. They were also used in the form of ‘shifters’, which adds to the intricate, multi-layered make-up of personal identity. The presenters, in particular, were able to adopt numerous ‘we’ images, as they referred to the production and studio teams, the England football team and the collective ‘national audience’ as they spoke ‘for’ and ‘to’ the ‘nation’. The complex nature of personal pronoun use was vividly evident in the discussions within the BBC’s multi-national studio team.

Nationalistic sentiments were also in evidence, especially on ITV. This marked one of the main differences between the broadcasting styles of the BBC and ITV. The latter proved to be the more partisan and populist, while the BBC aimed for, and in practice usually achieved, Niall Sloane’s intention of securing a ‘more balanced and considered’ presentation. His additional aim that an internationalist perspective be conveyed was reflected in the cosmopolitan make-up of the studio panel. In this way the BBC sought to bring a new British/European perspective to television sport during Euro 96.

Any nationalistic discourse was always of a positive nature; there was none of the xenophobia and chauvinism found in the newspaper coverage. Indeed, the
television personnel occasionally commented on the controversial aspects of the tournament press coverage. The narcissism that was a prominent feature of the newspaper reportage was not as common in the television coverage. Narcissistic remarks did, however, surface explicitly during broadcasts of England's victory over Holland. This then continued to some extent during the match against Spain. However, the comments tended to be much more reserved and tempered than those found in the tabloid newspapers. In this respect, the broadcasters were arguably more akin to the broadsheets. Although there were some instances of narcissism or patriotism, it was usually kept in check, especially on the BBC. This follows Boyle & Haynes’ observation on the distinction between the two mediums. They note how:

The popular press' at times overtly racist treatment of a German motor-racing driver may differ from that found even on a commercial channel such as ITV (where any racist overtones will be much more subtle). In other words, the mobilisation of particular discourses of identity is partly determined by a range of factors such as the audience being targeted, the specific media institution and how it is funded, as well as current political and social attitudes (Boyle & Haynes, 2000: 148).

In this connection there was comparatively little use of the vocabulary of war, unlike in the newspaper coverage. Militaristic imagery was adopted only occasionally during England's matches against Scotland and Spain. There was no such usage during the coverage of England versus Germany, only one inference to the framing of the match by the newspapers. National stereotyping was also uncommon, with Germany the only recipient of such descriptors. Sometimes, the habitus, or 'codes of being', can be perpetuated on a foundation of positive significations about 'us', and negative ideas about 'them' (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). This was evident in some of the descriptors utilised during the match against Germany.

As with the press coverage, the discourse of the television texts reinforced
invented traditions, but particularly national habitus codes, as the commentary drew on taken-for-granted images and key historical dates from the national consciousness. Codes of being were seen as operating on various levels and transcending many of the other discourse variables. For example, the commentary and studio teams appeared to be helping to instil feelings of ‘belonging’ to the ‘imagined community’ of the nation, so making the nation appear more ‘real’, through the interplay between the discursive and practical consciousness of both the commentators and the supporters/audience, with the audio-visual texts. An illustration of this was the way in which the BBC’s Barry Davies vividly described the scenes unfolding in the crowd, with supporters singing and dancing. This helped to communicate the displays of patriotism among the fans at Wembley to the fans watching at home. The commentator formed the ‘link’, so helping to convey the ‘shared experience’. This was evidenced by intertextuality processes that combined the prevalent audio-visual references to national symbols, both through the commentary teams’ narratives, the television cameras and the sound booms that captured the singing of the supporters.

The sense of belonging was also stimulated during the television coverage through the frequent use of personal pronouns, nationalistic sentiments and occasional narcissism, which was a feature of the sometimes partisan commentary. This helped to re-present and reinforce a ‘we-image’ in contradistinction to a ‘they-image’, although in a much more subtle way than in the newspapers. The broadcasters were much less divisive than the press in this sense. Such a ‘hardening’ of national habitus codes was also, arguably, amplified through the regular heralding of tradition and the nostalgic remembrance of former glories, namely 1966, as well as less joyful dates. The repeated references to the 1990 World Cup are an example of this. The commentators and presenters appeared to convey a sense of ‘history-in-the-making’ and attempted to
consolidate particular moments and images into the English nation's memories as they hyped a particular instance, or emphasised its significance. This was especially noticeable after goals were scored, and during the penalty shoot-outs. Thus, the images and imaginings of the nation's past, present and projections of its future came together to underpin the broadcasters' sporting discourse.

In these ways, the television coverage of Euro 96 performed a similar role to that of the press reporting in framing and re-presenting national identity. However, there were some significant differences, as have been highlighted. These mainly stem from the differences between the two mediums, given television's 'live' nature, juxtaposed to the retrospective perspective of the newspapers. The broadcasting styles of the BBC and ITV were also significant. An interpretation of the results from this textual analysis will be presented in the concluding chapter.

Notes
1. Refer to the Note 6 in Chapter 5 regarding Blain et al. (1993) on Scottish press responses to 'Anglomania' in 'British' media-sport.

2. Lynam is popularly perceived as an 'English gentleman' despite being Irish-born. This may be, in part, due to the fact 'Lynam's Irishness has never been evident, nor traded upon' (Guardian, G2 supplement, 3 August 1999: 3). Writing on Lynam's move to ITV in the summer of 1999, the Sun newspaper articulated a widely held public view, telling how he had 'built a reputation as an unflappable anchorman and become the face of BBC sport' (Sun, 3 August 1999: 7).

3. Testimony to the success of the BBC's new approach came when ITV attempted to follow suit by signing Gullit from the BBC for France 98. The BBC's new recruit was the French footballer, David Ginola who brought his continental perspective to the panel.

4. Unfortunately it proved impossible to secure a personal interview with Sloane's counterpart at ITV, Jeff Farmer.

5. Beard (1998: 62) points out how as Wolstenholme was describing Geoff Hurst's advance on the German goal for the BBC, Hugh Johns was meanwhile reporting the same scenes for ITV: 'Geoff Hurst goes forward. He might make it three. He has, he has. And that's it, that's it!' Johns' commentary has been all but forgotten, while Wolstenholme's has entered the sporting and, indeed, popular vernacular.

6. The irreverent whistling over the Swiss national anthem was also personally observed in field-notes from attendance at the match (fieldwork notes, 8 June 1996).
7. An example of this is Desmond Lynam's famous greeting to viewers for England's early afternoon opening match of France 98 with: 'Shouldn't you be at work?' (BBC 1, 15 June 1998). The journalist, Brian Viner explains: 'We think we know him because he seems to know us... Armchairs everywhere instantly seemed that little bit more comfortable' (Independent, 23 June 1999).

8. The source: <www.barb.co.uk> is the web-site of the Broadcaster's Audience Research Board Ltd., a joint company of the BBC and Independent Television Association.
CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

This final chapter draws together observations made in previous chapters. In this way a summation of the thesis will be provided. The initial section reviews what the study sought to do. This includes a reflection on what was, but also what was not, possible within its remit. Next, the implications and significance of the study's methodological approach is considered. An evaluation of the strengths, and shortcomings, of the research strategy and process is presented, together with a consideration of whether the study achieved its aim of acquiring a degree of reality-congruent knowledge about the relationship between national identity and media-sport.

This leads into a discussion of the significance of the empirical results obtained from the analyses undertaken. The theoretical significance of these findings is discussed. This involves a consideration of the meanings and metaphorical status attached to Euro 96 by the media and how these might be interpreted in the light of the over-arching theoretical framework employed. Most importantly, this section also includes an interpretation of the overall findings and the conclusions that might be drawn from them. A consideration of the apparent legacy of the media coverage of Euro 96 is also offered. A final summary is then given in conclusion to both the chapter and, of course, the thesis.

2. Objectives of the Study

The broad concern has been the relationship between national identity and media-sport. To explore this relationship, attention has specifically focused upon the construction and representations of national identities in the media coverage of Euro
This involved a content analysis of the English press and television coverage of the tournament, and a consideration of some of the cultural production codes, processes and conditions involved in the shaping and making of those media texts.

The content analysis of the newspapers was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. This ensured that, firstly, a measurable, verifiable account of the structure and manifest content of the press reporting was established. Secondly, it allowed for an interpretation of the latent meanings within the newspaper texts through an exploration of the codes, significations and culturally symbolic messages that were identified. Only a qualitative analysis of the television coverage was undertaken. The omission of a quantitative analysis was essentially due to the commonly held view that the television medium does not lend itself particularly well to this level of analysis. This is because of the complexities of intertextuality and the connotative dimensions of audio-visual signs (Gruneau et al., 1988; Goldlust, 1987; Whannel, 1992).

As such, attention was primarily given to the multi-layered audio-visual texts that are characteristic of television coverage. This allowed for the investigation of the textual codes, messages and meanings found in the construction and representation of national identity in televised sport. Aspects of semiotics were, therefore, used to help inform the qualitative analyses. The findings from the examination of latent meanings of the newspaper and television texts were then considered in the light of the revelations made by the media personnel who were interviewed regarding their intentions for their coverage of Euro 96. These interviews were undertaken to explore the "preferred meanings" of the Euro 96 texts, as intended by the newspaper football correspondents and television broadcasters.

An additional aim was to identify the contextual background that framed Euro 96, and, in turn, the media coverage of the competition. This involved a consideration of the concurrent tensions and identity politics in England, Britain and Europe. While
the concepts of 'imagined communities' and 'invented traditions' can be useful in this regard, the process-sociological approach that underpins this study is particularly helpful. Habitus codes, embodied feelings and the practical consciousness of the individuals who comprise a nation have been shown to play a powerful role in the foundation of cultural relations, identity politics and the construction and representation of national identities (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). In this context a range of Eliasian concepts were used. These will be considered later.

There were some original intentions that could not be pursued. For example, in the early planning, a further comparative element was considered, namely the inclusion of an analysis of the Scottish and/or Spanish media coverage of Euro 96. It was also deemed useful to consult international footballers from the national teams participating in Euro 96 about what sense of national identity they may feel when representing their countries. Some interviews were actually undertaken to this effect. However, as the scale of the English media coverage materialised, it became evident that neither of these plans would be feasible within the parameters of a single doctoral thesis. Similar limitations had to be imposed with regard to the inclusion of some level of audience reception analysis. This is addressed in more detail in the next section that considers methodological issues.

3. Methodological Considerations

Chapter 2 discussed the methodological issues, approaches and concerns of this research project. This included a consideration of the epistemological and ontological principles underpinning the theoretical framework, the research strategy that was employed, and the actual methods that were adopted during the empirical research. In the sections that follow, the overall methodological approach is appraised, and consideration is given to whether the overall objective of furthering our more
reality-congruent knowledge of the construction and representation of national identity by media-sport was achieved.

3i. Evaluating the Research Strategy

Derived from a process-sociological perspective, the study sought to combine grounded theoretical explanations with empirical inquiry in the quest for a verifiable, generalisable sociological explanation of the relationship between national identity and media-sport. This determined the planning and implementation of the research strategy. Rowe (1999: 5) has suggested that 'the links between the conditions under which media-sport texts are made and the meanings and ideologies that they generate are the key twin foci of a cogent and instructive understanding of the relationship between sport, culture and the media'. Consequently, despite a more rooted concern with examining the textual representations of national identities within the media coverage of Euro 96, it was also deemed useful to investigate some of the politico-economic and socio-cultural contexts that were central to shaping the production of media-sport texts.

This investigation involved a consideration of the context in which the tournament was played, coupled with the interviewing of media personnel about their production practices and intentions for Euro 96. In effect, a degree of triangulation was practised. The revelations of the interviews proved to be very useful as a means of validating the findings and observations from the content analysis. Clearly, media texts can be resisted, misunderstood, (re)interpreted and/or 'recycled' by their consumers (Whannel, 1992). Consequently, it is always 'more sensible and realistic to consider texts as open, in so far as it is possible that the intentions of authors are not realised by the recipients, or interpreted in a different way than it was perhaps intended' (Digel, 1995: 83). While this study does not pretend to offer definitive readings of the media-
sport texts generated by the Euro 96 coverage, they are at least informed by, and verifiable with, the media personnel's own thoughts and reflections.

This is a major strength of the research strategy. In some respects, this compensates for the lack of an exploration into how audiences and readerships interpreted the Euro 96 coverage. Ideally, of course, the most complete analysis of media-sport would embrace all components of the 'media-sport production complex' (Jhally, 1989; Maguire, 1993a). Kinkema & Harris (1998: 47) have recommended that 'future analyses should continue to focus on linking the content of the text with the processes of production and audience interpretation'. This was clearly beyond the parameters of one doctoral thesis. However, it would be desirable in future to pursue the study of media-sport and paint a more grounded picture of textual dynamics and reception.

Despite the regrettable omission of an audience analysis, it is suggested that the research strategy had many strengths. The first of these, as stated above, was the achievement of covering two of the three major foci of media-sport research. The strategy also allowed for two mediums to be subject to a content analysis: both television and the press, with a further comparative study of the different reporting styles within those mediums. The quantitative and qualitative levels of analysis in particular were useful in highlighting the distinguishing features of tabloid and broadsheet house-styles. Ultimately, the strategy was effective in yielding data that informed our understanding of the role of media-sport in the construction and representation of national identity. The contribution of the study to more reality-congruent knowledge is considered below.
3ii. Towards More Reality-Congruent Knowledge

The methodological discussion and research strategy offered in this thesis serve as highly appropriate and valid means of testing the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter I and, essentially, for investigating the media construction and representation of national identity in pursuit of more reality-congruent knowledge. Given that the methodology of the study is influenced by insights derived from the work of Elias, it has subsequently been driven by the pursuit of testable, verifiable and correctable approximations to the truth. As such, this thesis certainly does not claim to offer anything remotely resembling 'ultimate truth', for that is unattainable. What it does do is hopefully provide a less involved, and relatively detached perspective, that helps to advance, in some small way, our understanding of some key aspects of the relationship between national identity and media-sport. In this way, these findings will make a modest contribution to the collective fund of relatively adequate social scientific knowledge in the sociology of sport literature. A summary of this is provided in the following section.

4. The Results of the Study

The findings yielded by the empirical research are evidence that the methodological approach and specific research strategy offered in this thesis were conducive to the pursuit of more reality-congruent knowledge. The research methods that were employed have been detailed above. What this section seeks to do is highlight the empirical value of the research undertaken, and the significance of the results.

Firstly, the content analyses provide a comprehensive examination of the newspaper and television coverage of Euro 96. No other published study of Euro 96 has done this. Garland & Rowe (1996), Blain & O'Donnell (1998) and Whannel...
(1998a) offer useful insights into the press reporting of the tournament and Carrington (1998) provides an overview of various mediums’ coverage. However, arguably none of these carry the same breadth or depth. This is due to the methodological integrity, the duration of the present study, the number and range of newspapers analysed, the inclusion of the television medium, and, the different levels of analysis. Furthermore, the study’s quantitative and qualitative dimensions allowed for both the manifest and latent meanings of the media texts to be explored. It also meant comparisons and distinctions could be made between the two mediums.

Secondly, the nature of the newspaper analysis meant that a detailed comparative study of the tabloid and broadsheet press could be undertaken. This was another omission of the research studies cited above. All appeared to emphasise the tabloids’ controversial coverage of Euro 96, while over-looking the broadsheets’ in some ways not too dissimilar reportage. The general response was that the Daily Mirror especially had gone ‘too far’ and was out of step with the rest of the media (Garland & Rowe, 1996; Blain & O’Donnell, 1998; Carrington, 1998; Whannel, 1998a). However, what such criticism overlooked, as has been previously highlighted, was how other sections of the media, especially the broadsheets, were utilising images and associated nationalistic rhetoric that were remarkably similar to the Daily Mirror’s deliberate use of war-time imagery and national stereotyping. Consequently, other sections of the media were using Euro 96, and the game with Germany in particular, to develop their own agenda regarding European identity politics. For instance, a writer for the Times (20 June 1996: 20) spoke of needing to win ‘our other bigger battles with Europe’, not just those confined to the football pitch.

Lastly, the fact that the production codes and practices involved in the making of the media texts were analysed makes for a more holistic study and is therefore of greater empirical significance. Whannel (1998a: 23) notes how ‘media products
emerge from an elaborate process of production which is both economic and cultural'.

The interviews with media personnel at least helped to shed some light in this area, so informing the supposedly ‘preferred meanings’ of the texts under scrutiny. This accordingly helps to validate the interpretations of the textual content presented in the study. The conclusions that have been drawn from the empirical research are presented next.

4i. Empirical Findings and Observations

The analysis of the media coverage of Euro 96 presents us with several findings. First, the press coverage in particular served more to ‘divide’ than to ‘unite’ the nations of Europe, as the Umbro advertisement and, notably, the tournament organisers under the leadership of Glen Kirton, had hoped for. This was manifest in the widespread use of personal pronouns, war vocabulary/imagery, the stereotyping of opposing nations, nationalistic sentiments and narcissism. Such media discourse can be understood as part of an active construction of ‘fantasy group charisma’ that promotes an enhanced ‘we-image’ in opposition to ‘them’, so re-emphasising the differences between established and outsider groups. This involved the evocation of habitus codes (Maguire & Poulton, 1999) that generally appeared to be built on a foundation of significations that were essentially positive about ‘us’ and negative towards others. This was especially true in relation to Germany.

However, the television broadcasters were, on the whole, much less divisive in their coverage of Euro 96. There was a significant difference between the reporting styles of the two mediums. While personal pronouns were very much in evidence, national sentiments were only expressed in positive terms towards England. There were no negative sentiments directed towards opponents, unlike in the press. National stereotyping, and the use of references to the war, were also very rare, in contrast to
the newspaper content. National symbols were a common feature in the intertextuality of the television coverage owing to their presence in various audio-visual forms. For example, supporters were often seen and heard singing their national anthems, bedecked in their national colours, and the flags of nations could regularly be seen waving.

Second, the newspapers reflected the social currents that were evident in Anglo-British and European politics at the time, possibly reinforcing anti-European sentiments more broadly. This was also done through the deploying of national stereotypes, nationalistic sentiments and the vocabulary/imagery of war. Media discourse of this kind can be seen as part of the active construction of a group’s special charisma, that is based upon the invention of tradition, and, at a deeper, more enduring level, the habitus codes that underpin the English national character. Opposing nations on the football field who represented old military, and/or political adversaries, provided convenient opportunities to buttress deeply laden habitus codes about the fragile I/we identities of the English. The identity politics evident in the newspapers’ Euro 96 coverage therefore reflected, and one could argue, seemed to amplify, more deep-seated Anglo-British concerns regarding national decline, the fragmentation of the British Isles and European integration, especially in light of the controversy over beef exports. Such a discursive theme seldom appeared in the television coverage.

A third and similar observation is that the press discourse tended towards two interwoven themes. Those were nostalgia, especially with the recollection of '66 and all that, and ethnic assertiveness/defensiveness. This was manifested in the regular glorification of past glories and status, both on and off the sports field, and a celebration of history and tradition. Tabloid headlines, and some broadsheet articles, appeared to draw together the twin victories of the 1966 World Cup victory, and
World War II, in a blurred concoction of memory and myth. This was evident in the sports pages, as well as the main body of the newspapers, despite the Daily Telegraph's Henry Winter suggesting during interview that it was feature writers who tended to draw upon sport-politics allegories.

The media-sport discourse, therefore, reinforced ‘invented traditions’, but also national habitus codes, as it drew on images and significant dates from the national ‘folk memory’. In this way, habitus codes can be seen operating at various levels helping to instil a very real sense of belonging to the ‘imagined community’ of the nation. This is especially true when the nation is confronted with a perceived threat. Such sentiments were apparently a reflection of the concurrent political climate that was characterised by tensions within Europe, with the ‘Beef crisis’ and ongoing Franco-German moves towards Europeanisation the perceived threats to Anglo-British status and sovereignty. However, whether the newspapers were responsible for exacerbating, or even generating, renewed animosities with other European nations is unclear. An analysis exploring audience receptivity would be required to adequately investigate this, as explained above.

A fourth main finding can also be identified from the empirical results. The content analyses pointed to some notable differences between some of the newspapers’ coverage. This was especially evident between the tabloids and broadsheets. These differences were highlighted by both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, as outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively. While there was frequent use of personal pronouns, narcissism, and war vocabulary, in all of the newspapers, these discourse variables were all found more in the tabloids. The qualitative analysis was particularly revealing in terms of providing an insight into the latent meanings of the culturally symbolic messages within the newspaper texts. The study indicated that there were some marked contrasts between the content and
journalistic styles of the two genres. These differences reflected Henry Winter's observation that tabloid reporting often frames 'sport in cartoon'.

However, on occasions, the tabloid and broadsheet coverage was not too dissimilar. Broadsheet writers used similar evocative language and imagery to their tabloid counterparts. Sometimes, a particular journalistic style or discursive theme appeared to be used on the apparent pretext of chastising the tabloid reporters. Those from the broadsheets criticised the excessive use of national stereotyping and, especially, war vocabulary in the tabloids, while seemingly indulging in such discursive themes themselves. One might assume that such instances would be explained by broadsheet journalists as examples of when they 'get a bit sloppy', as the Guardian's David Lacey confessed with regard to the use of war vocabulary/imagery and national stereotypes. Such apparently 'acceptable' lapses in the language and imagery used by broadsheet writers suggests, once more, a self-perpetuating sense of 'superiority' vis-à-vis the tabloids, disguised in a lofty tone of latent denial. The candid insights of other football correspondents who admitted that their broadsheets' preferred house-styles are not always adhered to, evidence this further. Glenn Moore of the Independent conceded that 'the odd joke might slip in along that basis [national stereotypes] but its not something we go for as a general rule'. The testaments of the media personnel were very useful in this context for providing an understanding of the making and shaping of their texts.

Lastly, some further observations can be made with regard to the television coverage. While most of the discursive and thematic elements that were pervasive in the newspapers were also evident in the televised broadcasts of Euro 96, there were some distinctions. It has been stated above that the press reporting was more divisive in comparison to that found in the electronic medium. For example, there was none of the xenophobia and chauvinism that on occasions characterised the negatively
nationalistic sentiments of the newspaper coverage. The use of war vocabulary and imagery was very rare, too. It was only used, though briefly, during the broadcast of the England versus Scotland match, yet was a common thematic discourse in the press reporting of most matches, particularly that involving Germany. Narcissism was also rarely in evidence. Only during England’s defeat of Holland did the commentary and studio teams indulge in plaudits towards the England team. However, this was still more measured, and moderate, than the excessive superlatives and hyperbole of the press discourse.

The use of national stereotypes was also a less common feature of the television coverage. Furthermore, the stereotyping in the television texts tended, where present, to be less derogatory than the frequent instances of cultural denigration in the press reportage. ITV personnel more commonly used stereotypes. This was one of the distinguishing characteristics between the broadcast styles of ITV and the BBC. The latter generally seemed to conform to Niall Sloane’s intentions for a ‘balanced and considered’ coverage of the tournament, in keeping with BBC traditions. ITV’s broadcasting, in contrast, appeared to be more populist and consequently, more partisan at times. Such an atmosphere may be more conducive to the hardening of habitus codes and the reinforcement of national identity. While a degree of sociological caution needs to be exercised here, tentative comparisons can be drawn between the reporting style of ITV at times and sections of the ‘middle market’, or even tabloid press. In this connection, the more reserved, and tempered, approach of the BBC arguably tended to reflect that of the broadsheet newspapers.

The overall contention based on these findings is that, in this country at least, global sports are being used by sections of the media to reassert an intense form of national identity discourse in opposition to further European integration. Further research would have to be undertaken to test whether this appears to be borne out in
other European countries. In addition, sporting contests tend to reawaken 'sleeping memories' and rekindle deeply laden national habitus codes (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). As such, they tend to fuel the historic and ongoing strains, and tensions, vividly evident in the identity politics which served as a backdrop to Euro 96. This was manifested especially in the press coverage of England's matches between Spain and, in particular, Germany. The evocation of past and present hostilities between England and opposing nations, and the recollection of national glories from a bygone era, are evidence of 'wilful nostalgia' (Maguire, 1994). While the newspapers' vividly highlighted these animosities and rivalries, the broadcasters, in particular, reinforced invented traditions, and, especially national habitus codes, as commentary drew on taken-for-granted images and historically important dates from the national consciousness/culture.

Such media discourse celebrates England as an independent and powerful nation, so reinforcing the delicate 'fantasy shield' of its people, and providing a barrier to the growth of a feeling of emotional identification with mainland Europe. This observation supports Elias' (1991) contention that a collective European identity is emotively weak at this stage. As the Daily Telegraph (25 June 1996: 23) editor observed: 'Above all, Euro 96 serves as a reminder that the nation - be it multi-national or ethnically homogeneous - remains the principal focus of most people's affection'. Evidently the emotional resonance of national sports teams appears to outweigh the claim on people's affections that a European team would have. Or, at least, these are the sentiments framed by the media. Once again, however, an audience response analysis would help to probe the geopolitics of European cultures more generally in order to test whether this is the reality amongst citizens of different European nations.
The identity politics evident especially in the newspapers, therefore, apparently reflected deep-seated Anglo-British concerns regarding national decline and European integration. This may well explain why the dominant discursive themes of both mediums focused on nostalgia and ethnic assertiveness/defensiveness. These were particularly noticeable with regard to the victory of 1966, especially since that was the last time that England could claim any form of superiority over arch-rivals, Germany, whether on or off the sports field. The significance of these findings is explored further in the following section.

4ii. Euro 96 – ‘A Metaphor for Our Times’?

A few days prior to England’s semi-final against Germany, a writer for the Observer (23 June 1996: 10, sports supplement), noted for its more left-wing and liberal views on Europe, suggested that: ‘the game might be a metaphor for our times. This is an exciting, uncertain period of change for a nation looking to walk tall in Europe’. This observation raises some questions regarding the symbolism of the match, not least, that of whose times was Euro 96 supposedly a metaphor? What is suggested here is that Euro 96 was framed by the media in a whole variety of ways, as evidenced in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, as ‘a metaphor for our times’, with Anglo-British and European identity politics writ large. This was vividly evident after England’s elimination from the tournament. Gaining what the editor evidently felt was some solace from the defeat, and developing the metaphoric dimension still further, a Daily Mail writer argued that the English had been defeated at their ‘own game’, not at Germany’s. What the Daily Mail columnist concluded is worth quoting at some length:

We must regard last night’s defeat as another sort of victory - not a moral victory, but a historical victory. For surely we British have achieved nothing more admirable this century than teaching the Germans how to beat us at our own game. It was in 1863 - 133 years ago - that the Football Association was born. At that time, Germany did not even exist as a united state. And although
the game had caught on in Imperial Germany by the time of World War I - so much so that on Christmas Day, 1914, British and German soldiers played football together in ‘No-Man’s Land’ - it continued to be regarded as an English import... Nor is football the only thing we have taught the Germans this century. We have - after two great conflagrations - taught them economic liberalism and parliamentary democracy too. Not bad going. True, no teacher likes it when his brilliant pupil gets the better of him. But there is surely some satisfaction in seeing how well the pupil has been taught (Daily Mail, 27 June 1996: 8).

The combination of discourses present here illustrates once again how the newspapers framed Euro 96 as ‘a metaphor for our times’ and how England’s matches against European rivals past and present, were codified with latent textual messages concerning the nation’s contemporary European and global standing.

The content analysis indicated that the media-sport discourse found in the television and newspaper coverage of Euro 96 performed the function that Maguire (1993b, 1994, 1999) and Maguire & Poulton (1997, 1999) - guided by some principal concepts of Elias’ thinking - have detected about national identity politics and socialisation practices more broadly. That is, such discourse reinforced invented traditions, but also national habitus codes. This can be anticipated of a nation like England, which is struggling to come to terms with its status as a declining nation, and as such, is seeking to protect and promote a ‘fantasy image’, based on its former self. The fantasy shield and imagined group charisma of such a nation is based on both media discourses, and also ‘daily unnoticed practices’ (Billig, 1995; Connerton, 1989), in this case, in the activities of football supporters/spectators. This involves a level of inter-play, between both the practical and the discursive levels of consciousness identified by Giddens (1984). It is argued that although the concepts of invented traditions and imagined communities are fruitful in exploring domestic and European identity politics, they appear to only deal with discursive consciousness. Consequently,
the level of practical consciousness is ignored and the interplay between the two is overlooked.

What the empirical findings indicate is that to overlook this interplay is a grave oversight when attempting to gain more reality-congruent knowledge about identity politics, and indeed, the construction and representation of national identity. This study has sought to emphasise the theoretical importance of an appreciation of Elias' concept of habitus and identity formation, coupled with sensitivity for the past and an understanding of long-term, intended and unintended processes that can shape insider-outsider relations. These can inform, and be informed by, our understanding of the practical and discursive levels of consciousness. For it is the linkage between the two that illustrates how the individual and social (for example, national) habitus are interconnected. This helps to demonstrate how the I/we identity is constructed through a blend of discursive practices, (in this case media-sport reportage and its consumption), and practical actions, such as football supporters' exhibition of nationalistic sentiments through chanting, singing or correspondence with newspapers, and, too some degree, the media personnel's production of media texts. These insights are, arguably, of significance to the broader theoretical debate on national identity, which was addressed in Chapter 1.

My empirical results suggest that Euro 96 served to reinforce the stronger emotive I/we identification of the English, with their own nation, rather than with the we-image of being also Europeans. Of theoretical significance is that dominant I/we national identities are arguably strengthened in international sporting tournaments of this nature, which can be seen as 'patriot games'. During these contests, the special charisma embodied in the image that nations have of themselves can reflect, and reinforce, the fantasy shield of a group's imagined charisma still further. However, as has been noted elsewhere, 'these sporting dreams, while having potentially unifying
effects internally, far from uniting nations, can at same time be divisive, myth-forming and potentially dangerous’ (Maguire & Poulton, 1999: 18). This was seen in the jingoism, xenophobia and chauvinism that was a dominant feature of the press coverage of Euro 96, and also, possibly, the aggressive anti-German feeling that was a feature of the public disorder following England’s exit from the tournament at the hands of Germany.

This is encapsulated by Matthew Engel’s comments on the aftermath of England’s defeat that sparked the civil unrest throughout the country. Engel pertinently observed:

Maybe Scotland, Ireland and Wales can take defeat with more unanimous good grace. But these are countries with greater social cohesion. The blame [for the disorder following the defeat] should not be heaped on to football. In a country as large, as diverse and as generally out of sorts with itself as England, it was probably impossible for a balloon that grew as big as this one did, to have been pricked with a smaller bang (Guardian, 28 June 1996: 3).

Engel intimates here that there was an extraordinary level of English expectation during Euro 96, especially prior to the semi-final with Germany, which the content analysis suggests may have been largely media generated. Such expectation, he contends, does not bode well for a nation ‘as generally out of sorts with itself as England’. Engel is acknowledging the various social currents and ‘dislocating’ trends in society at the time that can contribute to a ‘crisis of identity’ as nations feel under threat. This, of course, relates to Elias’ contentions concerning established-outsider relations, and the ‘we-image’, and ‘we-ideal’, of once-powerful nations whose superiority in relation to others has declined. A further significance of this study is how these concepts have been shown to be very useful in helping to ‘make sense’ of national identity construction, and identity politics. As a consequence, these concepts will hopefully become more firmly located and more widely utilised in the broader
debate on national identity, and, indeed, national identity and its relationship with sport.

Arguably, the media framing of Euro 96 acted as a drag on further European integration. Indeed, it is possible to conclude that international team sports seemingly bind people to dominant I/we national identities, and the incipient European identity remains very much at an emergent stage. As Elias warned, 'the discrepancy between the actual and the imagined position of one's group among others can also entail a mistaken assessment of one's resources' (Elias 1994: p. x1iii). Football, was not after all to return to the English home of its founders. Rather, the 1996 European Championship title was claimed by arguably its modern homeland, Germany. This added further to the discontent over German ascendancy in European politics, which was reflected and reinforced by powerful media representations. For an insecure English nation, struggling to come to terms with European integration, the loss of Empire, and other dislocating processes, the global sports arena seems to appear to English media-sport, at least, as a last bastion for the preservation of the Anglo-British 'imagined charisma'. Yet this was not to be the case in Euro 96, where Germany was again to reign supreme.

4iii. The Media Coverage of Euro 96 – The Legacy

It has already been documented (see Chapters 4 and 5) how some of the tabloid newspapers were heavily criticised for some of their coverage of Euro 96, particularly for their reporting of the matches against Spain and especially Germany. This led the cross-party National Heritage Select Committee to urge the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) – the regulatory body charged with protecting press standards – to consider claims that reports in the Daily Mirror, Sun and Daily Star 'contained references to England's opponents that were pejorative and prejudicial in
breach of Clause 15 [Discrimination] of the Code of Practice’ (Report No. 35, July/August/September 1996). The PCC itself had received some 300 complaints from the general public. This was a substantial amount considering that the Commission receives on average 2,500 complaints in a whole year.

The PCC considered various factors. Firstly, the varied nature of the numerous complaints; some concerned with the taste and offensiveness of the articles, others that the coverage was racially discriminatory. Secondly, the editors’ apparently good intentions to reflect national pride without malice were taken into account, as were the swift editorial apologies after their controversial coverage. The PCC also acknowledged the fact that no official complaint had been received from any representatives of the German government, or its football team. Finally, they registered their recognition of how the semi-final match was ‘charged with a great deal of emotion and predictable historical comparison’, given 1966. In light of these considerations, the following conclusions were issued:

- [I]n these circumstances a considerable amount of nationalist fervour and jingoism from football supporters themselves was inevitable. Without making any judgement about the emotions which football matches excite, the Commission took into account that the coverage reflected at least in part the tone of comment and humour traditionally found in partisan support of football fans for their teams...

- The Commission believed that the coverage - although shrill and poorly misjudged - in reflecting this partisan national support, was clearly not intended to incite prejudice directed at specific individuals on grounds of their race; furthermore, the comments made against Germany and the German people in particular could not be taken as serious threats or incitement to discrimination, particularly in view of the generous comments by the German Football Association. The Commission found there was no breach of Clause 15 of the Code...

- Members of the Commission recognised that while there is a long and proud tradition in the British press of robust and nationalistic comment in support of British sportsmen and women competing in international sporting events, this has always been combined with an equally proud tradition in such reporting of tolerance and fair play towards others.
Although there were no grounds for formally censuring any newspaper for a breach of the Code, Members of the Commission reiterated that some of the coverage departed significantly from those journalistic traditions. They wanted to place on record their own concern about the lapses in editorial judgement which had occurred, and trusted that all editors would take into account the public reaction to the coverage of Euro 96 - as evidenced by the large number of complaints the Commission had received - when covering future international sporting events.

When called before the Commission to answer the charges against them, the tabloid editors defended themselves. Piers Morgan of the Daily Mirror explained that he had been aware of the criticism and had apologised. While acknowledging that his newspaper’s coverage had been regarded as offensive, and overtly jingoistic, he rejected suggestions it had breached the press Code of Practice. Morgan claimed: ‘To interpret it otherwise would be to prohibit highly critical articles about the conduct of nations as a whole or their people’ (Guardian, 30 October 1996: 9). The Daily Star claimed its coverage was ‘not malicious and the jokes were tongue in cheek and designed to raise a smile’. Meanwhile, Stuart Higgins of the Sun, again maintained its line that the reporting had been ‘jingoistic, robust and designed to bolster national pride, but not xenophobic or racist’ (Guardian, 30 October 1996: 9).

These responses, and the Commission’s comments more broadly, raise sensitive ethical and legal questions about censorship, sanctions and the appropriate extent of the ‘freedom of speech’. To discuss these is not within the realms of this thesis. However, it is interesting to note that the criticisms levied at the press coverage of Euro 96 seemed to mark a watershed in terms of the monitoring of future sports reporting in England. Following the controversy caused by the tabloids’ coverage of Euro 96, Lord Wakeham, chair of the PCC took an unprecedented measure on the eve of the World Cup of France 98. Wakeham issued a statement to newspaper editors attempting to prevent ‘a repeat of such undesirable headlines’ (Daily Telegraph, 14 May 1998: 11), and warning them to temper their nationalistic language in future
coverage, with the imminent World Cup in mind. He advised that the newspapers should ensure that they ‘did not over-step the line between robust comment and racism’ (Guardian, 14 May 1998: 1).

In response, Stuart Higgins of the Sun assured that their World Cup coverage would be ‘jingoistic’, but not ‘xenophobic’ (Daily Telegraph, 14 May 1998: 11). This was the distinction he had made during Euro 96 in defence of the ‘Let’s Blitz Fritz!’ headline. Higgins elaborated: ‘According to the Oxford English Dictionary, jingoism means loud and blasting patriotism. I’m proud of that. Xenophobia is a deep antipathy to foreigners and foreign things’ (Daily Telegraph, 14 May 1998: 11). Piers Morgan, editor of the Daily Mirror who received the brunt of the criticism during Euro 96, commented: ‘He [Wakeham] is preaching to the converted... Language such as hun and bosch is passé. That was old style tabloid humour perhaps to a big degree. We have all probably realised. the appetite for that kind of thing has changed’ (Guardian, 14 May 1998: 7).

This is not the context to present an analysis of the press coverage of subsequent international football competitions to see what effect the criticism of the Euro 96 coverage and Lord Wakeham’s warning to editors had. Some observations, however, can be offered with regard to the nature of the reporting of those tournaments. Indeed, as it has transpired, the England team has since faced ‘old foe’ Germany and a more recent military opponent, Argentina, in France 98 and the 2000 European Championships. On the whole, the coverage of those matches suggests that some lessons appear to have been learnt from criticism levied during Euro 96, with more limited instances of overtly negative nationalistic sentiments, and war vocabulary. However, these discursive themes have still emerged on occasions and as such, are likely to be pervasive whenever England is faced with an old or contemporary adversary.
5. In Summary

This study has sought to investigate the relationship between sport, the media and national identity. A content analysis of the media coverage of Euro 96 and an investigation into the cultural production of that coverage was undertaken to this end. In this connection, the drawing together of the concepts of Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983), Anderson (1983) and Billig (1995) with the process-sociological approach, and aspects of semiotics-based media analysis, appears to offer a useful conceptual framework through which to explore the complex inter-linkages of national identity construction and media-sport. Of course, while media-sport texts may reproduce, amplify, and even reconstitute identities, many of those already exist within society. Upbringing, education and socialisation practices more broadly all play a part in the processes of identity-formation, as well as that of ‘boundary-marking’ between groups. However, the media have an integral role here in the sense that they can stimulate and draw upon the national habitus, and help to foster a wider feeling of collective identification amongst members of an established group, especially when confronted by outsiders. This is frequently the case in international sport, when ‘we’ are pitted against the opposing ‘them’.

The results of the content analysis provide evidence of the multi-layered and processual nature of national habitus. Habitus codes have been identified as effectively operating at a variety of levels, with their emphasis changing in particular contexts of mediated tension. Such tension was present in the media framing of Euro 96. These ‘codes of being’ appear to be built around a core of significations that help to construct and represent national identities. These media representations ordinarily stereotype in positive ways about ‘us’ and negative ways about ‘them’. Such feelings of national belonging, or the exclusion of outsider groups, are activated further through the use of personal pronouns, narcissism, nationalistic sentiments and national
symbols that cement a ‘we-image’ in contrast to a ‘they-image’. This ‘hardening’ of national habitus can also be amplified through the use of war-like language, the nostalgic recollection of past triumphs, and disasters, and an emphasis on tradition.

The media coverage of Euro 96, therefore, served as part of an active construction of ‘fantasy group charisma’. This was based both on the ‘invention of traditions’ and the evoking of a sense of the national (imagined) community, and also, at a deeper and more enduring level, the habitus codes that underpin the national character of the nations involved in the football competition. To conclude, this study offers some evidence to suggest that media-sport provides a complex chain of interdependencies that can serve to stimulate the ‘flow’ of national habitus codes in various ways. In sum, through the coverage of sport, the media can help awaken, or reinforce, dormant identifications, so making the nation more ‘real’ rather than ‘imagined’.

These research findings will add generally to the growing body of more reality-congruent knowledge within the sociological study of sport, especially that informed by a process-sociological perspective (for example, Dunning, 1992, 1999; Elias & Dunning, 1986; Maguire, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1999; Maguire & Tuck, 1997, 1998; Maguire & Poulton, 1997, 1999; Murphy et al., 2000). More broadly, the findings will increase our understanding of the manifest and latent content of mediated sports texts, especially with regard to the framing of national identity. Furthermore, the study will help to shed light on a relatively under-researched aspect of media-sport: that of the production codes associated with the institutions and personnel who create media texts. Finally, it is hoped that this study will inform and enhance our future reading of media-sport, whenever there is a contest involving ‘us’ against ‘them’.
REFERENCES


Other Sources:


APPENDICES
SPORT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

CODEBOOK FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRINT MEDIA

For exclusive use with the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 1996 European Football Championships

Joseph Maguire, Jason Tuck, Emma Poulton ©
APPENDIX I

LEVEL 1: COPY

All articles and illustrations of the selected print media related to both national and international sport will be analysed.

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<th>Variable</th>
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**England**
The Times 01
Daily Telegraph 02
The Guardian 03
The Observer 04
The Independent 05
Daily Mail 06
Daily Express 07
The Sun 08
News of the World 09
Daily Mirror 10

**Scotland**
Daily Record 09
The Scotsman 10
Daily Mirror 11

Variable | Contents | Code |
|----------|----------|------|
APPENDIX 1

(M04)

Ireland
Irish Times 12
Irish Independent 13

Wales
Western Mail 14

Spain
ABC 15
Marca 16
El Pais 17
El Mundo 18

France
Le Soir 19
Le Figaro 20

Germany
Die Welt 21
Bild 22
Suddeutsche Zeitung 23

Other
The European 24

M05 Total number of pages:
(excluding any non-sport supplements)

M06 Number of pages of sports section:

M07 Number of pages of sport-specific supplement:

M08 Total number of sports articles:
These include any sports-related article
(but not lists of results, tables or statistics)

M09 Total number of sports illustrations:
These include photos, pictures and graphics

M10 Number of articles related to specified sport:

M11 Number of illustrations related to specified sport:

LEVEL 2: Article
For the purposes of this codebook an article may be defined as a narrative (or story) which deals mainly with themes related to sport. Headlines with no accompanying text (e.g. just associated with an illustration) should be treated as articles. A story continued on more than one page should be treated as one article. Only encode articles featuring sport below national level if national and international aspects (such as stereotypes) are mentioned. Pure statistics, lists of results and tables should not be considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>Serial number of copy:</td>
<td>(see M01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>Serial number of article:</td>
<td>All sports-related articles should be numbered (starting with 0001). Begin counting on the front cover of the publication (starting at the top left-hand corner) and end on the bottom right-hand corner of the back page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>Number of columns of article:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>Position of article:</td>
<td>Front cover 01, Back page 02, In the sports section 03, Front page of a sport-specific supplement 04, In a sport-specific supplement 05, Elsewhere (note page numbers) 06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>Reference:</td>
<td>Regular writer (name) 01, Guest correspondent (name) 02, Other (specify) 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also encode the gender of the contributor.</td>
<td>Male 01, Female 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>Journalistic style:</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 1

Indicate the style of the article according to the following categories:

- **News**: usually short and contains factual information.
- **Objective Report**: a summary of the facts describing events or themes (the opinion of the journalist is not explicitly shown).
- **Caption/Photo Credits**: usually connected (and placed beneath) an illustration; can provide further information.
- **Report/Commentary**: similar to an Objective Report but with the journalist’s opinion explicitly shown.
- **Feature**: an in-depth commentary.
- **Gloss/Satire**: caricature; often topical and sometimes humorous.
- **Interview**: when a journalist interviews someone.
- **Column**: well-known journalists (and former players) publishing their views on a regular basis.
- **Comment/Opinion Column**: subjective interpretation of events; often in an argumentative style.
- **Portrait**: an in-depth narrative of either a person, a country etc.
- **Press Comments/Press Reports**: comments from other newspapers.
- **Documentation**: a sequence of events (often in chronological order).
- **Headline**: the ‘title’ of an article, sometimes used on its own to catch the eye.
- **Editorial**: responses from, and letters to, the editor (or sports editor).
- **Mix**: a combination of styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective report</td>
<td>Objective report</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caption/photo credits</td>
<td>Caption/photo credits</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report/commentary</td>
<td>Report/commentary</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloss/satire</td>
<td>Gloss/satire</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>Column</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment/opinion column</td>
<td>Comment/opinion column</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait</td>
<td>Portrait</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press comments/press reports</td>
<td>Press comments/press reports</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headline</td>
<td>Headline</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix (specify)</td>
<td>Mix (specify)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variable**   **Contents**

M18 Leading national character:

348
APPENDIX 1

Identify the nation which provides the leading character of the article. If the article covers more than one nation both national teams would be encoded. For example in an article featuring a match between England and Spain (where the English team were the main source of interest) would produce M18 = 02 + 06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M19 Evaluation of leading character(s):
- Positive 01
- Negative 02
- Neutral 03
- Undecided 04

M20 Main theme/sub-theme:
Note one main theme but encode up to three sub-themes. For example a preview article about the history of Euro'96 would be encoded M20 = 01.00 (main theme)/18.03 (sub-theme).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(M20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender issues</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive male stereotyping</td>
<td>17.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

350
APPENDIX 1

Negative male stereotyping 17.02
Positive female stereotyping 17.03
Negative female stereotyping 17.04
History 18.00
General history 18.01
History of sport 18.02
History of competition under study 18.03
Nostalgia 18.04
Styles of play 19.00
Tactics 19.01
Techniques 19.02
Stereotyping 19.03
Nationalistic sentiment 20.00
Towards “us” (positive) 20.01
Towards “us” (negative) 20.02
Towards “them” (positive) 20.03
Towards “them” (negative) 20.04
Festivals/cultural events 21.00
Religion 22.00
Politics 23.00
Tourism 24.00
Military conflict 25.00
World Wars 25.01
Civil Wars 25.02
Regional conflicts 25.03
Sports Science/Technology 26.00
Other (specify) 27.00

M21  Discourse analysis: personal pronouns
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of personal pronouns (I/we/them/they) to identify with national teams and emphasise both positive feelings about “us” and negative feelings about “them”.
E.g. “they were no match for our boys”, “we are the champions”

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M22  Discourse analysis: play on words
APPENDIX 1

Encode and give up to three examples of the use of word play.
E.g. "Hun-believable", "Pole-axed", "Turkish delight"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

M23 Discourse analysis: other metaphors
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of other metaphors.
E.g. "the brains of the team", "he played like a donkey"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

M24 Discourse analysis: use of foreign words
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of foreign words.
E.g. "samba football", "go!"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

M25 Discourse analysis: exaggeration
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of exaggerations and superlatives.
E.g. "the best game ever", "the game of their lives"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

Variable | Contents | Code
--- | --- | ---
M26 | Discourse analysis: familiarity/nicknames | 352
APPENDIX I

Encode and give up to three examples of the use of familiarity.
E.g. "Gazza", "Platty", "Deano"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

**M27**
Discourse analysis: caricature of individuals and demeaning language
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of irreverence or lack of respect.
E.g. "Pit Bull" (Brian Moore), "Ice Man" (Bergkamp)

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

**M28**
Discourse analysis: emotive language
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of dramatic and emotive language.
E.g. "Wright returns from the international wilderness"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

**M29**
Discourse analysis: narcissism
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of narcissistic sentiment.
E.g. "Rule Britannia", "Land of Hope and Glory"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

**Variable** | **Contents** | **Code**
--- | --- | ---
M30 | Discourse analysis: vocabulary of war/aggressive language | 353
APPENDIX 1

Encode and give up to three examples of the use of war vocabulary or military metaphors.
E.g. "battle of the Titans", "Tartan army"

M31  Discourse analysis: nationalistic sentiments/nationalism
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of nationalistic sentiment.
E.g. "Frogs", "Krauts", "Gotcha!"

M32  Discourse analysis: national stereotypes
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of national stereotypes.
E.g. "the efficient Germans", "the fighting Irish"

M33  Discourse analysis: national symbols
Encode and give up to three examples of the reporting of national symbols (e.g. flags, anthems and emblems)
E.g. "with three lions on his chest"

Variable  Contents  Code

M34  Discourse analysis: invented traditions

354
Encode and give up to three examples of the reporting of the invention of traditions.
E.g. "the home of football", "venue of legends"

M35 Discourse analysis: individual/social identity and habitus
Encode and give up to three examples of references made to Identity, embodied feelings, collective memories and habitus.
E.g. "Scottish valour", "it is second nature to us"

M36 Discourse analysis: nostalgia
Encode and give up to three examples of the use of nostalgic imagery.
E.g. "1966 and all that", "football comes home"

M37 Discourse analysis: Europeanisation/globalisation
Encode and give up to three examples of the reporting of Europeanisation and globalisation.
E.g. "Europe coming together", "the world at one"

Variable Contents Code

M38 Discourse analysis: European regionalism
APPENDIX 1

Encode and give up to three examples of inference to intra-continental or sub-national regionalism.
E.g. "ice-cool Scandinavian", "he exploded in Latin rage"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

**M39**

**Discourse analysis: gender stereotypes**

Encode and give up to three examples of the use of gender stereotypes.
E.g. "they played like big girls' blouses", "the boyish Le Saux"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

**M40**

**Discourse analysis: hyper-masculinity**

Encode and give up to three examples of references made to the exaggerated view of male qualities.
E.g. "they played like real men"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

**M41**

**Discourse analysis: issues of femininity**

Encode and give up to three examples of the use of positive images of femininity.
E.g. "the women in the crowd were the peace-makers"

| Occurs often | 01 |
| Occurs seldom | 02 |
| Does not occur | 03 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M42</strong></td>
<td>Discourse analysis: references made to the family</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX I

Encode and give up to three examples of references made to the family (this includes the elderly and youths).
E.g. "it was a real family occasion"

Occurs often 01
Occurs seldom 02
Does not occur 03

Discourse analysis: racism/ethnicity
Encode and give up to three examples of references made to different races and ethnicities (include racial stereotypes).
E.g. "Barnes was a natural winger"

Occurs often 01
Occurs seldom 02
Does not occur 03
APPENDIX 1

LEVEL 3: ILLUSTRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(see M01, M12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M45</td>
<td><strong>Serial number of illustration:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All sports-related illustrations should be numbered (starting with 0001). Begin counting on the front cover of the publication (starting at the top left-hand corner) and end on the bottom right-hand corner of the back page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M46</td>
<td><strong>Type of illustration:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graphics</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television image</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cartoon</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M47</td>
<td><strong>Position of illustration:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front cover</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back page</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the sports section</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front page of a sport-specific supplement</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In a sport-specific supplement</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsewhere (note page number)</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M48</td>
<td><strong>Reference:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encode the gender of the contributor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M49</td>
<td><strong>Leading national character:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify the nation which provides the leading character of the illustration. If the illustration covers more than one nation both national teams would be encoded. For example in an article featuring a match between England and Spain (where the English team were the main source of interest) would produce M49 = 02 + 06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX I

(M49)

Great Britain 01
England 02
Scotland 03
Ireland 04
Wales 05
Spain 06
France 07
Germany 08
Switzerland 09
Netherlands 10
Bulgaria 11
Romania 12
Czech Republic 13
Italy 14
Russia 15
Denmark 16
Portugal 17
Turkey 18
Croatia 19
Europe 20
Other (specify) 21

M50

Evaluation of leading character(s):
Positive 01
Negative 02
Neutral 03
Undecided 04

M51

Main theme/sub-theme:
Note one main theme but encode up to three sub-themes.
For example an illustration depicting perceptions of Dutch hooligans within the English media would be encoded: M51 = 16.02 (main theme)/ 03.00 (sub-theme)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preview</th>
<th>01.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlights</td>
<td>02.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impressions/points of view</td>
<td>03.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>04.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variable Contents Code

359
### APPENDIX I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>05.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The press</td>
<td>05.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>05.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News conference</td>
<td>05.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to other media</td>
<td>05.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of media on sport</td>
<td>05.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human interest</strong></td>
<td>06.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandals</td>
<td>07.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Movement</td>
<td>08.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers</td>
<td>08.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in other country</td>
<td>08.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training/Preparation/Recovery</strong></td>
<td>09.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training camp/training methods</td>
<td>09.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury (playing with/tolerance of)</td>
<td>09.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stadia</strong></td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>10.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public safety</td>
<td>10.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing strategies</td>
<td>10.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commodification</strong></td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports merchandise/kit</td>
<td>11.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>11.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governing bodies</strong></td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>12.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>12.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (e.g. UEFA)</td>
<td>12.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regulations</strong></td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug use/abuse</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair play/behaviour</strong></td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct of teams</td>
<td>15.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct of individual players</td>
<td>15.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct of fans</td>
<td>15.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resignations/expulsions</td>
<td>15.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence/crime</strong></td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On pitch</td>
<td>16.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooliganism</td>
<td>16.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal activity</td>
<td>16.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender issues</strong></td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive male stereotyping</td>
<td>17.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative male stereotyping</td>
<td>17.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive female stereotyping</td>
<td>17.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative female stereotyping</td>
<td>17.04</td>
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</table>
# APPENDIX I

### (M51)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General history</td>
<td>18.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of sport</td>
<td>18.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of competition under study</td>
<td>18.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia</td>
<td>18.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Styles of play</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics</td>
<td>19.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td>19.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyping</td>
<td>19.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalistic sentiment</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards &quot;us&quot; (positive)</td>
<td>20.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards &quot;us&quot; (negative)</td>
<td>20.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards &quot;them&quot; (positive)</td>
<td>20.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards &quot;them&quot; (negative)</td>
<td>20.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivals/cultural events</td>
<td>21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military conflict</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Wars</td>
<td>25.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Wars</td>
<td>25.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional conflicts</td>
<td>25.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Science/Technology</td>
<td>26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>27.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### M52

**Visual emphasis on aesthetic things**

E.g. the beauty of the game and other positive aspects

- Yes: 01
- No: 02
- Neither: 03

### M53

**Visual emphasis on negative things**

E.g. violence and fouls.

- Yes: 01
- No: 02
- Neither: 03
APPENDIX I

M54 Symbols of nations (I)
Note any appearance of national symbols such as flags, emblems, singing of anthems.

Great Britain 01
England 02
Scotland 03
Ireland 04
Wales 05
Spain 06
France 07
Germany 08
Switzerland 09
Netherlands 10
Bulgaria 11
Romania 12
Czech Republic 13
Italy 14
Russia 15
Denmark 16
Portugal 17
Turkey 18
Croatia 19
Europe 20
Other (specify) 21

M55 Symbols of nations (II)
Note any ‘typical’ images of nations that are shown such as the ‘British’ bulldog. Encode the symbol first followed by the nation referred to (the code for the nation should be taken from those listed in M54)

Food and drinks 01.00
Landscape 02.00
Clothes/national costume 03.00
Architecture 04.00
Cultural traditions/pageants/festivals 05.00

M56 Other symbols of nations/regions/continents
Note any other symbols of nations found.
SPORT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

CODESHEET FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRINT MEDIA

For exclusive use with the 1995 Rugby World Cup
and the 1996 European Football Championships

Joseph Maguire, Jason Tuck, Emma Poulton ©
APPENDIX 2

LEVEL 1: COPY

(M01: Serial no.)

(M02: Date of copy)

(M03: Day)

(M04: Newspaper)

(M05: Pages I)

(M06: Pages II)

(M07: Pages III)

(M08: Articles)

(M09: Illustrations)

(M10: Specific Articles)

(M11: Specific Illustrations)

Additional remarks:
APPENDIX 2

LEVEL 2: ARTICLE

(M12: Serial no.) (Columns)

(M13: Article no.)

(M14:)

(M15: Position) (M15: Page no.)

(M16: Reference) (M16: Gender)

M16: Additional remarks on reference of article:

Author: Martin Samuel (football writer).

M17: Additional remarks on journalistic style:

The article includes an interview with Bryan Robson, a former England captain, currently part of England's coaching team.
APPENDIX 2

M18: Further remarks on leading character:

(M19: Evaluation I)

(M19: Evaluation II)

(M20: Main theme)

(M20: Sub-theme I)

(M20: Sub-theme II)

(M20: Sub-theme III)

M20: Specification/Further themes:

The article's headline reads: 'I loved to hammer the Scots: it is the Greatest Feeling in the World'. This is a quote from Robson; the article centres on his memories of England-Scotland matches, in light of the forthcoming fixture.
M21: Examples of the use of personal pronouns:

1) 'They [the Scots] knew he [Carnegie] was top man.'

2) 'We have excellent quality in our squad.'

3) 'We want commitment and endeavour but also coolness and calmness from our lads.'
**APPENDIX 2**

(M22: Play on words)

**M22: Examples of the use of a play on words:**

1) ........................................................................................................................................

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2) ........................................................................................................................................

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3) ........................................................................................................................................

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M23: Examples of the use of other metaphors:

1) .............................................................................................................................................

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2) .............................................................................................................................................

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3) .............................................................................................................................................

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M24: Examples of the use of foreign words:

1) 'Och nae... as they... says over the border'

2)

3)
(M25: Exaggeration)

M25: Examples of the use of exaggeration:

1) ................................................................................................................................................
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2) ................................................................................................................................................
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3) ................................................................................................................................................
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(M26: Familiarism/nicknames)

M26: Examples of the use of familiarism/nicknames:

1) Lobbo (bryan robinson) x 3

2) Gazza (paul gascoigne) x 2

3) Psycho (stuart learse) x 2
M27: Examples of the use of caricature/demeaning language:

1) ................................................................................................................................................
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2) ................................................................................................................................................
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3) ................................................................................................................................................
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M28: Examples of the use of emotive language:

1) "Stuart Pearce is a Patriot Missile."
   
2) 
   
3) 

(M28: Emotive language)
### M29: Examples of the use of narcissism:

1.

2.

3.
**APPENDIX 2**

(M30: Vocabulary of war/aggressive language)

M30: Examples of the use of the vocabulary of war/aggressive language:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>'Battle of Britain'</td>
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<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>'As hostilities ceased on May 27, 1989, only three England players knew the full heat of the battle between the oldest enemies.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>'England's young brains'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>We refer to Cannae (see over page)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M31: Examples of references to nationalistic sentiments/nationalism:

1) "My favourite part of my England v. Scotland game was when the Scottish ....
   supporters used to boo you when you were on the ball. Then there was silence at Hampden ...
   talk when you got a goal - that was when you knew you had done a really good job.' ...

2) "I got fed up with hearing about the passions of the Scots, Welsh and Irish as ...
   if we don't care, I can assure you there is no danger of our lads not being ...
   up for it.'

3) "The real heads on your shoulders that matter believe will be crucial ...
   rather than hitting the field with a bullying attitude. Now Hampden and ...
   Hampden Park, although of course it will be a blood and thunder affair.'

377
APPENDIX 2

(M32: National stereotypes)

M32: Examples of references to national stereotypes:

1) ‘fellas in skirts’ (i.e. kits)

2) .................................................................

3) .................................................................

378
M33: Examples of references to national symbols:

1) "Tara's horde" / "Tara's Army"  

2) "England's young horse will be wearing the three lions with pride"  

3) "fellas in shirts" (i.e. kilts)
APPENDIX 2

(M34: Invented traditions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M34: Examples of references to invented traditions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
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<td>....................................................................</td>
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<td>3)</td>
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<td>....................................................................</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
M35: Examples of references to individual/social identity and habitus:

1) "As hostilities ceased on May 27, 1989, only three England players............
   .... knew the full heat of the battle between the oldest enemies."
   ....

2) ............................................................
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3) ............................................................
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(M36: Nostalgia)

M36: Examples of references to nostalgia:

1) "I can remember scoring twice in the 2-0 victory at Wembley in 1983... and the last game... a 2-0 victory at their place in 1989. That's what it's all about."

2) ........................................................ I ................................ I .................................................... I

3) ........................................................ I ................................ I .................................................... I

382
### M37: Examples of references to Europeanisation/globalisation:

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APPENDIX 2

(M38: European regionalism)

M38: Examples of references to European regionalism:

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2) .................................................................
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384
### M39: Examples of the use of gender stereotypes:

1) **'felles in skirts'**

2) 

3) 

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(M39: Gender stereotypes)
APPENDIX 2

M40: Examples of references to hyper-masculinity:

1) "It takes a special sort of man to take on the Taliban Army and win."

2) .................................................................................................................................

3) .................................................................................................................................
M41: Examples of positive references to feminine values:

1) ................................................................................................................................................
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2) ................................................................................................................................................
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M42: Examples of references to the family:

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APPENDIX 2

(M43: Racism/ethnicity)

M43: Examples of the use of racism/ethnicity:

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3)

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APPENDIX 2

LEVEL 3: ILLUSTRATION

M46: Additional remarks on type of illustration:

Photograph of Bryan Robson.

M49: Further remarks on leading character:

APPENDIX 2

(M50: Evaluation)

(M51: Main theme)
(M51: Sub-theme I)
(M51: Sub-theme II)
(M51: Sub-theme III)

(M51: Further themes:

(M52: Positive emphasis)
(M53: Negative emphasis)
APPENDIX 2

M54: Additional remarks on symbols of nations I:

Robson is wearing an England shirt, so the 3 lions emblem is evident.

M55: Additional remarks on symbols of nations II:


M56: Other symbols of nations:
