

## NATIONALISM AND SPORT

### **Abstract:**

As Benedict Anderson noted, national communities have to be actively created through the imagination. The members of a national community need to recognise their special and exclusive bond to each other. Anderson cited the importance of print capitalism to the emergence of national communities in the nineteenth century. His argument is compelling but there are other important rituals which are critical to the creation of national solidarities. Sport is one of these. Through the sporting spectacle, not only can national communities be recognised but the transformation of these solidarities can also be traced. In the current era, under the pressure of globalisation, the nation is undergoing profound change. Through the analysis of football – and particularly the recent European Championships in Portugal – this chapter examines the gradual emergence of a re-negotiated national identity in England. Although focussing on a specific empirical example, this chapter is intended to illuminate processes which are occurring more widely.

### **Introduction: June 2004. England.**

In June 2004, the European Championships were played in Portugal. England had qualified for the competition earlier in the year and popular hopes were extremely high that England could win this tournament, the first since the World Cup of 1966. As anticipation for the tournament gathered in May, small Cross of St George flags, flying from small plastic attachments, started to appear on car roofs. The flag fluttered patriotically as the fans inside drove proudly across England. Their numbers swelled to reach a climax during the

tournament itself - and England's disappointing performance in it. By June, it was impossible to undertake a journey of any length in England without seeing Cross of St George's waving furiously from a passing car. Perhaps symbolically, the plastic attachments which held the flags onto the cars broke regularly and, during the tournament, England's roads were littered with white and red flags, muddied and ripped as they were routinely run over by the wheels of other passing cars. Even after the end of the tournament throughout July and into August, the odd tattered and faded flag could still be seen flying hopefully. For these brief summer months, these flags were a powerful statement of national pride and solidarity. These car-borne flags symbolised the England team and affirmed the pride which was embodied by the three lions on the England team shirt. Interestingly, they were not limited to the masculine fans from the fragmented working class, which had been football's central audience up to the 1990s, but were affixed to the cars of professional groups, including those of women. In every city – and in every area of every city – the flags were ubiquitous. This intense public interest in the England team was particularly noticeable given the nature of the tournament. Although the World Cup had routinely attracted the interest of those who did not follow the club game and England's victory in 1966 had been the spark of national celebration, the European Championship was a tournament which had attracted only limited public interest in England. Indeed, even the European Championship of 1992 inspired circumscribed public interest. The car flags of 2004 demonstrated the new position of football in English social life. In England, football has become a shared public ritual which is central to popular imagination across the social hierarchy. Even a tournament of traditionally moderate attraction now inspires an intense expression of national sentiment. Yet, just as football now attracts a different kind of audience than had previously been the case, the nationalism which this audience

espoused had also undergone transition. The England flags which fluttered from cars throughout June 2004 were certainly trivial gestures of enthusiasm but they marked out a reformed national community in response to the new flows of transnational capital. These flags denoted the outline of a new form of nationalism in England.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the way that the transformation of English nationalism can be plotted through the activities of football fans. England and, indeed, the summer months of 2004 are the exclusive focus of attention. Although the peculiarities of English nationalism must be recognised, there are manifest advantages in concentrating on a single case when considering nationalism. A detailed, ideographic approach illuminates the precise social processes by which social groups imagine themselves as national communities. In this way, a detailed empirical focus can actually speak to general theoretical issues more presciently than a sweeping, abstract approach. This is especially the case since national communities emerge out of everyday face-to-face relations. Moreover, once the precise processes are identified in relation to the English nationalism, they can be mapped onto other national communities and the way fans in those countries express themselves through sport. In this way, the differentiated responses of national communities and the alternative forms which they have adopted in the face of new conditions can be identified. At the same time, the underlying processes of change can also be recognised. Thus, the national communities which are imagined by football fans across the world are also changing. Like England, these imagined communities are undergoing a dual process of change: they are becoming simultaneously more local and more transnational. This chapter only briefly hints at how other national communities are changing but the example of England should provide a model for tracking these wider changes.

## **Theorising the Nation**

In his now seminal work on nationalism, Benedict Anderson argued that nations were ‘imagined communities’. By this he did not mean that nations were mythical or false communities which did not really exist. On the contrary, nations are among the most real and powerful form of social group in the modern world. For Anderson, the concept of ‘imagined community’ pointed to the process by which a nation – and indeed any social group – comes into being. In order for a nation to exist, its members must recognise their common bond to each other. They must understand that they share a special relationship which gives them certain shared interests on the basis of which they will commit themselves to common courses of action. They must imagine a special duty to each other on the basis of which they subsequently act. The act of creating a nation is then an act of understanding – or imagination – but once humans recognise their membership of a special national community, this group is real. It is important to recognise that, while human imagination or understanding is critical to the creation of national communities, imagination alone is not enough. In order for national communities to emerge, the members of these communities need to interact with each other on a regular basis. More particularly, they need to interact with each other as a specifically national community. Although Anderson cites neither, his argument accords almost exactly with the claims of Weber and Durkheim. Weber famously claimed that in order for a social group to come into being, its members had to engage in exclusive social interaction with no extrinsic purpose (1968). To form a group, individuals had to gather in exclusive moments to affirm their special relationship to each other. Durkheim’s analysis of aboriginal religion made a parallel argument. For aboriginal clans to exist, the members of these tribes had to gather

periodically and affirming their special bond of unity to each other ecstatically. The recognition of the group requires actual practices and aboveall, powerful and exclusive social interaction between members of the group.

Although less dramatic, Anderson describes a daily ritual as an exclusive period of interaction which has been critical to the creation of imagined national communities. Each morning the members of a nation have opened the same newspaper over their breakfast and this geographically diverse ritual has unified the nation around the key issues which confront it. The newspaper has created common understandings and shared interests which have unified members of a national community even though they have never nor will ever meet. Of course, although the majority of individuals in a national community will never meet, each is embedded in a web of social relations interlocked with others all employing the newspaper as a shared resource and all discussing the newspaper with each other during the day to confirm communal understandings of it. The newspaper becomes a common symbol employed across a myriad of interminable interactions which unify individuals within particular groups. Each group is, in turn, interconnected with others into broad social networks; families and neighbours are simultaneously embedded in professional groups or groups unified around forms of leisure activity. Consequently, by means of these interconnections, the newspaper becomes a shared resource across a very wide social network as individuals interact with others in other networks who in turn interact with others. Eventually, a broad set of understandings is established across an entire nation and continually re-established every day through a myriad of apparently trivial interactions. 'Interaction rituals' are, in fact, the basis of imagined communities. Apparently trivial everyday, face-to-face encounters are critical to the creation and maintenance of national communities. Only insofar as these webs of relations continue to affirm a sense of common

destiny does the nation persist. Members of a national must be continually – albeit briefly - reminded of their special relationship to one another.

Sport is sociologically important to nationalism because it constitutes a charged interaction ritual out of which imagined national communities arise. Certainly, sport is not the only, nor the most important, ritual which affirms the myriad networks which constitute a nation, but it is among the most striking in contemporary society. The England flags which appeared on cars before and during the European Championships of 2004 become socially significant in the light of Anderson's discussion of nationalism. These flags constitute an important interaction ritual which expresses and affirms the idea of England as a national community in the twenty-first century. In placing a flag on their car, English people announced their support of the English team but this statement was not individualistic, aimed at expressing merely personal pride. It was directed in the first instance at other, mostly anonymous, people past whom these flag-bearers drove and was aimed at communicating a sense of solidarity with them. Those who put a flag on their car knew that others would understand the meaning of this symbol and respond to it in the appropriate way. This flag focused communal attention on the English football team and expressed the shared hopes which the English had for them. In the weeks before and during the tournament, a previously meaningless encounter with another car driver became a shared act of solidarity; it became an interaction ritual. The merely profane encounter was transformed into a sacred, though brief, communion. As cars drove past each other, eyes would turn to the others' flag and each person would be communally oriented to a single idea; England. Like Anderson's newspaper readings, the unconscionable myriad of trivial flag encounters created a fluid and complex network which encompassed England and which created an actual social reality; a recognisable social community, appealing to

millions of individuals, who were all communally oriented to the same end and understood themselves to be English.

In the current era, as the flows of global capital subvert national boundaries, promoting uneven development, and transforming even the most intimate relations, new social groups are emerging while other groups – long established – are having to re-negotiate themselves. Nations are currently being re-invented and re-imagined in the face of new economic pressures to which social groups are being submitted. In his work on changing forms of identity, Appadurai has emphasised the increasing significance of the locale. The locale – the local city or region – has become a means by which corporate capital has disguised its increasingly anonymous and globalised operations. Appadurai overstates the de-territorialisation of capital but his argument about the growing importance of the locale is relevant to contemporary discussions about nationalism. Nationalism is changing in the face of global pressures and is, perhaps ironically, becoming more local in response to these external pressures. Under the uneven pressure of globalisation, formerly unified national identities have been increasingly fissured by new regionalised nationalities (Keating 1988; Jenkins and Sofos 1996). In Europe today, the transition of national communities is particularly obvious in the appearance of new forms of national groupings in Central and Eastern Europe as states fail, most obviously in the former Yugoslavia (Kaldor 1999). However, it is an error to believe that national communities are undergoing change only in those areas where there has been a radical collapse of the state. The same forces of globalisation which has led to the collapse of Yugoslavia are also transforming apparently stable nations. Nations which centralised during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries like Italy and Spain are beginning to de-centralise once and again and even a nation like Britain which has been unified since 1707 is undergoing a degree of

fragmentation. New forms of solidarities – new ‘national’ communities - are emerging in Europe, especially in those dynamic regions which have been constrained by backward or exploiting nation-states such as north-western Italy (see Mingione, 1993), Catalonia or Scotland. The rise of these new communities is predicated on the belief that the system of regulation provided by the nation-state has hamstrung a region’s current participation in the global economy (Sheridan, 1995; Sznajder, 1995). As global forces are channelled towards different regions, former national solidarities begin to have less importance in certain contexts as re-invented notions of the nation have come to the fore.

In this historic moment, it has been relatively easy for those dis-advantaged regions to construct a new identity for themselves. Emergent national communities like Scotland and Wales constitute themselves in opposition to an oppressive and colonizing England. They draw on the history of their resistance to the centralizing authority of the English monarchy and state. For the English, it is more difficult to define itself in this era (Nairn, 1981). England’s identity was based specifically on the Union which the English created through military conquest. English identity was consequently indivisible from British identity. The English defined themselves precisely by being British and dominating an island empire, comprising Scotland, Wales and Ireland. As Britain is breaking up under the force of global markets into its constituent and re-emergent national communities, England’s national identity has become deeply problematic for, unlike Scotland, Wales and Ireland, there is no obvious identity which the English should adopt. Historically, English national identity was defined by ironically not being English; it was a pride in Britain. Now thrown back on itself, it is difficult for the English to establish an identity for themselves since their history up to this point has always been a story of their role in the creation of Britain. In his great novel, *A Man Without Qualities*, Robert Musil (1995) noted that on the

eve of the First World War, Austria faced the same dilemma. Austria was defined by being the ruler of the Austro-Hungarian empire. It was therefore defined ironically by not being itself but in consisting of other nations. Its identity was hollow, consisting only of otherness which it could not claim as its own. Musil exposes this crisis of identity with the parody of the Parallel Campaign. The Campaign was intended to organize celebrations for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Emperor Josef in 1918, in response to Germany's plans to have a jubilee to celebrate Emperor Wilhelm II's 30<sup>th</sup> jubilee. However, although the committee is initially inspired by 'the Great Idea', it is unable to identify a single characteristic which defines Austrian identity. Its celebration of Austria is entirely vacuous.

This sense of the Austro-Hungarian states was so oddly put together that it must seem almost hopeless to explain it to anyone who has not experienced it himself. It did not consist of an Austrian part and a Hungarian part that, as one might expect, complemented each other, but of a whole and a part; that is, of a Hungarian and an Austro-Hungarian sense of statehood, the latter to be found in Austria, which in a sense left the Austrian sense of statehood with no country of its own. The Austrian existed only in Hungary and there as an object of dislike; at home he called himself a national of the kingdoms and lands of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as represented in the Imperial Council, meaning that he was an Austrian plus a Hungarian minus a Hungarian; and he did this not with enthusiasm but only for the sake of a concept that was repugnant to him because he could bear the Hungarian as little as they could bear him, which added still another complication to the whole combination. (Musil 1995: 180)

The current search for English identity (Scruton 2000; Paxman 1999) resonates with Musil's parody – albeit less amusingly. Like Austria, England must re-invent itself as its historic conflation with Britain is becoming increasingly problematic. English identity must be defined against Scottish, Welsh and Irish identity when it was once defined precisely as the domination and incorporation of these communities. The concept of Britain has become a problematic solidarity in the 1990s. Britain is not an irrelevance at the turn of the millennium, but the conflation of England, Scotland, Wales and (more problematically) Northern Ireland is now a matter of dispute. The novel use of England flags during the

2004 European Championship constitutes a new interaction ritual in which English people strive to constitute themselves as a distinctive national community.

Global forces are promoting the development of new kinds of national communities. New kinds of social solidarities are appearing across the world under the name of nationalism. Although geographically differentiated, these new nationalisms involve two fundamental processes. National communities are becoming more local. The nations which were established from the end of the nineteenth century are contracting, as regions within them devolve from the centralised state authority. They are concentrating onto a more geographically circumscribed, core group. Simultaneously, emergent national communities are becoming more transnational. The emergent contracted national groupings – or the new nations based on once repressed ethnic groups and regions – employ a much wider criteria of membership; the nation expands globally across its own borders which are themselves increasingly penetrated by economic traffic and population movements. Many people are included in the new localised national communities who did not once qualify as nationals. In the globalised world, the nation is becoming more local and more transnational. It is ironically both contracting and concentrating while also expanding and diversifying. These processes of localisation and transnationalisation are evident in the attempts of the English to constitute themselves as a new national community in the face of new global pressures. The European Championship of 2004 provides a convenient focus through which the re-invention of English nationalism can be observed.

### **The New Localism**

Before the 1990s, travelling England fans' preferred flag for display in the ground was the Union Jack. Union Jack flags, often with the name of the local club imprinted horizontally,

were draped over hoardings, barriers and fences in support of the team. In the now famous Turin World Cup semi-final against Germany in 1990, in which England were eventually eliminated on penalties, the England fans in the ground chiefly waved Union Jack flags, with only a few Cross of St George flags in evidence. In the course of the 1990s, although the Union Jack is still sometimes employed, England fans have increasingly preferred to use the Cross of St George. The Union Jack has become the minority, less favoured flag. Unlike the Union Jack, this flag denotes a specifically English identity. The St George's Cross fused with the Scottish Cross of St Andrew to create the Union Jack but alone it stands exclusively for England; a national community without its own state. The use of England car flags reflects the increasing symbolic weight which is being attached to the Cross of St George and to England itself.

It is interesting that English football strips have also reflected this growth of distinctive English identity. Since the first England international match against Scotland in 1872, England football teams have traditionally played in white with blue shorts and white socks. The choice of white seems to have been a direct response to the fact that Scotland chose dark blue – the colour of the Cross of St Andrew's Flag – as their shirt colour. Scotland wore white shorts and blue socks. England, therefore, seemed to select white on the basis that it was the matching opposite of Scotland's colours. In the 1930s, a red away strip was introduced and red has remained England's usual alternative colour, although blue has occasionally also been used in the late 1950s and early 1960s and for the World Cup of 1970. The World Cup winning team of 1966 famously played in red because West Germany also played in white. Red and white have remained the favoured colours for England up to the present. However, there has been a significant change in the design of the shirt. In particular, the secondary shirt colours have changed notably in the last decade.

From 1974 until 1980s, English football strips, produced by a sport company called Admiral, were predominately white but the subordinate colourings, around the shoulder and chest, were blue and red. Alternatively, on the red England shirt wore in the early 1980s, the trimming was white and blue. In this way, the football shirt referenced the red, white and blue Union Jack as a common symbol. The strips made an important symbolic point. They represented a conflation of English and British identity which was unproblematic at the time. For the English at that time, England and Britain were synonymous; England national identity founded on an idea of Britain as unified state.

In 1984, the sports manufacturer, Umbro, won the contract for the England strip which it retains to this day. Reflecting the Admiral design, until the late 1990s, Umbro shirts were white, with only a small blue and sometimes blue and red collar, referencing the Union Jack – but only minimally. Significantly, from 1997, the Umbro design changed. Although, red and blue strips were inserted on the flanks in apparently continuing reference to the Union Jack, a small but prominent Cross of St George flag appeared on the nape of the shirt, effectively in the middle of the players' chests

(<http://www.EnglandFootballOnline.com/TeamUnif/Unif.html>). In later shirts, the Cross of St George, first displayed on the 1997 shirt, has become even more central. For instance, in 2001 Umbro launched their new England strip on St George's Day itself and the shirt itself made an explicit reference to the English saint. A bold red line ran down the left hand side of the shirt (over the players' hearts) in a clear reference to the Cross of St George. From 2003, a new England white strip was introduced and the Cross of St George theme persists. The red line, representing the cross, now runs across the shoulders. Similarly, the new red away strip introduced in 2004 repeats the earlier design. A Cross of St George flag was prominently displayed on each shoulder while a third cross was sewn into the lining of the

shirt below the neck-line so it was visible when the shirt was not being worn. In these new England Umbro designs, the white shorts have similarly referenced the Cross of St George by featuring a red stripe. England players no longer play in the Union Jack as they had done in the 1970s and 1980s but in the exclusively English Cross of St George. The shirt symbolises the transformation of English national identity in the era of globalisation.

Significantly, the use of the St George Cross seems to accord with public self-understandings and identities. The Umbro shirt design has been very successful and sales of the Cross of St George design have been substantial. For instance, the new red away strip, released on 26 March 2002, has been bought by four times as many fans in three months as the previous away shirt in its entire two-year life span and outselling the England home shirt which was launched in April 2001 (<http://www.umbro.com/corporate/130602.htm>). The St George Cross design is manifestly attractive to England fans, reflecting their own sense of identity and the way they understand themselves as England fans. The new England shirt design symbolise changes in national affiliation but Umbro's marketing strategy also usefully illustrates how the processes of globalisation encourage the formation of new national communities.

In his work on globalisation and identity, Appadurai identifies an important process. The operations of increasingly transnational companies do not mean the end of the locale. On the contrary, the competitive global market promotes and supports increasing mobilisation and identification at the locale. The England football team represents exactly this process. Since the 1980s, sport has become an essential commodity for the media and other sponsoring interests to expand their markets and sustain their profits in an increasingly competitive global economy. In the case of England, the expression of a new national identity is directly in the interests of these corporations. Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB

television network, *The Times* and *The Sun* newspapers (which are part of his News International conglomerate) have been central to this process. BSkyB was the product of a merger in 1990 between Murdoch's Sky Television and British Satellite Broadcasting and BSkyB's rise to national and increasingly transnational dominance is primarily due to its monopoly of the rights to Premier League football from the first contract in 1993 to the current date (see Chippendale and Franks 1992; King 1998). Murdoch's media corporations have promoted English football to a position of cultural dominance which it has never experienced before. As Murdoch has himself emphasised: 'Sport absolutely overpowers film and everything else in the entertainment genre [and] football, of all sports, is number one' (Rupert Murdoch cited in Guest and Law 1997: 24). Sport is then, to use Murdoch's term, a 'battering ram' by which new networks can break into and indeed create new markets (Harveson, *Financial Times*, 16 October 1996). In England, the global competition between emergent transnational corporations like Murdoch's News International has promoted football and stimulated the development of re-invented local and national communities around this transformed ritual. The promotion of new national identities by multinational corporations is recognised explicitly by these companies themselves. Martin Prothero, Head of Marketing and International at Umbro International conveniently demonstrates the point: 'A combination of a fantastic product design and value for money pricing, allied to England's success on the field, has led to vast numbers of fans wanting to show their support by wearing our England products. Let's hope the team can keep going in the World Cup and generate even more excitement and support around the country!' (<http://www.umbro.com/corporate/130602.htm>). England success – and the nationalist solidarity which that success would stimulate – is directly in the interests of Umbro. The competitive global economy does not mean the end of nationalism. On the contrary, the

competition between multinationals promotes national solidarities and identities in new localised forms. Umbro's new England shirts symbolises the transformation of English national identity in the era of globalisation. As Great Britain has been compromised by global economic pressures, it has been necessary for English people to express a new distinctively English national identity.

The emergence of a new English identity is a response to global economic forces which have undermined a unified British identity. The development of a new English identity has been a positive response to globalisation. Yet, this is only one side of the current process. Emergent social groups are not only promoted by globalisation – they are also threatened by these forces. New social groups emerge as a means of collectively resisting the uneven development initiated by globalisation. Appadurai has called this resistance which often takes the form of violence as the 'ugly face' (Appadurai 1996: 42). There is an ugly side to new English nationalism which attempts to resist the threat posed by the new power of commercial forces. In England, this resistance of and resentment of global forces has been consistently focused on a single football player: David Beckham. He is seen to represent the very commercial forces which have both brought the new English community into existence but which have also threatened its world status. For most of the time when he was a Manchester United player, David Beckham was subjected to very serious abuse, focusing specifically on his - and his wife's - financial status. He was explicitly seen as a product of threatening corporate forces. The abuse he received was not limited only to when Beckham played for United but was a common occurrence at England games when he was supposedly representing the nation. Thus, in the important qualifying game against Finland on 24 March 2001 which was played at Anfield, a significant portion of the previews of the game focussed on the issue of whether Beckham, as captain, would

be barracked by England fans. In 2002, when Beckham ensured England's qualification for the World Cup, almost single-handedly, the abuse against him declined. However, his move to Real Madrid in 2003 and his decline in playing form for England has once again stimulated increasing antipathy towards him by England fans. Once again, the accusations against him highlight his commercial corruption. His poor form is not explained in sporting terms, it is not the product of injury or fatigue, it is specifically a result of his lack of pride in England. He has played poorly for England over the last two years because he is more concerned with money, sponsorship and the rankly commercial Real Madrid than with his nation. He is seen as a representative of global corporate forces and is, therefore, a danger to national integrity. Illustrating his corrupting commercial influence, a story was circulated among and deplored by England fans that David Beckham had asked that England wear all white the colours of his new club, Real Madrid, in his first match in England after his transfer from Manchester United, and the Football Association cravenly acceded to his request (<http://www.EnglandFootballOnline.com/TeamUnif/Unif.html>). It is unclear whether this story is true but it demonstrates that fans believe that Beckham represents a corrupting commercial presence to England. It is instructive to compare Beckham's treatment by England fans with Kevin Keegan in the late 1970s. As a player, Keegan was at least as successful an international star as Beckham and he also benefited commercially from football. He became extremely wealthy and like Beckham he made a high profile move abroad – to SV Hamburg – on a lucrative contract. There is little doubt that Keegan was as interested in financial remuneration as Beckham. Nevertheless, his loyalty to England was never questioned and, especially in an era of very poor England teams, he was supported by the fans as a figurehead. In the current globalised era, Beckham, unlike Keegan, is widely looked upon with suspicion even though there is no evidence that he is any less

committed to England on the field than Keegan was in the 1970s. In a globalised context, certain players, like Beckham, represent those threatening forces which demand the formation of new national communities. In the face of new global forces, new forms of localized national identity are emerging in new kinds of public rituals. In England, football – and especially the support of the national team – has become the vehicle of the re-invention of the English national community.

### **Transnationalism**

In the ritual of football, the localisation of national identity is evident. However, this localisation involves a further element. As nations concentrate, they simultaneously expand globally, seeking support and members from populations in other parts of the world. These localised nations consist paradoxically of increasingly diverse population groupings. This dialectic is reflected in sport, in general, and in football, in particular. In 1966, England won the World Cup with a team which was socially extremely homogeneous. It consisted of white players all of whom came from urban, working class backgrounds, and all of whom played exclusively for English professional clubs: Banks (Leicester), Cohen (Fulham), Wilson (Everton), Stiles (Manchester United), Jack Charlton (Leeds), Moore (West Ham), Peters (West Ham United), Ball (Blackpool), Hunt (Liverpool Football Club), Bobby Charlton (Manchester United), Hurst (West Ham United). They were from England and played in England. Since that time the demographic basis of the national team has changed. In particular, reflecting widespread immigration into Britain from the 1950s, the England team which lost to Portugal in the semi-final of Euro 2004 featured four black players (James, Campbell, Cole and Vassell). In addition, although England football professionals migrate less than their European counterparts, the defeated Euro 2004 side

included two notable émigrés. David Beckham and Owen Hargreaves played for at Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, respectively. In addition, the England internationals, Michael Owen and Jonathon Woodgate transferred to Real Madrid in the summer after Euro 2004. Owen Hargreaves is especially interesting because he has never played in England and he is Canadian by birth and therefore would not have qualified to play for England in the past. He represents the transnationalisation at its extreme; he has virtually no concrete connection to England. There is further evidence of this process of transnationalisation. Until 1999, England had always been managed by an Englishman and indeed, it would have been regarded as inappropriate for the national team to be managed by anyone other than a national. In the face of increased international competition, these nationalist principles have been compromised. As a result of poor performances under a series of English managers throughout the 1990s culminating with Kevin Keegan, the Football Association prioritised results over national purity appointing the Swede, Sven Goran Eriksson, in January 2001. Interestingly, Eriksson had never coached even an English club side but came to the attention of the FA due to his success over in fifteen year period in international club football, including recent successes at the Italian club Lazio. Significantly, there was initially intense opposition from some fans and from certain elements of the press and on his arrival at FA headquarters in London, a Union Jack clad individual protested with a banner which read 'FA – Hang your heads in shame' (Winter 12 January 2001). It was significant that the fan wore a Union Jack, representing an increasingly anachronistic notion of nationalism. He represented an increasingly outmoded British nationalism whose exclusiveness undermined national competitiveness in a globalised era. The appointment of Eriksson as a manager represented a transnationalisation of the England team. In the face of new pressures, The Football

Association sought to exploit the potential of the global market to promote the national team, seeking new alliances irrespective of traditional solidarities and cultural boundaries.

Under Kevin Keegan, in particular, England employed crude tactics which reflected the insular national style of fast and aggressive rather than skilful football. Keegan also favoured older players most of whom had become professionals in the 1980s before the deregulation and globalisation of the game. These players were educated in increasingly anachronistic styles of English professionalism. Although Eriksson's period as England manager has not been without its problems and England still fail to reach the level of the best international teams, Eriksson has employed young England players; his first action as manager was to retire the old players of Keegan's regime. He also greatly improved the tactics of the England team. Under Keegan, in particular, England had played like a mediocre British club side, playing aggressively but unskilfully. They were poor at keeping possession or at developing attacks preferring an uncerebral long-ball game. Under Eriksson, England still lack sufficient players of international quality to win an international tournament but they are a more professional and more tactically astute team than they were throughout the 1990s under Graham Taylor, Terry Venables, Glenn Hoddle and Kevin Keegan. England have begun to adopt a style of play which accords more closely with the styles employed by other international teams. England are a more transnational team both in terms of players and style of play.

The process of transnationalisation is demonstrated by other national teams. Indeed, other teams have transnationalised more radically and far more successfully than England. France is primary among these. While the French national league is extremely weak due to now obsolete business structures, the national team was very successful in the late 1990s and early 2000s, winning the World Cup in 1998 and the European Championship in 2000.

France's eventual victory in Euro 2000 and their earlier success in the World Cup Final in 1998 highlights the way in which transnationalisation has ironically strengthened the national team. A notable feature of the French team was how many players were drawn from France's former colonies, including one of the world's greatest players, Zinedine Zidane of Algerian descent. While Jean Marie Le Pen's National Front rejected the national team for its ethnically diverse composition, the team was celebrated in France as a symbol of social diversity, representing a multicultural nation. The definition of who is part of a nation has changed and in this case it has broadened to include individuals who would not once have been considered as genuine French nationals. The French team is also dispersed geographically with few players having any tie to French clubs. Of the 22 players in France's squad for the World Cup of 1998, 15 played in leagues outside France and the proportion of the squad playing outside France increased even further by 2000 (Mignon 2000: 232). Other national football teams have also expanded the pool of players once considered illegible. This is a strategy particularly popular with weaker footballing nations. Thus, under Jack Charlton, the English World Cup winner, selected to manage the Irish team on the same competitive grounds that Eriksson was later chosen as English manager, the Irish Republic played English players who tenuously qualified for the Irish team by the possession of a single grandparent of Irish birth, such as Andy Townsend and Tony Cascarino. National teams have effectively transnationalised to include individuals who were not once part of the nation. Echoing the Football Associations decision to employ Eriksson, there has been a developing trend in world football for national teams to be coached by foreign managers. Scotland hired the famous German coach Berti Vogts while South Korea employed the Dutch coach Guus Hiddink for the 2002 World Cup who led them to the semi-finals of that competition. The European Championships of 2004 were

themselves won by Greece, coached by a German, Otto Rehagel.<sup>1</sup> The economic pressures of globalisation are forcing national institutions to develop new strategies which drive them beyond established national borders. National institutions expand their operations in the face of increased global competition and they draw upon new transnational connections to maximise their competitiveness.

## **Conclusion**

Like the nation-state, nationalism is changing not dying. Globalisation engenders uneven development within national communities so that there is increasing disparities of economic wealth and interest between cities and regions which were regulated in the past by an overarching state. Certainly, in the twentieth century, state regulation did not destroy all regional inequality but through programmes of welfare and subsidy, it limited the worst of the effects of this internal hierarchy. In the light of global economic forces, nation-states have been unable to mitigate against the effects of uneven development and the nation-state is being compromised internally and externally. Externally, the borders of the nation-state is becoming more porous as states draw into ever closer intergovernmental alliances with other states, pooling and sharing sovereignty, and new flows of immigrants and capital subvert boundaries. Internally, nations are fissuring in the face of economic pressure which promote the independence of cities and regions. The state remains a critical political institution and nations remain primary social communities. Yet, both state and nation are

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<sup>1</sup> The process is not confined to football. Britain's Olympic rowing team employed Jurgen Grobber who had coached the East German rowing team to successive Olympic gold medals since 1972 while the English cricket team is coached by an Australian, Duncan Fletcher. In other sports, very broad definitions of national identity have been applied into determining whether an athlete has qualifies for national selection. The British Olympic athletics team included an American, Maliki David, who was part of the men's relay team which eventually beat the American team to the gold medal. At the same time, the tennis player, Greg Rusedski, and the world champion boxer, Lennox Lewis, are both Canadians who have sought to exploit their tenuous familial links to Britain into order to maximise their market potential.

undergoing profound transformation. In particular, although the nation appeals to an unbroken past and therefore appears as a primordial solidarity which has never changed, national communities are, in fact undergoing, radical transformation as they respond to new pressures and threats. Nations are becoming new kinds of solidarities, including those who were once excluded and vice versa. In the name of putatively timeless nationalism, new national communities, like the English, the Scottish, the Welsh, the Catalan or the Lombardian are emerging.

The transformation of the nation-state and nationalism can be traced through almost any social activity. Not unreasonably, it has been traditional to trace these changes through formal political activities and institutions. Yet, the transformation of the nation today can be equally well identified through informal social activities and above all with an activity like sport, even though sport appears otiose to the grand sweep of human history. Yet, in the ritual of sport, humans create and sustain the social groups of which they are part and consequently in this ritual the contours of national communities are thrown into relief. The recent and continuing transformation of sport and of European football, in particular, is especially striking in this regard for, there, in microcosm, the outlines of new kinds of national communities can be seen. European football today demonstrates the enduring importance of the nation as a basis of social solidarity and mobilisation but it also reveals quite radical changes to the nation as a community. The nation has been compromised by new forms of local identity promoted by global forces. In the world of sport, the new solidarities to which fans appeal provide a rich and pre-emptive insight into the new geography of nations and nationalism.

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