

Team Europe: How Sports Can Be Used to Increase Support for the European Union and Further the Process of European Integration

Andrew Kaplan, Xavier University '14

The question of European identity has long interested scholars. Contrary to expectations, the strengthening of economic ties among European nations has not led to greater political and cultural cohesion and a solidified European identity. One potential solution to the problem of European disunity is to use football (what Americans call soccer) to bring people together and encourage the development of a shared European identity. In this paper, I propose that Brussels combine the national teams of the member states into one team for the Olympics, the FIFA World Cup and other international competitions. The creation of a single European sports team would bring middle and lower class citizens into the fold of "European-ness."

Since the process of integrating Europe began, many leading intellectuals saw that the construction of a European identity would be problematic. The historical narratives of the various member states include centuries of war with each other, a factor that has been and will be very hard to erase (Harris 2011). Further, the majority of Europeans find it difficult to see the benefits that they receive from Brussels on a day-to-day basis. Quite understandably then, the majority of Europeans do not feel very European. For the European Union to garner more support from the masses and create a more cohesive European identity, the EU must find a way to engender connections across political and social borders among a greater number of Europeans (Etzioni 2013).

Sports have the power to unify people from all walks of life regardless of socioeconomic class, education, or race. The unifying power of sport is particularly powerful during and leading up to international competitions such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games. During these international competitions, national pride swells as the citizens of the competing nations cheer on their respective teams, and age-old rivalries between nations are continued on the various playing fields. Further, victories on the pitch or track and in the gymnasium or swimming pool are often used as metaphors for the success of one set of ideals over another (Cronin & Mayall 1998).

By combining the various national teams of the European Union member states into one team for international competitions, the EU could create a more cohesive, inclusive identity. Giving the people of Europe a single team to root for provides a more tangible, less abstract symbol around which to gather. Putting aside the fact that the European Union football team would be all but unbeatable, presenting a united cultural symbol to the world aligns perfectly with Brussels' aims. Integration has more or less stalled, especially in the face of the economic recession, but perhaps the creation of a single European sports team is the move to get the process going again.

The Construction of a European Identity

Many scholars believe that the age of the nation-state is approaching its end. If such scholars are correct, trans-national governmental organizations like the European Union could be the next progression in governmental structure. However, organizations like the EU face challenges in creating a collective identity for their citizens that nation-states do not. The history of European integration has been lengthy and complex, especially when one considers the historical narratives of the various nations involved. The establishment of more powerful and more permanent European institutions over the course of the second half of the Twentieth Century has helped to mold a loose European identity, but further progress can still be made.

Although the idea had been around since the 19th Century, a serious movement towards European integration began in the period immediately following World War II. Dinan (2010) writes that Jean Monnet, hand-picked by General de Gaulle to lead the French economic planning office, believed that peace in Europe would never last without economic unity among the nations. Monnet desired a high level of unification for Europe, and what resulted from these first efforts was the Council of Europe. The Council was established in 1949 and placed in Strasbourg in order to keep it away from any one nation's capital. Although this was a vital first step, the level of economic interconnectedness achieved between the Western European states in the post-war period stopped far short of what Monnet wanted. This was due in large part to the reluctance of many European leaders, most notably Winston Churchill, to relinquish their powers of sovereignty.

However, during the 1950's and 1960's the conflict between the states of Western Europe and the Soviet Union pushed the European states closer together in the interests of security. The United States was a fervent supporter of this movement because a stronger Europe meant a stronger buffer against Soviet aggression. The United States and England had a vested interest in the rapid recovery of the German economy, and as a result quickly lessened the restrictions on German steel production. Until this point, the French were unable to move past their anti-German sentiments during the post-war period and had refused to take part in the Anglo-American monitoring of the German recovery effort. The decreased restrictions on German production, however, put pressure on the French economy. The French were forced to cooperate, which led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community.

Over the next thirty to forty years, Europe moved through a number of different organizations and policy-making bodies that would eventually lead to the start of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 1989 as laid out in the Delors Report. The EMU is an umbrella term for the three-stage policy that aims to converge the economic policies of the EU member states. The report, named for Jacques Delors, eighth president of the European Commission (EC), proposed a three-stage approach to the EMU (Dinan 2010). The first stage called for free capital movement in the EC and closer monetary and macroeconomic cooperation among member states and their central banks. The second called for closer coordination of national monetary policies, and the third for fixed exchange rate parities and the granting of full authority of monetary policy to the European Central Bank (ECB). Currently, the EU is still progressing through the third stage. The EMU involves four main factors: a single market, competition policy, structural changes and regional development policies, and binding limits on

national debts and deficits. Dinan (2010) writes that the first three were already in place by the late 1980's, and the fourth was proposed in the Delors Report.

The opinions of the member states of the European Commission varied greatly, both on the Delors Report and on European integration. Nonetheless, powerful states such as France and Germany supported the creation of a European Union to supersede the EC. Thus, although opposition existed among a few of the EC members, the Maastricht Treaty was eventually ratified and came into effect in November of 1993. Formally known as the Treaty on European Union, the Maastricht Treaty established formal criteria for the entrance of Europe into the third stage of the Delors report, mentioned above. It also implemented the governmental structures of the European Union as they are today, most specifically the three pillars of the EU¹. These structures were established in large part to assuage the fears of some member states that issues such as security and criminal justice should be placed in a body other than the European Economic Community.

Although the European Union was, and continues to be, primarily an economic project at face value, economics was always meant to be a tool used to promote more abstract goals. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the citizens of Europe, both powerful and common, were exhausted from the two World Wars. The end of war in Europe forever was a very popular idea, and it is towards this end that European integration aims. McLaren (2006) writes that the powers that were realized that without drastic changes, the continent would continue to destroy itself in war every thirty years. . At the time, the method used to maintain peace among the superpowers was the balance of powers; this had obviously become untenable for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the balance of powers system had failed miserably over the past fifty years, evidenced by the occurrence of two world wars, and a new peacekeeping method was necessary. Secondly, an individual nation was unlikely to be able to balance out the two emerging superpowers at the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union. Economic integration was thus proposed out of both mutual benefit and dire necessity.

Although economic cooperation has been relatively easy to generate, the large-scale cultural and social cooperation that many intellectuals believed would arise as a result of economic and political partnership has not occurred. In the nation-state, the creation of a national identity is simple. A French person is French, for example, because they subscribe to a certain set of values, certainly, but it is easier to attach to these values when one speaks the same language as his neighbors and lives within the same geopolitical boundaries. Such definitions help to establish not only who is a fellow citizen, but also who is not. This second point is equally as important as the first, if not more so, because it is the identification of an outsider that more clearly establishes the boundary of the group. It is easy for a French person to understand themselves as French, or for a German to understand themselves as German, because there are tangible factors that identify who else is French or German and who is not.

The barriers of nationalism, history, and culture are the issues that the European Union faces in trying to foster stronger feelings of "Europeanness." Not only are the physical borders

¹ The three pillars are: first, European Communities, which handles social, economic, and environmental policy; second, Common Foreign and Security Policy; and, third, Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters.

of Europe changing with the continuing addition of more and more member states, but also there is an enormous variety of cultural difference among the various member states. For example, there are twenty-four different official languages spoken within the boundaries of the European Union, and that number does not include minority and immigrant languages. The argument could easily be made that the only cultural commonality in the EU is Christianity, a fact evidenced by the hesitation to incorporate Turkey into Europe. Further, the average European has difficulty not only understanding what it means to be European, but also understanding the benefits of being European. Whereas the impact of the national government is easy to see and comprehend, the impact of European policy on the lives of the common people are much less obvious. Harris (2011) writes that most Europeans are apathetic towards the policies of the EU because there is a degree of confusion about the aims and structures of the policymakers in Brussels.

There is also some lingering animosity between some of the member states. The EU as a whole does not have a cohesive historical narrative, but each member state certainly has its own distinct and powerful narrative. These narratives necessarily engender nationalism, a term that today carries an unfortunate negative connotation. Harris (2011) writes that at its core, nationalism is simply a political strategy that attempts to cement the relationship between the abstract idea of the nation and the concrete borders of the state. She goes on to argue that the political project that is the nation-state legitimizes some key assumptions about nationalism, one of which is that maintaining and reproducing the national narrative is vitally important to the future of the nation. Harris (2011) claims that the formation of the nation is a long process, and thus the narrative promotes the idea of the end goal; essentially, the idea that the nation has a destiny.

These narratives are also invaluable in teaching the next generation the cultural norms and values that are important to the people as a whole. In other words, the historical narrative is used to socialize citizens into the national identity. Unfortunately, many of these historical narratives involve centuries of conflict with multiple other European states. English and French people will always have some degree of animosity towards one another, as will French and Germans, Spanish and Dutch, so on and so on. Even if this is only ever played out in derisive jokes and international sporting events, the animosity does exist at a subconscious level. For a European identity to form, then, the aforementioned cultural and historical barriers must be broken down.

Although not a large group, there are people for whom the social and cultural barriers that prevent most from seeing themselves as European have been removed. Some citizens readily identify as Europeans and show comparatively strong support for the structures and policies of the European Union. Such individuals are likely to be wealthy, highly educated, or live close to a border with another European nation. These factors make sense, as individuals that meet such criteria have a much higher probability of coming into contact with other Europeans. Further, the nature of these relationships is likely to be more serious, more economically fruitful, and likely to continue for a longer time.

Gabel (1998) identified the five most prominent theories explaining public support for European integration: cognitive mobilization theory, political values theory, utilitarian appraisals of integrative policy, class partisanship theory, and support for government theory.

Cognitive mobilization theory argues that Europeans who are more politically educated are more likely to support European integration. Because European integration is a rather theoretical project, a relatively high level of cognitive ability is required to fully understand the benefits of, and thus be supportive of, membership in the EU. A second tenet of the cognitive mobilization theory is that any additional information that an individual receives regarding integration engenders more support by that individual for integration. If cognitive mobilization is a valid theory, it makes sense that the more an individual learns about European integration, the more that he or she will support it.

The political values theory states that citizens' political attitudes are formed mostly during their preadult years by the socioeconomic conditions into which they are born. The political attitudes and values are then separated into two categories, materialist and post-materialist. Values that pertain more to economic and physical security are labeled materialist, whereas priorities such as intellectual fulfillment and a sense of belonging are labeled post-materialist. The EU, then, is an excellent vehicle for the cultivation of post-materialist values and ideals, and is thus more popular with citizens whose political attitudes are primarily post-materialist.

Gabel's utilitarian appraisals theory focuses on the economic interests of individual citizens. The theory states that it stands to reason that those citizens who reap economic benefits from European integration will support integration, and that the opposite will be true for those citizens who do not experience economic benefits. Wealthier individuals are more likely to be supportive of European integration because the open economic policies of the EU allow such individuals to take advantage of an increase in available markets in which to invest. Contrarily, citizens in lower socioeconomic classes that depend on wage labor are hurt by the open economic policies of the EU because capital can be moved to regions with cheaper labor. Workers of a higher education level, who possess more human capital, are also more likely to be supportive of European integration because they are more able to adapt to changing market demands. Finally, citizens that live close to borders of other EU countries reap the economic benefits of an open system in which goods flow freely across national lines. Such citizens are therefore more likely to support European integration than those that live further from borders, all else being equal.

The last two theories, class partisanship and support for government, are relatively similar to one another. According to the class partisanship theory, personal characteristics and interests such as income or occupation are deciding factors when choosing a political party to support; these interests are also reflected in one's opinions about integration. However, subscribers to the class partisanship theory believe that the party's stance on integration can influence a party member's opinion of integration regardless of the individual's interests and values. The support for government theory makes the same claim, but an individual's level of support for the national government takes the place of party affiliation. For example, if an individual supports the national government and the government is in favor of integration, that individual is likely to support integration as well, regardless of personal interest.

According to the data that Gabel (1998) collected, the utilitarian appraisals theory provides the best explanation for an individual's level of support for European integration. Although the data also marginally supports the class partisanship and support for government theories, the utilitarian explanation is the most thorough and widely applicable. This makes sense, especially

when considering the fact that the European Union is an economic project. Logically, it is not surprising that citizens evaluate their support for an economic project according to the economic benefits or costs that they experience.

In another paper, however, Gabel (1997) argues that the actual economic conditions are less important than the citizens' perceptions of the economy. He found that there was a low correlation between actual GDP and citizens' support for integration. Instead, Gabel found that the evaluations that citizens make about national and local economic conditions shape citizens' opinions on European integration. The fact that citizens' perceptions are more influential than objective conditions lends credibility to the idea that public opinion regarding the EU could be altered without any quantifiable change in the daily lives of Europeans. Further, if the utilitarian appraisals theory is valid, as the data shows, something must be done to create more support for integration among citizens of lower socioeconomic classes that live far from national borders.

Because of the low level of support for European structures and policies among less educated individuals of lower incomes who do not live close to national borders, Fligstein et al (2012) write that the limit of European integration and identity may have been reached already. The authors argue that the individuals that meet the criteria to strongly support integration according to the utilitarian theory constitute a small minority of Europeans. Although this minority may grow in number in the future, the data shows that European identities are declining, if anything. It would seem, then, that to increase the number of Europeans who support integration, the EU must create a strong, positive symbol around which people can gather. Such a symbol must be accessible regardless of nationality and transcend national narratives, but be common enough to attract individuals of low socioeconomic status and education level.

The Power of Sports

A single European sports team could bring citizens of lower socioeconomic classes into the European identity and connect Europeans across national boundaries. Sports have always had a transcendent quality about them. They have a power unlike anything else to capture the imagination, to make one believe in miracles, and to unify people from all walks of life. Throughout history, sporting teams and heroes have served as symbols and talismans to inspire people, to teach them important values, and, in the case of some governments, to promote the ideals of the regime in power. National sports teams are a more tangible, less abstract symbol of the nation in comparison to, say, a flag. As a result, individuals have an easier time understanding the idea that the team or athlete is a representation of the nation as whole.

This is never truer than immediately before and during major international sporting events such as the Olympics or FIFA World Cup. During these events, the participating nations are put on display for the world to see and judge. Although the conflict is limited to the playing field, track, court, or pool, the implied ramifications of victory and defeat extend far beyond the competition site. A prime example of this is the Miracle on Ice that took place during the 1980 Winter Olympics. In this game, the United States Men's Hockey team, incredible underdogs, defeated the hockey team of the Soviet Union, who were all but unanimously considered the best team on Earth. A collection of college hockey players beating the top professionals in the

world is impressive enough, but the importance of the victory was magnified many times over. This was a case not simply of one hockey team beating another, but of one set of ideals beating another. In the eyes of many Americans, the victory signified that the glory of capitalism had won out over the evils of Communism.

The stage of the grand international sporting competition is also more politically open than any other international stage, aside from perhaps the United Nations. In the opening ceremony of the Olympics, it is not just the world's superpowers that parade into the stadium; athletes from countries big and small march proudly in the colors of their respective nations. Tomlinson and Young (2006) write that smaller nations from Africa, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe are able to use the Olympics and World Cup to assert their sovereignty on an international stage. Such nations are often former colonies or territories of the world superpowers, and it is in this way that the major cultural influence that is sport takes on a powerful political aspect.

The 1936 Olympics in Berlin show the political power of sports as propaganda better than many other similar events. Prior to the games, many nations, including the United States, intended to boycott the games, as it was believed that to celebrate the Games in Nazi Germany was contrary to the spirit of the Olympics (Guttmann 2006). The oppressive, derogatory, and prejudicial policies of the National Socialist Parties certainly did not align with the inclusive, brotherly ideals of the Games. However, realizing that the opportunity to paint the Nazi regime in a tremendous light had all but fallen into their laps, Hitler and the German Olympic Committee promised to follow the Olympic code and not discriminate against athletes, Jewish or otherwise. Germany promptly reneged on their promise, but it was too late. The boycott effort failed, and all nations participated in the Berlin Games.

During the actual games, much was made to show the power and wealth of Nazi Germany. The venues for the events and the Olympic Village were magnificent on a scale never before seen, and the global audience was certainly impressed with the German efficiency and manufacturing prowess on display. Additionally, the tradition of the Olympic Torch relay was begun during the 1936 Games. The torch, carried from Olympia, Greece to Berlin, was used to provide a connection between Nazi Germany and the greatness of the Ancient Greeks. Guttmann is very clear in his argument that the Nazis used the 1936 Olympics to show the power and might of their regime. By using the power of sports, the Nazis were able to demonstrate their power and social organization to the world while at the same time veiling over their discriminatory policies.

Although the media is not ultimately necessary to send a message from the government to the people, good coverage disseminates the information more effectively and makes the message more clear and easier to understand. During the 1934 World Cup in Italy, the Fascist controlled media certainly stretched the truth in covering the event in order to make the regime look better. Success in the '34 World Cup became increasingly more important to Mussolini's government; performing well as the host nation was obviously important, but the team also exemplified a number of the characteristics that the Fascists regarded highly (Gordon & London 2006).

Being Fascist controlled, the media obviously painted the Fascist regime and its efforts to put on a good event in a positive light. Mussolini himself made a spectacle of buying his own

ticket to the final match, the Fascist leader trying to show that he was just one of the people. The Fascist characteristics of the Italian team were well publicized, as was the fervor of the Italian fans; the facts, however, were often far from what was printed. Although the press reported that anywhere between fifty and seventy thousand fans attended the final match in Rome, pictures of the stadium show wide swathes of empty seats (Gordon and London, 2006). Regardless, Italians viewed the World Cup as a major success, and the Fascist reputation for efficiency and effectiveness continued to grow. As this example shows, effective media coverage magnifies the already potent power of sports to rally a people behind a government and its policies

In some extreme cases, sports can even make people ignore or forget about the terrible circumstances of their lives. For example, during the period between 1976 and 1983, the military government of Argentina killed an estimated 30,000 of its own people (Archetti 2006). The junta took over in response to rapidly deteriorating social and economic conditions, but they also took over a country that had been picked to host the World Cup in 1978. Amid extremely valid fears that the country would not be ready to host the Cup, the military brutally cracked down on the various guerilla groups and ramped up the pace of construction of the stadiums. In the end, the World Cup was successfully hosted, and Argentina managed to win its first World Cup title. More important than the victory, however, was the way that Argentina played and the support that they received from their fans.

As in most countries that are not the United States, football is tied directly to the national ethos in Argentina. The 1974 Argentinian World Cup team was judged to have performed poorly by the Argentinian people not because they lost 4-0 in the second round, but because their play did not align with Argentinian footballing values. To remedy this situation, Cesar Luis Menotti was hired as the national team coach almost immediately after the 1974 World Cup. Menotti articulated a playing philosophy that his team would follow, highlighted by the idea that technical ability and footballing talent would take precedence over athleticism. More importantly, Menotti wanted his players to feel a sense of belonging to an Argentinian footballing tradition. Menotti's strategy won both on the field and off it: Menotti's team was very successful in its World Cup qualifying campaign, and the Argentinian fans loved the flair and ability with which Menotti's team played. (Archetti, 2006).

In spite of the fact that Argentinians were being kidnapped, tortured, and killed during the World Cup, the country reveled in their football team. The writer Claudio Tamburrini, who was imprisoned by the Argentinian junta in 1978, explained this paradox by saying that the passions that football creates often override the better judgments of football fans. For better or for worse, the national team gave Argentinians enough joy and pleasure to make the people ignore the horrific actions of the junta. Indeed, the national team was a representative symbol of the government, but this seemed to matter little to the people. In their eyes, and in the eyes of Menotti and his players, the team and its football were representative of the people, not the government. Regardless of any and all disagreements with the actions of the government, the Argentinian people stood behind their team.

Around the world, sports, especially football, exert a power on people that is almost indescribable. Although Americans are certainly ardent sports fans, the level of involvement that international football fans experience is different-many would argue that it is much higher-

than in the United States. This fervor is greatly intensified during international competitions, and especially during the World Cup, which is undeniably the biggest global sports stage. In 2010, for example, over 3.2 billion people, 46.4% of the global population, viewed the World Cup either in person or on television (FIFA.com, 2011); by comparison, only 106 million people watched the Super Bowl in the same year (Bauder, 2010). The global allure of football means that it has a unifying power like few other activities or entities in the world, which history has shown time and again.

Football's popularity is not a new phenomenon: during World War I, German and British troops temporarily ceased hostilities to enjoy a friendly game of football. Troops on both sides had exchanged shouts across the trenches during the course of the war, but at first light on Christmas Day 1914, British soldiers saw their German counterparts approaching, unarmed. After engaging in small talk and pleasantries and retrieving fallen comrades, reports state that a football ball was kicked out of one of the trenches and a Germany versus England football match ensued (Stormer, 2006). Although this was a one-time occurrence, the fact that the game occurred at all shows the unifying power of football. The game was so important and memorable that an anniversary football match will be played on the battlefields in Flanders to commemorate the centenary of World War I (BBC, 2013).

In some cases, single footballers have had the power to stop wars. In 1967, Pele, widely considered the greatest player to have ever lived, was scheduled to play in an exhibition match in Nigeria. At the time, the country was in the midst of a violent civil war. It was quickly decided, however, that a forty-eight hour ceasefire would be instated so that football fans from both sides could watch the game (Stormer, 2006). Similarly, in 2006, the Ivory Coast had been embroiled in civil war for almost four years. But, upon the national team's qualification for the World Cup, star striker and national hero Didier Drogba requested that the two sides come together to support the team. Peace talks started almost immediately and a ceasefire was declared so that the citizens of both factions could cheer together for their team (Stormer, 2006). In the former example, one sees the extreme power that football holds on the overwhelming majority of human beings. In the latter, one sees again that national identity as symbolized by the national team can overcome any local or national-scale divisions, even those that lead to violent conflict.

Research Design

Ideally, the effectiveness of the single European team at increasing the scope of the European identity would be tested after the team had been created. At that point, I would study the Eurobarometer data set to determine whether a statistically significant increase in either support for the European Union or in the European identity had occurred. The Eurobarometer is a public opinion survey that is performed by the European Commission to gauge the European population's stance on a wide variety of topics. According to the "Standard Eurobarometer" link on the European Commission's Public Opinion website, "The standard Eurobarometer was established in 1973. Each survey consists of approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews per country. Reports are published twice yearly." The topics covered in the Eurobarometer survey range from the interviewee's opinion on the future of the European

Union and the pros and cons of the single market system to general knowledge of European polices and structures.

The Eurobarometer also asks the following question: *“Do you ever think of yourself as not only (nationality), but also European? Does this happen often, sometimes, or never?”* To test the theory that the creation of a single European team has increased the European identity, I compare the percentage of “Often” answers during years in which there was a World Cup or Olympic Games to those years before and after the major sporting events. If the theory is valid, there should be a statistically significant rise in the percentage of respondents that identify themselves regularly as European.

Unfortunately, a project on the scale of combining the various national teams, points of great pride to the citizenry and governments of their respective nations, will not be undertaken lightly. For that reason, I have chosen to investigate a small-scale example of a nationally diverse group of people uniting behind a singular sports team and the government for which they stand. The United Kingdom is made up of four distinct countries: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. In general, citizens of England are quick to identify as British, but citizens of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland are proud of their own respective national identities. In most cases, the four countries compete as individual nations on the international sporting stage. In the Olympics, however, English, Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish athletes compete together as Team Great Britain. Therefore, if the theory that sports can be used to unify people and increase their attachment to a governmental structure is valid, attachment to the United Kingdom should increase in the years in which there is an Olympics.

The tools for measuring whether or not such a change occurs are already in place in the Eurobarometer survey, which currently asks respondents to assess their level of attachment to their town or village, their region, their country, and to Europe. Responses are given on a scale of one to four, with one being “Very Attached” and four being “Not at all attached.” If my hypothesis is correct, the number of people in the “Very Attached” category will increase, especially in World Cup and Olympic years and especially among lower income, less educated people who live farther from international borders.

I began by analyzing the “Attachment to Country” variable on the Eurobarometer Interactive Search System. Figure 1 shows the levels of attachment for five Eurobarometer surveys for respondents in Great Britain. Clear spikes in the percentage of people that felt very attached to Great Britain exist in 2004 and 2006, the years in which the Olympics and Winter Olympics were held. The mean score on the attachment scale went from 1.56 in 2004 to 1.66 in 2005. Although this is not a statistically significant difference, it is a noticeable difference. Further, the median score went from “Very Attached” in 2004 to “Fairly Attached” in 2005.

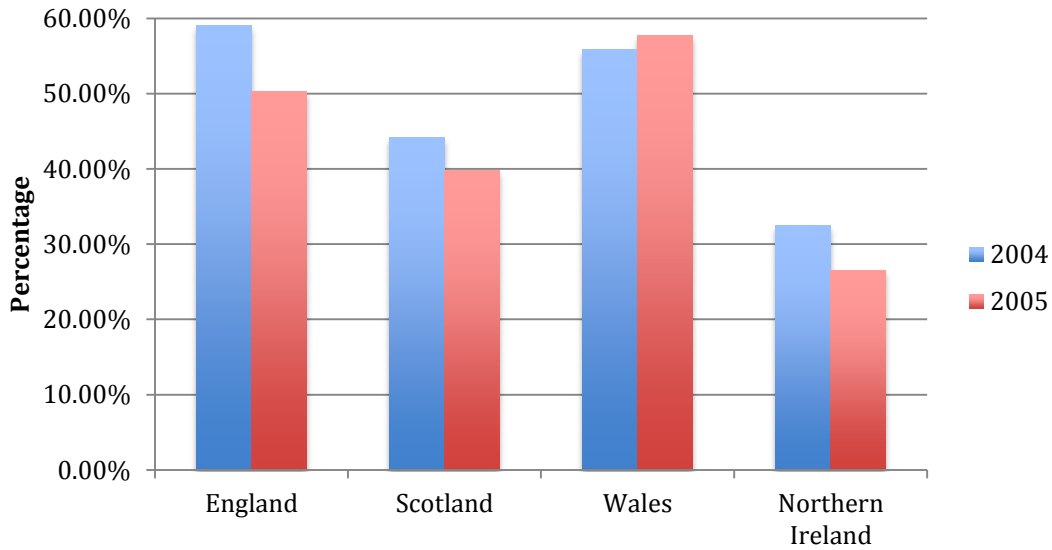
Figure 1: Attachment to "Our Country," United Kingdom



Although Figure 1 lends support to my hypothesis, a more in-depth investigation is required before conclusions can be drawn. One of the most obvious issues with taking the above graph at face value is the fact that English citizens are likely to be overrepresented in the Eurobarometer survey. If this were the case, then it stands to reason that the data would be unnecessarily skewed to show higher feelings of attachment to Britain than actually exist. The methodology used by the Eurobarometer would certainly suggest that this is the case. According to the European Commission, surveyed individuals were randomly selected in a multi-stage design that first selected a primary sampling unit from each of the administrative regions in the EU countries; individuals were then randomly selected from within the primary sampling units. Great Britain has seven such administrative regions, four of which are in England, with the other three being Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. As a result, of the slightly more than 1300 British citizens surveyed in the 2004 Eurobarometer, 828 were English, 111 were Scottish, 68 were Welsh, and 295 were North Irish. Similar statistics are found in the 2005 survey: 899 English, 83 Scottish, 26 Welsh, and 286 Northern Irish.

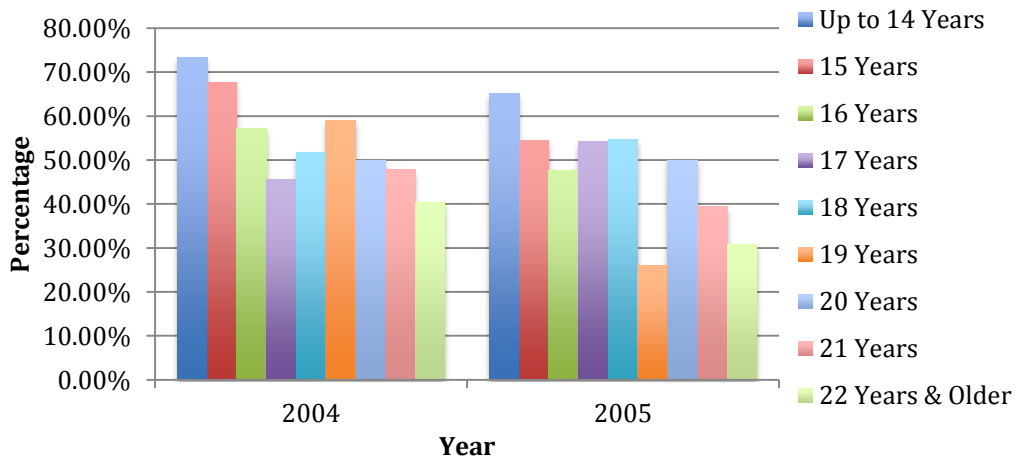
In order to offset the effects of the oversampling of English citizens, I regrouped the Eurobarometer's regional-level variable into a country-level variable. Figure 2 shows the percentage of people surveyed that felt "Very Attached" to Great Britain, by country, in 2004 and 2005.

Figure 2: Percentage of Respondents that Felt “Very Attached” to Great Britain, by Country



As before, Figure 2 shows support for the hypothesis: in every country except for Wales, the percentage of “Very Attached” people decreased from 2004 to 2005. It is important to note, though, that in Wales the total number of people that felt “Very Attached” decreased from 2004 to 2005, but the number of people surveyed from Wales also decreased. The combination of these two factors could have led to the apparent percentage increase from 2004 to 2005.

Figure 3: Percentage of Respondents who Felt Very Attached, by Education Level



One of the other tenets of my hypothesis is that the creation of a single European sports team will reach the citizens the European Union is currently struggling hardest to attach to Europe: individuals with lower levels of education, lower household incomes, and those individuals that live further from national borders. I investigated the first of these variables using the Eurobarometer data for Great Britain. After categorizing respondents by the age that

they finished their formal education, I once again looked at attachment levels on the four-point scale.

In general, the percentage of respondents that felt “Very Attached” to Great Britain decreased from 2004 to 2005, regardless of level of education. However, these differences were generally steeper amongst respondents of lower levels of education, with the outlier being those who ended their education at nineteen years of age. Like the other information produced by the Eurobarometer surveys, this data is not conclusive, but it would seem to provide evidence for my hypothesis.

Can Sports Bring Europe Together?

The link between national identity and national sports teams has long been established. In some cases, the sports team has existed before a politically defined nation; for example, the Hungarian Olympic team began to compete in 1896, twenty-two years before Hungary was fully independent (Polley 2004). This connection makes sense when one considers the fact that sports are an excellent means for groups to express their identities. While true when considering professional sports, this statement is far truer on a national scope in international competitions. It certainly applies in the United States, particularly during the Olympics, when Americans of all races and creeds join together to support our athletes.

To harness the power of sports, the European Union should combine the national teams of the member states into one team for international competitions. According to Fligstein et al, “Nationalism can have any cultural root, as long as that culture can be used to forge a cross-class alliance around a nation-building project” (109). As mentioned previously, sporting culture, especially football culture, has a stranglehold on the citizens of Europe. Though more popular with the lower classes than the upper classes, support for both club and national football teams exists among all peoples. There are ardent fan groups for all of the major club teams in Europe, and most of the lesser-known clubs as well. The clubs have flags, each has their own special chants and anthems, and in some cases the fan groups have violent conflicts with one another.

The passion of football fans, and really, of sports fans in general, could also cause the combination of the national teams to have a divisive, as opposed to an inclusive, effect. By default, there would be more qualified athletes than there would be available positions on teams, as always happens when national team rosters are decided. If Europe fielded a single team, however, it is all but certain that an athlete from one country would be selected over an athlete from another country. The citizens of the second country might feel slighted by this decision, which could lead to resentment towards the decision-makers specifically and the European Union in general. This happens semi-regularly in the United States when the All-Star teams are selected in the various professional leagues. Almost without fail, a team’s favorite athlete is “snubbed” during All-Star selection, offending the athlete’s fans. Such fans are hardly ever angry for long, however, and thus the pros outweigh the cons in this scenario

I also do not intend to say that the formation of the team will lead to the creation of an identity. In fact, it is a moot point; a European identity already exists, which we know because there are citizens that view themselves as being European. It is, however, important to create the team because without a tangible symbol, increased integration and support for the

European Union is highly unlikely to occur. In the case of Great Britain, for example, Scottish people do not root for the English national team simply because both countries are British; in fact, the average Scottish fan would be most likely to root for any team that is playing against England. However, Scottish fans do root for the British team during the Olympics because Scotland is a part of Great Britain. Similarly, German fans will never root for a French team simply because they are both members of the European Union; it is likely, however, that both French and German fans would root for an EU team as it would be a tangible symbol of the abstract construct that is the European Union.

In the end, the evidence would suggest that, at the very least, it would not hurt for the European Union to form one supranational team to compete in international competitions. Previous efforts to create a "Team Europe" in events such as golf's Ryder Cup have been relatively unsuccessful in creating stronger feelings of "Europeanness," but competing as Team Europe in an event as popular as the World Cup would almost certainly cause greater feelings of attachment amongst the football-crazed Europeans. Sports in general, and football especially, have a powerful hold on humans around the world, and football and its stars have proven in the past to hold real political sway. At the very least, the European teams, especially their football team, would be quite the sight and very difficult to beat.

Works Cited

- Archetti, Eduardo P. 2006. "Argentina 1978: Military Nationalism, Football Essentialism, and Moral Ambivalence." *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*: 133- 147. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- BBC. February 9, 2013. "WWI Christmas Truce Football Matches 'To Be Replayed.'" *BBC News UK*. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-21393377> (December 18, 2013).
- Cronin, Mike, and David Mayall, eds. 1998. *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*. Routledge: Portland, OR.
- Dinan, Desmond. 2010. *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*. Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, CO.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 2013. "THE EU: The Communitarian Deficit." *European Societies*: 1-19
- European Commission. 2013. "Eurobarometer Interactive Search System." August 23, 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm (November 22, 2013).
- European Commission. 2012. "Eurobarometer 62.0 (Oct-Nov 2004)." Updated January 6, 2014. <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=4229> (March 31, 2014)

- European Commission. 2012. "Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-Jun 2005)." Updated January 6, 2014. <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/SDesc2.asp?ll=10¬abs=&af=&nf=&search=&search2=&db=E&no=4411> (March 31, 2014)
- Fligstein, Neil, Alina Polyakova, and Wayne Sandholtz. 2012. "European integration, Nationalism and European Identity." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 50.s1: 106-122.
- Gabel, Matthew. 1998. "Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories." *Journal of Politics* 60: 333-354.
- Gordon, Robert S.C. and John London. 2006. "Italy 1934: Football and Fascism." *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*: 41-63. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Guttmann, Allen. 2006. "Berlin 1936: The Most Controversial Olympics." *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*: 65-81. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Harris, Erika. 2011. "Nation-State And The European Union: Lost In A Battle For Identity." *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 48.2: 91-109.
- McLaren, Lauren M. 2006. *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, NY
- Polley, Martin. 2004. "Sport and national identity in contemporary England." *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World*: 10-30. Routledge: New York, NY.
- Stormer, Neil. June 20, 2006. "More Than a Game." *Common Ground News Service*. <http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=2079> (December 18 , 2013).
- Tomlinson, Alan, and Christopher Young, 2006. "Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Global Sports Event-An Introduction." *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*: 1-15. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

