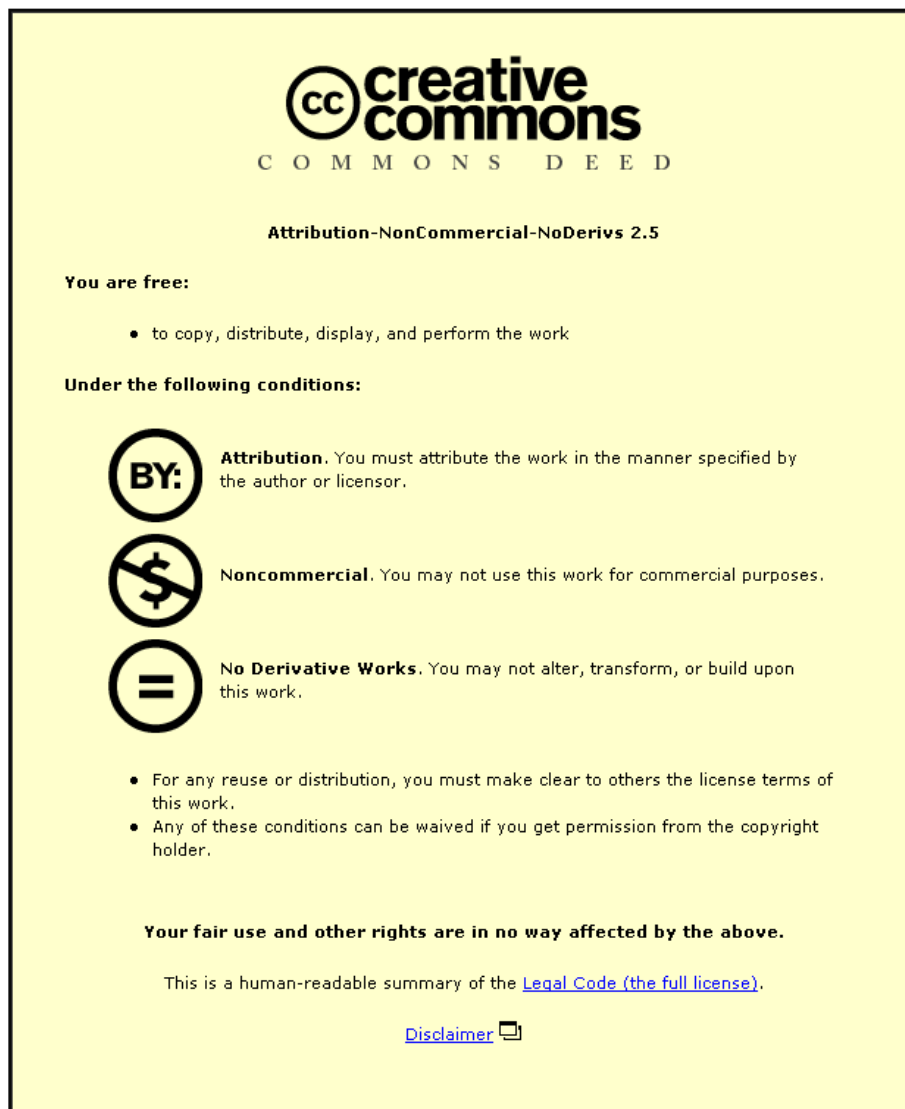




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
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**“That’s what I am, I’m an England player”:
Exploring the gendered, national and sporting identities of
England’s elite sportswomen**

by

Alison Kay Bowes

A Doctoral Thesis

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Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

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Abstract

According to Robinson (2008), England exists more in imagination than it does anywhere else, except on the sports field. However, Englishness remains relatively unexplored in discussions of sporting nationalism. For so long, academics have focused on the ways in which male sport plays a key role in (re)producing national identities, with the contribution of women to the relationship between sport and national identity formation undeniably ignored. Based on interviews with 19 elite sportswomen from England's netball, football, rugby and cricket teams, this thesis examines the relationship between gendered, national and sporting identities, giving a voice to England's 'heroines of sport'. These sports were chosen as the women had only represented England, rather than Great Britain, in international sport. Few research studies have adopted this approach of speaking to athletes about their national identities, although significantly, those that have were not concerned with women (see Tuck, 1999; Tuck and Maguire, 1999; McGee and Bairner 2011). The challenge was not only to integrate personal experiences into discussions of sport and national identity, but also to try to incorporate gender into these very discussions. The question here is whether women's sport has a place in the national imagination, and how do those very women who embody their nation on the field of play articulate their experiences.

Central to this research is an understanding of the ways in which we perform aspects of our identity. Building on work by Butler (1990) and Edensor (2002), we can understand how international sport provides a site where multiple identities are performed. Findings suggest that performances of femininities are contextual, and that elite sport is an arena where displays of heteronormative femininity are inappropriate. In addition, sport serves to clarify imaginings of Englishness, where previously it may have been confused or conflated with conceptions of Britishness. What was clear throughout the research, however, was the performative nature of the participants' identities, as well as the way in which their identities can be conceptualised as multiple and fluid, subject to change depending upon context and circumstance.

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Introduction

Ultimately, this research study is concerned with exploring the ways in which gendered, national and sporting identities intersect and interact. Thus, the immediate theoretical challenge is to bring gender into debates on sport and national identity, and to establish possible connections between the two. This thesis aims to highlight the complex, multiple and fluid nature of identities, through looking at gender and national identity in England's elite sportswomen, from netball, football, cricket and rugby union. The thesis argues that these women, as representatives of the nation, are embodiments of England, and thus their gendered, national and sporting identities are central to their sense of self.

The initial research interest centred on questions surrounding the experiences of women in sport. More specifically, I was interested in gendered subjectivity and the performance of differing types of femininity, dependent upon context (Butler, 1990). However, advances in feminist theory and feminist methodologies have introduced us to concepts such as intersectionality, whereby the researcher takes into account a person's other competing identities and subjectivities. A lack of research incorporating gender into discussions on national identity prompted the incorporation of national identity into the research project. Recent discussions on the future of Great Britain, as well as debates about the concepts of Britishness and Englishness are central to the specific focus on Englishness.

1. Positioning the study

Women have a pivotal role in the nation that is by no means confined to biological reproduction (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Yet, the relationship between women, the construction of nations, and the reproduction of national identities remains under researched. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the sociology of sport. Women have been systematically excluded in literature on sporting nationalisms, and because women have been written out of the nation, and subsequently out of analyses on sport and the nation, their experiences have been ignored. By seeking to identify alternative examples

of sporting heroism, Hargreaves (2000: 3) quite properly looked beyond ‘the violence, corruption, commercialization and exploitation that plague men’s sports’. In so doing, however, perhaps unwittingly, she may also have denied a voice to women as national sporting beings. Thus, the contribution of women to the relationship between sport and national identity formation has undeniably been largely ignored.

The idea of Englishness is becoming more pertinent in sociological literature on nations and national identity. The common conflation of Englishness with Britishness is a constant feature in discussions on English national identity. The forthcoming referendum on independence for Scotland have led many to wonder where this leaves the English. Indeed, Madeleine Bunting (*The Guardian*, 2011: 27) states that ‘the nationalism that urgently needs definition is Englishness’. According to Robinson (2008), England exists more in imagination than it does anywhere else, although one place where it does exist is on the sports field. Despite this, Englishness is relatively unexplored within literature on sporting nationalism. However, when it has been considered, it is apparent that men’s sport is central to creating a sense of English national identity.

Much research that focuses on national identity in sport utilises an approach which analyses the role of the media in (re)producing a sense of national identity. Billig (1995) in particular highlights the role of the sporting press in ‘national flagging’, using terms such as ‘we’ and ‘us’ to link the national sports teams to national populations. However, few research studies actually focus on those who are the embodiments of the nation in sport – the athletes themselves. However, these athletes are often men. International sport can be seen to act as a site in which multiple identities are performed – sporting, national and gendered. Following Tuck (2003) and McGee and Bairner (2011) this research demonstrates the need to ask those athletes who actually act as representatives of the nation about their identities and sense of belonging. As such, the research centres on the relationship between sport, gender and nationhood, and the role of elite sports representatives in this respect. This study offers a discussion on the experiences of England’s elite sportswomen, drawn from netball, association football, cricket and rugby union. It seeks to ‘give a voice’ to these women whose experiences have often been ignored by both the popular press and academics alike.

2. Research questions

The thesis discusses the ways in which women represent their nations, not least on the field of play, and sheds light on the complex intersections of gendered, sporting and national identities. Little is known about Englishwomen's experiences of playing sport for their nation, and how this may impact or influence their imaginings of national identity. This research has involved interviews with a number of women who have represented England in the national sporting arena, in sports that have been typically described as central to a male English national identity: football, cricket and rugby, as well as in netball. Just as men are customarily regarded as the real warriors who fight for their nations, so too are they identified in most of the relevant literature as proxy national warriors in the world of sport. This research asks the fundamental question, what about the women?

However, the research question can be broken down into smaller subsections. Clearly, the research aims to elucidate the intersection of gender and national identity, in a sporting context. Furthermore, the study explores the concept of multiple identities, and the ways in which they can interact and influence each other. There is a discussion on gender, and the relationship between being a woman and femininity. There is also a focus on the complexities surrounding national identities, especially with regards to those who identify as English, yet are defined constitutionally as British. Finally, the research documents the ways in which international sport acts as a site for the performance of gendered and national identities.

3. Thesis overview

The thesis can be divided into six chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 is an extensive critical review of literature concerning the nation, sport, and Englishness. The chapter begins with in depth discussions on the paradigms of nationalism, before moving to the concept of national identities. An in-depth look at the history of the English nation follows. This includes discussions that question whether or not there is an English nationalism, and identifies challenges to concepts of Englishness. Central to

understanding Englishness is an appreciation of the history of Great Britain, and the relationship of Britishness to Englishness. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the role of sport in the formation of national identities, with sport often seen as integral to the idea of Englishness.

Chapter 2 is a discussion on women in sport and in the nation. An initial review of feminist theory concludes with a discussion of postmodern and poststructural feminisms. Poststructural feminism provides us with conceptual tools that allow us to begin to understand identity not as a definite, core sense of self but as multiple, fragmented, contextual, fluid, and performed (Goffman, 1959; Butler, 1990). Following this, a review of literature on gender and nation reveals the pivotal roles women play. These are often restricted to functions that centre on women's biological capability – namely, reproduction – but also to roles that focus on stereotypically feminine characteristics such as nurturing and educating their young. The chapter continues with a discussion of women in sport, addressing recent debates that have centred on femininity and sexuality. The chapter concludes with an outline of the sports that feature in this research: netball, football, cricket and rugby.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methods and methodology of the research project. It goes into detail about the research paradigm that informs this research. It also describes the benefits of utilising qualitative research and a feminist methodology to engage with the research problem. The chapter describes the process of data collection, transcription, and interpretation and analysis.

Chapters 4 to 6 present and analyse data collected throughout the research, and focus on three key themes: women, sport and femininities; the complexity of national identities in England; and women as national sporting beings. Here, extracts are presented from interviews conducted with England's sporting women on their experiences. There is also the incorporation of some media extracts to supplement the interview data. The research process has allowed these women to become active participants in the exploration of the complexity of both gendered and national identities. Finally, the

conclusion is intended to tie together the preceding discussion and present the major findings of the thesis.

Chapter 1

Literature Review: Sport, Nationalism, and Englishness

This chapter begins with an introduction to the main debates on nationalism, before looking at national identities more specifically. Then, scholarship on the history of England is reviewed, followed by a discussion on Englishness. Finally, the role of sport in the formation of national identity is discussed, before ending with consideration of the importance of sport to an English national identity.

1. Nations and nationalism

Hechter (2000) explains that the word 'nation' is derived from the Latin word 'nasci', meaning 'to be born', and has been in use since as early as the thirteenth century. In the form 'natio', it referred to a group of people united by birth or birthplace (Heywood, 2007). Hechter (2000) also identifies an underlying, core definition of the term 'nation' that has been proclaimed by nearly every eminent scholarly and political authority on nationalism; 'the term "nation" refers to a relatively large group of genetically unrelated people with high solidarity' (ibid: 11). As well as being a major political force since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, nationalism has also divided academic opinion, particularly in discussions of the origins of the nation. What follows is a discussion of some of the main debates in the field of nationalism, before returning to look more specifically at the idea of national identities.

1.1. Defining the nation and the nation-state

Anderson (2006) proposes that the nation, nationality, nationalism have all proved notoriously difficult to define. Common concerns within the study of nationalism are the lack of agreement about what nationalism is, what nations are, and how we are to define nationality (McCrone, 1998). The main contested areas include the nature and origin of nations, discussions surrounding antiquity in relation to modernity and the roles of

nations and nationalism in historical and social change. Kedourie (1960) stated that nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For Gellner (1964: 169), 'nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness, it invents nations where they do not exist'. In 1983, along similar lines of thought, Anderson (2006) believed that a nation is an 'imagined community'. However he also proclaims that Gellner 'assimilates "invention" to "fabrication"', rather than to "imagining" and "creation"' (ibid: 6). Connor (1994: 202) proposes that the nation is the 'largest group that can commend a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties; it is, from this perspective, the fully extended family'. More recently, Smith (2001: 13) defines the nation as a 'named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members'.

All of these varying ideas and definitions paint a cloudy picture of what constitutes a nation. Smith (2001) believes the concept of the nation predates the ideology of nationalism, but Gellner (1983: 55) disputes this, stating that 'it is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round'. Gellner (ibid: 49) also warns against accepting the supposed myth of nations, claiming that 'nations are not inscribed into the nature of things, they do not constitute a political version of the doctrine of natural kinds, nor were national states the manifest ultimate destiny of ethnic or cultural groups'. He denies that nations are natural formations.

In order to discuss the nation, we also need to consider the role of the state. Keating (2001) describes how states and nations have been around for a long time, but that the nation-state as we know it today is a product of the last two hundred years. Gellner (1983: 3) explains that when discussing the state, we must begin with Weber's celebrated definition of it, as 'that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence'. Heywood (2007: 154) offers an alternative description of a nation-state: 'a sovereign political association within which citizenship and nationality overlap; one nation within a single state'. It is common to use the terms nation and state interchangeably, but the condition of a nation being coterminous with the state is relatively rare. A prime example of this is the United Kingdom, where at least three

nations, and part of a fourth, are submerged within the larger nation-state. Very few states are nationally homogenous, and multinational states may suffer from resultant challenges (Keating, 2001).

1.2. Paradigms of nationalism

There are numerous debates within the field of nationalism about the origins of nations. Smith (2000: 27) proposes that in the past, 'many scholars and most of the educated public assumed that nations and nationalism were, if not primordial, at least perennial'. Nations can be found everywhere in historical record. Most scholars would now appear to have abandoned this old perennialist paradigm in favour of modernism, which assumes nations were created in the wake of the industrial revolution. However, modernism has not been uncontested. In particular, it has come under attack from those historians who still regard at least some of today's nations and even their nationalisms, as pre-modern (ibid). It is important to identify the precise hallmarks of these identified paradigms that have dominated nationalist discourse.

1.2.1. Primordialism

Historically, the earliest of nationalist debates centred on the organic quality of nations and nationalism, otherwise known as primordialism. Primordialism is described as the 'idea that certain cultural attributes and formations possess a prior, overriding, and determining influence on people's lives, one that is largely immune to "rational" interest and political calculation' (Smith, 2000: 5). These cultural attributes such as kinship, language, religion and customs, as well as historical territory tend to give rise to that sense of communal belonging we call ethnicity and ethnic community, forming the basis for the subsequent development of nations and nationalism (ibid). Keating (2001: 4) explains that primordialists believe that 'ethnic identities are deep-rooted and are the cause, albeit not in a strictly determinist manner, of mobilization around the theme of nationalism'.

McCrone (1998: 10) identifies how 'many subscribe to the view that nations are primordial entities embedded in human nature and history which can be identified through distinctive cultures'. A sense of self is bound up in blood, race, language, locality, religion or tradition (Geertz, 1973). A primordialist believes that nations exist in the first order of time, and lie at the root of subsequent processes and developments. With primordialism, the idea of a shared ancestry and common lines of descent implicates the nation as an extended family for its members. Smith (2001: 54) states that 'we as individuals and members of collectivities, feel and believe in the primordality of our *ethnies* and nations'. Connor (1994: 202) however argues that 'myths of origin generally fail to correspond to what we know about actual descent lines'. Especially in the modern era, nations can have several ethnic strains and roots. Nevertheless, Smith (2000) claims that for all of its limitations, cultural primordialism is important, if for no other reason than highlighting the failure of other paradigms to take seriously the symbolic aspects of nationalism.

1.2.2. Perennialism

Smith (2001: 49) states that 'before World War Two, many scholars subscribed to the view that, even if nationalist ideology was recent, nations had always existed in every period of history, and that many nations existed from a time immemorial'. This is encapsulated in the perennialist paradigm. The main facets of perennialist thought include the belief that nations are natural communities, and the paradigm is aided by the popular equation of 'race' or 'ethnicity' with 'nation'. The rise of nationalism is often associated with the decline of religion, with many authors viewing nationalism as a religious surrogate (ibid). Hastings (1997) claims that the very act of translating the Bible into the vernacular turned the reading public into a 'chosen people', encouraging the development of pre-modern nations.

Conversi (2007: 18) explains that perennialists see nations as 'enduring, inveterate, century-long, even millennial phenomena, certainly predating modernity'. Nations are destined for eternity. Perennialism describes two main forms of nation formation (Smith, 2001). The continuous nation has had a long, uninterrupted history and can trace its

origins back to the Middle Ages. Recurrent nations are subtly different. Particular nations are historical, but change with time. 'The 'nation-in-general', as a category of human association, is perennial and ubiquitous, because it reappears in every period of history and on every continent on the globe' (ibid: 50). This implies a recurrence of the same type of collective cultural identity. Hastings (1997) presents the case of England as a strong argument for the perennialist paradigm. England has been noted in history since the fourteenth century, demonstrating continuity in the use of the term nation.

1.2.3. Modernism

In contrast to perennialist interpretations, Hechter (2000: 3) claims that 'there is much agreement that nationalism is a creature of the last two centuries, but no consensus about the causes of its modernity'. McCrone (1998: 10) discusses the essence of the modernist case, arguing that 'nationalism is a cultural and political ideology of "modernity", a crucial vehicle in the great transformation from traditionalism to industrialism, and in particular the making of the modern state'. Modernists believe that nationalism is a social construction, emerging around the time of the political and economic revolutions of the eighteenth century. Hobsbawm's (1983) theory of 'invention of tradition', Anderson's (2006) work on 'imagined communities' and Gellner's (1964) analysis of high cultures are viewed as essential works on nationalism. Stone and Risova (2007: 32) describe how they view the ideology of nationalism as a 'relatively recent social phenomenon, inextricably linked to the forces of modernity'. The modern study of nationalism arguably began with Gellner's work in the 1960s, providing us with an ideal starting point for an analysis of the modernist paradigm (McCrone, 1998).

Gellner (1964: 169) famously stated, 'nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness, it invents nations where they do not exist'. He believed that belonging to a nation is 'not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such' (Gellner, 1983: 6). He further states,

Nationalism is not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of

social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state (ibid: 48).

The key facet of Gellner's work is the impact of a 'high culture' on the formation of nationalism: 'with the passage from agricultural to industrial society, a "high", scientific culture, carried by standardised national languages becomes an all-pervasive requisite' (Conversi, 2007: 19). For Gellner (1999: 33), 'the central fact of the modern world is that the role of culture in human life was totally transformed by the cluster of economic and scientific changes since the seventeenth century'. He believed that what really mattered was the ability to incorporate a high culture, defined as 'a literate, codified culture which permits context-free communication, community membership and acceptability' (ibid: 33). This, he claimed, is what constitutes a nation.

Anderson's most distinguished work focuses on imagined communities and was first published in 1983. He believes that 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined' (2006: 6). The perspective adopted by Anderson (ibid: 6) is that 'the nation is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'. He goes on to further state,

The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained hierarchal dynastic realm. It is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. It is this fraternity that makes it possible, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill as willingly die for such limited imaginings (ibid: 7).

His argument is that throughout life, members of a large community will almost certainly never meet everyone in that community, yet they perceive themselves to be connected to them despite never having had direct contact. He states, 'societies are sociological entities of such firm and stable reality that their members can even be described as passing each other on the street, without ever becoming acquainted, and still be connected' (ibid: 25).

Essential for Anderson in the development of new imagined communities was the emergence of what he terms 'print capitalism'. He claims that 'what made new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity' (Anderson, 2006: 42). For Anderson, it was almost an accident that these new print languages were set in existing political territories. However, print language enabled members of the same nation to read the same news, thus feeling connected with other members of the nation whom they were never likely to meet, and so conjuring up an 'imagined' national consciousness. Anderson stressed that the 'most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities' (ibid: 133). He goes on to say, 'it is always a mistake to treat languages in the way that certain nationalist ideologues treat them – as emblems of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk-dances, and the rest' (ibid: 133). For Anderson, print languages were developed due to industrialisation, modernisation and the growth of capitalism, and thus resulted in uniting people into an imaginary community, the nation.

Hobsbawm's (1983) work on invented traditions discussed 'traditions' which appear or are claimed to be old, but are in fact often quite recent in origin, and sometimes invented. He states, "'invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past' (ibid: 1). Hobsbawm believed that 'most of the occasions when people become conscious of citizenship as such remain associated with symbols and semi-ritual practices (for instance, elections) most of which are historically novel and largely invented: flags, images, ceremonies and music' (ibid: 12). It is this linking of national symbols with practices which aids the development of an 'invented tradition'. Hobsbawm suggests however that despite the claim that nations are ancient, they are in fact modern, and the practices which hint at their antiquity are in fact traditions invented in order to make the community believe in the historicity of the nation.

The modernist paradigm, despite being the most prevalent, is also heavily criticised. For Grosby and Leoussi (2007: 6), 'modernisation ignores the historical and symbolic expressions or representations of the collectivity and its self-consciousness not only in the past, but also in the present'. Critiquing Hobsbawm's concept of 'invented traditions', McCrone (1998: 44) explains that 'the inventing of traditions is nowadays treated with due suspicion, because we are better aware of the ways in which historical accounts are used as tools in the contemporary creation of political identities'. McCrone (ibid) also claims that nationalism frequently predated industrialism, so that to attribute nationalism to industrialism would be inaccurate; industrialisation is not a prerequisite for nationalism. In addition, 'it is difficult to argue for a causal link between industrialisation and the development of mass education systems' on which Gellner's theory of 'high culture' seems to depend (ibid: 82). Smith (2001) identifies three problems with modernist theories; their generality, their materialism and the idea that nations and nationalism are the product of modernisation. He explains that this approach systematically overlooks the persistence of both ethnic ties and cultural sentiments in many parts of the world, and their significance for large numbers of people.

1.3. The civic/ethnic dichotomy

Following the introduction of theories of nationalism, we can now look at types of nationalism. Hans Kohn's (1967) dichotomy of Eastern and Western nationalisms is described by Smith (2001) as still the most celebrated and influential. The differences between East era and West era cultures were the starting point for the dichotomy. As Smith describes,

Kohn argued that Western forms of nationalism were based on the idea that the nation was a rational association of citizens bound by common laws and a shared territory, whereas Eastern varieties were based on a belief in common culture and ethnic origins, and as such tended to regard the nation as an organic, seamless whole' (ibid: 39).

This theory has now been developed into the categories of civic nationalism, based on the Western form, and ethnic nationalism, developed from Eastern nationalism. Keating

(2001: 8) insists on two points when making a distinction between civic and ethnic nationalisms,

1. These are ideal types, that is, abstractions against which to measure reality and must not be taken as descriptions of any given movement.
2. These categories are normative and value-laden. Nationalist movements can contain both civic and ethnic nationalisms. Civic nationalism has a broader appeal, since it does not exclude anyone in the society, though lacks the emotive edge of ethnic nationalism.

That said, it is worth commenting on the essential features of these nationalisms, albeit in their abstract forms.

Ethnic nationalism is based on ideas of ethnic descent and blood ties to a nation. Smith (2007: 326) states that ethnic nationalism 'sees a world composed of a multitude of ethnic communities and nations, disparate power centres, each of them unique in terms of size, extent, resources and values'. Ethnic nations are communities of presumed common ancestry and shared descent, with accompanying myths and historical memories (ibid). Nations are thus seen as unique, indigenous 'communities of historic culture and shared destiny, embedded in ancestral homelands and recognized by distinctive public cultures and common laws and customs rooted in ethno-national history' (ibid: 326). However, Keating (2001: 5) comments, 'the fluid and instrumental quality of ethnic identity means that ethnic nationalism cannot serve as a universalist doctrine since the boundaries of the ethnic groups are always in contention'. Ethnic nationalism is an exclusive nationalism, harbouring the belief that one can only belong to the nation one was born into.

According to concept of civic nationalism, nations are not rooted in ethnic descent but on political organization. Smith (2007: 325) explains that civic nations are 'based on the voluntary association of individual citizens, who agree to live according to common values and laws, which are essentially utilitarian and instrumental, and whose relationship to the state is direct and unmediated'. The guiding principles for a civic nation include uniformity of law, and equality before the law (ibid). Smith (ibid: 325) writes, 'the civic idea of nationhood is profoundly political: it is predicated on the union

of nation and state, and on a political type of nationalism'. In civic nationalism, the nation itself is seen as an autonomous legal-political community, defined by common territory, shared civic history and common laws, its members united by a common public culture and political symbols such as flags, anthems, assemblies and public days of commemoration (Viroli, 1995). For Keating (2001: 6), 'civic nationalism is a collective enterprise of its members but is rooted in acquired rather than ascriptive identity'. In a civic nation, anyone can become a member of the national community.

For Smith (2007: 335),

The domains of landscape, language, ethno-history, and public religion and ritual reveal how ethnic traditions and symbols infuse and give meaning to wider national identities, even in national states that are in their own eyes most determinedly "civic" in orientation'.

In reality, most empirical cases of national community are composed of elements of both models, albeit in varying manner and degree (ibid). A poststructuralist framework would reject the concept of an ethnic/civic nationalism divide as a false dichotomy. By stringently segregating and dividing society into categories, such as ethnic/civic (or man/woman) we only further obscure the problem by creating false dichotomies. Otero (2007: 74) describes how, 'on the relation between social conditions and individuals, poststructuralist scholars have been skeptic about the role of structural conditions in determining collective action'. Therefore, it is important to regard the nation in poststructural terms, and not as one single expression of nationalism or another. Indeed, nationalism, as we shall now see, operates on a spectrum stretching from the most climatic moments in human history to the most commonplace elements of human experience.

1.4. Nationalism and warfare

Nairn (1977) refers to the nation as 'the modern Janus' to contrast nationalism's two sides: a regressive, jingoistic, militaristic "warfare state" visage versus a progressive community-building "welfare state" countenance. Holsti (1996: 58) suggests that 'war has been a constant companion of the state-making process in European history', and

many states in the modern era have been created out of war. Hutchinson (2007) explains that the study of warfare is therefore central to an understanding of nation formation. He claims, 'it is hardly an exaggeration to say that nationalism, in both its civic and ethnic varieties, was born in war' (ibid: 42). Civic nationalism developed from the French revolution, whereas ethnic nationalism is elaborated in Fichte's 'Addresses to the German Nation' (ibid). Those who believe in the formation of nations through warfare contend that the nation is founded on organised violence.

Political realists believe the driving force behind war is an increasingly competitive and militaristic state system (Hutchinson, 2007). As Rousseau understood, each nation-state must competitively arm itself against the threat of war, and as such, the price for a system of sovereign states is permanent insecurity and occasional war (Holsti, 1996). Despite Kant believing that if the people rule, there can be no wars, war as a means of political action, conflict resolution or uncontrolled violence is still prevalent today (ibid). The Swedish slogan 'one soldier, one rifle, one vote' clearly identifies the relationship between political citizenship and the willingness to sacrifice one's life (Hutchinson, 2007). However, mass death in war is far less a demonstration of collective will than of the coercive powers of the state (ibid).

Furthermore, it is worth considering what type of nation a person is willing to die for. For example, are people willing to lay down their lives for a more civic nation? Does the nation have to be considered in more ethnic terms in order to instigate feelings of quasi-familial ties? Political leaders in war will often appeal to the idea of defending a homeland, and to the concept of the nation as a family. If the nation is perceived to be ethnic, a greater feeling of kinship is attached to it, thus making it easier for men (and some women) to lay down their lives for their alleged extended family. However, as argued earlier, it is actually impossible to distinguish between an ethnic and civic nation, with most nations being a combination of the two.

1.5. Banal nationalism

Nationalism is not limited to the extreme and violent domain of warfare, but is also incorporated into mundane, everyday life practices. In everyday thinking, nationalism is often considered in negative terms, involving national struggles or extremist right-wing politics. As we have seen, it has been claimed that nations are created in warfare, implying images of bloodshed and sacrifice in the name of the nation. However, there is another side to nationalism. The term banal nationalism was introduced to describe 'the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced' (Billig, 1995: 6). Billig (ibid) explains that there exists a continual reminder of nationhood in established Western nations. In many discreet ways, the citizens of a nation are continually reminded of their nationality, whether this is through the singing of a national anthem, or seeing a national flag hanging outside a public building. Despite the view that nation-states are declining, discussed later, Billig (ibid: 8) explains, 'nationhood is still being reproduced: it can still call for ultimate sacrifices; and, daily, its symbols and assumptions are flagged'.

In support of his argument, Billig (1995) offers a discussion of the differences between the waved and the unwaved flag. He claims that the 'unwaved flag, which is so forgettable, is at least as important as the memorable moments of flag-waving' (ibid: 10). In addition, he highlights the role of the press in maintaining a sense of nationhood, explaining how British national newspapers address their readers as members of the nation, and continually point to the national homeland as the home of the readers. Billig (ibid) interprets these reminders as operating beyond the level of conscious awareness. Ordinary hints of nationality act to further imprint the nation onto the people, so that it is important not to discount the subtle displays of nationhood that citizens encounter daily.

1.6. National identity

The terms national identity and nationality are often used interchangeably. In fact, nationality implies a legal definition of identity, a formal requirement either through a parent's heritage or via qualification from residing in a country for numerous years, and

thus is similar to citizenship. However, national identity represents a more subjective definition of one's relationship to the nation. Which nation one identifies with may differ from one's place of formal identity, or nationality. For example, the component countries that constitute the United Kingdom all have strong histories and traditions that contribute to the formation of national identities at odds with or additional to a British nationality. Here we will focus on national identity.

Cubitt (1998: 1) claims that 'we live in a nationalised world. The concept of the nation is central to the dominant understandings both of political community and of personal identity'. According to Parekh (2000), every political community needs to develop a view of its identity, to define what kind of community it is and how it differs from others. This serves to unite members around a common self-understanding, and gives them a common sense of belonging. Smith (2001: 18) defines national identity as:

The continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identification of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements.

National identity is often considered the most fundamental collective identity. Smith (1991: 143) believes that 'other types of collective identity – class, gender, race, religion – may overlap or combine with national identity but they rarely succeed in undermining its hold, though they may influence its direction'.

McCrone (1998: 29) explains how 'we cannot discuss ethnicity and nationality without focusing on the process of identification, on the active negotiation in which people take part as they construct who they are and who they want to be'. However, it is not as simple as to think of national identity only as an individual identity, but also as a collective identity. As Calhoun (1994: 9) suggests,

We are distinct from each other, and often strive to distinguish ourselves further. Yet each dimension of distinction is apt at least tacitly also to establish commonality with a set of others similarly distinguished.

For a political community, identity is paramount to forming a conception of the kind of community it is, what it stands for, its originality, and how it differs from others (Parekh, 1999).

Miller (1995: 42) claims that 'one is forced to bear a national identity, regardless of choice'. However, despite Miller's description of an inevitable imposed relationship between an individual and a national identity, Scheff (1994) believes that the urge to belong may well be one of the most powerful forces in the human world. What these two statements taken together imply is that not only does everyone have to have a national identity, they also want one. It is this desire to belong to a nation which may account for the strong emotional attachment attributed to one's nation. According to Hechter (2000: 94), 'that people are more liable to make sacrifices – including the ultimate sacrifice, their own lives – for their nation than for many other kinds of groups is ample testament to the power of national identity'. The willingness to lay down one's life for one's country highlights the strong emotional attachment members bestow on their nations.

Smith (1991) identifies Rousseau as the architect of national identity. Rousseau (1915, cited in Smith, 2001: 27) famously stated, 'the first rule which we have to follow is that of national character: every people has, or must have, a character, if it lacks one, we must start by endowing it with one'. What is implied here is that 'to each nation there corresponds a distinct historical culture, a singular way of thinking, acting and communicating, which all the members share (at least politically) and which non-members do not, and as non-members, cannot share' (Smith, 2001: 27). What Rousseau puts forward is a primordial way of thinking about a national identity, with each nation being historically culturally distinctive and unique.

Calhoun (1994) believes that nationality is not primordial but modern and constructed. Similarly, Parekh (1999: 66) states,

National identity is nothing to do with national essences, spirit or soul...for no such thing exists, nor with what the nineteenth century writers called national character or culture, for no modern society whose membership fluctuates and

whose members take pride in self-determination can have a uniform character, and no modern culture is an undifferentiated and monolithic whole.

And so, national identity is described in modern societies as ‘a matter of moral and emotional identification with a particular community based on a shared loyalty to its constitutive principles and participation in its collective self-understanding’ (ibid: 69). According to Miller (1995: 35), ‘national identities typically contain a considerable element of myth’. In addition, Miller (ibid) identifies that the role of myths is to provide reassurance of the history of the nation, as well as performing a moralizing role, by emphasizing a glorious past.

Another interesting approach to the formation of national identity is proposed in Billig’s (1995) discussion of banal nationalism. He argues that nationalism is reproduced in everyday life. He states, ‘an identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life (ibid: 8). The habitual assumptions about belonging that permeate the media assume that we (the viewers or readers) are part of the nation (Edensor, 2002). Edensor uses the idea of banal nationalism and applies it to the relationship between national identity and popular culture. Both Billig and Edensor argue that the majority of work on nations, nationalism and national identity only focuses on ‘the spectacular, the “traditional” and the official’ (Edensor, 2002: 17). However, according to Edensor (ibid: 17), we must not forget that, like nationalism itself, ‘national identity is grounded in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and practical knowledge’.

1.6.1. National identities

Smith (1991) admits the complexities of national identity. He explains,

The nation, in fact, draws on elements of other kinds of collective identity, which accounts not only for the way in which national identity can be combined with these other types of identity – class, religious or ethnic – but also for the chameleon-like permutations of *nationalism*, the ideology, with other ideologies like liberalism, fascism and communism (ibid: 14).

For Smith (ibid: 15), ‘it is this very multidimensionality that has made national identity such a flexible and persistent force in modern life and politics’. It would be incorrect to

suggest that any person possesses a single identity. For example, one cannot only be a woman, or only English. Therefore, it is essential to identify the complex nature of identity. Each of us has multiple identities, associated with our immediate family through to the widest circle of humanity, and in a free society, many of these identities are optional (Smith, 2001). McCrone (1998) even challenges us to look at national identities as multifaceted and plural, explaining that by doing so we begin to see that competing identities will constantly emerge and challenge each other.

Individual and collective identities have many components, and it is hard to classify which, if any, component may be treated as primary (Day and Thompson, 2004). Smith (1992: 59) explains that,

However dominant the nation and its national identification, human beings retain a multiplicity of allegiances in the contemporary world. They have multiple identities. These identifications may reinforce national identities or cross-cut them.

It is important to make a distinction between collective cultural identities and individual identities. Smith (ibid: 59) adds that,

For the individual, identity is usually “situational” if not always optional. That is to say, individuals identify themselves and are identified by others in different ways according to the situations in which they find themselves’.

In contrast, collective identities tend to be persistent and pervasive (ibid). It is assumed that because they are more intense, they are less subject to rapid changes, even when relatively large numbers of individuals no longer feel their power, something which is particularly true of national identities today (ibid).

As Hall (2003: 234) describes,

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, with the new cultural practices they represent, we should think instead of identity as ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term ‘cultural identity’ lays claim.

Poststructuralism can help to explain how individuals are plural subjects with multiple identities. Thus, Collinson (2006: 181) argues that 'while identity has often been viewed in the literature as a singular, unitary and coherent entity, post-structuralists emphasize its multiple, shifting, fragmented, and non-rational character'. A poststructuralist approach stresses that identity is not a naturally given category, and challenges essentialist notions that individuals can have harmonious identities (Calhoun, 1994). Yashar (2005: 13) describes how,

Poststructuralism opened the door to see ethnic identities as primary and purposive without arguing that they are primordial or instrumental by nature...indigenous identity is, from this perspective, both constituted by social conditions as well as renegotiated by individuals.

Thus, poststructuralism encourages us to consider a multitude of factors that impact on a person's identity, or identities. In a poststructuralist framework, humans are defined as plural subjects, with the potential for multiple identities.

1.6.2. Performing national identities

It seems that poststructuralist theory has had little influence on works on nationalism compared to gender. However, Edensor (2002) does draw upon elements of poststructuralist theory, namely Judith Butler. Although Butler's work will be discussed in much more detail later, it is important to highlight her influence on the work of Edensor. Adopting a poststructuralist framework, Edensor (ibid: 69) identified ways in which national identities are '(re)produced by using the metaphor of performance'. The concept of performance, borrowed from Goffman (1959) and later Butler (1990), is a useful metaphor 'since it allows us to look at the ways in which identities are enacted and reproduced, informing and (re)constructing a sense of collectivity' (ibid: 69). However, for Edensor (ibid), performance can be both purposive and unreflexive. He states:

There are roles which we are conscious of at certain times and not others and we undertake actions which are not governed by consciousness by which might give rise to self-awareness in unfamiliar contexts. Certainly, particular kinds of performance are intended to draw attention to the self, are a vehicle for

transmitting identity, and others are decoded by others as denoting identity irrespective of the actor's intentions. (ibid: 72).

Edensor (ibid) explains that the most obvious and recognisable ways in which national identity is performed are at those instances when the nation is elevated in public display, 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm, 1983). Edensor (ibid: 73) goes to explain how specific ceremonies 'ape the trappings of antiquity even if of contemporary origin', and serve to 'inscribe history on space'. There are symbolic spaces in which national identities are played out, including national landmarks and symbolic places, including sports grounds. Repetitive performances result in memory and identity becoming inscribed on the body, thus, performing a national identity results in that identity becoming part of the performer. For Edensor (ibid: 88), like Billig (1995), 'national identity depends for its power upon the habitual performances of everyday life'. He concludes:

In order to retain their power, performative norms need to be continually enacted, whether these are the spectacular disciplinary performances of national identity or the unreflexive habits of everyday life...This continual re-enaction means that rather than being fixed, performance is an interactive and contingent process. (ibid: 99)

Edensor (ibid) also notes the way in which global processes increasingly penetrate everyday life. This will now be explored in more detail.

1.7. Postnationalism and globalisation

When considering multiple identities, it is important to consider that a person might identify with a political unit bigger than the nation, such as Europe. Globalisation processes have been heralded as a possible catalyst for the end of nationalism, with countries now, on the surface, so similar in appearance and action. Holton (1998: 2) suggests globalisation is 'the key idea of one single world or human society , in which all regional, national, local elements are tied together in one interdependent whole'. Post nationalism is a concept that considers the end of nationalism as we move into a world of

global communication, as well as the potential to move all over the world. Smith (2001: 132) states that:

The idea that postmodern society is also 'post-national', with a concomitant attenuation of national sentiments and a growing disenchantment with nationalist ideologies, is predicated on the thesis of the rise of a cosmopolitan global culture which will increasingly subsume and erode national cultures and identities.

As Koopmans and Statham (1999: 645) state, and as we will see in the case of the United Kingdom, 'immigration is invariably seen as one of the main driving forces behind both the external erosion of sovereignty, and the internal cultural differentiation of liberal nation-states'. The emergence of increasingly culturally diverse nation-states might be taken by some as evidence of a transition from the ethnic to the civic nation. In reality, however, the consequences of large-scale migration simply highlight the practical inadequacy of that theoretical distinction. Mass migration and rising inter-marriage rates result in communities that are culturally mixed, and as a consequence, modern nations no longer have one face (Smith, 2001). Globalization encourages growing cultural diversity, resulting in diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties (Maguire, 1994). Thus, in a world of global brands, every nation begins to look the same. Smith (2001) explains that this global culture is ultimately based on electronic mass communications. However, according to Smith (ibid: 136), 'no electronic technology of communications and its virtual creations could answer to the emotional and psychological needs of the 'global citizens' of the future'.

It is evident that in the twenty-first century, nationalism is still present. As McCrone (1998: 173) states that 'nationalism shows no sign of dying', explaining that 'being both global and local is a perfectly logical paradox'. Nationalism is essential to the workings of modern societies, providing the 'ideological cement which binds people to the state and to civil society' (ibid: 181). A global community could not demand the same kind of emotional attachments, and as such, the reality is that people are unlikely to lay down their lives for a multi-national corporation or global organization.

Now we have considered the nation, nationalism and national identities in general, what will follow is a discussion on nationalism and national identities in a specific context: England.

2. Historical and contemporary issues in England and the United Kingdom

Following discussion of the general debates on nationalism and national identities, it is now necessary to examine England's national history, and explore the concept of an English national identity. So, who are the English? This is a question that is still as pertinent today as it was seventy years ago, when it first began to be considered. It is an inquiry that was first made by Hans Kohn in 1940, and again by George Orwell in 1953, but one that was then left relatively untouched until the 1990s and 2000s, notably with work by Kearney (1995), Hastings (1997), Colls (2002), and Kumar (2003). It is important to note that it is not within the remit of this study to analyse in depth the complex arguments concerning the origin of the English nation, although it is essential to make reference to those debates. Central to the concept of Englishness is the complexity surrounding the relationship between the English nation and the nation-state of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Thus, it is essential to understand the history of England, as well as the development of the union of England with Wales, Scotland and Ireland that resulted in the United Kingdom. As Bond, Jeffery and Rosie (2010: 463) explain,

The contemporary status of England and Englishness must be understood not only through comparison with other parts of the UK but, equally importantly, through relation to the broader – and to some degree overlapping – question of Britishness.

2.1. England and/or Great Britain

Historically, the English are descended from peoples throughout Europe. Oman (1972) describes how, aside from the first primitive settlers, the first wave of invaders, the Celts (also known as Gaels, and some generations later, Britons) arrived, some seven centuries prior to the birth of Christ. The Gaels are the ancestors of the Irish and certain Scots, and

the Britons of the English and the Welsh. Following that, we see invasions by the Romans, the Angles and the Saxons, the Danes, and later the Normans (ibid). Colls (2002) identifies the Anglo-Saxons as central to the development of England as a nation, establishing the first codifications of customary law in the early seventh century.

According to Kumar (2003), the first kings of 'Engla Land' begin in 928, although he questions whether in fact this actually constituted an English nation. Often considered essential for a nation is the widespread use of a common language. However, in England it was not until the fourteenth century that English was established as the common language for all classes (Kumar, 2003). Even then, like the English people, the English language could not be described as pure in form. The English language that developed was distinctly different from Old English, which was in use prior to the Norman Conquest. The new form of English had distinctly French, Greek and Latin influences (Green, 2007). Indeed, Green (ibid: xi) claims that 'over 60% of English words have Greek or Latin roots'. Following the establishment of the English language, Kumar (2003) claims that there were signs of a growing sense of nationhood in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However he urges us to distinguish between this development and the ideological nation of the nineteenth century and questions whether there was a 'fully fledged sense of the nation', a 'feeling shared by rulers and the ruled alike of belonging to a political community' (ibid: 59).

It was not until the late sixteenth century that we start to see the expansion of England into the other territories on the island. In 1591 Wales was brought under English control. Following this, in 1603, the crowns of England and Scotland were joined, with King James the Sixth of Scotland becoming King James the First of England. Following this, the Act of Union in 1707 saw the unification of the English and Scottish parliaments. Once Scotland was linked to England and Wales, it was announced there would be one United Kingdom by the name of Great Britain (Guibernau and Goldblatt, 2000). What emerged was an 'embryonic British nation-state but no British nation' (ibid: 130). With the Act of Union of 1801, Ireland joined Great Britain, and the islands became known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The subsequent splitting of Ireland into Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State, later the Republic of Ireland, in 1921 resulted in the adoption of

the name which still exists today, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (now referred to as Britain or the UK).

The overseas British Empire originated in the sixteenth century. However, it was not until the seventeenth century, in the early years of the United Kingdom (of England, Scotland and Wales), that the Empire began to take shape. The British Empire spread as far as America, Asia, and Africa, and at its peak covered a fifth of the world's surface, and incorporated a quarter of its population (Kumar, 2000). During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British and more specifically English men and women imagined themselves at the centre of a great and powerful empire.

Guibernau and Goldblatt (2000) explain that essential to a national identity are cultural content and symbols, through which the national community can be imagined and represented to itself. In the UK, however, it was not until the middle decades of the 18th century that a national anthem ('God Save the King') was acquired, followed by royal sponsored institutions such as the British Museum, and even later, the Union flag. Guibernau and Goldblatt (ibid: 132) further state that,

Britain was never a union of equals and Britishness was always more closely aligned with Englishness, and landed aristocratic Englishness, than it was a genuine hybrid of the English and Celts or a mass, popular nationalism.

This is a key point in discussions on England and Great Britain, wherein Englishness became almost synonymous with Britishness. The Scots, Welsh and Irish all have their own strong sense of national identity, often situated in opposition to the English. Thus, no matter to what degree the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish submerged their identities into a common Britishness, it remained difficult to ignore the fact that Britain was essentially a multinational entity (Kumar, 2003).

It would appear that the confusion between Britain and England stems in part from the fact that England was an imperial nation in a double sense (Kumar, 2006), with the creation of a domestic land empire, Great Britain, by taking over other nations in the Northwest European archipelago, and the subsequent acquisition of an overseas empire. As Colls (2002: 162) claims,

If the nation is really an imagined nation, then neither seas nor continents can get in its way. The empire brought England into a relationship with much of the world, and that world was influential in how England saw itself. There was more to the identity of England, therefore, than England.

However, this extensive overseas empire was then gradually lost throughout the twentieth century, most notably after the Second World War. As the Empire had been so central in most people's imagining, the break-up represented a challenge to how people now viewed an English and/or British identity. For Kumar (2000: 4), 'English nationalism, past and present, is the nationalism of an imperial state – one that carries the stamp of its imperial past even when the empire has gone'. It is this imperial nationalism that he believes explains why the English themselves may not think they have a nationalism at all.

Kumar (2003a) states that with Britain's empire gone, with it went Britain's world role. However, the English now faced a more serious challenge, the 'loss of the "inner empire"', Great Britain, which had sustained them and given them a sense of purpose for nearly three centuries' (ibid: 16). In recent years we have witnessed the restoration of a Scottish Parliament, and the setting up of Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies, leaving England as the only nation in Great Britain that does not have a devolved parliament or assembly. Whether or not there is actually a break-up of Britain, as has been predicted (Nairn, 1977), this development highlights a challenge to the English, who, as the core of the inner empire, have for a long time felt neither the need nor the desire to define a separate national identity (Kumar, 2003a). Edmunds and Turner (2001) describe how the devolution of powers to the peripheral nations of the UK has so far left the question of a post-British English identity unanswered. Nevertheless, in the wake of the lost empire of Great Britain and with the threat of the break-up of Britain looming, the English are in the process of redefining themselves (Kumar, 2000).

2.2. The English

It was thought, initially, that by adopting the 'mother name' of Britain, the Scots and the English could set aside their differences and, in so doing - and without giving up their

separate identities - construct an overarching British identity. Heath and Roberts (2008: 4) support this, identifying a British identity as a relatively recent construct which 'was gradually superimposed on earlier national identities of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish'. However, it is claimed that what developed after the union of England and Scotland was an 'Anglo-British' identity, in which the English element was primary. Kumar (2003: 7) states,

For over 1000 years England has been the largest and most powerful state in the British Isles. It is not surprising that England became, and remains for many people at home and abroad, a synecdochical expression not just for the island of Britain but for the whole archipelago. Not just in everyday conversation but in journalistic use and in scholarly writing the confusion of 'England' with 'Britain' and 'Britain' with 'England' is so common and pervasive that quotation is largely superfluous.

Whilst the Scots, Irish and Welsh all have a strong sense of national identity, as well as established nationalist cultural and political movements, the English appear to have been more than happy to be submerged into the British identity.

Kumar (2003: 172) notes,

The peoples of Britain acknowledged British citizenship, a British 'state identity'; but in their nationhood – in the 'cultural' as opposed to the 'political' realm – they remained diverse, as Welsh, Scottish and Irish nations.

McCrone (1997: 584) agrees, stating that 'Britishness sat lightly on top of the constituent nations as a kind of state-identity'. Indeed, there are several reasons why the English may have been keen to have their identity submerged into that of Britain. As the majority population of Great Britain, and with expressions of nationalism in the 'Celtic fringe', it was left to the English to cultivate and thereafter preserve the remains of a British identity. Crick (1991) argues this, believing that the English actually submerged their national identity in order to hold the British state together. It made sense for them to do so. As the wealthiest, most numerous and most powerful group within the United Kingdom, the English were aware of the need to restrain their own claims and to mute assertions of ethnic identity, in order to keep the union together (Kumar, 2000).

Kumar (2003: 235) goes on to say,

The unthinking, unconsciously arrogant English habit of saying 'England' when they mean 'Britain' actually hides from them the fact that there are very few institutions which are clearly English as opposed to British.

This is true of the monarchy, armed forces and the broadcasting service, to name but a few. In England, we fly with British Airways, watch the British Broadcasting Corporation, heat our houses with British Gas and join the British Army. In England, therefore, the concept of Britishness forms a key part of social and economic structure. However, here it is important not to ignore that this is also the case for the Scots, the Northern Irish and the Welsh, who will also fly BA, watch the BBC and join the British Army. Whilst we accept the existence of dual identities (at least) throughout the UK, arguably these have been understood as such in the Celtic fringe more so than in England.

Also significant in this respect is the absence of an official English national anthem, with the anthem of the United Kingdom often being adopted, for example, on sporting occasions. Although Scotland does not have a separate, official national anthem, 'Flower of Scotland' is often considered the nation's anthem, featuring at most international sporting events. Wales also has a separate national anthem, and again although not established by law, 'Land of My Fathers' has a tradition of over 100 years. The situation in Ireland and Northern Ireland is more complicated, with each having its own anthem ('The Soldiers Song' and 'A Londonderry Air' respectively) for sporting events, as well as 'Ireland's Call' for occasions when players from both the north and south of Ireland compete together in Rugby Union. In general, English sporting representatives compete with the British anthem ('God Save the Queen') ringing in their ears. In the Commonwealth Games, since 1930, England has used the song 'Land of Hope and Glory'. However, 2010 witnessed a change to the anthem to be played at the Commonwealth Games. A public poll, conducted by Commonwealth Games England, resulted in 'Jerusalem' beating 'God Save the Queen' and 'Land of Hope and Glory' to become the anthem to be played at the event. Since 2003, 'Jerusalem' has also been used to accompany the English cricket team on to the pitch. However, does any of this confirm the development of a separate English national identity?

2.3. Challenges to Englishness and Britishness: Immigration and the EU

As previously discussed, ideas about the concepts of nationality and national identity are problematic in Great Britain. Citizens of the four constituent nations of the UK may hold a British passport. This passport will state 'British citizen', thus categorizing everyone in possession of such a passport as British. Colls (2002) explains that a historic view of British nationality was that it involved some sort of personal bonding between the subject and the monarch, through being born into the monarch's dominions, whether at home or abroad. He describes the introduction of passports for all British subjects in 1858, and explains that 'it was not until 1870 that the possibility that persons might wish to renounce their nationality was formerly recognized' (ibid: 159). It is important to make the distinction here between what it means to hold a passport as a signifier of belonging to a particular place (one's nationality), and a subjective feeling of belonging (one's national identity). Indeed, Kumar (2003: 238) describes 'Englishness as a form of ethnic or cultural nationalism, versus a British civic nationalism'.

However, according to Colls (2002: 159), 'in the twentieth century, large-scale immigration from a troubled and shifting world shocked the nationality issue into life'. 'Alien Acts', starting in 1914, were put in place to control immigration to Great Britain by people from outside of the Empire. Those who did come to settle were faced with a dilemma, 'assimilate or go' (ibid: 159). The Nationality Act tried to render those who had formerly lived in the Empire, on settlement, full citizens of Britain. However, this was not without difficulties. Colls (ibid: 160) states that living in a country requires more than legal entitlement to do so, and as such, black and Asian immigration faced opposition from much of the 'indigenous white nation'. The 1960s brought controlled immigration exercises, with quotas being introduced, as well as tests of ancestral links. There was 'confusion over who people were when they arrived, and who they should try and become' (ibid: 161).

It was not until the 1970s that there emerged a new challenge to traditional conceptions of Englishness and Britishness, where a truly "multicultural" or "multiracial" England is introduced' (Colls, 2002: 143). For most people born before the 1950s, it would have been difficult to conceive of England as anything other than an exclusively white country.

Yet with the decline of the British Empire and mass immigration of people from the former colonies to the British Isles, in particular to England, the nation's faces were changing colour. Colls (ibid: 143) goes on to say,

Coming so soon after the loss of Empire, multiculturalism could look like the loss of the national culture and the self-determination that was supposed to go with it. 'Race' became a major domestic issue.

So how did Britain, and especially England, adapt to the changes that were occurring due to immigration? Colls (2002: 150) explains,

In the ethnic field, "subcultural" was dropped for "multicultural" in a nation now suddenly multiplied in the number and awareness of its parallel cultures, its comparisons of parallel cultures, and its sense of difference of identity between parallel cultures.

Whilst the 'new look' England, and Britain, could be seen by some as involving a loss of national culture, others urge us to contemplate that what was, and is, occurring is simply a redefinition of what it means to be English in the twenty-first century. In 2000, The Parekh Report (Parekh, 2000), carried out for the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, was published. The report concluded that fluidity and heterogeneity were now the characteristics of all sections of British culture. To recognise the diversity and changeability of immigrant communities, we must also recognise that the majority culture is constantly evolving. Furthermore, Parekh (2000) explains in the report's introduction that:

Citizens are both individuals and members of particular religious, ethnic, cultural and regional communities. Britain is both a community of citizens and a community of communities, both a liberal and a multicultural society.

Kumar (2003) describes past research showing that while it was common for blacks and Asians to call themselves 'British' – as well as identifying as black, Asian, Muslim etc – they often resisted an identification with 'English'. McCrone (2006) explains that being an imperial white gave easier access to being British. We now know that non-white peoples had 'different and complex relationships to Britishness, depending on how much or how little cultural capital they were able to accumulate' (ibid: 274). Ultimately, being

British meant having British citizenship, and a passport, and this helps to explain why non-white people living in England are much more likely to call themselves British than English (ibid). Kumar (2003: 258) accepts that this may indeed be the case as 'the concept of Englishness often seems inappropriate, since to be English, as the term is in practice used, is to be white'. Furthermore, immigration did not present the only challenge to traditional readings of Englishness.

Colls (2002: 380) explains,

Being part of the EU, being part of a 'globalized' world, being adaptable, and mobile, and multilingual and multicultural, and open and rational and secular and forward-looking and de-centred and amnesic, does not square with the nation as it is.

Throughout the development and expansion of the European Union, challenges to British independence have been met with strong internal opposition. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) gained its first Parliamentary seat in 2008 signifying a growing disillusionment in Britain with the EU. The UKIP describes itself as a libertarian, non-racist party, seeking Britain's withdrawal from the EU. However, the majority of its support comes from England, again highlighting the conflation of Britishness with Englishness.

England in the twenty first century represents a completely different picture to the England of one hundred years ago. The challenges to the traditional notion of what England is, and who the English are, have never been more evident. Nowadays, it would appear that who is English is becoming more and more difficult to distinguish. This leaves the English in a challenging position, as the concept of Englishness modifies and grows, adapting to a nation that is changing before everyone's eyes. For Kumar (2003: 16),

Gone are the cosy assumptions of 'Englishness', with its sleepy villages and ancestral piles. They have gone because the English are not even safe in their homelands, challenged as they are by the rise of Celtic nationalism and by the claims of 'multiculturalism' within English society. And then there is the promise, or threat, of Europe. In whichever direction they look, the English find themselves called upon to reflect upon their identity, and to rethink their position in the

world. The protective walls that shielded them from these questions are all coming down.

Kumar here summarises nicely the challenges faced by the English, and how the English see their nation.

2.4. Is there an English nationalism?

Following consideration of the impact of Great Britain and Britishness on England and Englishness, it is essential to discuss the debates surrounding English nationalism, not least question if one even exists. At present, there are emerging efforts to try to define and describe an English identity, 'one that might enable England to take its place – in Britain or outside it – alongside the other better-defined British nations' (Kumar, 2003, p. 256). Guibernau and Goldblatt (2000) believe that recent uncertainties about Britishness are forcing the English to rediscover and redefine themselves. Despite this, Kumar (2003) explains that it has been common to query English nationalism, even to deny it. He states,

Certainly the term sounds odd in English ears. *Other* nations have nationalism; the English, it has been conventional to say, have patriotism, royalism, jingoism, imperialism – but they do not know nationalism (ibid: 18).

It is this denial which is the probable cause of the lack of research, until recently, on the subject; why investigate a nationalism that the nation itself denies? However, Kumar (2000: 3, original emphasis) claims that 'there *is* such thing as English nationalism'. Certainly, according to McCrone (2006), never has there been such interest in the English question as there is now. In recent years, we have seen a remarkable increase in literature produced on Englishness. Indeed, for Kearney (1995), whereas a few decades ago, research on England and Englishness would have seemed bizarre, now it has become commonplace.

Kumar (2003) claims that towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a 'moment of Englishness'. He states, 'it was largely a cultural movement, responding partly to a sense of the possible decline of empire, partly also to the strong expressions of ethnic and cultural nationalism in other parts of the British Isles and on the European

continent' (ibid: xii). He further argues that this came at a time when English intellectuals and artists, for example historians, composers, poets and novelists, 'for the first time began an inquiry into the character of the English people as a nation – as a collectivity, that is, with a distinct sense of its history, its traditions, its destiny' (ibid: 224). Schools in the early twentieth century adopted a nationalist curriculum, in subjects such as music. The teaching of history also acquired a strongly nationalist, or patriotic, flavour, with teachers encouraged to educate pupils about their own race and national character. In addition, Colls (2002) describes the concept of the English gentleman as central to national imaginings during the late nineteenth century. He explains that the notion of English gentlemanliness was transformed in the education system, stating 'the Victorians took gentlemanliness and turned it into 'manliness' in the public schools' (ibid: 77). 'Until about the end of the nineteenth century, "Britishness" trumped "Englishness" (Kumar, 2000: 20). According to Kumar (2003) it was in the twentieth century that we first started to see the origins of a truly English, rather than Anglo-British, national identity. Kumar explains that this image of Englishness that was defined before the First World War continued after it, and was mostly a cultural rather than a political phenomenon. He states, 'it was an affair of English history, English intellectual and political traditions, English literature and the landscape of England. It did not attempt to erect a political movement of English nationalism' (ibid: 238).

McCrone (2006: 275) explains, 'the problem for the English is that they have come belatedly to accept that they are English (as opposed to British), and are, as we speak, still working through the implications of this'. As such, it has been claimed that there is now a need for the English to develop a more definite sense of themselves, away from the British identity (Kumar, 2003). Research suggesting a decline in British identity (Heath and Roberts, 2008) also highlights the importance for the English to establish an English identity outside of a British identity. Furthermore, there is a growing proportion of people who think of themselves as Scottish, Welsh or English (or none of these) rather than British. This provides evidence of the perceived decline in British identity, as well as an increase in a specific English national identity. However, Heath and Roberts (ibid) also allude to the fact that the majority of British residents continue to have dual identities.

In recent years, some English nationalists have been accused of flag-waving racism, thus further explaining why non-whites may prefer to identify as British and not English. It is worth noting here that not all representations of the St. George's cross are associated explicitly with far-right politics and racism. Aughey (2007: 204) states, 'it may be no coincidence either that English flag-waving has been most dramatically on show at and around those venues which have integrated most efficiently popular culture and commercial success – sporting events'. Consumerism plays a significant role in modern sport, and Aughey (ibid) explains that English merchandise for the 2006 World Cup was estimated to be worth £1.2 billion to manufacturers and retailers. The persistent increase in and use of the cross of St. George by English sports fans could simply be because it is so readily available. However, by Euro 2000, the flag had become powerfully associated with English racism, football hooliganism, violence and xenophobia. The cross of St George has also been adopted by the English Defence League, a nationalist organisation, whose demonstrations, rallies and opposition to the spread of Islam have led to accusations of chauvinism, and further association of the white and red cross of England to violent, white racists.

The elimination of racism is one of the points made by the Parekh Report (Parekh, 2000) when discussing how Britain can adapt to its multiculturalism. The report identifies how England, Scotland and Wales are at a turning point in their history. They could become narrow and inward-looking, with growing rifts between themselves and among their regions and communities, or they could develop as an amalgam of citizens and communities. As well as tackling racism, this could involve a rethinking of the national story and of national identity, and an understanding of the complexity, fluidity and changeability of identities (ibid). However, when discussing the report, Kumar (2003: 258) suggests that while a 'pick-and-mix' attitude to identity 'has some reality in the popular culture of contemporary Britain, it seems an unreal, and perhaps even undesirable, goal for the majority of people in both the old and the new communities'. The Parekh Report (Parekh, 2000) also claimed that some sense of shared belonging, some notion of national community - of the kind traditionally provided by the idea of national identity - are still important and necessary today.

In concluding his work on the English, Colls (2002: 380) maintains that whilst the England of the past is long gone, replaced by a new multicultural, and multicoloured, country, it is necessary that the English remember their history – ‘peoples remember, therefore they are’. Colls (ibid: 378) describes that ‘being English is not a natural, or a fixed, or an absolute quality’, and explains that group identities do not ‘befit the unfinishedness of lived experience’ (ibid: 197), and that certain ways of seeing England are disappearing. Despite the perceived threat of globalization to the modern nation, it remains that nations are still the substance of the world. Kumar (2003: 273) states that, ‘if England too at last needs to see itself as a nation among other nations, it can by example still show the world that nationalism need not mean only narrowness and intolerance’.

We have touched upon the role that sport can play in the (re)production of national identity with the appearance of the St. George’s cross at England sporting events. Now it is necessary to explore this further, and understand the relationship between sport, national identity and Englishness in particular.

3. Sports and national identity

We cannot underestimate the importance of sport in today’s society. All societies have played games, and since the emergence of codified sports in the eighteenth century, sport has played a large role in people’s lives across the globe. MacClancy (1996: 2) stated that sports are ‘vehicles of identity, providing people with a sense of difference and a way of classifying themselves and others’. Bairner (2001) agrees, claiming sport provides an important arena for the construction of identities. Sport is one of many social institutions that give people a sense of identification, whether this is defined through difference or sameness. In addition, MacClancy (1996: 3) proposes that ‘sport may not be just a marker of one’s already established social identity but a means by which to create a new social identity for oneself as well’.

It is a widely held belief in the sociology of sport that sport is supremely important in developing a sense of national identity. It has been claimed that ‘sport is clearly linked to the construction and reproduction of the national identities of many people’ (Bairner, 2001: 1). As Cronin and Mayall (1998: 1-2) explain, ‘sport is a vehicle, in a variety of ways,

for the construction of individual, ethnic and national identities'. How sport is organised reminds us that the world is structurally divided into nation-states, and one of the dominant features of modern sport is its links with the 'geopolitical ideology of nationalism' (Polley, 2004: 11). Polley (ibid: 12) further explains that 'most team sports developed organisational structures and elite competitions that were based on the model of national representation'.

However, it is not only sport on an international level that is bound up with ideas of nationalism. Edensor (2002: 78) explains,

Sport is increasingly situated in the mediatised matrix of national life, is institutionalised in schools, widely represented in a host of cultural forms and is an everyday practice for millions of national subjects.

This demonstrates the importance attached to sport in national societies, as well as the important role of the media. In particular, sport is often implicated in the politics of the nation, with politicians regularly linking sporting success, or failures, to the state of the nation in general. For example, this has been noted with the decline in English society during the 1970s and 1980s and the failings of the English football team (Porter, 2004). Allison (2000: 345) further describes the 'collective sense of national humiliation when a national team is defeated; the event is taken to reflect on the state of the nation as a whole, quite apart from sport'. Conversely, Bairner (2001) concludes that sports fans of any nation will delight in the sporting success of their compatriots. Success in sport is often seen to unite the nation.

Allison (2000: 345) explains, 'whether we are talking about nationalism or patriotism or the development and expression of national identity, it is clear that a national dimension is an important part of sport'. Tuck and Maguire (1999: 27) suggest that international sports are forms of 'patriot games', and this allows the individuals who represent their nations to become embodiments of the nation, or 'patriots at play', simultaneously defining and reflecting the national character. However, Jarvie and Walker (1994) provide us with the term 'ninety minute patriots' to indicate that the national significance of sport might not extend much beyond the event.

Allison (2000: 351) describes how the setting of international sport is especially relevant in inculcating national sentiment; the frequently displayed flags, the sung national anthems, the wearing of national colours and emblems, all by large crowds, 'are as easy and appropriate a setting for collective expressions of national identity as one could devise'. For important international tournaments and games, fans arrive to watch with faces painted and wearing national colours or replica kits; on special occasions flags are hung outside houses and pubs nationwide. Kellas (1991: 21) asserts 'the most popular form of nationalist behaviour in many countries is in sport, where masses of people become highly emotional in support of their national team'. However, it should be noted that these sports fans, with their painted faces, wearing clothes in national colours or printed with national emblems, are not necessarily attracted to nationalist politics.

For Polley (2004: 12), 'people's national sporting affiliations are among the most public statements that they make about their identities'. However, Bairner (2001) explains that whilst sport provides us with an important arena in which to celebrate national identities, it also forces us at times to consider the precise nature of our own national identity. Smith and Porter (2004: 2) state, 'sporting occasions may provide us with as many opportunities not to belong as to belong and that a sense of what we are not may be as important as a sense of what we are in determining national identity'. Furthermore, Smith and Porter (ibid) urge us to consider that the relationship between national identity and sport is not simple but in fact complex and multifaceted.

3.1. Imagined sporting communities

Considering the nation in relation to sport requires an understanding of the complexities of the debates surrounding what a nation is. Work on national identity and sport has often selected Anderson's (2006) well-regarded concept of imagined communities. As Cronin and Mayall (1998) explain, Anderson's framework of an imagined community examines the construction of the nation at a variety of political, social and economic levels. 'It is within this idea of the imagined community, as set out by Anderson, that sport functions' (ibid: 2). Also using Anderson's work, Tuck and Maguire (1999: 106) state,

It has been widely acknowledged that sport and national identity have been closely associated throughout history. Sporting competition arguably provided the primary expressions of imagined communities; the nation becoming more 'real' in the domain of sport.

Indeed, Jarvie (1993: 75) claims, 'it is as if the imagined community or nation becomes more real on the terraces or the athletics tracks'. This is supported by Harris and Clayton (2007: 209), who argue that Anderson's (2006) concept of an 'imagined community' is, 'in many cases, (re)created through sport', although they contend that it is particularly evident in men's football. No discussion of the relationship between sport and national identity would be complete if we did not consider the following statement proposed by Hobsbawm (1990: 143), who, again using Anderson's concept, concluded that 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people'. Similarly, Duke and Crolley (1996: 4) note how 'football captures the notion of an imaginary community perfectly: it is much easier to imagine the nation and confirm national identity when eleven players are representing the nation in a match against another nation'.

Hobsbawm (1990) argued that sport, at least for males, has proved 'uniquely effective' in generating a sense of belonging to the nation. He further states that this is due to the 'ease with which even the least political or public individuals can identify with the nation as symbolized by young persons' excelling at what practically every man wants, or at one time in life has wanted, to be good at', sport (ibid: 143). And so, these national sporting teams, composed of the best players from within the national boundaries (or those who qualify to represent a particular nation), become the focus for powerful, if unrealisable, fantasies. This approach, however, clearly implies a gendered relationship between sport and nationalism, identifying the national sporting arena as being for men. As is demonstrated here, the location of sport within the national consciousness is often firmly male orientated. Furthermore, for Hobsbawm, it is not just the athletes involved who are male, but the public profile of sport, as demonstrated by the media coverage, is aimed at men. This is also something Hobsbawm (ibid: 143) alludes to in claiming that 'the individual, even the one who only cheers, becomes a symbol of the nation *himself*'.

3.2. The importance of the media

As Harris (1999: 98) explains, 'the mass media has long been recognized for the role it plays in shaping opinion and framing attitudes'. According to Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell (1993: 2), 'the media fabricate versions of social and cultural reality, while, at the same time, insisting that, beyond discourse, there is a *real* set of historical circumstances'. So, for example, how the media portray national character is simply a construction. For Rosie, MacInnes, Peterson, Condor and Kennedy (2004: 437), national newspapers are 'essentially national institutions which encourage their readers to see the world in general in specifically national terms, "re-mind" them of their own nation in particular and help them to think in patriotic terms about it'. As a result, it has often been assumed that essential in affirming the role of sport in the construction of national identities are the popular media. Boyle and Haynes (2000: 18) claim that 'mediated discourses of sport play an important part – at times more crucial than others – in reproducing, naturalizing and even constructing values, attitudes and sometimes prejudices, which circulate in wider society'. Boyle and Haynes (*ibid*: 143) highlight how few other cultural forms lend themselves as easily as sport to being used as an indicator of national identity, with 'its visibility and focus on symbols, winning, competition, partisan fans – and, in team games, the necessity of collective struggle'. However, Rosie et al (2004) further note that an exploration of the role of sport in constructing national identities has rarely been empirically demonstrated.

The national sporting press will make heroes of its sporting champions, and fervently celebrate most national victories (Cronin and Mayall, 1998). As Porter (2004: 46) explains,

Consciousness of national identity...is shaped by shared experience, especially of the kind that creates a collective awareness that those who constitute the nation are essentially different from others whom they encounter. International sport plays a part in this process, even if most people experience it only indirectly through the consumption of mass-produced words and images.

Therefore, sport has a major place in the everyday life of any nation, with most having dedicated sporting channels on radio and television, and a separate sports press. This

can result in what Billig (1995) refers to as ‘banal nationalism’, or continual reference to national symbols and aspects of a nation’s history that act to ‘flag’ the nation. He states: ‘small words, rather than grand memorable phrases’ that offer constant yet barely noticeable reminders of the homeland, ‘making “our” national identity unforgettable’ (ibid: 83). Important for Billig in the relationship between sport and national identity is the role of the media. He explains the part the press play in flagging nationhood; ‘all the papers, whatever their politics, have a section in which the flag is waved with regular enthusiasm. This is the sports section’ (ibid: 119). Polley (2004) describes how popular discourses use the label ‘we’ to link the national sports teams to the English population, in particular the male population.

Every day, in every newspaper in the nation, the sport pages are present, and ‘every day, the world over, millions upon millions of men scan these pages, sharing in defeats and victories, feeling at home in this world of waved flags’ (Billig, 1995: 122). Billig’s observations again highlight the gendered nature of the relationship between sport and nationalism, especially in the media. He states, ‘sport is also historically a largely masculine domain, as are the pages which the British press devotes to it’ (ibid: 119). Liberal feminist literature has also discussed the gendered nature of national news press, with Hargreaves (1994) describing the active role the media play in trivializing female sporting success, thereby preserving sport as a male domain. The sports sections in the newspaper, the dedicated sports channels on the television, are about men’s achievements, for male consumption. The ‘we’ the sports press consistently refer too is one that is distinctly masculine. According to Rowe, McKay and Miller (1998), in this respect, men are the representatives of national character. Harris and Clayton (2002: 402) explain,

National identity is established through the achievements of male sports teams and individual male athletes. As such, male sports stars emit the masculine status of the nation’s men, and the media construct a masculine ideal within England and Great Britain through the elaboration of the country’s achievements, and promotion of male athletes and teams.

So, while Harris and Clayton (*ibid*) identify a strong nationalistic discourse that is prevalent in articles on a whole host of male sporting activities, this is not the case with media representations of women in sport, as will be discussed in more detail later.

The sporting news in Britain offers little opportunity to assume the position of the British opposition. Through the use of 'our' and 'we', only British hopes, and thereafter successes or failures, are presented. As Bishop and Jaworski (2003: 250) explain, 'the use of pronouns such as 'we/us/our' versus 'they/their/them' have received substantial attention as a means of articulating in- and outgroup status and negotiating interpersonal distance'. Again, the UK provides us with a unique example. Although most national newspapers can be found throughout the British Isles, they usually have different editions for each home nation. Furthermore, Scotland, Wales and Ireland each have their own national press. The ambiguities of Englishness and Britishness have meant that in England, it is the English teams that are presented. This is especially noticeable when England plays against any of the other home nations. However, individuals such as Andy Murray, the Scottish tennis player and British number one, and non-English athletes who compete at the Olympics under the Team GB banner are also represented as 'hopes' in England by the British press.

3.3. Sport, the nation, and war

Sport and war have often been used as metaphors for each other. The now famous proposal in 1945 by Orwell that 'sport is war minus the shooting' (cited in Orwell and Angus, 1970) has been much cited. Young (2007: 5) states, 'George Orwell's description of sport as 'war minus the shooting' is an oft-cited, but little interrogated, dictum in scholarship and journalism on the dynamics of international sporting contests'. Orwell's comments, first published in an article for *The Tribune*, were made in the context of a series of football matches between Dynamo Moscow and leading British teams, following the end of the Second World War. What Orwell actually wrote was that 'at the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare' (Orwell and Angus, 1970: 62). For Orwell, sport 'is bound up with the rise of nationalism – that is, with the lunatic modern habit of identifying oneself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of

competitive prestige (ibid: 63). His statements could be interpreted in one of two ways. Either sporting competition could act in place of war, allowing nations to compete in the sports field, making war less likely; or international sporting competition could be seen as actually keeping alive tensions between nations, of which war is sometimes an inevitable consequence.

For Bairner (2001: xi), 'sport and nationalism are arguably two of the most emotive issues in the modern world. Both inspire intense devotion and frequently lead to violence'. In outlining the way in which sport can inculcate national sentiment, Bairner (ibid: 17) states that 'except in times of war, seldom is the communion between members of the nation, who might otherwise be classed as total strangers, as strongly felt as during major international events'. This serves to highlight the similarities between sport and war in fostering a sense of national identity. For Fischer (2002), the very origins of sport appear to be some sort of imitation of war. Of course, both sport and war are contests, and frequently sports require invasion of opposition territory. However, according to Cronin and Mayall (1998: 2), unlike war, 'sport cannot win territory or destroy an opposing ideology or religion which the nation seeks to demonise'. Fischer (2002: 18) states that 'war, by contrast, is most serious, and what it is most serious about, is victory'.

Polley (2004) explains that the use of war imagery and metaphor adds meaning and nationalistic hype to sporting contests. For Fischer (2002: 16), the 'language of competitive sport is ubiquitously infused with metaphors of war and battle'. Garland and Rowe (1999) also found the language of sport to rely heavily on metaphors of war. Important in maintaining these sport/war metaphors have been their persistent use by the media. Jansen and Sabo (1994: 5) describe how sport/war metaphors are 'deeply entrenched in the narrative structures of sport media'. Garland and Rowe's (1999) analysis of English newspapers coverage of the European Championships in 1996 found that George Orwell's characterization of sport as 'war minus the shooting' had been fully embraced by the sport journalists through their use of militaristic rhetoric to dramatize their accounts.

For Jansen and Sabo (1994), the use of sport/war metaphors also serves to maintain constructions of hegemonic masculinity in the two fields. They state, 'sport/war tropes exaggerate and celebrate difference between men and women. They idealize and valorize men and masculinity, and emasculate men who appear to be weak, passive or pacifist' (ibid: 9). Both sport and warfare represent institutions through which hegemonic masculinity has been constituted, and is bolstered by the association of men with violence (ibid). War is quintessentially masculine and represents a test of manhood, as does sport. Jansen and Sabo (ibid: 10) state that the 'language of sport/war represents the values of hegemonic masculinity', such as aggression, competition, dominance, as desirable. Bairner (2001: 177) states,

Bearing in mind Hoberman's (1984) description of sports people as 'proxy warriors', the fact is that, throughout the twenty-first century, sport has been one of the most valuable weapons at the disposal of nationalists, whatever their situation or respective aspirations.

In addition, if sport can be likened to war, then it is likely that male athletes become the proxy warriors. Before returning to that, what about the specific relationship between sport and national identity in England?

3.4. Sport and English national identity

Due to its importance to national identity, sport provides us with an excellent framework for studying national identity, and as such it has been used by scholars investigating concepts of English national identity. Discussing complexities around the United Kingdom, again using Anderson's (2006) framework, Robinson (2008: 219) states that,

While Anderson's analysis of how the 'imagined community' became the nation may not be helpful in establishing how England is a nation distinct from Britain, the idea of 'imagined' remains central. England exists more in imagination than it does anywhere else, as England lacks many of those political or cultural institutions that are usually taken to embody the nation (state).

As such, sport is essential in the imagining the English nation, as it is one of the only places the English nation would appear 'real'. Sport has long been conceived of as central to imaginings of England; not least because England was where modern sport was

born. Allison (2000: 352) explains that the British Isles present a situation which is quite different from the rest of the world:

Here modern sport came into existence in the mid-nineteenth century, its genesis having everything to do with 'civil society' and nothing to do with the state. At this level it was always assumed that the sporting nation was different from the state and that (unlike almost everywhere else) national sporting representation did not have to be aligned with state boundaries.

It was only in exceptional cases where nation-state representation was required by international organisations, such as the Olympic Games, that we see the nations compete as a united Great Britain. In other contexts, in sports so often associated with England such as cricket, association football, and rugby union, England would, and still does, compete as a nation in its own right.

Tuck and Maguire (1999: 30) propose that 'sport forms one of the most significant arenas by which nations become more "real"'. In relation to England, Robinson (2008: 219) explains, since 1996 one thing has become increasingly apparent: 'the one place where England exists is on the sports field'. National sports teams embody the nation. For the ninety minutes of football, eighty minutes of rugby, or even five days of cricket, those men on the field of play represent England, and as such, England appears 'real'. Smith and Porter (2004: 2) claim that:

Having once made the requisite leap and accepted that the eleven men who appear in white shirts at Wembley, or the fifteen at Twickenham, are 'England', the possibilities for defining and redefining what it means to be 'English' are inextricably linked to what happens on the field of play'.

This statement again highlights the gendered nature of the national sporting arena.

For Bairner (2001), sporting nationalism may be linked to the sports from which success, or failure has been accrued. Thus, the depth of celebration can still vary from one sport to another and the sport, or sports that attract the most widespread attention will commonly be linked to the idea of a national sport. What is required is a more in depth examination of the three sports that could be considered to represent Englishness in

certain ways, and in which England have, at some point or another, enjoyed success on the international stage: football, rugby and, of course, cricket.

3.4.1. England and association football

Football is one of the most popular sports in the world, and, as many will claim, it was the English who gave the world this great game. Gibbons (2010: 422) claims that ‘football and English national identity have been interlinked for over a century’. It was the English who formally codified the game, which developed from mob football, following the formation of the world’s first Football Association (FA) in 1863. Despite often being cited as the game for the working classes, the rough game of football was also played in the public schools in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Mason, 1980). This is where the reform of mob football into a codified game was initiated. As Mason (ibid: 255) states, ‘association football was refined and organised by the educated classes’. By inventing football and then giving it to the world, prior to the 1950s England had assumed a role at the pinnacle of the world game. However, in 1953, Hungary came to Wembley and defeated England on their home turf. This was widely regarded as the worst defeat in England’s football history, because ‘a win for Hungary would indicate powerfully that the people who had given the game to the world were no longer its masters’ (Porter, 2004: 39). We then see a change in the fortunes of English football with the World Cup win of 1966, ‘one of the greatest things that ever happened to the English nation’ (ibid: 42). Britain had changed since 1953. Porter (ibid) notes the increase in numbers watching television in the 1960s, and claims that over 13 million people nationwide watched the final against West Germany at Wembley stadium. The English team’s manager, Alf Ramsey, declared the day for the England, Englishmen and English football (ibid). The importance of the media in developing, maintaining or creating a relationship between (men’s) sport and national identity is evident here. For the 120 minutes that the game was played, 13 million people throughout the nation were united in watching history happen.

Euro ’96 presents an interesting case as it was the tournament at which England played Scotland for the first time in the group stages of a major international football

tournament. Because of this, the Union flag, representing a 'united' kingdom, was rendered redundant, and the English fans turned to the flag of St. George. Euro '96 is then often considered a defining moment in demonstrating the recent increase in displays of English nationalism with the flag waving of English fans during the tournament (Paxman, 1999; Kumar, 2003; Aughey 2007). As Aughey (2007) explains, during the Euro '96 football finals, something had changed; this demonstration of patriotic flag-waving represented the English outright flaunting of their nationalism throughout the football tournament. He states,

In 1996 then, the flying of the English flag (at least in such large numbers) was a startlingly new form of behaviour. By 1998 it had become commonplace...not only was the flag everywhere, but the symbol of English identity had become a more or less permanent feature of the national landscape. It had entered the popular cultural mainstream (ibid: 4).

Aughey (ibid: 2) continues, 'if the particular occasion was the support for the national team, the political significance was the extraction of the English cross from the union flag'. For Weight (1999, cited in Aughey 2007), this popular flag waving meant that the English were gaining a 'deeper awareness of their own nationhood', and that England was in the process of becoming a nation again. Kumar (2003) agrees, claiming that this recent brandishing by the English at football matches of the St. George's cross does indeed indicate a rise in a specific English, as opposed to British, national consciousness, or at least a recognition of the distinction between the two.

With regards to national football teams, Giulianotti (1999: 23) claims, 'at internationals, the team embodies the modern nation, often literally wrapping itself in the national flag'. However, the players who embody the nation only represent a small minority of the national collective. For example, whilst Harris and Clayton (2007: 213) have also proclaimed football as the national English sport, they state that this has allowed it to 'embody the nation's collective claim to authority in a power relations sense and, as such, provides the ideal arena for the creation of heroes and figures of hegemonic masculinity'. According to Rowe et al (1998), men are the representatives of national character, and national identity can be established through the achievements of men, whether in team or individual sports. Harris and Clayton (2007) are explicit in their claim that the football

in which the nation is imagined is that played by men. For them, through the media, the high level of expectancy that is often placed on English sports teams radiates 'a patriotic, masculine vibe' (ibid: 214).

This masculine emphasis is continued with the branding of the England men's football team as the three lions. The three lions are taken from the royal coat of arms of England, and the use of the lion as a national symbol dates back to Richard the First, or Richard the Lion-heart, in the twelfth century (Hand, 2002). It was Richard the First's military exploits and subsequent death in battle that led to the nickname of Lion-heart, and forms the basis of the prototype brave, courageous English hero (ibid). Polley, (2004: 11) states,

An England football team wrapped in a historical symbol of Englishness was an attractive way for many people to express their own sense of belonging.

The male lion-hearts of the English men's football team, with the three lions emblem on their shirt, provide an avenue for the rest of the nation to demonstrate their national identity.

Robinson (2008: 221) also writes that 'football is a national obsession for the English'. This is aptly demonstrated in a statement by David Beckham, himself often considered a symbol of Englishness:

Football is in our culture, in our DNA. It's in us from the moment we are brought into this world, from when we are born and that's something we will always have (Burt, 2009, *The Telegraph*).

This comment by Beckham, a global superstar and the most capped England outfield football player, made during the campaign for England to host the 2018 World Cup, highlights the importance of football to England. For Harris and Clayton (2007), Beckham has become a cultural icon, as well as a symbol of national identity and masculinised sporting pride. That said Beckham is also representative of multiple, more transgressive masculinities. However, for Beckham, football represents a part of what it means to be English. As the world's most popular sport, created by the English, football remains intimately tied to notions of Englishness, as well as masculinity, more so since 1966 than ever before in history.

3.4.2. England and cricket

According to Simons (1996: 41), of the three major English sports (football, rugby and cricket), it is only cricket that has 'taken on board a cultural weight which has projected it out of the realm of the competitive and professional and into that of the aesthetic and frankly political'. As such the sport that one might associate most strongly with England is cricket, so much so, in fact, that Marqusee (1994) unequivocally proclaims cricket to be England's national sport. For Simons (1996: 41), 'the game of cricket has become almost synonymous with all that is English'. Whilst acknowledging that football might be said to be the national game of England, Malcolm (2001) explains that cricket would be the game which best expresses an English national identity. Malcolm (1999: 16) also explains that 'it remains almost impossible to discuss the sport without some reference to its role as the quintessentially "English" game'. For Malcolm (ibid), many of the images connecting cricket with English national identity relate to a notion of the way the game is played. 'The common use of phrases such as "playing with a straight bat", "going in to bat" and "it's not cricket" are just three examples of the crossover' (ibid: 17). As Marqusee (1994: 250) states, 'cricket values, above all, fair play, are *supposed* to be international, yet they are also *supposed* to be English'.

Simons (1996) locates the positioning of cricket as a national pastime in the eighteenth century, claiming that at this time, we see the beginnings of organised cricket games in the villages of England, featuring players from both the upper and lower classes. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, cricket was adopted by the public schools in England, as it was seen as a sport by which boys could be taught self-discipline and team work, the beginnings of a 'muscular Christian' ethic which characterized sport in the public schools (as emphasized in the book, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*). Williams (2003: 7) identifies cricket as a 'key element in the cult of athleticism in public schools'. However, the sport was not just played by the upper class boys in the public school system. As Holt (1989: 265) describes, it was in the villages where cricket can be considered as most important. Williams (2003: 8) states, 'village cricket, the English and the English countryside were at one', with cricket described as part of the 'rural idyll'. Bairner (2009) has noted the interconnectedness of nation, sport and landscape. As

Simons (1996: 41) proposes, the tying together of England and cricket demands an understanding of 'the idea of England as an essentially rural society'. Despite the growth of urban centres during the industrial revolution, the England that was imagined was one of green fields and warm summer days in the countryside. This is an idea of England that still persists today.

Cricket has also been indicative of current debates on nationality and racism. Malcolm (2001: 253) states, 'cricket has been historically significant in defining notions of English national identity and continues to feature in debates over the inclusion/exclusions of immigrants in British society'. Marqusee (1994) goes into detail discussing the problems that have arisen over the years with players not born in England representing the England cricket team. The England cricket team is actually representative of the British Isles, although recent cricket players have included those born in Jamaica, India, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, as well as Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Marqusee (ibid: 20) states,

Clearly there was little consensus not only over the question of just who was and was not entitled to represent 'England' but over what this 'England' was and to whom it belonged.

Further debates have centred on fandom and national identity. Norman Tebbit, a conservative politician, publicly questioned the loyalty of multicultural British cricket fans, questioning 'which side do they cheer for?' in the Los Angeles Times in 1990 (Marqusee, 1994). He claimed that too many Asian immigrants had failed the metaphorical 'cricket test', i.e. who they would cheer for when England played India or Pakistan. Tebbit's obvious assumption that they could, and should embrace a unitary English culture, is a perfect example of 'new racism', with an emphasis on 'mutually exclusive cultural identities' (ibid: 138). Furthermore, Tebbit did not apply the same ideology to white people. What about Scots living in England or the English living in Australia? If an Irishman living in Sydney supported the Australian Rugby team over the Irish, it would seem odd, yet this is what Tebbit expected of non-white immigrants to the UK. Tebbit's racist 'cricket test' was then later applied to immigrants who played in the England

cricket team: would a 'coloured England-qualified player' play for England with the same commitment as one who was 'unequivocally English'? (Kumar, 2003: 265)

Tebbit, writing in the Los Angeles Times, in order to demonstrate that he was an 'integrationist', had used the example of cricket in England, as, 'to Americans, cricket and England are one and the same' (Marqusee, 1994: 137). Tebbit was using cricket to build an 'imagined community', one in which values were shared, and where migrants had to be integrated into a unitary British culture. Tebbit was sending a clear message to the white majority in Britain: 'they *belonged* – because others did not. And what they belonged to was *the nation*, defined not as a territory or even a race, but as a culture' (ibid: 139, original emphasis). For Marqusee (ibid: 139), 'the whole point of the Tebbit test was to justify the exclusion of black people from the national community'. This is symbolic of the challenges faced in England's society today.

3.4.3. England and rugby union

Although research on English sports and the links to national identity has been undertaken, these have almost always looked at either cricket or football. This has led Tuck (2003) to claim that previous research that has focused explicitly on Englishness and sport has overlooked rugby union, with the sport being more commonly associated with the nations of Wales, New Zealand and South Africa. Some of the few pieces of research on Englishness and rugby union are those by Tuck and Maguire (1999), who looked at players' perceptions of national identity, and Tuck (2003) who reflected on rugby union, the media and Englishness. However, not least because of recent successes in the twenty first century of the England rugby team (2003 World Cup winners and 2007 World Cup finalists), it is fair to say that rugby has become more relevant to notions of Englishness. However, rugby union in the British Isles presents us with an interesting case. Not only do male rugby players represent their individual home nations, but there is also the opportunity for the best to represent Great Britain and Ireland with the touring side, the British and Irish Lions.

Rugby union developed from the handling side of the game of mob football, and the Rugby Football Union was created in 1871 in an attempt to codify and formalize the game. Tuck and Maguire (1999) locate rugby union as central to the sporting nationalisms not only of England, but of all the nations of the British Isles. In fact, rugby union in the British Isles is more often than not considered important for Welsh cultural identity. Tuck and Maguire (ibid: 30) claim that it presents an opportunity through which the 'English identify the Welsh and the Welsh identify themselves'. Despite this, and in line with research into media representations of Englishness in football (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003; Poulton, 2004; Gibbons, 2010), Tuck (2003) found rugby union to be significantly connected to a specific type of Englishness (with race, class and gender connotations), and that the players were, in many ways, portrayed as embodiments of England.

As Holmes and Storey (2004: 95) explain, 'little research into professional sportspeople's attitudes to issues of national identity has been undertaken'. This is what makes Tuck and Maguire's (1999: 26) research on the inter-relationship between sport and national identity in rugby union interesting, as it provides us with 'original evidence for viewing national identities 'at play' through the eyes of elite sportsmen'. Tuck and Maguire (ibid) found that, in the English rugby players, English national identity appeared to be comprised of a more reserved sense of national pride rather than the demonstration of overt patriotism. However, they urge us to not consider this to mean that the attachment to the nation is in any way weaker than in other national cultures, but that we can understand it as a representation of a typically more reserved display of patriotism and national identity that underpin English national culture.

However, the rugby players are not overly reserved about their national pride when they are on the pitch. Tuck and Maguire (1999: 38) claimed that 'feelings of national pride tended to flow more openly during the build-up to the game and especially during the playing of national anthems'. For Tuck and Maguire (ibid: 30),

One only has to observe the way in which players clutch their national symbol on the rugby jerseys and sing 'their' national anthem vociferously before the match

to understand that these players see themselves, and are seen as the embodiment of their various nations.

They further state, 'the nation leaves the imaginary, rises from behind its fantasy shield, and becomes (at least for eighty minutes) a lived experience' (ibid: 48). These men on the rugby field literally become the nation, providing a face to the imaginary community and uniting millions. As Tuck and Maguire (ibid: 37) state, 'the pride and patriotism evoked within the context of rugby union has frequently been likened, most notably in the tabloid press, to that experienced within an environment of war'. It is worth noting here that the physical nature of rugby union allows it to be considered as a sport where the men literally put their bodies on the line for the nation. In this sense, the men in the white shirts representing England become true 'proxy warriors' in sport.

4. Summary

We have seen from the earlier discussions that, despite the threat of globalisation to nationalism, it remains a significant part of modern society, providing people with emotional attachments and binding them to a certain place. As such, the nation is still an important aspect of identity for many people. As a nation, England is shown to have a complex and confused identity, given its central role in the formation of the UK. As a result, many question whether or not an English national identity could even exist. However, it is quite clear that an English nationalism is emerging, and more and more people identify increasingly with England rather than Great Britain than has been the case previously. The importance of sport to a nation and a sense of nationhood has been introduced. This is apparent in the development of Englishness especially given that Robinson (2008) reminds us that nowhere is England more evident than on the sports field. Football, cricket and rugby are all seen as symbolic of specific types of Englishness (Malcolm, 2001; Tuck, 2003; Robinson 2008).

MacClancy (1996: 9) notes that 'it is easy to state that, for a certain people, sport has contributed to their sense of ethnicity (or nation) and to their sense of community'. As Billig (1995) explains, modern sport has a social and political significance which, extends beyond the player and spectator through the media. This has also been highlighted by

James (1989: xi), who observed that “far more people scan the cricket news in the morning paper” than read books. For Billig (1995), the significance of this is that those sporting pages define and repeat stereotypes of nation, place and race, as well as those of masculinity. The narrow ‘we’ that the popular sports media presents serves to reinforce particular stereotypes in relation to whom the national sporting arena belongs. Herein lies the problem. The men who subsequently represent England in these sports are often seen as active embodiments of the nation, and symbolic of Englishness. What about English women, either as supporters of national sport, or national representatives?

Bairner (2001: 174) states,

If the sporting culture of a particular community or a particular nation or nationality is organized and presented in an exclusive manner, an important point of access to the national community is inevitably denied to large numbers of citizens. Naturally, this type of social exclusion does not relate to the issue of nationality alone. When sport is deeply embedded in patriarchy, women are either denied access completely or offered only restricted opportunities to participate in this particular element of the national culture.

Literature concerning the roles of women in the nation, and in sport, will be now be reviewed, following a discussion of the development of feminist theory, which has informed the research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Women, the Nation, and Sport

This chapter outlines key stages in the development of feminist theory, before focussing more specifically on aspects of postmodern feminism. A discussion of the role of women in the nation follows, before finishing with a critical review of debates surrounding women in sport.

1. The Development of feminism and feminist theory

Birrell (2000: 61) explains how 'feminist theory is a dynamic, continually evolving complex of theories or theoretical traditions that take as their point of departure the analysis of gender as a category of experience'. Mary Wollstonecraft's 'Vindication of the Rights of Women', written in 1792 against the backdrop of the French Revolution, is seen by many as a defining moment in the emergence of feminism (Heywood, 2007). Now classified as first wave feminism, by the mid nineteenth century the campaign for female suffrage had given the women's movement a central focus in countries where political democracy was most advanced. The achievement of the vote coincided with the end of the first wave, with what was considered by many as women's full emancipation (ibid). However, the achievement of political and legal rights had not solved the 'women's question'.

Second wave feminism emerged during the 1960s, characterized by Betty Friedan's 'The Feminine Mystique', published in 1963. The movement had many strands, most notably liberal and radical feminism, and placed a wide range of previously marginalized issues (such as family, workplace, sexuality and reproductive rights) on the political agenda (Weedon, 1999). Heywood (2007) explains that despite differences, a common theme in early second wave feminism was a belief that sexual inequality persisted due to the division of labour being perceived as natural. Public life was the preserve of men, with women confined to a private existence in the home. The term patriarchy, which literally means 'rule by the father', has been used to describe the power relationship between men and women. The patriarchal family lies at the heart of a systematic process of male

domination, and the dominance of the father symbolized male supremacy in all other institutions (ibid). The development of global theories of patriarchy as the fundamental form of oppression was thought to unite women around the world (Weedon, 1999). However, Birrell (2000) argues that despite all feminists sharing an assumption that women are oppressed within patriarchy, there is disagreement as to how those oppressive relations are produced and reproduced.

Scruton and Flintoff (2002) explain the theoretical shift over three decades of feminism, from an early emphasis on women's shared oppression and inequality to a concern with difference. These issues are now discussed in greater detail, through a chronology of different strands of feminist thought. Caudwell (2011) urges us to consider the 'multiple, complex and fragmented nature of feminisms' (p. 111). However, despite Caudwell (2011) critiquing the linearity of the 'waves' of (sport) feminisms, it is beyond the scope of this research to go into depth on this debate, and in this discussion it is necessary to present the developments as linear.

1.1. Liberal feminism

Tong (2009) suggests that because so much contemporary feminist theory defines itself in reaction to traditional liberal feminism, the latter is an ideal place to begin. Weedon (1999: 13) states that 'liberalism is concerned with the rights of the individual to political and religious freedom, choice and self-determination', locating our uniqueness as human beings in our capacity for rationality. Liberalism is considered the main strand of political thinking that influenced first wave feminism and also early second wave feminism. Liberal feminism is based on the humanist ontological position that men and women are more alike than different, sharing many psychological, behavioural and linguistic similarities. Evans (1995: 13) claims that liberal feminists ask for equality, and justify this via sameness, stating, 'we possess the same capabilities; but this fact has been hidden, or these abilities have, while still potentially ours, been socialized, educated, 'out'.' For Birrell (2000: 64) however, despite their inherent similarities, women and men come to live different lives, with different opportunities and different expectations, because society erects barriers that restrict their equal participation in society.

Liberal feminism in the 18th century was interested in attaining the same education for women and men. Advancing into the 19th century, liberal feminists were also concerned with achieving the same civil rights and economic opportunities. In 1851, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill insisted that if we are to achieve sexual equality/gender justice, then society must not only give women the same education as men, but also the same civil liberties and economic opportunities that men enjoy (Tong, 1989). In 1963, Betty Friedan's 'The Feminine Mystique' took liberal feminist thought forward by challenging the idea that women can find satisfaction exclusively in the traditional roles of wife and mother. The cure for this was claimed to lie in work outside of the home, in the male defined public domain.

In the 21st century, the majority of liberal feminists agree that the single most important goal of women's liberation is sexual equality, requiring the removal of women from oppressive gender roles and stereotypes (Tong, 1989). The most common of all anti-feminist arguments is that gender divisions in society are natural. Weedon (1999: 10) claims that 'throughout its history, feminism has taken issue with the hegemonic meanings ascribed to women's biological and anatomical differences from men', according to which women's perceived biological destiny of childbearing suits her to a subordinate domestic role. Liberal feminists believe that 'now or eventually, men and women are or could be the same, and equal or capable of being equal once stereotypes are changed or barriers removed' (Evans, 1995: 14).

Liberal feminism has been criticised for a 'failure to challenge the normative dualism that defines the essence of humanity solely in terms of rationality' (Weedon, 1999: 16). Despite being at the forefront of many of the educational and legal reforms that have improved the quality of life for women, the liberal feminist movement is often dismissed as a bourgeois, white movement, one which fails to acknowledge that there is more to feminism than a fight for equality with men (Tong, 1989). Critiquing 'The Feminine Mystique', bell hooks (2000) states that while the issue of dissatisfied housewives was presented as a crisis for women, it was really only a crisis for a small group of well-educated white women. In addition, the emphasis on work as the key to women's liberation led many white feminist activists to suggest women who worked were already

liberated (ibid). They were in effect saying to the majority of working women that the feminist movement is not for you (hooks, 1984). Working for low wages did not liberate poor and working class women from male domination.

1.2. Radical feminism

Radical feminists were important in the second wave feminist fight to address issues such as sexuality, reproductive rights, family and the workplace. The phrase 'the personal is political', was the title of a paper written by radical feminist Carol Hanisch, published in 1970. The phrase was adopted by the movement, and feminists sought to educate women to see their personal lives as politicized and reflective of the sexist power structures in society. Radical feminists argue that it is the 'patriarchal system that oppresses women, a system characterised by power, dominance, hierarchy and competition' (Tong, 1989: 2). The aim was to question the concept of a 'natural order', leading radical feminists to view women's biology as a potential source of liberating power for women (ibid). In radical feminist discourse, traditional female traits and values are given a new, positive status which challenges the supremacy of traditionally perceived male characteristics such as reason and objectivity (Weedon, 1999).

Rowbotham, Alexander and Taylor (2006) explain how the term patriarchy has been used to express men's control over women's sexuality and reproduction. More than their liberal predecessors, radical feminists have directed attention to the ways in which men attempt to control women's bodies. In explaining how reproduction can be the cause of women's oppression, Firestone (1979) argues that patriarchy is rooted in the biological inequality of the sexes, thus necessitating a biological revolution through which women seize control of reproduction. According to Tong (1989: 95), radical feminists have been at the forefront not only in 'articulating the "highly elaborate" and "deeply entrenched" nature of the sex/gender system, but also in sketching exit routes out of it', in particular ways to free women from the age of femininity. They are working towards an androgynous culture in which male and female differences are minimized. By transforming the institution of heterosexuality, radical feminists believe that neither men nor women will play a dominant role. Tong (ibid: 110) argues,

To the same degree that socially constructed gender and reproductive roles restrict a woman's identity and behaviour, socially constructed sexual roles make it difficult for a woman to identify and develop her own sexual desires and needs.

Sexuality is a crucial issue for feminism because 'aggression and the 'need' to dominate form a routine part of what is accepted as [normal] male sexuality' (Tong, 1989: 110). Radical feminists believe that if male dominance and female submission are the norm in something as fundamental as sexuality, they become the norm in other contexts as well (ibid). Therefore, 'women will never be men's full political, economic, and social equals until heterosexual relations are entirely egalitarian – not likely to be achieved so long as women's sexuality is interpreted in terms of men's sexuality' (ibid: 110). Some radical feminists feature strongly in anti-pornography campaigns, where they claim that pornography is not about sex but about male power being exerted over females in the context of heterosexual relations. In some radical feminist discourse, heterosexuality is therefore rejected in favour of celibacy, autoeroticism, or lesbianism. For some radical feminists, lesbianism was proposed as a paradigm for female-controlled sexuality, providing an outward sign of an internal rejection of patriarchal sexuality. MacKinnon (1982: 529) argued that heterosexuality is the 'primary social sphere of male power'. Weedon (1999) sees this digression into lesbianism as a logical consequence of the radical feminist critique of heterosexuality. It was considered that lesbianism could free women from patriarchy's rules on normal sex, leading to a separatist approach that would split the women's movement.

Radical feminism is often accused of a 'false universalism', an unjustified assumption of female commonality (Eisenstein, 1984). Indeed, radical feminism does see the oppression of women as universal, crossing racial and cultural boundaries, as well as those of class, age, and physical ability. A frequent criticism of radical feminism is that it supports a biologically based 'essential' division of the world into male and female. In addition, the radical feminist creation of 'womenspaces' has been critiqued, for suggesting this is the only way for women's liberation from patriarchy (Tong, 1989).

1.3. Postmodern and poststructural feminisms

Attempts by feminists to establish one specifically feminist standpoint from which all women can see and speak have not gone without challenge. Tuana and Tong (1995: 431) explain how 'postmodern feminists regard the search for woman's voice and vision as yet another instantiation of "phallogocentric" thought – the kind of "male thinking" that insists on telling only one, presumably true, story about reality'. For postmodernists, this search is futile, because women's experiences differ across class, racial, ethnic, and cultural lines (ibid). A key feature of postmodern social theory is its challenge to 'grand narratives' of emancipation, because of the belief that no narrative can be truly universal and totalizing. However, Di Stefano (1990) claims that feminism itself depends on a relatively unified notion of the social subject 'woman', a notion that postmodernism would attack. Butler (1990) agrees, stating that feminist theory has assumed that the term women denotes a common identity, although the very subject 'woman' can no longer be understood in stable or abiding terms. Butler (ibid: 4) goes on to say that the 'feminist critique ought to understand how the category of "women", the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought'.

Feminists have traditionally challenged the idea that biology is destiny by drawing a sharp distinction between sex and gender. Weedon (1999: 5) states that 'gender difference is not naturally given but is an effect of relations of knowledge and power which permeate all areas of life'. Many of the roots of postmodern thought are found in the work of Simone de Beauvoir (1997) who posed the essential question of feminist theory, why are women the second sex? Undeniably famous for its defining sentence at the start of the second book, 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (ibid: 295), 'The Second Sex' has been identified as a defining text not only in feminist theory but also in twentieth century thought more generally. According to de Beauvoir, femininity is not a reflection of essential differences between men and women, but of differences in their situation. The idea of 'becoming a woman' was pursued by later feminists who claim gender differences are typically imposed through contrasting stereotypes of masculinity and femininity.

de Beauvoir (1997: 16) claims that man has named himself the Subject and women the Other, stating that the category of the Other is 'as primordial as consciousness itself'. Postmodern feminists take de Beauvoir's explanation of women as the Other and proclaim its advantages. Tong (1989) explains that for all of its associations with oppression and inferiority, otherness is much more than an oppressed, inferior condition; rather it is a way of being, thinking, and speaking that allows for openness, plurality, diversity and difference.

Birrell (2000: 94) explains that as feminism progresses and develops, it is taking us 'beyond the boundaries of social science into the relatively unbounded territory inhabited by Derrida, Lacan, Foucault and Gramsci where the languages spoken include discourse analysis, hegemony theory, post-structuralism, deconstruction and postmodernism'. Postmodernism aims to challenge the notion of totalizing theories, such as the feminisms discussed above. For example, many postmodern feminists have been heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, who was interested in the way in which social norms operate on the body.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1979), Foucault develops his conception of power. For Foucault, truth and knowledge are always produced within a matrix of power relations. He conceptualizes power not as linear and top-down, but as a network, operating through discourses and institutions. The text centres on ideas surrounding discipline, surveillance and constraint. Foucault compares modern society with Jeremy Bentham's 'panopticon' design for prisons. In the panopticon, a single guard can watch over many prisoners, while the guard remains unseen, and this concept was adopted by Foucault as an example of the disciplinary gaze. Whilst surveillance cannot be continuous, the possibility of surveillance is pervasive, which leads in turn to self-monitoring. Foucault (ibid: 176-77) explains:

Hierarchized, continuous and functional surveillance...was organized as a multiple, automatic, and anonymous power...This enables the disciplinary power to be both absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere and always alert...and absolutely "discreet", for it functions permanently and largely in silence.

McLaren (2002) indicates the section on discipline in the text as perhaps the most compelling. Here, Foucault describes the insidious and subtle techniques of power that create 'docile bodies'. Foucault (1979: 138) states, 'discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, "docile" bodies'. McLaren (2002: 89) summarises,

Discipline permeates individual bodies...power operates through disciplines to normalize behaviour...this process of normalization is not restricted to institutions whose explicit aim is to correct behaviour, such as prisons, but is a widespread feature of all institutions in modern society.

McLaren (2002: 108) explains that 'surveillance impacts actions, behaviour, bodies', through the disciplinary gaze, and then through self-monitoring. This is how modern society exercises its controlling 'power-knowledge'. So, for Foucault (1979), we are in large part determined by social forces beyond our control. Furthermore, McLaren (2002: 81-82) explains:

The body and its investment by power are significant issues for Foucault. One of the effects of power on the body is subjectivity; thus questions of subjectivity are inseparable from questions of the body. So, for Foucault as for feminists, subjectivity is always embodied'.

Postmodern feminists, following Foucault (1979), perceive power to operate in both an institutional sense and a 'productive' sense; thus discursive power regimes produce individuals through the encouragement of certain types of subjectivity and embodiment.

Foucault's writings supply feminism with theoretical tools for analysing the ways in which power structures come into being and for understanding how particular cultures and ideologies have repressed women (Cavallaro, 2003). One strand of postmodern thought regularly adopted by feminists is poststructuralism, of which Weedon (1997) identified Foucault's theory of discourse and power as a founding element. Weedon (1999: 100) claims that 'often termed postmodern, poststructuralist theories of meaning, subjectivity and power have radically challenged approaches to difference, which see it as grounded in biology or in universal structures of the psyche'. A focus of poststructuralist feminism is on difference and diversity, and it is argued that the very term 'women' has little significance in the fragmented and changing world that we live in today (Scruton and Flintoff, 2002). Weedon (1999) explains that poststructuralist analysis assumes that

identity in western cultures is not something given; it is rather an uncertain and temporary effect of difference.

Intersectionality, a term often associated with black feminist thought, is another development in postmodern feminist theorising that raises important issues. Davis (2008: 70) states that intersectionality 'addresses the most central theoretical and normative concern within feminist scholarship: namely, the acknowledgement of differences among women'. Intersectionality as a theory fits 'neatly into the postmodern project of conceptualizing multiple and shifting identities', coinciding with 'Foucauldian perspectives on power that focused on dynamic processes and the deconstruction of normalizing and homogenizing categories' (ibid: 71). Collins (2010) explains the ways in which power relations intersect with regards to race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, ability and nation.

1.3.1 Poststructural feminism and Judith Butler

Presently in Western culture, how we perceive gender is informed largely by binary thinking which positions male and female as opposites, whose pairing is 'natural' and analogous to a variety of other dualisms. One important achievement of feminist poststructuralist analysis has been to deconstruct the binary oppositions on which traditional ideas of difference rest (Weedon, 1999). Furthermore, Weedon (ibid) states that these binary oppositions are discursively produced under specific historical conditions, rather than being expressions of a natural order. Poststructuralism moves beyond a binary and hierarchical notion of difference towards a plural and fluid one, arguing that binary thinking is not a natural way of viewing the world.

For poststructuralist theory, the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meanings, power and individual consciousness is language (Weedon, 1997). Its founding insight is that language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us. It is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed (ibid). Moi (1999) describes how our subjectivity is constituted through ongoing interaction between ourselves and the world. Weedon

(1997: 31) explains that the terms subject and subjectivity are central to poststructuralist theory, 'marking a crucial break with humanist conceptions of the individual still central to western philosophy'. Cavallaro (2003: 26) adds that for Foucault,

Subjectivity is not innate but rather the effect of discourses that constantly determine people's identities, by enforcing matrices of visibility and expression that dictate what we are able (or made) to see and say, and how we negotiate the invisible and the unsaid therein.

In short, our subjectivity is not genetically determined but socially constructed, produced in a variety of discursive practices which constitute a constant site of struggle over power (Weedon, 1999).

Barrett (2005) notes that an important distinction between modern and poststructuralist stances lies in their respective notions of the subject. From poststructuralist perspectives,

There is no fundamental or essential self...rather than coming from an independent consciousness or core, an essential self, notions of who one is and what a person is supposed to be and do are socially constructed (ibid: 83).

For Weedon (1999: 99),

The body is the primary referent in visually grounded categorizations of people; the body is the obvious and transparent sign of a person's gender and race, guaranteeing the meanings and values attributed to them.

Poststructuralist theory has challenged all understandings of sexual and gender difference that appeal to the fixed meaning of bodies. The basis for this challenge is the assumption that there is no such thing as natural or given meaning in the world; language does not reflect reality but gives it meaning, and meaning is an effect of language, so is therefore always historically and culturally specific, thus resulting in meaning that can never be fixed once and for all (Weedon, 1999). So, from a poststructuralist perspective, the meanings ascribed to bodies are culturally produced, plural and ever changing, aspects of broader relations of power that have implications for both women and men.

Judith Butler is a prominent scholar in the field of poststructural feminism, and two of her works *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter* (1993) will be introduced here.

According to Salih (2002: 2), 'Butler is engaged in an ongoing interrogation of 'the subject' in which she asks through which processes subjects come into existence, by what means they are constructed, and how those constructions work and fail.' Central to Butler's work is the idea of genealogy (following Foucault), and the emergence of history – thus sex and gender are the effects, rather than the causes, of institutions, discourses and practices. Salih (2002: 10) explains, 'you as a subject do not create or cause institutions, discourses or practices, but they create or cause you by determining your sex, sexuality and gender.' Butler's work departs from the assumption that sex, gender and sexuality exist in relation to each other.

Central to the deconstruction of the binaries of gender is Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, one of the most essential works of contemporary feminist thought. Taking a Foucauldian approach, Butler deconstructs the categories of sex, gender and desire, exposing them not as natural but as the effect of particular power formations. Butler (1990: xxxi) explains that 'to expose the foundational categories of sex, gender, and desire as effects of a specific formation of power requires a form of critical enquiry that Foucault designates as genealogy'. Genealogy is explained as investigating 'political stakes in designating as an origin and cause those identity categories that are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourse with multiple and diffuse points of origin' (ibid). McLaren (2002: 99) explains:

Following Foucault in assuming the cultural inscription of the body, Butler shows how sex and gender come to be written on the body, in part through the gestures and expressions of the body. Butler's performative theory of gender illustrates the productive aspect of power – sex categories are produced and maintained through social practices.

The task of Butler's inquiry is to decentre defining institutions such as phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality. Further, Butler (1990) challenges those distinctions between sex and gender, which see sex as the biological basis on which gender is inscribed. Butler argues that the presumption of a binary gender system essentially retains the belief in a relationship between gender and sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. Whereas de Beauvoir (1997) stated that one becomes a

woman, Butler (1990: 11) explains that this is less about choice; rather, one is under a 'cultural compulsion to become one'. Cavallaro (2003: 35) explains, 'although human beings are born with bodies and anatomical characteristics, they are not actually born as either men or women but only become gendered creatures as a result of external pressures and demands'.

For Butler, gendered subjectivity is acquired through repeated performance by the individual of discourses of gender. Butler's concept of 'performativity' is not dissimilar from Goffman's (1959) 'performance', with both describing social presentation as dramaturgical. Butler (1990: 25) notes, 'gender proves to be performance – that is, constituting an identity it is purported to be'. So, gender is an act that brings into being what it names – masculine men or feminine women (Salih, 2002). Butler (1988: 519) goes on to state:

Gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.

These bodily gestures and movements are essential to the performance. Performativity thus involves taking on a role or acting in some way, and this role-playing is crucial to the gender that we are and the gender that we present to the world. Butler (ibid: 519) explains:

Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity, instituted through a stylized repetition of acts.

Thus, we act, speak, walk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman, and our gender is subsequently produced and reproduced through these performances. The continuous repetition of gendered performances constitutes a gender reality that appears stable, owing to the illusion of an 'inner gender core' which sustains our identity over time (Butler, 1990).

Butler's concept of performativity was not without question. She acknowledges this in her work *Bodies That Matter* (1993). Butler states:

For if I were to argue that genders are performative, that could mean that I thought that one woke in the morning, perused the closet or some more open space for the gender of choice, donned that gender for the day, and then restored the garment to its place at night (ibid: x)

However, she then goes on to address these issues, explaining that 'gender is created through relations of power, and, specifically, normative constraints that not only produce but also regulate various bodily beings' (ibid: x). For Butler (ibid: 2), 'performativity must be understood not as a single or deliberate "act", but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects it names'.

Poststructural feminists are also interested in the power relations surrounding sexuality. Butler reveals how the terms 'man' and 'woman', 'male' and 'female' are discursively constructed within a heterosexual matrix of power. Relations of sexuality have historically privileged heterosexuality, situating it as the norm against which other forms of sexuality have been constituted as deviant. Foucault believed that the idea of a 'truth' of sex is generated through a heterosexual society, produced by regulatory practices that generate coherent identities through a model of coherent gender norms (Butler, 1990). Butler (ibid: 24) explains that 'the heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine", where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female"'. The heterosexual matrix determines whether one's subject position is coherent, and aligned with notions of compulsory heterosexuality. To be recognised as a normative individual, sex and gender must match, which requires a dichotomisation of sex and gender categories. Thus, feminine women and masculine men are produced, and should subsequently desire the opposite sex. These ideas will be explored in more detail later, with Caudwell's usage of the woman-feminine-heterosexual matrix.

1.3.2. Critiques of postmodern feminisms

Although the goal of feminism is the overthrow of patriarchy and the ending of sexist oppression, feminists have sometimes been uncertain about what this means in practice (Heywood, 2007). The issue of equality and difference exposes major fault lines within

feminism, feminists having 'embraced contrasting notions of equality and some have entirely rejected equality in favour of the idea of difference' (ibid: 239). According to Birrell (2000: 61),

In the past it seemed to make sense to distinguish among varieties of feminist theories; today it is more useful to conceive of feminist theories in the plural, as a series of theoretical approaches marked by rapid development and comprised of an intermix of voices and responses to earlier theoretical traditions.

As the women's movement progresses, evolves and develops, it is important to note the changes as we move from second wave to third wave feminism. Key is the intersection of gender, race and class. Bennett (1989) explains that by treating gender as part of a complex of factors, we can better understand the real experiences of women, whose identities are formed not by sex alone.

However, many readers complain that postmodern feminists apparently delight in their opacity, obscurity or meaning, viewing clarity as one of the seven deadly sins of the phallogocentric order (Tong, 1989). This has led to a claim of a 'feminism for academics'. hooks (2000: 22) explains that 'while academic legitimation was crucial to the advancement of feminist thought, it created a new set of difficulties'. She claimed that feminist theory was being written solely for an academic audience; it was metalinguistic, with complicated theories, creating exclusive jargon. hooks (ibid: 22) notes how 'work was and is produced in the academy that is oftentimes visionary, but these insights rarely reach many people'. Whilst some critics claim it is elitist, others fault postmodern feminism for privileging the female over the male, the feminine over the masculine (Tong, 1989).

The radical feminist critique of gender as discourse and performance is part of a wider set of objections to postmodern feminism. In addition, radical feminists frequently challenge the reliance of postmodern feminists on male theorists. Critics also object to what they see as an over-privileging of language at the expense of material power relations of oppression (Tong, 1989). Tuana and Tong (1995) note that as exciting and stimulating as the postmodern approach to feminism may be, some feminist theorists worry that an overemphasis on difference may lead to intellectual and political disintegration.

Furthermore, Tuana and Tong (ibid: 431) state that 'if feminism is to be without any standpoint whatsoever, it becomes difficult to ground claims about what is good for women or to engage in political action on behalf of women'. Therefore, a major challenge for contemporary feminist theory is to reconcile the pressures for diversity and difference with those for integration and commonality (ibid). However, despite all of the criticism, postmodern feminism is arguably the most exciting development in contemporary feminist thought. This can be seen as one turns one's attention to the relationship between gender and nation.

2. Gender and nation

In previous sections of this literature review work on nationalism and national identity, and feminist scholarship have been explored as separate phenomena. It was important to understand feminism and nationalism in and of themselves before considering how the two can interact, intersect and impact on each other. As Yuval-Davis (1997: 21) has argued, 'a proper understanding of either cannot afford to ignore the ways they are informed and constructed by each other'. Day and Thompson (2004: 113) claim that 'all national societies contain unequal relationships and systematic unfairnesses between men and women'. For McClintock (1993: 61, original emphasis),

All nations depend on powerful constructions of gender. Despite nationalisms' ideological investment in the idea of popular *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalization of gender *difference*.

As Day and Thompson (2004: 108) explain, 'seen through the eyes of women, or as framed by women's experiences, the world can look very different from how men view it'. Despite this, Yuval-Davis (1997) outlines how most hegemonic theorizations about nations and nationalism have treated gender relations as irrelevant. Racioppi and See (2000: 32) suggest that "'mainstream" literature which may recognize the importance of "our intimate relations" to national identity have not explored how our "intimate relations" engender that identity'. Gender is an important category of identity, and yet it has been ignored. Meyer (2000) proposes that because nationalism, gender and sexuality are all social constructions, they frequently play a role in constructing one another, by creating "us" and "them" dichotomies, and excluding the Other.

To appreciate the role that gender plays in the nation, it is important to consider the relationship historically. Tétreault and al-Mughni (2000) identify that the rise of nationalism coincided with the development of the feminist movement and an expansion of citizenship rights for women. The American and French revolutions created powerful models of national identity and new visions of national belonging. Now, not only did all male citizens have rights as members of the nation-state, they also had new obligations, including 'the quasi-universal obligation of men to risk death for the nation' (Heuer, 2008: 46). Despite women's equal rights campaigns providing powerful grounds for their political participation, revolutionary nationalism and its connections to war only served to further highlight men's dominant role in the nation (ibid). Men were the ones who would lay down their bodies to protect not only their country, but specifically the nation's women and children (Enloe, 1989). Sluga (1998) suggests that the declaration of the 'Rights of Man' that underpinned the French Revolution inevitably raised the issue of whether such rights were gender specific. As it turned out, French women had to wait until 1944 to achieve the right to vote, and thus were excluded for another 150 years from the political sphere. Eley and Suny (1996: 27) conclude that we 'need to consider the gendered dimensions and meanings of nationalist discourse more seriously, for this remains an astonishing absence in most of the scholarly literature'. Racioppi and See (2000) describe how leading theorists of nations, such as Smith, Anderson and Hobsbawm, despite mentioning gender in their works, have still failed to elaborate on the importance of gender to nation. Indeed, McCrone (1998: 122) even states, 'one looks in vain to the works of Gellner, Anderson, Smith and others for a sustained analysis on gender issues'.

Whilst Smith (1991: 4) recognizes gender as an important, universal and pervasive category of identity that 'stands at the origins of other differences and subordinations', he further claims that gender is the category of social identity least likely to produce collective mobilization. He explains that this is because "geographically separated, divided by class and ethnically fragmented, gender cleavages must ally themselves to other, more cohesive identities if they are to inspire collective action" (ibid: 4). Despite acknowledging that the self is composed of multiple identities and roles, Smith thus also fails to consider the impact of these identities on one another.

For Gellner (1983: 7, original emphasis), the very definition of the nation rests on male recognition of identity, 'two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognize* each other as belonging to the same nation'. He continues by claiming that '*nations maketh man*; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities' (ibid: 7, original emphasis). Gellner thus goes further than simply ignoring women in the argument; he explicitly proclaims the nation for men, created by men.

Anderson (2006: 5) states, 'in the modern world, everyone can, should, will "have" a nationality, as he or she "has" a gender'. However, according to Pierson (2000: 41), despite acknowledging gender as an important and integral part of a person's identity, this:

Sharp separation of nationality and gender is an indication of Anderson's failure to consider the nation as gendered and consequently one's nationality, one's sense of national identity, as inextricably and ineluctable intertwined with one's gender.

Hobsbawm (1990: 11) argues:

We cannot assume that for most people national identification – when it exists – excludes or is always superior to, the remainder of the set of identifications which constitute the social being. In fact, it is always combined with identifications of another kind, even when it is felt to be superior to them.

Despite acknowledging the importance of other identities and the influence of these on one's national identity, Hobsbawm fails to examine this further. For Racioppi and See (2000: 32), 'the historical myths and the imagined communities [of a nation] are deeply gendered'. The myths of a nation, and the processes through which these myths are constructed, present normative images of the appropriate roles and behaviours expected of males and females in any particular nation. As such, we cannot ignore gender when discussing nations.

In modest defence of authors on nationalism, it should also be said that many texts about feminism have little to say on the relevance of the nation (Day and Thompson, 2004). However, due to the unwillingness or inability of the majority of nationalism scholars to account for gender in the nation, feminist scholars have been left to insert the debate

into a previously gender-blind area, having 'argued that this absence of women from the work and thinking of these authors reflects, at best, their gender blindness or, at worst, their gender chauvinism' (Nagel, 1998: 243). Consequently, feminists are only now beginning to examine the relationship between gender, sexuality and the nation.

2.1. Feminist scholarship on nations

For some, it may seem unusual to try to produce a feminist overview of the nation. Day and Thompson (2004: 114) explain that this is due to the 'way each veers towards a universalizing discourse, giving primacy to one particular distinction as the overwhelming force that binds people together as a collectivity'. Day and Thompson (2004: 115) claim, however, that 'the nation is gendered at its very core', and as will be seen, women have a definite place in the nation. Indeed, although that differs from the role of men, women are vital for the nation's survival. Theorizing on women and the nation began during the mid-1980s. While George L. Mosse first examined the relationship between nationalism and sexuality in 1985, *Woman-nation-state*, edited by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias in 1989 was one of the first texts that explicitly examined the relationship between women and the nation. For feminists, the construction and naturalization of gender differences have an impact on every area of social life, and as a result, there is no reason to believe that the social organization of nations and nationalism is exempt from their influence (Day and Thompson, 2004).

Ranchod-Nilsson and Tétreault (2000: 167) write,

Whereas much of the literature on nationalism emphasizes the conditions under which and/or the ways in which collective identities of nations are formed in opposition to outside groups, feminist scholarship has concentrated on the constructions and reconstructions of gender differences and hierarchies within what are generally construed to be "homogenous" groups.

Subsequently, feminist literature has brought to light the numerous ways in which women are implicated in the social construction of the nation. Feminist literature on nationalism has gone through distinct phases, shifting from early research on women's

active participation in nationalist struggles to explorations of the ways in which gender shapes the construction of national identities.

Ranchod-Nilsson and Tétreault (2000: 4) state that 'much of the contemporary [feminist] scholarship on nationalism focuses on the construction of identity and the conceptualization of social categories'. As Eley and Suny (1996: 10) claim,

The multiplicity, fluidity, contextual and contested qualities of identities that studies of gender have highlighted have undermined any notion of a single, all-embracing primary identity to which all others must be subordinated at all times and costs.

Postmodern research has already revealed how an individual has multiple identities. Not surprisingly, therefore, as feminist scholarship on the nation has shifted attention away from political agendas and towards work on identities, we see the 'multiple and even contradictory ways in which identities are implicated in the very idea or construction of "the nation"' (Ranchod-Nilsson and Tétreault, 2000: 164).

New, postmodern approaches challenge those conceptions which regard individuals as coherent subjects with a unified sense of identity, stressing the 'various dimensions of subjectivity, such as gender, race, ethnicity and class, noting that these dimensions are inextricably intertwined; hence, it makes no sense to treat them separately' (Özkirimli, 2000: 198). With recent feminist scholarship taking a postmodern turn, we have seen the focus move to language, representation and subjectivity. Eley and Suny (1996: 10) describe how feminist theory has 'taken on the most naturalized of all categories, gender, and destabilized our understanding of the "natural" roles and capacities of women and men'. As much recent feminist theory has proposed, women and men are socialized into appropriate gender specific behaviour. Indeed, for Butler (1990), human beings become gendered creatures through external pressure. By deconstructing the supposed 'natural' characteristics of men and women, we call into question their roles in the nation, namely those of men as warriors and protectors, and that of women as reproducers. Postmodern theorists criticize essentialist categories and universal theorizing, arguing that all knowledge is based on subjective experiences situated in specific contexts. Thus, as Spelman (1990) proclaims, there is no universal woman or universal explanation for

women's subordination, and as such, there can be no single woman's view of the nation. Furthermore, as Parker, Russo, Sommer and Yaeger (1992) identify, while there is no unitary category of women, there is no nationalism in general either. For this reason, they further state that gender relations cannot be understood either within or between the borders of nations 'and that while patriarchy may be universal, its specific structures and embodied effects are certainly not' (ibid: 4).

2.2. Women's roles in the nation

Nationalism is gendered – women's bodies are the boundary of the nation, and the bearers of its future (Whitehead, Connolly, Carter and Crowley, 1993: 1).

It is important now to begin to document the roles women have played out in the nation. In 1993, *The Feminist Review* published a special edition on nations and nationalisms. In their editorial, the editors claimed that 'women are the *symbol* of the nation, men its *agents*, regardless of the role women actually play in the nation' (ibid: 1, original emphasis). This lies at the heart of the present study: how do women symbolize the nation and what roles do they undertake? Pettman (1996: 187) explains how the gender politics of nations and nationalism are complex, 'including both the gendering of the nation as female and the construction of women as mothers of the nation, responsible for its physical, cultural and social reproduction'. Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) identify five ways in which women have participated in national and state processes and practices,

1. as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities;
2. as reproducers of the (normative) boundaries of ethnic/national groups;
3. as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture;
4. as signifiers of ethnic/national differences;
5. as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles.

In this way, Yuval-Davis and Anthias (ibid) succeed in trying to articulate the position of women in the nation. Their much used framework highlights not only the practical but also the symbolic nature of women's national positioning. Each of these roles is worthy of further discussion, and will now be explored in greater depth.

2.2.1. Women and the biological reproduction of the nation

Yuval-Davis (1997) explains that the struggle of women for reproductive rights has been at the heart of feminist struggles since the emergence of the radical feminist movement. However, most of the discussions on women's reproductive rights, until the last decade at least, have been mainly concentrated on the effects of the existence, or absence of, these rights, in relation to women as individuals (ibid). But, as Yuval-Davis (ibid: 22) points out, 'often pressures on women to have or not to have children relate to them not as individuals, workers and/or wives, but as members of specific national collectivities'.

Yuval-Davis (1997) explains that the relationship between women and the biological reproduction of the nation is one that corresponds most closely to the so-called 'natural' role of women – to bear children. She summarises,

The central importance of women's reproductive roles in ethnic and national discourses becomes apparent when one considers that, given the central role that the myth (or reality) of 'common origin' plays in the construction of most ethnic and national collectivities, one usually joins the collectivity by being born into it (ibid: 26).

It would seem that the most obvious role of women in the nation is reproduction, for without them it would be impossible. Therefore, a nation cannot develop or survive without its women. The discourses around female reproduction highlight the pressures women face, whether to have as many children as physically possible, or in certain circumstances, not to reproduce at all.

The concept of women's reproduction inevitably relates to the idea of the family. Indeed, many theorists of nationalism have likened the nation to the family.

A paradox lies at the heart of most national narratives. Nations are frequently figured through the iconography of familial and domestic space. The term nation derives from *natio*, to be born. We speak of nations as motherlands and fatherlands...in this way, nations are symbolically figured as domestic genealogies (McClintock, 1993: 63)

The family is very much conceptually tied to both the nation and to women. The nation is often described as the extended family, with the majority having the same ethnic or racial background. The national community is considered one of extended family and kinship, especially by primordialists. Not only is the nation likened to a large family, the family unit has in turn been described as a microcosm of the nation. Day and Thompson (ibid: 119) explain that 'within this microcosm there are figured strong images of the roles and duties of mothers and fathers, which were transferred symbolically to the macro domain of the nation'. The family is a male-headed household, with the mother and father having different, although it is often claimed 'natural', roles to play.

For Özkirimli (2000: 193), in order to 'analyze the marginalization (and the silencing) of women by the national body politic, we have to look in the family and household, in the unspectacular details of everyday life'. McClintock (1993: 64) explains,

Since the subordination of woman to man, child to adult was deemed a natural fact, other forms of social hierarchy could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature. The metaphoric depictions of social hierarchy as natural and familial – the 'national family', the 'global family of nations', the colony as a 'family of black children ruled over by a white father' – thus depended on the prior naturalizing of the social subordination of women and children within the domestic sphere.

Thus, the subordination of women in the home has been translated from the private into the public sphere, through the use of the family to personify other social constructs, such as the nation. However, not only does the construct of the family conjure up images of gender appropriate roles for men and women, it also raises issues of normative sexuality. Smith (1991) identifies the family as central to the creation of the nation, and for this reason immediately posits heterosexuality as the only sexual choice available to members of the nation. Nagel (2008: 907) states that 'just as feminism has the capacity to challenge the stability of the masculinist heterosexual order that underlies nationalist boundaries, so, too, does homosexuality'. Manliness is valued in the nation if it comes in the form of virile heterosexuality, and so it becomes clear that nationalism is not just a man's game; it is a heterosexual man's game (ibid). Mayer (2000: 2) states,

When sexed bodies comprise the nation we can no longer think of the nation as sexless. Rather, by exploring the gender ironies of nationalism we expose the fact that sexuality plays a key role in nation-building and in sustaining national identity.

It is in the nation's interests to have a heterosexual population, so that reproduction can occur. Biological reproduction is essential for the nation to continue its existence, from time immemorial to the distant future. Peterson (1999: 39) states that 'group reproduction – both biological and social – is fundamental to nationalist practice, process, and politics' as this is only possible naturally through heterosexual sex, which means that there is no place in the nation for homosexuality.

Day and Thompson (2004: 122) write,

Since birth is the main route to eligibility for membership of the nation, the national interest in reproduction extends to the area of 'legitimate' birth, with concern to regulate sexual liaisons and forms of marriage, and to eliminate 'improper' forms of sexuality, which might include homosexuality, prostitution and 'miscegenation', all of which at different times have been defined as crimes against the nation.

It is easy to understand why the nation may oppose non-reproductive sex, especially if the latter is considered women's prime national function. Day and Thompson (2004: 122) claim that in general, 'nations exercise considerable control over the area of sexual reproduction, and associated patterns of conduct, and in doing so they enforce expectations about behaviour appropriate to the sexes'.

Nagel (1998) explains that women's sexuality often turns out to be a matter of prime national interest for at least two reasons. She states that 'first, women's role in nationalism is most often that of a mother, the symbol of the national hearth and home. Second, women's sexuality is of concern to nationalists, since women as wives and daughters are bearers of masculine honour' (ibid: 255-256). Not only is homosexuality a major concern for the nation, but so too are heterosexual relations with members from other nations.

2.2.2. Women as reproducers of the boundaries of national groups

The second role of women in the nation is also one of reproduction, but this time of the normative boundaries of the ethnic or national group. Through restrictions on sexual and marital relations, women reproduce the boundaries of national groups (Tétreault and al-Mughni, 2000). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989: 9) explain,

Women are controlled not only by being encouraged or discouraged from having children who will become members of the various ethnic groups within the state. They are also controlled in terms of the proper way in which they should have them – i.e. in ways which will reproduce the boundaries of the symbolic identity of their group or that of their husbands.

And so, women control the boundaries of the nation through reproduction. Day and Thompson (2004: 121) state, 'in performing these functions (having children), women are also instrumental in reproducing the boundaries around their ethnic or national groups'.

Mostov (2000: 90) explains, 'women's bodies actually become the boundaries of the nation, for not only are they symbols of the fecundity of the nation and vessels for national reproduction, but they also serve as territorial markers'. So mothers, wives and daughters constitute the nation's geographical boundaries upon which the survival of the nation largely depends. The vulnerability of the nation's borders, as well as its women's bodies, demands protection by the nation's men.

2.2.3. Women as transmitters of culture

Peterson (1999) summarises that under heteropatriarchal conditions, women are not only expected to bear children, but also to rear them. This not only involves the practical element of raising the children, but also their early education, passing on the customs and traditions of the specific ethnic or national group, as well as teaching them the national language. Yuval-Davis (1997: 23) identifies that 'the notion of genetic pools is but one mode of imagining nations'. We can also consider people's culture and traditions, which are usually partly composed of a specific religion and/or a specific language, as other essentialising dimensions. Yuval-Davis (ibid) argues that the mythical

unity of 'national imagined communities' is maintained and ideologically reproduced by a whole system of symbolic 'border guards' which classify people as members and non-members of a specific collectivity. These border guards are closely linked to 'specific cultural codes of style of dress and behaviour as well as to more elaborate bodies of customs, religion, literary and artistic modes of production, and, of course, language' (ibid: 23). Özkirimli (2000: 207) explains that 'gender relations and sexuality play a significant role in all of this, as women are generally seen as embodiments and cultural reproducers of ethnic/national collectivities'. Women are often constructed as the cultural symbols of the collectivity, of its boundaries, as carriers of the collectivity's 'honour' and as its intergenerational reproducers of culture. As Day and Thompson (2004: 123) note, the national language is known as 'the mother tongue, learned at the mother's knee, close to the family hearth'. In this way, and in many others, ideas of nation and gender blend into one another until they become indistinguishable, and often unnoticed (ibid).

For Yuval-Davis (1997), gender symbols play a particularly significant role in the delivery of cultural traditions, and thus constructions of manhood and womanhood, as well as sexuality and gendered relations of power, need to be explored in relation to these processes. Yuval-Davis (ibid) explains that hegemonic cultures present a specific view about the meaning of the world and the nature of social order. The relationships between women and men, and the control of women by men, offer a particular perspective on the meaning of the nation. Certain codes and regulations are usually developed, and then learned, defining who and what is a 'proper man' and a 'proper woman', which is in turn central to the identities of the collectivity's members (ibid). Because women are characterised as the primary care-givers, the resultant exclusion of men from the parenting process will have effects on the child, on experience, identity and on worldview (Peterson, 1999). This results in the current gender order and perceived natural roles of men and women being reinforced through the children. If they are brought up by their mothers, they will then go on to believe that this is the way things are done, and the next generation of mothers will bring up their children accordingly, and so on.

2.2.4. Women as signifiers of national difference

Peterson (1999) states that, alongside women's reproductive role, they also serve as symbolic markers of the nation and of the group's cultural identity. For Day and Thompson (2004: 121), 'society uses women, and their gender characteristics, to symbolize and signify the nature of the nation and ethnicity'. Not only do women teach and transfer the cultural and ideological traditions of ethnic and national groups, they also symbolize the nation and thus national difference. As signifiers of ethnic/national differences, women are used as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction, and transformation of ethnic/national categories (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989).

2.2.5. Women as participants in national struggles

History tells us that, despite the belief that war is for men, women have in fact always played a key role in national struggles. However, while women's roles in national liberation struggles, in guerrilla warfare or in the military has varied, they have generally been seen as supportive and nurturing (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989). As mentioned previously, many nations are created in wars. It is the men who protect the nation, and by implication the nation's women and its future mothers. Hall (1999: 52) claims that 'gender issues around nation and nationalism are perhaps most sharply articulated during periods of military conflict, when men's and women's bodies become the site of that conflict'. The ultimate responsibility of the citizen used to be that of being prepared to die for one's country. This was usually a sacrifice only men could make whilst fighting for their country. Hall (ibid: 52) explains that the 'masculinisation of war and of citizenship are intimately connected, and the exclusion of women from the military has been a key aspect of their exclusion from citizenship'.

However, modern technology and the professionalization of militaries have increased the participation of women in the armed forces, as well as changing their social constructions as soldiers (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Yuval-Davis (ibid: 93) claims that 'militaries and warfare have never been just a "male zone", women have always fulfilled certain, often vital,

roles within them – but usually not on an equal, undifferentiated basis to that of the men’. As Yuval-Davis (ibid: 100) notes, the ‘formal incorporation of women into the military as soldiers has encountered a lot of prejudice’. However, analyses of the jobs that women undertake in the military reveal the persistence of a gendered civil labour market. Women’s roles are still predominantly those of nurses, teachers and secretaries. Yuval-Davis (ibid: 101) explains that ‘if the experience of the military is supposed “to make men from the boys”, womanhood cannot be easily incorporated with such imagery’. Despite the naturalization of the construction of men as warriors throughout history, there have also been constructions and images of women as warriors. However, as Yuval-Davis (ibid: 94) explains,

These images usually have either enhanced the constructed unnaturalness of women as fighters, or have been made in such a way as to collude with more general notions of femininity and masculinity in the society from which the women fighters have come.

Indeed, stereotypical images of femininity at war, such as women at home being good wives and mothers, are highly necessary for the militarized images of masculinity (ibid). For Nagel (2008: 899), ‘men’s honour and women’s purity are important, though often overlooked, symbols in national ideologies, mobilizations and conflicts’. War is constructed as a man’s world, where men fight, kill and die on the frontline while the women support them, or wait at home looking after the family awaiting their return.

2.3. Nation-as-woman

The personification of the nation as a female is seen throughout history. The nation is feminized as weak during times of war, desperate for protection. However, ‘she’ is also nurturing, providing and tasked with raising the future generations. Morokvasic (1998: 75) explains,

Women often embody the nation, they are bearers of its honour and love. In nationalist discourse woman is either the mother of the nation or the sex object. She is either a protector and regenerator of the collective or a possession of that

collective. These symbolic images have been used by the media [in] getting the nation to face the enemy.

Heuer (2008) notes that women were regularly used as symbols of newly created or transformed nations. Many countries' names and associated terms are grammatically feminine, and thus feminine allegories were natural choices for representations of the nation (ibid). Meyer (2000: 122) states,

Traditional representations of the "nation" have been typically associated with female gender constructions and women's bodies, as illustrated in such nineteenth-century symbols of nation-as-woman as Britannia, Columbia, Germania, Hibernia, and others.

In addition, Heuer (2008) explains that historians have emphasized maternal representations of the nation, and in particular the use of expressions such as 'mother country' to represent the nation. This recurring use of the mother as a symbol for the nation not only feminizes the nation, but also ties it to the notion of family.

Eisenstein (2000: 35) describes how the nation 'constructs gender, sexuality, and their racial meanings through moments of nation-building'. Nations are built when the men fight, while the women produce the future nation. Thus, the symbolized woman, as mother of us all, ties the notion of family and kinship to the nation. Eisenstein (ibid) explains that a nation always has 'a' gender and 'a' race although the gender usually remains unspoken. She explains that gender is naturalized through patriarchal familialism. The symbolization of the nation as the 'mother country' embodies the nation as a 'woman', and it is this feminized nation that is mentioned in times of war, when men have to protect their country from the 'rape' of outsiders. In addition, the nation as a loved woman in danger or as a mother who has lost her sons in battle, are elements of the nationalist discourses surrounding national liberation struggles (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

2.4. The nation, men, and masculinity

Nagel (1998) has criticized the current scholarship by feminists on gender and the nation as having a sole focus on women. Whilst feminists can complain about male authors who

have written women out of the nation, they themselves are guilty of the complete opposite. Nagel (ibid: 243) states,

To limit the examination of gender in politics to an investigation of women only, misses a major, perhaps the major way in which gender shapes politics – through men and their interests, their notions of manliness, and masculine micro and macro cultures.

And so, while we can look at women and their roles in the nation, or the nation as a feminized entity, it is also important to briefly consider and understand the role of men and masculinity in the nation.

Enloe (1989: 44) contends that nationalism typically springs from ‘masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinised hope’. Nagel (2008: 900) states that ‘the idea of the nation and the history of nationalism are intertwined with the idea of manhood and the history of manliness’. For Mosse (1996), it is no accident that features of ideal masculinity and ideal nationalism reflect one another, since the qualities associated with both were forged in the new nationalist movements of the 19th century at a time when masculinity was being reinvented as well. Nagel (1998: 251) explains further,

Given the close association between nineteenth- and twentieth-century ideologies of masculinity, colonialism, imperialism, militarism and nationalism, given the fact that it was mainly men who adhered to and enacted them, and given the power of those movements and institutions in the making of the modern world it is not surprising that masculinity and nationalism seem stamped from the same mould – a mould which has shaped important aspects of the structure of the nations and states in the modern world.

So why is the nation a male domain? Feminist scholars point to the male domination of decision-making positions, the male superordinate/female subordinate internal division of labour, as well as the male legal regulation of female rights, labour and sexuality (Nagel, 2008). For Mosse (1985: 67), ‘nationalism had a special affinity for male society and together with the concept of respectability legitimized the dominance of men over women’. As Anderson (2006: 7) describes it,

The nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly die for such limited imaginings. It is clear that the nation is conceived of as man's domain, and we have seen from research on sport and national identity in England that it's Englishmen that are often imagined as embodiments of the nation. What follows is a closer examination of the role of women in the English nation.

2.5. Women in the English nation

Trying to identify and incorporate the history of women in England is difficult, given that literature on England and Englishness on the whole ignores the experiences of women (e.g. Kumar, 2003; Aughey 2007). Notable however is the work by Edmunds and Turner (2001), who, mindful of how studies of national consciousness have tended to marginalize women, concentrate solely on women and the development of a modern (post-1960s) English consciousness. Going back further, Colls (2002: 115) claims that 'the history of women had been one of incorporation into the person of the husband', thus leaving the experiences of women relatively unwritten. When Colls (2002) discusses English women in the nation, it is in a similar vein to how the working classes and black people have been considered. In essence, it is clear that the way the nation was constructed meant that it was not their business (ibid). However, he makes some important distinctions between these three subordinated groups of people. He states, 'in effect the English constitutional attitude to women was analogous to, but not the same as, the constitutional attitude to male workers and colonized people' (ibid: 116). What he means by this statement is that just as the working class was seen as different from those who ran the state, so too were women. However, in principle, unlike the working class as a whole, women were not seen as an oppositional force. Women, and the black people of England, were simply seen as apart from, rather than oppositional to. However, this 'apartness' was different again between the two groups, for women could not be seen as alien as, after all, 'these were women who lived cheek by cheek with English men' (Colls, 2002: 116). So how is it then that Englishwomen have been so consistently ignored?

Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when we begin to see a redefinition of what it means to be English, or more specifically, an Englishman, 'a clearly defined, uncontested image of the Englishwoman is surprisingly elusive' (Mackay and Thane, 1986: 191). The classic English man of the period was held to combine certain qualities, which were defined as distinctively English. Although there were also discussions on what may constitute a perfect English woman, these qualities, which were essentially domestic and maternal, were believed to be universal in women (ibid). For Mackay and Thane (ibid: 191), the Englishwoman was a 'shadowy figure', because of the transnational qualities they were believed to possess. This implied that being a woman went deeper than country, although this was not to say that women were not expected to be patriotic (ibid). The role of females 'was to contribute to the preservation, perpetuation and enhancement of their race, both physically and spiritually; the male role was to defend and preserve' (ibid: 192). The 'separate spheres' of women and men, private and public respectively, reduced women to simply reproducers of the nation. As Mackay and Thane (ibid: 199) state,

The central female role as guardian of the race was further promoted by influential contemporaries in the social and natural sciences. A number of writers attempted a scientific examination of the natures of sex differences and their role in the development of the human race.

In the early twentieth century, despite increasing numbers of women achieving much in education, sport (even motoring) and politics, the most important role for women remained in the home, as wives to the nation's men and mothers to the nation's children. It was only in the twentieth century that feminists came forward to demand their place in the nation. The state was entirely male, 'women were not equal because, put bluntly, how they looked came before who they were' (Colls, 2002: 115). The emergence of the feminist movement led to a reinterpretation of the conventional roles of women and for the nation this meant an 'ever-present danger that women would be tempted away from domesticity' (Mackay and Thane, 1986: 191). In 1913, Miss Osler, the president of the Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society, saw the campaign for women's right to vote as the last phase in a 100 year campaign to extend the state to include women (Colls, 2002). The belief was that equal votes would count persons as equal, and it was as persons in

their own right, and not simply as men's wives, that women made their bid (ibid). Women's involvement in the state was possible, so long as it was not the same kind of inclusion that men enjoyed. Thus, it was not until 1918 that the first women of England achieved the vote, although this was restricted to those over 30. Ten years later, women were registered as voters on the same terms as men. Colls (ibid: 116) explains,

Before suffrage, the identity of women rested on institutions entirely defined by masculine authority – the household, the business, the church, and especially, the state. After female suffrage was granted in 1918 and 1928, now that they were *in*, and claiming equality, the different-ness of women had to be more finely graded.

Throughout the inter-war years, despite the strength of the women's movement and the new roles in society that women were enjoying, women continued to be seen primarily as mothers and homemakers (Colls, 2002). However, Colls (ibid) describes how the evolving English society, including fundamental changes in the meaning of sexuality as well as changing patterns of family and work, allowed women to transform how they are constituted. It would appear that the nineteenth century Englishwoman, as bearer and rearer of the nation's children, was at last an outdated vision. Yet Colls (ibid: 186, original emphasis) cautions,

When it is a question of their *national* identity, or their connections with the state, women as women seem to be out of focus, aligned somewhere else, thinking of options at once greater and smaller than nation or state.

What Colls (ibid) is alluding to here is the idea of a woman as being both transnational and family orientated. This makes sense as historically the English woman's role in the nation was aligned with the gender roles of the nineteenth century. Women were passive members of the community, producers of children, responsible for the rearing and educating of the next generation. The feminist movement provided English women with an alternative avenue into society, and thus the nation.

Following the social changes of the 1960s in the UK – women's rights movements and anti-war campaigns – we now see a new generation of women who have moved from the private sphere and firmly into the public realm (Edmunds and Turner, 2001). Edmunds

and Turner's (ibid) research on women in the post-war elite (including a journalist, an MP, a judge and an actress) has found that these women are playing an important part in re-inventing Englishness in the post-British context. Influencing this re-invention is their 'generational location and the values integral to that as well as their specific biographies as women occupying places in men's worlds (ibid: 91). Furthermore, the focus is on the elite, as they are generally recognized as critical to the construction of national identity. What Edmunds and Turner (ibid) propose is the development of a new English identity in response to the possibility for two models of Englishness: benign or malign. They state, '*benign* Englishness is characterized by openness; it is cosmopolitan, ironic, feminine and creative whereas *malign* Englishness is closed, insular, earnest, masculine and reactive' (ibid: 92). These models of Englishness tie in with Kumar's questioning of the possibility of either an English civic nationalism, or, conversely, the threat of an English ethnic nationalism; or, whether a binary approach does justice to the subtleties of the English nation - it is possible for England to be an amalgamation of the two?

2.6. Summary of gender and nation

As this discussion reveals, women have a pivotal role in the nation, one that is not only about biological reproduction, and this should not be forgotten. Despite the gender-blind wealth of work on the nation, feminist scholars have begun to deconstruct the nation and analyse it through a gendered lens. It is vital that we appreciate the different ways in which men and women experience the nation, although care must be taken to avoid overgeneralized, essentialist assumptions about women and men. Nagel (1998: 261) concludes her paper on masculinity and nationalism by saying:

According to a Southern African Tswana proverb, 'a woman has no tribe' (Young, 1993, p. 26). I wonder whether it might not also be true that a woman has no nation, or that for many women the nation does not 'feel' the same as it does to men. We are not expected to defend our country, run our country, or represent our country. Of course, many women do these things, but our presence in the masculine institutions of state – the government and the military – seems unwelcome unless we occupy the familiar supporting roles: secretary, lover, wife.

Another masculine institution, although not mentioned by Nagel, is sport, and work looking at the position of athletic women in the nation is a relatively rare phenomenon. Sport has historically been a man's world, and women's entry into sport regarded as challenging notions of acceptable feminine behaviour. Thus, by representing the nation in sport, women may be seen to be trespassing on not one, but two male domains.

3. Women in Sport

It has been claimed that women's sports history has often been underwritten, relatively ignored in sports history accounts, and in accounts on the history of women in general (Osborne and Skillen, 2010; Kay, 2010). According to Guttmann (1991), there has never been a time in history when women have been as involved in sports as men. It is this reality which ultimately led to sport being identified as being a 'male domain' or a 'masculine preserve'. As Messner and Sabo (1990: 9) state, sport is 'an institution created by and for men'. They further claim, 'as such, it has served to bolster a sagging ideology of male superiority and has thus helped to reconstitute masculine hegemony in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' (ibid: 9). Young (2010: 13) agrees, stating that 'the cultural exclusion of women from the idea and reality of sport has given sport a masculinist bias'. Thus, sport orientates itself according to male values and norms (Palzkill and Fisher, 1990), and throughout history, women's struggle to participate in sport and be accepted as athletes is evident. Shaped by cultures and belief systems, sport has often been considered an unladylike activity, resulting in centuries of discrimination (Harris, 1999).

Some of the early writers on sport and gender were men. Whitson (1990: 19) claims that 'sport has become, it is fair to suggest, one of the central sites in the social production of masculinity'. Not only is it important to men, according to Messner (1987), sport has actually become one of the last bastions of male power. Whitson (1990: 20) further states that 'sport is named as a male institution, not just in the numerical sense that many have pointed to, but, more importantly, in the values and behavioural norms it promotes and ultimately naturalizes'. More recently, Young (2010: 16) has argued that the 'major symbols and institutions of sport in our society continue by and large to

exclude women'. Despite this, according to Velija and Malcolm (2009: 629), 'it is widely accepted that there are now more opportunities for females to be involved in sports than ever before', including in sports which have traditionally been seen as male preserves. What is important in looking at women in sport is to gain an understanding of the issues that were prevalent at specific times, so as to make more sense of the position accepted by women in sport today.

3.1. A brief history of women in sport

Guttmann (1991) traces the history of women's sport in England from the mid-seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. During this period, there were numerous occasions when women were involved in various forms of physical activity. As Guttmann (ibid: 1) states, 'blanket statements about the pre-nineteenth-century exclusion of women from sports are commonly uttered in blissful ignorance of the historical record'. What he means by this is that women's supposed exclusion from the male domain of sport fails to consider the 'distinctiveness of times and places nor the complicated ways in which gender has interacted with social class and with the stages of the life cycle' (ibid: 1). Indeed, throughout history, women have been involved in physical activity. However, analysis of this participation reminds us of the limited opportunities they have had to participate in sports, and how participation was often, although not always, in accordance with dominant notions of femininity and acceptable feminine behaviour. Guttmann (ibid: 93) explains that the 'clear supposition behind the attempts to restrict young women to gentle exercise and graceful notion was that vigorous sports are essentially masculine'.

Hargreaves (1994: 43) explains that it was believed that women were 'inherently emotional, co-operative and passive and therefore unsuited to take part in strenuous physical activities and competitive sports'. This view of 'the physically limited female was institutionalized in scientific and medical establishments', and as such served as a controlling measure on the activities women were allowed to participate in (ibid: 45). The nineteenth century was dominated by an idealized image of a woman as a pale, sickly, 'wraithlike damsel' (Guttmann, 1991: 85). It is apparent that nineteenth century

doctors 'sought to control women's bodies in order to consolidate the power of patriarchal society' (ibid: 87). Doctors cited perceived biological differences, such as 'smaller brains and lighter bones' (Lenskyj, 1986: 17), as reasons for not allowing women to participate in certain activities. The common belief that physical activity could damage women's unique anatomy and hinder their child-bearing abilities disqualified them from vigorous activity. Doctors and exercise specialists warned against strenuous activity for women because of their perceived instability due to menstruation (Cahn, 1994). This belief 'systematically subordinated women in sports for years to come' (Hargreaves, 1994: 43).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was the beginning of a breakthrough with regards to the medical profession, with physicians beginning to recognise the positive health effects of gentle exercise. More important was the realisation that healthier women would bear healthier children, resulting in a healthier nation. However, despite campaigns by some to improve women's health, women were still warned emphatically against over-exertion through physical activity, due to mostly imagined negative consequences. Furthermore, women were constrained by the 'dictates of fashion', which only served to confirm the medical stereotype of a frail, weak, delicate female (Hargreaves, 1994). Women wore restricting clothes, ate little and often took part in no physical activity, which would result in fainting, illness and submissive behaviour. Both women and men believed that women were the weaker sex, and this offered apparent proof. The myths had become self-fulfilling prophecies, which presented women with limited opportunities for physical activity and confirmed the idea of sport as, in general, unattainable for women.

The nineteenth century also saw the development of a number of boarding schools for girls throughout the UK, and there followed the emergence of women's team games. The role that schools and colleges played in the development of women's sport should not be underestimated. However, initially this was only an upper-class phenomenon. As Guttmann (1991: 106) states,

Most members of the Victorian middle-class remained committed to the Cult of Domesticity, while most lower-class women were too overwhelmed with physical

labor inside and outside the home to have much time or energy for regular sports participation, the seeds of change were sown in the elite schools and colleges.

For the most part, these team games were different from the sports played by the boys in their separate schools. Hargreaves (1994: 102) argues that during the 1890s, competitive games for females alongside hockey 'which were taken up in schools, colleges and clubs included lacrosse, rounders, basketball, netball and, finally, in the closing years of the century, cricket'.

The emergence of Victorian sportswomen challenged a 'system that restricted opportunities for development to males' (Guttmann, 1991: 134). However, Hargreaves (1994: 63) states, 'although physical education was becoming an integral feature of the curriculum, conventional ideas that competitive games enhanced masculinity and were incompatible with essential feminine characteristics prevailed'. According to White (2003), traditionally, boys and girls in school were taught different activities, in separate classes. The 'cult of athleticism' in the Victorian boys' public schools had close ties with notions of English masculinity in that period, notably the embodiment of physical prowess, gentlemanly conduct and moral manliness (Hargreaves, 1994). Indeed, Hargreaves (ibid) explains that this 'cult of athleticism' was in essence a 'cult of masculinity'. As a result, the development of sport for girls was intimately tied to notions of acceptable femininity.

The interwar years represent an important time in the history and development of women's sport. During the First World War, women began to step into the shoes of the men away at war. This was not simply a case of women filling the absent jobs of the men in the factories, but also in competitive sport. As Hargreaves (1994: 113) states, 'the interwar years represent a remarkable period in the development of women's sports'. She goes on to claim, 'the Great War had been a unique and liberating experience for many' (ibid: 113). Furthermore, during the interwar years, there was a change in girls' education, with the development of physical education programmes delivered to girls in state funded schools. Instead of drill, girls were offered the opportunity to play games, although these were dependent on access to facilities, which was limited at best and unevenly distributed. Hargreaves (ibid) explains how small-sided games were popular

because they could take place in the limited space of the playgrounds of urban schools. It was for this reason that netball became established as a major team sport for working-class girls.

Hargreaves (1994: 138) claims that 'throughout the interwar years, middle-class women still constituted the majority of those who actively participated in sports and recreation, but gradually during this period more and more working-class women got involved'. Guttman (1991: 189) states that in the western world,

The immediate postwar decades were a medley of confusing and conflicting tendencies and countertendencies. World War Two had mobilized millions of European and American women in roles conventionally thought of as male. Women entered offices and factories, and women entered the armed services, though rarely as combatants.

According to Guttman (ibid), women's work during the war effort helped to make women's sports more accepted, although sport was inevitably still seen as a male domain.

3.2. Feminist scholarship on women in sport

Second wave feminism had a considerable impact on women's sport. Despite the focus of feminist campaigns being mainly on the attainment of equality in the home and the workplace, this liberal ideology of equality filtered through to other aspects of social life. By the 1970s, there was a significant growth in academic scholarship on women's sports, as well as radical changes to women's participation, not just numerically, but in the types of activities they were choosing. According to Whitson (1990: 20), 'feminist scholarship began to develop a critical analysis of male sport, including its effects on women, and of the contributions of male sport to the reproduction of male hegemony'. Title IX is often highlighted as a prime example of the success of the liberal feminist movement in the US, which targeted sexual discrimination and inequality in federal funding for US collegiate sport when it was introduced in 1972.

Messner and Sabo (1990) explain that the feminist analysis of sport has a very short history, with most occurring since 1980. At this time, feminists in academia began to develop a critique of sport as a 'fundamentally sexist institution that is male dominated and masculine in orientation' (Theberge, 1981: 342). For Hargreaves (1994: 26), 'the important impact of the feminist intervention into sports sociology has been to uncover ways in which men's power over women in sports has been institutionalized'. However, as Messner and Sabo (1990: 9) state, 'women's movement into sport (as athletes and spectators) has challenged the naturalization of gender difference and inequality, which has been a basic aspect of the institution of sport'.

Poststructural feminism informs our understanding of the diversity of women's experiences, gendered sporting bodies, and deconstructing the boundaries of femininity and masculinity. If gender is considered as a social construction, it is not something we have but something we produce and do. However, the duality of gender corresponds with traditional binary thinking, and according to this, a person can only be one gender at any time. Thus, 'reality is constructed according to the dichotomy and polarity of female and male' (Pfister and Hartmann-Tews, 2003: 7). According to Lorber (1993: 569), 'in Western societies, we see two discrete sexes and two distinguishable genders' and sport lends itself to maintaining, and highlighting, the differences between the two sexes. The existence of a two-sex sports system can serve to restrict and narrow the ways in which we can imagine the body. The system of athlete classification limits sex to man and woman, and hence masculinity and femininity as discrete categories.

For Theberge (1994: 185), 'the ideological process that legitimizes women's sporting experience begins with the general belief that the sexes are innately different and that males are superior'. She further states, 'the transformation of the biological differences between the sexes into the reality of the social inferiority of women takes place when these differences come to define and limit the practice of sport' (ibid: 185). Sports are often labelled as either male or female. This highlights the way society thinks of gender in binary terms, and how the male form is privileged (e.g. sport versus women's sport). Pfister and Hartmann-Tews (2003: 7) confirm that the doing of gender in sport involves 'the presentation of the body and the demonstration of the physical', and this 'appears to

provide convincing evidence of the gender duality and of the “natural” hierarchy of the sexes’. Birrell and Cole (1994: 2) write, ‘the central effect produced through and by sport is that differences between the sexes are natural’, and therefore men are naturally superior. So when men’s world records are faster, higher, or further than women’s records, this is used as evidence serving to perpetuate the myths that men are biologically better suited to sport, and possibly that women should not be playing or trying to compete.

Sports have also been categorised as ‘masculine-’ and ‘feminine-appropriate’ because of heterosexist traditions (Hargreaves, 1994). ‘Feminine-appropriate’ sports are characterized as such because they ‘affirm a popular image of femininity and demonstrate their essential difference from popular images of masculinity’ (ibid: 159). Hargreaves (ibid) states that masculinity and femininity are relative concepts that are socially and historically constructed. The gender order is a dynamic process, constantly in a state of flux. Connell (1987: 98-99) defines this as ‘a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of masculinity’. To expand, at any given historical moment, there are competing masculinities, some of which will be hegemonic and some marginalized, or even stigmatized. However, hegemonic masculinity can only be created in relation to other subordinated masculinities, as well as femininities (ibid). Connell (ibid: 85) observes, ‘the meanings in the bodily sense of masculinity concern, above all else, the superiority of men to women, and the exaltation of hegemonic masculinity over other groups of men which is essential to the domination of women’.

As Brownmiller (1984: 15) explains, ‘femininity was a challenge thrown down to the female sex, a challenge no proud, self-respecting young woman could choose to ignore’. Femininity is contextual, subject to change over time and across cultures. Despite this, a hegemonic form of femininity, based on white, western, middle-class, heterosexual women, exists. Butler (1990) theorised the ways in which women perform femininity due to the association of sex with gender. The dominant notion of an ideal feminine body is highlighted by Wolf (1992), who explains that the white woman’s body ideal is thin, toned, weak and model-like. Roth and Basow (2004: 249) claim that the ‘femininity

ideology goes far beyond convincing society and women themselves that they are weak, the ideology actually makes them weak, or at least weaker than they need to be'.

Women playing sports that may be in conflict with notions of femininity can be seen as challenging society's conceptions of acceptable gender behaviour, thereby disrupting the gender order. Theberge (1994: 187) identifies a common assumption: that 'sport is a stereotypically masculine activity and that women who participate in sport experience conflict between their feminine and athletic roles'. Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar and Kauer (2004) state that the athletic woman is constantly affected by the socially constructed ideal of femininity, which is in stark contrast to the masculine domain of sport. It has been considered whether female athletes, in conforming to the ideal of hegemonic femininity, are in conflict with themselves by succeeding in the male domain of sport. Royce, Gebelt and Duff (2003) propose that an athletic identity only forms a small part of a much larger and more complex identity incorporating various aspects of life. Female athletes typically define femininity in contrast to athleticism. Krane et al (2004) state that sportswomen therefore develop two identities, athlete and woman, in negotiating the social expectations of femininity and athleticism. But how widely is that recognised, particularly in media coverage of women's sport?

3.3. Women, sport, and the media

A limiting factor for women's capabilities in sport is the association of female athleticism and female sex appeal (Roth and Basow, 2004). Central to this discourse is the media, which have played an integral role in stereotyping female athletes in accordance with heterosexual femininity. Representations of women in sport portrayed to us by the media restrict our imagination about women's sport and what women can achieve. Birrell and Theberge (1994: 341) explain that 'media images misrepresent, distort, trivialize, marginalize and heterosexualize women athletes rather than presenting them as serious, talented and hardworking'. Bruce (2008: 57) notes 'the ways in which the sports media can simultaneously challenge and reinforce dominant assumptions that sport is primarily a male domain.' Wensing and Bruce (2003) explain that as sport is overwhelmingly constructed in the mass media as a male domain, professional male

sport is then represented as the pinnacle of sporting value and achievement. When women do find themselves represented on the sports pages of the popular press, they are represented in notably different ways from men. Bruce (2008: 60) explains that when women receive media coverage, 'extensive international research has shown that the media have historically used five techniques to represent women in line with cultural ideas about femininity', as identified initially in Wensing and Bruce (2003).

In *gender marking*, an event is presented as a women's event, with the men's version as *the* event, and the implication that women's sport is inferior. The technique of *compulsory heterosexuality* means that journalists present female athletes as sex objects, or portray them in heterosexual roles such as wife/mother/girlfriend. The emphasis of *appropriate femininity* focuses on traditional notions of acceptable feminine physical or emotional characteristics or behaviours. *Infantilization* presents sportswomen as girls, thus undermining their sporting achievements. Finally, the *downplaying of sport*, which focusses on non-sport-related aspects such as appearance, family, personal life, alternative careers and comparisons to male athletes, demeans female performance and reinforces the idea that, for women, sports performance and success are secondary to other things, including male sporting success. Wensing and Bruce (ibid), however, also noted that while evidence of these five rules remain, in many cases this approach appears to have given way to a framing technique they have termed *ambivalence*, by which positive descriptions and images of women athletes are juxtaposed with descriptions and images that undermine and trivialise women's efforts and successes.

However, Wensing and Bruce (2003) described the ways in which media coverage of international sporting events may be less likely to be marked by gendered discourses. Wensing and Bruce (2003) and Bruce (2008) identify the ways these 'media rules' are 'bent' when presenting international sportswomen who are representing and, more importantly, winning for the nation. Thus, national identity becomes important in these moments of sportswomen's success, with nationalism overriding the usual ways that the sports press report on female athletes. However, these situations are limited and it remains that women are often still subjected to the trivialisation of their achievements.

In general, however, sport dramatizes sex difference, and the divide between male and female sports further adds to perceived male superiority. Hargreaves (1994) believes that we can only understand images of the female in sport in relation to those of the male. After all, 'the idealized male sporting body – strong, aggressive and muscular – has been a popular symbol of masculinity against which women, characterized as relatively powerless and inferior, have been measured' (ibid: 145). The media conform to this concept of strong men, weak women, with their trivialised portrayal of women's achievements, as well as the (hetero)sexualisation of the female athletes, through displaying them as sexual objects, or as mothers with families.

3.4. Femininity, heterosexuality, and sportswomen

For Brownmiller (1984: 16), 'femininity pleases men because it makes them appear more masculine by contrast'. Women playing masculine-appropriate sports are in direct opposition to societal expectations of how women should behave, and thus challenge men's masculinity. Sports that are seen to embody notions of masculinity contain characteristics such as strength, power, aggression and competitiveness, which are essential for success. As a result, we see sports such as rugby, football, American football and ice hockey labelled as unsuitable for women, in line with notions of acceptable femininity. Women have to challenge dominant notions of feminine-appropriate sport and 'ideal' femininity in order to move into traditionally male only sports (Scraton, Fasting, Pfister and Bunuel, 1999). Women's participation in masculine sports, such as football, rugby or cricket, has therefore never been easy; in England these sports are embedded in the history of what it is to be a man. Scraton, Caudwell and Holland (2005) highlight football as *the* national men's sport in England, with Cox and Thompson (2003: 8) explaining that it seems to 'epitomise a nation's vision of masculinity'.

This leads to other significant issues. For example, in a sporting environment, the term feminine is often considered to mean heterosexual (Hall, 1996). Heterosexism is defined as the belief by various institutions of the superiority of heterosexuality and the assumption that everyone is heterosexual (Lenskyj, 1995). This point is emphasised by Caudwell (1999) who identifies a hierarchy of sexuality, with heterosexuality the norm

and homosexuality the deviant form of behaviour. Caudwell (2003) further explored the compulsory order of sex-gender-desire (for desire read sexuality) in sport. She highlights the operation of woman-feminine-heterosexual, with the body as a site/sight for anchoring the lineage, and explains how women's bodies are disciplined by the woman-feminine-heterosexual order that supports sport's system of sex-gender differentiation. Caudwell (ibid: 384-385) argues that 'regulatory practices attempt to materialize women's sporting bodies through a compulsory ordering of woman-feminine-heterosexual'.

Due to the compulsory order of woman-feminine-heterosexual, women athletes are often under pressure to look feminine and display feminine behaviour to compensate for their unfeminine actions when playing sport. Hargreaves (1994: 171) states,

Women who play traditional male sports, such as cricket, football and rugby, face the greatest criticism and exposure to ridicule. The implications that athletes may be 'pseudo-men', unfeminine, gay, masculine, butch, dykes, or lesbians put pressure on heterosexual sportswomen to play the 'femininity game' and stigmatize homosexuality.

As a result, 'women athletes feel the necessity to conform to dominant images of heterosexual femininity because female muscularity is treated as a sign of masculinisation' (ibid: 169). Indeed, Halberstam (1998) introduces us to the term 'female masculinity', which prizes away masculinity from its close association with men.

Women's success in sports threatens male dominance, and society as a whole is unreceptive to the idea that women might be men's physical equals (Roth and Basow, 2004). According to Lenskyj (1986: 55), 'women's sporting participation during the past century has been constrained by the forces of patriarchal control over female sexuality'. Lenskyj (1986: 95) pointed out that 'throughout the century of women's mass sporting participation, femininity and heterosexuality have been seen as incompatible with sporting excellence'. It was perceived that either sportswomen were inherently masculine, or that sport made women masculine. Women athletes were labelled unfeminine, butch, 'psuedo-men' (Hargreaves, 1994). As Cox and Thompson (2000: 10) explain, 'female athletes, who deviate from the 'norms' of femininity by having...athletic

bodies, are challenged overtly or covertly about their sexuality'. Halbert (1997: 12) argues that 'labelling sportswomen as lesbians stems from the conception that sports-minded women are deviant and is tied to other stereotypes that focus on women athletes' appearance'.

However, Mennesson and Clement (2003) claim that women's team sports provide an environment that promotes the expression of homosexuality. As in all sports, there are women of different sexual preferences who play football. Football is thought of as game suitable only for lesbians or butch women, and this image of the game is often thought of as a barrier to its future development (Harris, 2005). Scraton et al (1999) explain that due to football being so strongly associated with men, in order to gain entry into the footballing world, women and girls are forced to define themselves in opposition to femininity. Because of this, Caudwell (1999: 391) suggests that the 'lesbian image is one of the most popular notions of women who play football in the United Kingdom, in particular, the butch lesbian identity'. Caudwell (2002) explains that the cultural arena of women's football provides a safe social space for players who are unable to conform to compulsory heterosexuality and heterosexual femininity. Scraton et al (1999) argue that not only is football an arena that can provide a safe space for lesbians but it can also lead to hyper femininity as a way of resisting homophobia. Cox and Thompson (2001) explain that heterosexual players are pressured to disassociate themselves from lesbian teammates and to align their image to conform to dominant constructions of femininity that are based on heterosexuality.

At present, women have more opportunities than ever before to participate in sports, and the sports that are enjoying increasing popularity include previously male-dominated ones such as football and rugby union (Carle and Nauright, 1999). The movement of women into rugby has helped to challenge traditional rugby cultures (Chandler and Nauright, 1996), although for Carle and Nauright (1999: 132), the way the sport is reported and represented in the media hints at the 'reluctant toleration of rugby as an option for women'. Nauright and Chandler (1999: 203-204) explain that,

Despite the blurring of gendered boundaries in and around rugby, women who play rugby have faced, and in many cases continue to face, widespread

condemnation although they appear to enjoy many of the same benefits and also suffer many of the same difficulties (and injuries) as men.

In the twenty-first century, athleticism has still not been aligned with hegemonic femininity, and as a result athletic women are often labelled 'pseudo-men' which equates to lesbian (Cox and Thompson, 2003). The stigmatisation of athletic women as essentially non-women serves to help maintain sport as a male domain.

3.5. Women in team sports

After looking at recent research and debates on women's involvement in sport, it is important to now provide background to the four team sports that will be central to this research, netball, football, cricket and rugby union. These four sports have varied and interesting histories, often characterised by some of the debates we have already discussed.

3.5.1. Netball

Netball is a sport predominantly played in countries of the former British Empire, having been created in England in the late nineteenth century. Unlike other team games, netball is virtually unique in that it did not originate as a predominantly male sport that was taken up women. The sport is controlled and governed by the International Federation of Netball Associations (IFNA), formed in 1960 (Shakespear, 1997). White (2003) identifies the governance system in netball as unique, given that the national governing body for the sport has not been taken over by male counterparts. Although the sport is in fact open to men, and there are some male umpires and coaches, 'netball remains a largely female defined sport played and governed by women' (ibid: 37).

The name was derived from the equipment used, usually poles at either end of the court with a net attached in which goals are scored (Jobling and Barham, 1991). Hargreaves (1994: 124) explains that netball developed as a 'specifically English and "feminized" version of American basketball'. Rules prevented any form of contact throughout the game, and meant that the sport allowed women to participate whilst still conforming to

societal expectations of how they should behave (Crego, 2003). According to Hargreaves (1994: 250), 'as a non-contact game, played and controlled by women throughout its history, and linked to the school and college contexts, netball has all the attributes of a 'feminine-appropriate' sport. It is the most widely played female sport in the country'. As such, netball is a sport most girls are introduced to through their school physical education programmes, which still tend to reflect a traditional gendered approach, resulting in girls playing sports such as netball and hockey, and boys, rugby and football (White, 2003).

England Netball (2011) claim that the levels of participation in the sport are growing fast. At present there are over 75,000 affiliated members, with at least one million girls playing netball every week. Furthermore, over 70 national netball associations are affiliated to the IFNA, with a representative from every continent (IFNA, 2012). From these, 33 teams are internationally ranked, with Australia, New Zealand, and then England making up the top 3 (IFNA, 2012). In major competitions (World Championships and Commonwealth Games), England has never finished higher than third, highlighting the dominance of Australia and New Zealand.

3.5.2. Cricket

The history of women playing cricket is a fairly long one. However, Odendaal (2011) explains that the extensive literature on the development of cricket has merely touched on the involvement of women playing in England in the 1700s and early 1800s. Guttman (1991) identifies the earliest recorded game of women's cricket as taking place on 26 July 1745, in Guildford, Surrey. Although by the end of the eighteenth century the game of cricket had become the English gentleman's game, it remained surprisingly popular amongst women (ibid). It was taken up in the English girls' boarding schools. Indeed, Hargreaves (1994: 123) states, 'cricket was a traditional bastion of male chauvinism, but because most female cricket at this time was institutionalized in the private spheres of clubs, schools, colleges and universities, it was relatively easy for women to determine their own progress'.

Huggins and Williams (2006) explain that although a few women had played cricket before the First World War, it became the only men's sport that women significantly took up between the wars. The British Women's Cricket Association (WCA) was formed in 1926, with an estimated figure of around 6,000 women playing the sport by the late 1930s. Marqusee (1994) explains that the WCA was never given a voice in the cricket hierarchy. Nevertheless, it was women who conjured up the idea of a cricket World Cup, before the men, to be held in and subsequently won by England in 1973. Yet, gender prejudice remained. Comparing the state of cricket in England with that in Australia, Marqusee (1994: 21) writes,

In Australia, women's cricket enjoyed commercial sponsorship, but not in England, where appeals for support from Tetley Bitter, official sponsors of the men's Test side, had been rebuffed. Other potential sponsors told the WCA that women's cricket did not receive enough television coverage or that its image was not suitable for the sponsors' products. At one point the English women were advised that they would get more television exposure if they played scantily clad.

Marqusee (1994: 22) states, 'year in, year out, the top women cricketers play not for the media, not for the fans, not for the money or the fame – there is little of either – but for themselves and for each other'. However, despite the English Cricket Board (ECB) claiming increased numbers of girls playing cricket since the 1998 merger with the WCA, Velija and Malcolm (2009) dispute this. They found that survey data indicate no significant change in female involvement in cricket between 1994 and 2002. They noted that within certain social contexts, female cricketers experience views which suggest that playing cricket is an unusual activity for a woman (ibid).

More recently, in 2009, the women's cricket World Cup was held in Australia. England defeated New Zealand in the final, with five of the England side named in the team of the tournament. Batswoman Claire Taylor made history as Wisden¹, for the first time in its 120-year history, named a woman as one of its five cricketers of the year. England's success in the women's game was further highlighted with victory in the inaugural World

¹ Wisden is the common term for the Wisden Cricketers Almanack. It is a cricket reference book published in the UK, also known as the 'Bible of cricket'.

Twenty20 Championships, held in England in the summer of 2009, a tournament in which they also finished runners-up in 2012.

3.5.3. Football

Hargreaves (1994) claims that there is some evidence suggesting women were involved in football as far back as the late nineteenth century. While the FA (2011) claims the first game between women was in 1895 between the North and the South, Williams (2003a) believes that the first recorded game of women's football was actually in 1888, in Inverness. It was in the twentieth century that women's football reached its peak, specifically from the First World War up to 1921. In 1917, we see the formation of Dick Kerr's Ladies, a team of women munitions workers from Preston, which became one of the most famous women club sides ever. In addition, by 1920, there were approximately 150 women's teams in operation throughout the UK. Williamson (1991: 15) describes the feeling at the time, stating 'it was as if the country had been gripped by ladies football fever'. The FA (2011) states that the first international fixture in England was played between Dick Kerr's Ladies and a French XI in 1920, and on Boxing Day of the same year, 53,000 people gathered at Goodison Park to see Dick Kerr's Ladies beat St Helens Ladies 4-0, which was the largest crowd for a women's football match in England prior to the London 2012 Olympics (Woodhouse and Williams, 1999).

The FA did not support the early participation of women in the sport. An initial FA ruling in 1902 prevented male teams from playing against women's teams, and then in 1921, with around 150 women's teams in operation, the FA imposed a pitch ban on women's teams, preventing them from playing on the grounds of their affiliated male clubs. The FA stated, 'the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and should not be encouraged' (The FA, 1921, cited in Williamson, 1991, p. 17). It is thought the support for, and the high standard of, the women's game was seen by the FA as a threat to the men's game. The ban effectively halted the growth and development of the sport in the UK for fifty years (Cox and Thompson, 2003). The Women's Football Association (WFA) was formed in 1969, and the FA subsequently lifted the pitch ban in 1971. This allowed the staging of the first official women's international in Britain, with England beating

Scotland 3-2. In 1993, the WFA was then taken over by the FA. Women's and girls' football continued to grow in the UK throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, with more players competing in affiliated competitions than in any other team sport. Scraton et al (2005) highlighted that in 2002, football became the most popular sport for women in the UK, overtaking netball. Harris (1999: 98) points out that 'despite continued opposition...the game has gone from strength to strength', with the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) stating, 'the future is feminine' (FIFA Report, 1995, cited in Williams, 2003: 1).

2011 was a landmark year for women's football in England with the introduction of the FA Women's Super League (WSL). The WSL is a new, elite, semi-professional league for women's football, to be played during the summer, with some games being televised live. The FA believe the WSL will play a pivotal role in ensuring the player pathway leading to a competitive, elite structure at the very top of the women's game. According to the FA, at present football is the nation's number one female team participation sport, with 1.38 million women and girls playing (FA, 2011). In addition, England women's football is thriving, reaching the World Cup quarter finals in 2011, and finishing as runners up in the 2009 European Championships, losing 6-2 to Germany in the final.

3.5.4. Rugby union

Women's rugby union is a sport identical to the men's game, but with a significantly different past. In fact, this is one women's sport with a very modern history. Dunning (1994) is one of many who identifies British rugby union as a male preserve. Grundlingh (1996: 197) states, 'rugby, in part at least because of the rough, physical nature of the game, has acquired a reputation of being pre-eminently 'a man's game'. It has been described as the 'ultimate Man-Maker', inculcating values such as 'courage, self-control and stamina'. Wheatley (1994: 195) explains that more recently, 'women have begun to challenge and undermine the taken-for-granted notion of rugby as a male preserve', by actively getting involved with the sport. However, because of the sport's physical nature and connections to masculinity, women were systematically excluded from participation in the sport throughout history, until the 1970s.

It appears that where rugby is a major national football code for men, women's rugby was slower to emerge (Carle and Nauright, 1999). Whilst significant numbers of women in the USA and Canada were playing rugby by the 1980s, this is often attributed to the fact that rugby was not a major male team sport in those countries, and as a result women did not face as much opposition. In the UK, the Women's Rugby Football Union (WRFU) was founded in 1983, and governed the sport for each of the 'home' nations, England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. When the WRFU was formed, there were only 12 member clubs. The WRFU continued to run the sport until 1994, when it was disbanded, and each country established its own governing body. In England, the Rugby Football Union for Women (RFUW) was formed. Due to a merger between the RFUW and the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in 2009, the kit for representative teams became standardised. As a consequence, the use of the English rose, alongside the words 'women', which is the same as the rose worn by the men, appeared on the shirts of England's women's rugby players.

Chandler and Nauright (1996) claim that women's rugby is the fastest growing sport for women in Europe. The RFU (2011) records that there are 231 senior and university teams affiliated to the RFUW, allowing approximately 8,500 women to play regularly. As with the other sports discussed, women's rugby in England has enjoyed a successful recent history. In the 2010 Women's Rugby World Cup final in London, New Zealand overcame England 13-10 to lift the trophy. Aside from the defeat in the World Cup, England women continue to demonstrate their strength on a global scale. In the Six Nations tournament, played between England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy, England women have been completely dominant, winning for a record-breaking six times in succession, only losing one game in all of the 6 tournaments, to Wales in 2009.

4. Summary

It is clear that women's roles in the nation are not restricted to biological reproduction. However, the close association of men-nation-war means that both the nation and war are typically seen as male domains. Similarly, it is apparent that modern sports have been powerful sources for male imagery, which has made women's involvement

problematic. As we move into the twenty-first century, women continue to make inroads into traditional male sports, and it is these women who are actively redefining concepts of women's sports, blurring the boundaries between the traditional binary of masculinity and femininity (Hargreaves, 1994). Whilst there is an argument that women's participation in sport is characterized by their historic subordination to men, the sexualisation of the female athletes, and the commercialisation of both the female body and sexuality, Hargreaves (ibid: 161) proposes that the female athletic body can be 'a symbol of empowerment and an escape from the traditional images of femininity and domesticity'. Furthermore, for Hargreaves (ibid: 116), male hegemony in sports has never been absolute: 'in spite of the historic subordination of women, it has always been possible for outstanding female athletes to assert themselves and to disrupt conventional images of femininity'.

However, as noted, women have been and continue to be subordinated in sport. In the twenty-first century, it is interesting to consider how far, if at all, society has come in accepting and celebrating women's participation and achievements in sport? Bryson (1994: 55) claims that 'the ignoring of women's achievements is by no means confined to situations in which they fail to win, it extends to situations in which they do win'. Furthermore, Willis (1994: 35) questions how it is that 'the meanest local fifth division, male works' team gets more respect, in popular consciousness, than a women's national team'. What is important is to ask what the women themselves think about their status as women, athletes, and representatives of the nation.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Methods

In conducting social science research, one must adopt a methodology, which acts as a bridge between one's theoretical positioning and the research practice. This chapter provides an outline of the epistemological basis of the current research on sport, gender and national identities, and explains the choice of a specific research paradigm and the methods of data collection.

1. Research paradigms

Paradigms and metaphysics do matter. They matter because they tell us something important about researcher standpoint. They tell us something about the researcher's proposed relationship to the Other(s). They tell us something about what the researcher thinks counts as knowledge, and who can deliver the most valuable slice of this knowledge (Lincoln, 2010: 7)

The process of selecting a methodology stems from underlying principles that are intimately tied to how we conceive the nature of reality. According to Willis (2007: 8), 'at the basic or fundamental level there is a philosophy of science that makes a number of assumptions about fundamental issues such as the nature of truth (ontology) and what it means to know (epistemology)'. Ontology is described as the way one sees reality or truth, a 'theory or 'reality' of being' (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 194). Brustad (2008) explains how epistemology refers to a branch of philosophy concerned with knowledge generation and the knowledge we value and trust. Gratton and Jones (2004) provide us with a definition of epistemology as the philosophical study of how knowledge is acquired. Further, an epistemology is 'a framework or theory for specifying the constitution and generation of knowledge about the social world; that is, it concerns how to understand the nature of reality.' (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 108).

How we understand ontology and epistemology depends on the philosophical paradigm we operate within. The idea of a paradigm is taken from Kuhn (1962: 5), who suggested

that it is 'the entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques shared by members of a given scientific community'. Markula and Silk (2011) more recently describe research paradigms as the means of providing orientations towards how we see the world, our ontology, and how we gain knowledge, and our subsequent judgements on this knowledge, our epistemology. It is these philosophical parameters that underpin our methodological practices. For Guba and Lincoln (1994: 107, emphasis in original):

A paradigm may be viewed as a set of *basic beliefs* (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a *worldview* that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts.

As highlighted here, central to all research is an understanding of research paradigms. In relation to this research, three differing paradigms (positivism, interpretivism, postmodernism) will be discussed briefly, in order to reach a better understanding of the theoretical and methodological positioning of the study.

Silk, Andrews and Mason (2005) confirm that a paradigm is not only made up of ontology (the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world) and epistemology (how I know the world and the relationship between the knower and the known), but also the methodology (the best means for gaining knowledge about the world). The methods used to collect data in the search for 'truth' will depend on how 'truth' and 'reality' are conceptualised, through ontological and epistemological beliefs. Arguably the two most common paradigms are positivism (and later, post-positivism) and interpretivism. Silk et al (2005: 6) describe a positivist paradigm as 'based on decontextual, formal and standardized experimentalism that seeks to analytically separate distinct variables in an effort to prove causality – cause and effect'. Positivist ontology expects the discovery of a universal truth, through a measurable and objective reality. A positivist paradigm suggests that there can only be one truth and that subsequent methodologies lend themselves to finding this truth. Thus, for a researcher operating according to the positivist paradigm, reality is something that is quantifiable.

The Enlightenment period, and movement of western societies into modernity, was a time in which the notion of one truth was carried over into the human sciences, due to

the privileging of the natural or traditional sciences. In the modernist era, science replaced pre-modern religious institutions as the authority as to what is 'true'. Thus, scientists came to represent tellers of an objective, value-free knowledge. Seidman (1994: 1) states:

At the heart of the modern west is the culture of the Enlightenment. Assumptions regarding the unity of humanity, the individual as the creative force of society and history, the superiority of the west, the idea of science as Truth, and the belief in social progress, have been fundamental to Europe and the United States.

The use of a positivist approach in the social sciences provided an authoritative foundation during the first half of the twentieth century.

According to Lather (2004: 204), the alternative interpretivist paradigm is involved in 'making an epistemological break with the positivist insistence on objectivity', putting forward an argument that 'nothing is outside ideology, most certainly the production of social knowledge'. This has resulted in the displacement of the consensus on what it means to do science. Many in the social sciences are no longer looking for causal relationships, single answers to single questions, the 'truth', as an explanation for a phenomenon. This is not to say that positivism is dead. 'What is dead, however, is its theoretic dominance and its "one best way" claims over empirical work in the human sciences', with the focus in the social sciences now on constructed instead of found worlds (ibid: 207).

Hammersley (2004) concludes that human behaviour is not reducible to fixed patterns. Thus, a positivist approach to research fails to capture the contextual character of human interaction. Despite this, we must not forget that quantitative methods have proved useful throughout the social sciences. However, an interpretive approach which attempts to understand the behaviour of individuals within particular social settings and environments is more appropriate than a positivist, scientific approach. An epistemological approach to the social world can be considered interpretive insofar as an understanding of a particular action requires an emphasis on grasping the situation in which human actions make or acquire meaning (Schwandt, 2000). In relation to sport, 'in order to capture the essence and context of the sporting empirical, research needs to

recognize the fluid and intricate interactions between people and the socio-historical worlds in which they exist' (Silk et al, 2005: 5).

In more recent times, Siedman (1994) argues, a social and cultural shift has taken place within western societies, and it is the concept of "postmodern" that best captures this. Despite Rail's (1998) contention that postmodern theories and movements cannot be universally defined, Lyotard (1984) accurately describes the postmodern turn as characterised by the decline of the legitimating power of "metanarratives" as distinctive of postmodern culture. According to Seidman (1994: 5),

Lyotard describes the rise of a postmodern science. Such knowledges abandon absolute standards, universal categories, and grand theories; they favor local, historically contextualized, and pragmatic types of social inquiry. The value of postmodern knowledges lies in making us aware of and tolerant toward social differences, ambiguity, and conflict.

As Foucault (1980: 40) explained, 'the attempt to think in terms of a totality (have) in fact proved a hindrance to research'. Postmodern science has flourished 'as claims to universal knowledge lack credibility, [and] as knowledges are viewed as interlaced with rhetoric and power, the very meaning of knowledge is changing' (Seidman, 1994: 2).

England (1994: 241) proposes that 'social scientists are increasingly suspicious of "objectivity" and value-free research', given the increasing acceptance of knowledge as socially constructed and situated. As Hammersley (2004) understands it, the hallmarks of positivist social science are not well suited to capturing the myriad perspectives or the contextual character of human interaction in the social world. This led to the postmodern turn, which is founded upon the premise that the social world is complex and that people define their own realities (Markula and Silk, 2011). A postmodern paradigm works in opposition to the positivist/postpositivist paradigm, the aim of the postmodern project being to conceptualise how an individual creates and understands his or her own reality in a given social setting. The underlying principle is that a world has multiple realities, our views of these realities being dependent and linked to us, and knowledge being subjectively constructed, and subjectively known by us. The postmodern paradigm's ontological and epistemological plurality, according to which

multiple realities exist and can best be known through the subjectivities of many different people, leaves postmodern work at odds with what we may call traditional science, situated within the positivist paradigm and premised on the assumption that there exists one knowable truth. The postmodern rejection of grand narratives in favour of smaller-scale, local interpretations has become characteristic of much recent qualitative social science research.

2. Qualitative research

The paradigm 'wars' have often presented themselves as a direct conflict between quantitative and qualitative research. Indeed, there has been a tendency in discussions about research methods to treat quantitative and qualitative research as 'mutually antagonistic' (Bryman, 1988: 93). Willis (2007) explains that the major difference between these two approaches is not the type of data collected but the foundational assumptions that underpin them. As Berg (2006: 5) notes, 'methods impose certain perspectives on reality'. Quantitative research embraces the logic of research methods employed by the natural sciences, essentially underpinned by a positivist research philosophy. Quantitative research methods are concerned with objective measurement, causality, concepts of reliability and validity, control and repeatability, and generalisability (Bryman, 1988). In contrast, the focus of qualitative researchers is on depicting the reality of social life in dynamic and fluid ways. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 2) state,

By the 1960s, battle lines were drawn between quantitative and qualitative camps. Quantitative scholars relegated qualitative research to a subordinate status in the scientific arena. In response, qualitative researchers extolled the humanistic virtues of their subjective, interpretive approach to the study of human group life.

Given that qualitative research means different things to different people, there is little consensus over a definition that suitably summarises what it is. 'There is no formulaic way, no blueprint, of how qualitative research ought to be conceptualised and conducted' (Lyons, 2007: 4).

For Avis (2005), qualitative methods are often defined as what they are not, i.e. qualitative methods are those which are not quantitative. Van Maanen (1983: 9) explains that

The label 'qualitative methods' has no precise meaning in any of the social sciences. It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode and translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.

Thus, qualitative research provides a way of attaining information that is aligned to postmodern epistemological and ontological concerns, such as the subjective and complex nature of experiences, and the possibility of multiple, constructed reality.

3. Feminist methodologies

Following a more detailed discussion of feminist theory in the literature review, it is essential to situate feminist methodologies within some of these epistemological and ontological debates. Doucet and Mauthner (2006: 36) ask, 'is there a specifically feminist method?' Answers to this are far from straightforward and the complexity of the debates is much greater than the scope of this research. It is important to question the extent to which feminist research has indeed gone beyond other forms of good, interpretive research. However, an understanding of feminist research, and a consideration of the possibilities of feminist epistemologies and feminist methodologies, is vital. As Doucet and Mauthner (ibid: 42) explain, 'over the past three decades, there have been multiple intersections between feminism and the fields of methodology and epistemology'.

According to Skeggs (1994: 77), feminist research is distinct from nonfeminist research because "it begins from the premise that the nature of reality in western society is unequal and hierarchical". More specifically, feminist research puts gender at the centre of social inquiry, making women visible and representing women's experiences. This is due to the feminist assumption that the powerful (men) dominate social life and ideology, and research is produced and owned by the powerful at the expense of women. As Doucet and Mauthner (2006: 38-39) contend, 'knowledge, both academic and popular,

was based on men's lives, male ways of thinking, and directed toward the problems articulated by men'. Early claims for a feminist methodology were characterized by a challenge to the silencing of women. Thus, calls were made for more critical examinations of the limits of knowledge produced by (male) researchers adopting masculinist perspectives. Types of research that followed therefore placed women at the centre of the research process, as women were researched by women, for women. It is widely accepted that as a consequence there emerged three feminist research positions: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theories and postmodern feminist methodologies.

Doucet and Mauthner (2006) explain that many feminists in the 1970s began to grapple with issues of masculinity, power and authority in knowledge creation, across many disciplines, and subsequently the masculine bias in science was exposed. 'Feminist empiricism was a response that emerged largely from feminist scientists and feminist critiques of science' (ibid: 37). What was meant by feminist empiricism was a consideration of how feminist values can inform empirical inquiry. Feminist empiricism accepts within its research model an objectivist, positivist epistemology, and is considered as criticising not the foundations of science, but its practice (Sarantakos, 2005).

Feminist standpoint theories may seem more closely aligned with the feminist political tradition (Harding, 1987). As Sarantakos (2005) contends, central to this research model is the theoretical proposition that women are better suited to investigate and document the social experiences of women, due to a shared understanding of personal and social experiences. The development of feminist standpoint epistemology led to feminist challenges to the differential power that groups have to define knowledge, and it was argued that 'marginalized groups hold a particular claim to knowing' (Doucet and Mauthner, 2006: 37). Although there are many and different contexts (for example class, ethnicity, race, education, culture), and hence many different standpoints, within this research perspective, Sarantakos (2005) identifies some common criteria: the rejection of traditional research methods, a focus on feminist methodologies, and the placement of women's experiences at the centre of the research focus.

Due to previous feminist work being criticised for the emphasis on metanarratives in its understanding of the social world (for example, the universal subordination of women by men), postmodern feminist methodologies began to be adopted. According to Alcoff and Potter (1993: 1), many feminist epistemologists are sceptical about 'the possibility of a general or universal account of nature and limits of knowledge, an account that ignores the social context and status of knowers'. Postmodern feminists adhere to general philosophical principles that have a strong impact on the way research is to be done. Feminist postmodernism is understood as an epistemology that is non-foundationalist, contextualist and multiple in its commitments (Sarantakos, 2005). It rejects epistemological assumptions of modernism, the foundational grounding of knowledge, the universalising claims for the scope of knowledge, and the employment of dualist categories of thought. Furthermore, postmodern feminisms are critical of certain feminist practices that may be considered essentialist (ibid).

Despite the diversity in feminist theory and methodology, there are some common principles that unite the field, namely agreement that women have been marginalized and overlooked, that male superiority is perpetuated, and that there is still a long way to go before gender equality is achieved and established (Sarantakos, 2005). However, feminism has also come under attack for its presumption of representing the 'hidden truth' of women or women's experience (Gibson-Graham, 1996). There have been further problems surrounding the relationship between feminist methodologies and third-wave postmodern feminist theorizing. If we are to fully embrace new, postmodern feminist theorising, involving the deconstruction of 'women', we must therefore accept that there is no unity, centre, or actuality to discover for women. As Gibson-Graham (ibid: 233) explains:

Feminists have historically claimed that as 'women' we are dominated and oppressed, and feminist politics has staked its legitimacy upon the assumption of this shared or common, but importantly, *subordinated* identity...without unity of women's identity, many critics see postmodern feminism as opening the doors to fragmentation, factionalism and political disempowerment.

However, 'in dissolving the presumed unity of women's identity postmodern feminism has liberated knowledge's and given rise to fruitful theoretical controversies as to who

women 'are' and how to 'know' them' (Gibson-Graham, 1996: 233). England (1994: 242) claims that 'feminism and the so-called postmodern turn in the social sciences represent a serious challenge to the methodological hegemony of neopositivist empiricism'. For England (ibid: 243), the 'openness and culturally constructed nature of the social world, peppered with contradictions and complexities, needs to be embraced, not dismissed'. As noted previously, postmodern feminism is a complicated, and multiple, field. Poststructural feminism is but one strand of postmodern feminist thought, which 'opened up a space for voices other than those of white, western, middle-class, heterosexual men to be heard' (ibid: 242).

Davies and Gannon (2005: 318) explain that:

Feminist poststructuralism makes visible, analysable and revisable, the binaries male/female and straight/lesbian. It shows how relations of power are constructed and maintained by granting normality, rationality and naturalness to the dominant half of any binary, and in contrast, how the subordinate term is marked as other, as lacking, as not rational.

In sport, the binary of male/female is highlighted with segregated sports events, and standardised 'sex testing' featuring in women's sports events globally. Within the national sporting arena, male sports are powerful, and female sports are often marked as other. The present research is based on a poststructural feminist methodology, not least because, as mentioned previously, the rationale is premised on critiquing current academic trends within the field of sociology, in particular the masculine bias of work on the nation, and the subsequent masculine bias of work on sport and the nation.

Not only does a feminist poststructuralist approach seek understanding of how power relations in society are gendered, it also allows us to understand that identity is not singular. Greishaber (2001) explains that the concept of multiple identities, or compulsory subjectivity, is made possible if one uses poststructural theoretical approaches. This takes us beyond theorising on identity that may situate it as genetically determined, essential or innate. Instead, identities and subjectivities, who we are and how we understand ourselves, are considered to be socially constructed, 'constructed

and produced in the political, social and economic circumstances (discourses) currently operating in society' (ibid: 66).

A feminist poststructural model provides an alternative paradigm to identity development. Starting from the premise that identities are fluid, contextual, and multiple, identity is not a fixed category, but one that is constantly constructed. In this sense, each individual has multiple identities that are available based on the particular context (ibid: 67).

Identity, or subjectivity, is theorized as "precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in the discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, 1997: 32). Subjectivity, then, can be understood as a range of subjectivities (or identities). 'The multiplicity of identities does not infer that they are separate. Rather identities such as race, socioeconomic class, and sexuality, tend to intersect' (Greishaber, 2001: 67). Feminist poststructural theory allows us to begin to understand the complex nature of identities. This allows us to begin to understand how one's gendered subjectivity may impact and intersect with a range of other subjectivities and identities, including national identity(ies).

According to Davies and Gannon (2005: 319), 'feminist poststructural research is focused on the possibility of moving beyond what is already known and understood. Its task is not to document difference between men and women but to multiply possibilities'. The task here is not to document the differences between men and women but to find an avenue to discuss if and how identities intersect and overlap, and to give a voice to the experiences of English women who represent their nation in the sporting arena.

4. Research methods

The research mainly used one research method – the interview – although resultant data is supplemented by media accounts.

4.1. Interviews

This study involved a comparative analysis of the experiences of women in four separate women's national sports in England: netball, association football, rugby union and cricket. In order to collect data to help understand the complexities surrounding national, gendered and sporting identities and subjectivities, interviews were used. A qualitative approach was essential given the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the poststructural theory of multiple identities, as well as the feminist poststructural understanding of gendered subjectivity. One way to discover how people subjectively create their realities is simply to ask them; it is well documented that asking people questions about their lives and experiences provides a way by which we can begin to understand their actions, emotions, identities etc. After all, as Davies and Gannon (2005: 318) explain, poststructuralist analysis 'seeks to transcend the individual/social divide and to find the ways in which the social worlds we inhabit, and the possibilities for existence within them, are actively spoken into existence'. Moreover, in order to even begin to understand the intersections of gender, national identity and sport, an appropriate method of data collection is essential.

Amis (2005: 105) explains that interviews offer a depth of information that permits a detailed exploration of particular issues, as the interviewer 'attempts to gain insight into the inconsistencies, contradictions and paradoxes that are a quintessential part of our daily lives'. deMarrias (2004: 54) defines an interview as 'a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study'. These questions will ask for thoughts, opinions and descriptions, with the aim of eliciting information that will shed light on the research participants' subjective experiences.

Gratton and Jones (2004) highlight that interviews can be split into categories according to the rigidity of the interview schedule. Structured interviews are usually simple to administer and gain responses from, though these responses will usually lack depth and nuance, and the interview itself can be as structured as a spoken questionnaire. Unstructured interviews operate in precisely the opposite way. They follow little or no

schedule of questioning, and are often left open for the research participant to guide the interview as she sees fit. However, the most common form of qualitative interview that occurs in the social sciences is semi-structured.

In general, researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of a respondent's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic. The method gives the researcher and respondent much more flexibility than the more conventional structured interview, questionnaire or survey (Smith, 1995: 9).

Semi-structured interviews have an interview guide as a basis, but also flexibility in that new questions can be generated throughout the course of the interview. Gratton and Jones (2004) state that the use of semi-structured interviews allows the adoption of a flexible approach, whereby the sequence of questions can be changed accordingly, or subsidiary questions can be asked to probe for more information. Amis (2005) explains that the utility of this type of interview ensures that certain themes are covered and that the individual remains focused on particular issues, but there is also a degree of flexibility to develop new questions as new themes emerge. Holland and Ramazanolgu (1995) state that interviewing brings in the subjects of research, making the research a social process. The semi-structured interview approach is modelled on a conversation, allowing both the interviewer and interviewee to engage in learning during the two-way process. The conversational style also 'enables the participants to engage in the process more freely without merely responding to researcher-generated questions' (deMarrias, 2004: 53). For Amis (2005: 105), interviews offer a depth of information that permits a detailed exploration of particular issues, as the interviewer 'attempts to gain insight into the inconsistencies, contradictions and paradoxes that are a quintessential part of our daily lives'. Thus, for this research, the main source of data was a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women who have represented England at various levels of international sport.

4.2 Media analysis

Using interviews in research on sport and national identity is not commonplace (with the exception of work such as Tuck and Maguire, 1999; Bairner, 2003; and McGee and

Bairner, 2011). Conversely, the use of media analysis in work on sport national identity is widespread (e.g. Maguire and Poulton, 1999; Tuck, 2003; Wensing and Bruce, 2003; Poulton, 2004; Jinxia, 2005). In this respect, media analysis has involved the examination, interpretation and critique of the material content of the channels of media communication. According to Cashmore (2006), the term 'media' refers to what used to be called the mass media, which are the means of communication of information to large numbers of people. This is typically via newspapers, television and radio, although in more recent years it has come to include multimedia, as well as electronic modes of communication made available by the internet (ibid). The media's power to persuade or influence is what makes it worthy of investigation.

Print media, such as newspapers, are often selected for analysis in research on national identity. As already noted, the sports pages of national newspapers represent a platform in which the nation can be continually 'flagged' (Billig, 1995). Therefore they provide a wealth of information for researchers wanting to investigate the relationship between sport and national identity. This often means researching male sport, although a few researchers who have studied the relationship between women and national identity within sport have also chosen to read media texts in their discussion (e.g. Tervo, 2001; Wensing and Bruce, 2003; Jinxia, 2005, Bruce, 2008). Media analysis forms a small part of the analysis in this research project. It is used simply to supplement the comments made by the women interviewed, since the central feature of this project is to focus on the voices of the participants. With media analysis, the researchers know little about the women they are investigating, what they feel, their stories, memories and emotions. In this research, the women become active participants in exploring the intersecting nature of national identities, gendered identities and sporting identities. In order to understand what these women are thinking and how they understand their realities, they must be asked, for these are complex questions that one cannot answer by analysing the print media.

Having said that, the media are important in creating and defining national identity, and that is why there is a place for media analysis alongside the interviews of the women in this analysis. Although this research stems from a critique of studies utilising media

analysis in discussions on sport and national identity, utilising media will demonstrate how the women are (re-)presented to the mass public. It is important to highlight that its contribution will be limited, compared to the use of interview data. In this way, the women's voices remain central to the overall research project. However, its inclusion, whilst not initially planned, demonstrates the way in which research projects can evolve and grow.

Throughout the course of the research, articles were selected for their relevance to the research question, namely, those that refer to national and gendered identities. A total of 45 relevant articles were collected and analysed. The selected material has come from numerous sources (tabloid press, broadsheet newspapers, online articles and magazine extracts). It is interesting to see how media texts can supplement, and add to, the analysis (for example, in relation to issues such as how the media portray the women as national representatives), against the backdrop of the women's own personal opinions. In this way, the subjects of the media can become genuine participants in the research, bringing them to life through their own words and, in essence, making them real.

5. The researcher in the research process

'The intersubjective nature of social life means that the researcher and the people being researched have shared meanings' (England, 1994: 243), which means the researcher is more central to the research process than one might think. The researcher will come to the research carrying her own subjectivities, opinions and ideas, broadly influenced by education, culture and beliefs. The ability to be reflexive, to consider the implications of the research process for both the researcher and those being researched, to know how the process is changing and to offer initial thoughts on what is being contextually discovered is essential. After all, research is a process, and part of this process involves reflecting on, and learning from, past research experiences.

Given that meaning is created 'intersubjectively' between the researcher and those being researched, the biography of the researcher will impact on the creation and understanding of this meaning. England (1994) explains that the biography of the

researcher impacts the research process in numerous ways. For deMarrias (2004: 55) 'researchers' theoretical and disciplinary perspectives, life experiences, cultural backgrounds, genders, ages, physical appearances, and other characteristics influence the way in which they attend to and respond to the conversation and construct meaning within that interview'. A researcher is positioned by her/his gender, age, "race"/ethnicity, sexual identity, and so on, as well as by her/his biography, all of which may inhibit or enable certain research method insights in the field. My own research is therefore grounded in my reality, which reads as an English early-twentysomething female, white, middle-class, able-bodied, bisexual, student, sportswoman. This raises important questions, such as, how does my biography relate to those of my participants? And does this enhance or impact on their willingness to disclose information? Borrowing from Gibson-Graham (1996: 237-238), who has adopted a feminist standpoint position:

I am situated by one of the most powerful and pervasive discourses in social life (that of the binary hierarchy of gender) in a shared subject position with others who are identified, or identify themselves, as women. This subject position influences my entrée into social interactions and the way I can speak...listen and be heard. In this sense I am enabled, as a woman, to research with other women the conditions of our discursive construction and its effects.

Being a woman researching women gives me an instant level of solidarity. However, differing characteristics, such as ethnicity or age, as well as my positioning as a researcher, still set me apart from the research participants. The researcher is also another person, and as such, her personality, sensitivity, openness will have a subsequent impact on how comfortable the participant feels, how willing she is to share information. Appearance, tone of voice, accent, style of dress, age, colour etc, must be assumed to have some potential effect on the interview (Amis, 2005).

As noted previously, a rejection of traditional research methods is a hallmark of feminist research. In this sense, it is important to note the way in which I positioned myself as a researcher within this research project. Given that I wanted to retell these women's stories, stories that I was passionate to tell and felt needed telling, I felt it was important that I became immersed in the research project fully. In order to do this, I attended live games, volunteered at events and watched any television coverage of the teams I was

researching, as well as collecting any newspaper articles I read. My passion for sport, and women's sport, meant that this represented an enjoyable yet necessary extension of my research commitments. This ensured that I was prepared, knowledgeable, and sensitive to their experiences throughout the interview procedure. Following the interviews, I also kept in touch with some of the participants, congratulating them on any sporting achievements, such a team selection or victories. I was in a unique position where I had access to these elite sportswomen, I personally knew some of them, and we were of similar ages and had similar interests. This meant that the relationship of researcher and the researched was not as pronounced as perhaps in traditional research.

To summarise, the combination of interviews, supplemented by media analysis should paint a more complete picture of the issues surrounding women's national identity(ies) in England. Interviews are essential in bringing to life these women and their experiences, but the media can also contribute to our understanding of how these women's sporting achievements are valued in the nation.

6. Ethics

The complexities of researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena raise many ethical questions for the researcher. Indeed, as Kvale (2009: 61) states, 'ethical issues go beyond the live interview situation and are embedded in all stages of an interview enquiry'. Ethics has become a major feature of research, and in particular how we can protect the interests of those who are ready to take part in a research project. As Flick (2006: 45) states, 'the growing sensitivity for ethical issues in research over the years has led to the formulation of a large number of codes of ethics and the establishment of ethics committees in many areas'. These take into account the principles of the process of research day-to-day practices in the field. Flick (ibid: 46) explains:

Codes of ethics require that research should be based on informed consent (i.e. the study's participants have agreed to partake on the basis of information given to them by the researchers). They also require that the research should avoid harming the participants, including not invading their privacy and not deceiving them about the research's aims.

Kvale (2009: 70) explains that informed consent involves ‘informing research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project’. With this in mind, I created an information sheet for the participants (Appendix 1). This involved describing the research area, outlining the participants’ right to withdraw at any time, as well as them being made aware of the various ways the research data may be presented, including at international conferences and published in international journals. It was a requirement that before the prospective participants agreed to be involved in the study, they had to have a clear understanding of what the research was about and what was expected of them. Once this had been established, the participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 2).

Kvale (2009: 72) explains that ‘confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be disclosed’, and if the study should be published, the participants should agree to the release of identifiable information. The unusual aspect of this research project was the identifiable nature of the participants. Flick (2006: 50) explains that ‘the issue of confidentiality or anonymity may become problematic when you do research with several members of a specific setting’. It is much easier to identify the ‘real’ person from the context information included in quotations, particularly in a setting such as elite, international level sport. Similarly to McGee and Bairner (2011), it was established that the participants would feature in the research as themselves. This would mean that they would be named, and personal details about the sporting lives could be retold in full. Given the aim of this study – to give a voice to England’s sporting heroines – this strategy could be seen as an important way by which to achieve this. Anonymity can protect the participants, but it can also deny them “the very voice in the research that must originally have been claimed as its aim” (Parker, 2005: 17). As a result, the decision was taken to include the participants in the research as themselves, giving them the ability to use their own voice in the project.

7. Data collection

7.1. Interview participants

As deMarrias (2004: 59) states, 'the research process should lead quickly to the possible participants for the study'. For this research, it was relatively easy to identify who to interview, and to begin to formulate a way of making initial contact with possible participants. As noted, the area of research necessitated providing an initial account of the experiences of women who play sport for their nation, and to then examine the gendered nature of national identities, in the context of England within the United Kingdom. In addition, I wanted to give these women a voice in an academic world where they have been systematically ignored as national heroines of sport. Thus, women who have played sport for England were chosen as the sample population. The participants therefore come from a very small group of women, those who have the talent, and have had the opportunity, to represent their country on the sporting field. Given the small potential interview sample, I was not worried about the sample being considered as representative of all women who identify as English, as the theoretical underpinnings of the research understands the importance of all voices, specifically in relation to localized, particular sources of information about the social world. That said, there is evidence of differences in the sample with regards to ethnicity, age, national sporting experience, although less so with reference to socio-economic status. The participants were not asked to identify their sexuality, given that sexuality remains a sensitive topic to discuss and the participants would not be anonymous in the research. Caudwell (2003) noted that the disclosure of sexuality might be easier if anonymous. Although it is almost certain that there were differences in the sexualities of the participants, as a researcher I did not feel comfortable disclosing such information given the identifiable and high profile stature of the women interviewed.

The sports were carefully selected; netball, football, cricket and rugby were used because, as noted previously, in these sports, unlike others, there is not usually a team that is representative of Great Britain (except for the unique situation of a Team GB women's football team at the 2012 Olympics). It was felt that this unique position of

being identified as English by their sporting representation would give the participants a unique view of English national identity and its separation from Britishness.

In order to interview elite, English sportswomen in the four identified sports, I had to find initial gatekeepers. There are numerous ways of accomplishing this, the most obvious being a direct approach to the national governing bodies. However, I found myself in a unique position. Loughborough University provides an environment saturated with elite athletes, and through my involvement in the university netball and women's football clubs, as well as recreational cricket, I was able to make contact with a few women who provided a key to the locks, so to speak. The women I initially made contact with were then able to pass on information about friends, and this snowballed into my participant base. A snowball sample involves an interviewer asking each person they interview who else they know who might be willing to be interviewed on that topic (Seale and Filmer, 1998). The researcher selects the initial sample, and then relies on these participants to increase the sample size, through their referral of other relevant individuals. As Seale and Filmer (*ibid*: 139) explain, 'this can be a very helpful way of gaining access to people who, without such a personal contact, might otherwise refuse to be interviewed'. Snowball sampling, although contradictory of many underlying assumptions about sampling (often linked to positivist notions of reliability and validity), has a number of advantages for studying populations such as elites (Atkinson and Flint, 2003). In this case, as soon as I had established a network, I then utilised this to ask the women to recommend any of their teammates who might also be willing to participate. This increased my chances of getting more participants, and, in contrast to 'cold emailing', potentially increased my chances of a response.

7.2. Social networking sites and research methods

The social networking site 'Facebook' undoubtedly made data collection much easier. Facebook is one of the most popular social networking websites around the globe, with Facebook (2011) claiming that there were over 750 million users in 2011. Facebook was launched in 2004 as a niche site dedicated to college students and has since expanded to

welcome a much wider audience (boyd, 2008). The Office of Communications (OFCOM, 2008: 1) produced a report that stated,

The rapid growth of social networking that has been observed over the last two to three years is indicative of its entry into mainstream culture and its integration into the daily lives of many people.

Social networking sites offer people new and varied ways to communicate via the internet, whether through their computer or, more recently, mobile phones. People create their own online profile, a digital representation of themselves, complete with personal information and photos, and then construct and display an online network of contacts, called 'friends'. Users of social networking sites can communicate via their profile both with their 'friends', as well as with people from outside of their list of contacts. This can be on a one-to-one basis (much like an email), or in a more public way such as a comment posted for all to see. OFCOM (2008: 1) explains that:

Like other communications tools, social networking sites have certain rules, conventions and practices which users have to navigate to make themselves understood and avoid difficulties. These range from the etiquette of commenting on other peoples' profiles to understanding who one does and doesn't add as a 'friend'.

The OFCOM (2008) report notes that the concept of a 'friend' online stretches what one would consider a traditional meaning of the word, to describe anyone with whom a user has an online connection. As such, people often have 'friends' whom they may never have met or spoken to in person.

Facebook represented stage one of the data collection, although it featured consistently throughout the process. In attempting to get in touch with women who have represented England, I certainly stretched the definition of a friend, albeit while following the unwritten rules of Facebook usage. I managed to use my online, Facebook network to make contact with a few women, some of whom were not themselves England national athletes but friends or club teammates. This would then snowball into a larger sample. Appendix 3 shows how I started out with a small number of initial gatekeepers, and managed to reach through two or three degrees of separation women who fitted the

interview criteria. I decided to adopt a methodology using Facebook as I felt it was a medium with which I could initially connect with women I wanted to interview.

The use of email represented stage two of the research process. Again, constricted by the 'rules' of Facebook, I did not feel comfortable 'Facebooking' someone who did not know me; I felt that I would be stepping on toes so to speak, invading someone's 'virtual' personal space. Therefore, whenever a contact agreed to get details for others who might be suitable for the research, I asked for an email address, to which I could send a more formal invitation to participate. This seemed appropriate because, first of all, informal, friendly language is acceptable for a medium such as Facebook between friends, acquaintances, or friends of friends. I often adopted phrases such as 'Hey mate, I spoke to [name of a mutual friend] and she told me to get in touch...'. Sending a formal sounding message across Facebook is unusual, and I think in this situation when I was asking women to help me with my research, first impressions were essential. I then worded an email that I used as a template. This was to be sent to all the contacts gained from those women with whom I had been in touch via Facebook, as initial email correspondence:

Hi XXX

My name is Ali Bowes and I am contacting you with regards to my PhD study. I am completing my PhD at Loughborough University in the sociology of sport, and my research is looking at women's sporting national identity. This is an area that has been completely overlooked in academic research. I am looking to find women who have played sport for England in netball, football, cricket or rugby, and interview them on their experiences of playing sport for England.

After calling in favours from friends, I got your email address from XXX. I am emailing to ask you if you would like to take part. It would be great to have a player of your experience and calibre for the research. All that will be required is one interview. I have attached a participation information sheet, which just goes into a little more into detail about what the research is about and what to expect.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Best wishes,

Ali Bowes
PhD Research Student
Sociology of Sport
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Despite the more formal approach to the email than any Facebook messages I sent, I was aware of the need to include information about where I got their email address from, in order to legitimate myself not only as a genuine researcher, but as a friend of a friend. This represents a second reason why I felt emailing women I had never had any contact with before was more appropriate than contact through Facebook. A more structured and formal sounding email served to assure my legitimacy as a researcher, and also my research. Including information such as 'student', I felt, was important in order to connect with the women, who, due to the nature of women's international sport, would undoubtedly be of a similar age, or had passed through the university system themselves, and as such could identify with me in that way. Furthermore, naming Loughborough University as the institution was included as, in England, it is a very well respected university, particularly in sport, due to its unrivalled success in university competition within the United Kingdom. Therefore, the chances were that these women would have heard of the university or, in some cases, actually studied there. Again, this represented an avenue by which the women could identify with me as the researcher.

I should note that not all of the women whom I contacted whilst carrying out this research have been through Facebook. However, it played a key role in securing contact with the younger women whom I interviewed, and who have used Facebook for a number of years, often starting during university. Another factor which made Facebook an attractive option was the visibility it gave the women of myself as a researcher. Given that everyone has their own profile, when you message somebody who is not on a contact list, that person can then go to your private profile and view it. If they wanted to, the women I got in touch with would then be able to verify my authenticity; they can view my friends, where I study, and various other bits of information such as interests.

7.3. Interview procedure

In total, 19 women were interviewed. A profile of all 19 participants is included in Appendix 4. As noted previously, the selection process began with my own personal contacts, and 'snowballed' from there, mainly using online tools such as Facebook and email. To participate, the interviewees had to have represented England, either at youth

level (U21/U23) or as a full senior representative. The breakdown of participants across the chosen sports was as follows: three cricketers, five netballers, five footballers and six rugby players. The intention was to have a relatively even split across the sports, as far as possible, and the participant numbers reflect this.

Selected participants were then interviewed in numerous settings. These interviews were recorded on a digital dictaphone, in order to transcribe at a later date. For the interview, those within easy access of Loughborough University were invited to the campus to complete their interview in a specially allocated qualitative research room. Interviews that could not be completed at Loughborough University were undertaken in various public spaces, including on a green by the River Thames, in a school staff room and at a variety of coffee shops. One interview was completed over the phone, due to the strict time constraints on the player involved.

The interviews focussed on the key research aims, of exploring the participants gendered, national and sporting identities. The interview schedule was designed with this in mind. Following an introductory section the interview was arranged around 3 themes: gender, national identity and their international sporting careers. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix 5. The interviews were usually approached in a conversational way, adopting interviewing styles associated with a semi-structured technique. Thus, whilst the interview schedule was followed for all participants, there was scope to ask questions that allowed them to expand on their responses. With knowledge gained through my own personal engagement with women's sport, previous experience playing netball and football and attendance at numerous games, I was able to understand any technical language and develop conversations around particular experiences. This led to a more open, relaxed interview environment, which I feel resulted in more open and relaxed interviewees.

I decided to conclude the interview phase of the research project when the total number of participants reached 19. This was when I felt that the interview data had reached 'a point of saturation' (Kvale, 2007: 44). As Kvale (2009) states, beyond a certain point, adding more respondents will yield less and less new knowledge. Furthermore, given the

importance of being able to tell the stories of the participants, having too many participants could dilute the effectiveness of this aim.

8. Data analysis

Kvale (2009: 104) describes transcription as the process by which ‘conversational interaction becomes abstracted and fixed in a written form – one narrative mode (oral discourse) – into another narrative mode (written discourse)’. Throughout the interview period, I produced typed transcripts of each interview almost immediately after the interview took place. I felt that this was important in order to recall subtleties in the interview that cannot be picked up on the digital dictaphone, such as expressions and body language. Kvale (ibid: 104) states,

Rather than being a simple clerical task, transcription is an interpretive process, where the differences between oral speed and written texts give rise to a series of practical and principal issues.

The option of a ‘slow play’ on the dictaphone allowed some of these practical issues to be overcome. The interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim, with every word spoken written down in the correct order. Pauses, stutters, regional dialects and the use of thinking words such as ‘erm’ ‘er’ and ‘you know’ were also included. This allowed for a full reading of the whole interview during the analysis phase. A copy of an interview transcript can be found in Appendix 6. Kvale (2009: 192) cautions us to not:

Conceive of the interviews as transcripts – the interviews are living conversations. The transcripts should not be the subject matter of an interview study...but rather be means or tools for the interpretations of what is said during the interviews.

Thus, the transcripts form the basis of the data analysis, providing an avenue to allow the researcher to analyse and then retell the stories of those interviewed.

Qualitative data analysis involves summarising, describing, explaining and theorising the words that have been transcribed. Qualitative data analysis thus means going ‘into the text seeking to develop, clarify and expand what is expressed in the text’ (Kvale, 2009: 192). So, following the interview transcription, which is often considered itself an initial analytical process (ibid), the interview transcripts were then subjected to initial coding.

This was based on a thematic analysis of the data set. Boyatzis (1998: 1) explains that thematic analysis is 'a way of seeing', while Braun and Clarke (2006: 79) describe thematic analysis as 'a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data'. Boyatzis (1998: 4) further notes that thematic analysis is a 'process for encoding qualitative information' and explains that 'a theme is a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organizes possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon'.

As the data analysis phase occurred some months after the initial interviews, the first phase of data analysis involved reading the interview transcripts in full. This acts as a re-familiarisation with the data. Dey (1993: 97) states that

We cannot analyse our data unless we read it. How well we read it may determine how well we analyse it. Reading in qualitative data analysis is not passive. We read to comprehend, but intelligibility is not our only, nor even our main, goal. The aim of reading through our data is to prepare the ground for analysis.

Indeed, Braun and Clarke (2006: 87) explain that 'it is ideal to read through the entire data set at least once before you begin your coding, as your ideas, identification of possible patterns will be shaped as you read through'.

Following this, the data was initially organised and indexed, according to sport. The next stage of data analysis involved revisiting each transcript and noting down key themes and ideas that ran throughout each interview. Once this had been completed for all 19 interviews, the interview data was, where possible, organised around these themes. For example, the data was initially divided according to the interview sections: women, national identity, and sporting experience. Each subdivision could then be focussed on more specifically. This meant that each interview in each subdivision was then recoded using more specific and subtle themes. This procedure often occurred numerous times with each subdivision of transcripts. After the themes had been grouped, and further subgrouped in some instances, the analytical write-up process could begin. Braun and Clarke (2006: 94) highlight how the extracts in thematic analysis are 'illustrative of the analytic points the researcher makes about the data, and should be used to illustrate/support an analysis that goes beyond their specific content, to make sense of

the data, and tell the reader what it does or might mean'. This involved organizing the extracts of interview data into a logical order, and adding supporting, or contradictory, literature as discussed in the previous literature review chapters.

The introduction of media texts into the research data added a further analytical dimension. Following the analysis of the interview data, I examined the collected media articles. Although the media articles were initially collected to supplement and develop knowledge on the women and their sports, it became obvious that the media articles told their own story too. It demonstrated the ways in which these very women I spoke to were then spoken about by the popular press to the public. The way that they were represented, the headlines used, all added to the story I was wanted to tell. I used a similar thematic analysis of reading and re-reading the media data before thematically coding it, the articles could then be used to support elements of the interview data in the data analysis chapters. Following the interviews, it became apparent that the stories told in the media would add to the stories told to me by the women.

In the following three chapters, the findings of the research project are presented, in accordance with the three main themes that emerged from the data: women, sport and femininities; Englishness and Britishness; and their national sporting experiences. Each chapter is then broken down into further subdivisions, with extracts of interview material, and in some instances media articles, presented alongside analytical discussion.

Chapter 4

Discussion: Women, Sport and Femininities

We initially began to discuss and explore the participants understanding of the concept of a woman. It was thought to be important to understand how the participants discuss sex and gender before exploring how their sexed and gendered identities intersect with other identities, such as their national and sporting identities.

1. Women, womanhood, and femininities

Harriet: 'All I can think of is feminine, but that's so obvious...it's a really hard question that is, because a woman is just a woman'.

Clasen (2001: 36) states that 'Western culture tends to define gender and sex along two overlapping dualisms: masculinity/femininity and male/female'. Despite post-structural feminist analyses of gender challenging binary definitions of man/woman, masculine/feminine, sport is an arena in which sexual differentiation clearly persists. 'Sport epitomizes sexual differentiation. In fact, most sport is premised on dimorphic sex and the notion that sex difference is "natural", stable and fixed' (Caudwell, 2003: 384). The dualisms of masculinity/femininity and male/female create an expectation that women will be feminine and men will be masculine (Clasen, 2001). Krane et al (2004: 316) state that 'an important cultural ideal that affects all women, and especially athletic women, is femininity'. As Bordo and Heywood (2004) explain, femininity is a socially constructed standard for women's appearance, demeanour and values.

Cox and Thompson (2000) discuss the use of heterosexuality as an organizing principle, separate from a sexual way of being and acting. Borrowing from Butler (1990) and Caudwell (2003), there exists a compulsory order of sex-gender-desire, where for desire we can read sexuality. For women, this equates to woman-feminine-heterosexual. Heterosexuality can be seen as the controlling social system that produces and maintains the differences between the sexes, making women feminine and men masculine (ibid).

This is what Butler (1990) termed the 'heterosexual matrix', put simply, the way in which heterosexuality structures everyday life. Woman-feminine-heterosexual as a construct appears to underpin most of the participants' understanding of the female body.

1.1. What makes a woman, a woman?

In this section of questions in the interview schedule, I was initially looking to explore what the term 'woman' means to the participants, and how they define and describe a stereotypical woman – in effect, what they consider makes a woman a woman. When the participants were asked what sort of images or words they would use to describe a stereotypical woman, a variety of responses emerged. However, underlying most of these were ideas of women as bearers of children, as primary care givers and homemakers, as well as concepts that highlighted the centrality of femininity to definitions of a woman.

Jo: 'I would describe her as probably no children, but looking to settle down or with the ambition to settle down and start a family I suppose, and I wouldn't really describe her as a massive achiever...just settling for family life I suppose.'

Jade: 'I don't know, stereotypically you would be like all girly, they need to do the cooking and look after the kids.'

Sophie B: 'Like a mum. When I hear woman I thought, like, my mum. Someone to look after someone and things like that. Cleaning [laughs] sounds bad but that's what I'd think! I'd think cleaning, looking after the house...cooking, running the kids around.'

Clearly, the idea of women as mothers featured strongly in the responses, as did notions of appropriate feminine behaviour and appearance. When asked to define a stereotypical woman, the women interviewed focused very much on the stereotypes of women that have persisted in British society throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Freidan's (1963) discussion of femininity, although limited by class and culture to the white, western, middle classes, initially challenged the idea that the roles of women were confined to the family and the home. However, these are the roles Yuval-Davis (1997) attributed to women in the nation: women as biological reproducers, central also in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity, and as transmitters of its

culture. The nation's woman, then, is limited in her imagined capabilities to those of a mother and care-giver, the roles Friedan (1963) initially began to critique. This is a woman who is heterosexual, as a mother, and feminine, as a caregiver, and thus subscribes to the compulsory gender order identified by Caudwell (2003).

However, this was not a completely uniform response, which highlights the complex and subjective nature of how the participants had come to interpret the category of woman, as well as the multiple and contextual aspects of femininity. Some of the participants stated how the stereotype of a woman is potentially changing in the modern era.

Claire P: *'Ok, a stereotypical woman has probably changed since, but we still see them as the mother essentially, someone that is caring, is going to look after you...it was probably easier to stereotype some like years and years and years ago when you could say right, well, ok, the husband works and the mum's the homemaker and she doesn't go to work because she looks after the three kids because that's her role. But now, if you look what women do and what they achieve...they call them superwomen don't they, who can balance it all...they work in London and things like that.'*

Here, Claire P highlights this conception of a 'new' woman, and how times may have changed in terms of how women are stereotypically viewed. This is a possibility that Sarah and Serena also considered:

Sarah: *'I don't know like, probably a bit mixed really, like...the traditional homemaker and a mother and a wife. And then you've got, it's sort of split between that and people that are independent, work for themselves, they are businesswomen, they can sort of fend for themselves [laughs]!'*

Serena: *'I guess stereotypically I always think like cooking, cleaning, you know, women always supporting like her family, things like that. But then I also kind of think it's someone who is quite strong these days as well, like, quite career strong, head strong, makes tough decisions, does what's best for her family.'*

For some of the women interviewed, this idea of a woman who could have it all, one who is strong and independent, was definitely evident. Kerys shared a similar view, saying that she would describe women as *'more independent now than they used to be, so*

obviously before it used to be male dominated didn't it, but now I think women are, you know, making their own way and stuff.' However, she concludes that she *'probably think[s] of family as well, having kids and stuff like that'*. In all of these extracts, even when the participants claim to be imagining a 'new' woman, the conceptualization of a woman is still at least partly constrained by the notion of acceptable heterosexual femininity. This is a woman who can 'have it all', but having it all still includes the roles of being a mother and wife. Thus, despite the possibility of changing constructions of femininity, in reality it would appear that the definitions of femininity might have simply broadened, whilst essentially remaining the same. Therefore the ordering of woman-feminine-heterosexual persists and the woman is still the nation's bearer of children, and reproducer of national cultures as the primary caregiver.

However, the word woman for both Dani and Tammy solely conjured up an image of powerful, strong, and empowered women:

Dani: *'Office workers, London women...in Canary Wharf...Dressed smart, suits...it would be powerful, executive sort of [women] you know, high powered.'*

Tammy: *'For me it's kind of an empowering word that like, you're always a bit knocked down as a woman but...a lot of people are like businesswomen and have made it.'*

Claire A thought about the word woman in a similar way: *'that's a really tough question, I think of, like, strong.'* For these three participants, the word woman means something entirely different from the view expressed by the remaining participants. Perhaps this is reflective of their own personal status as elite athletes who could be claimed to be actively redefining femininity (Hargreaves, 1994). They describe the possibility of a new femininity entirely, a modern, or progressive femininity. How they define a woman is not connected to concepts of the family, and subsequently heterosexuality, but as strong and powerful.

As an introductory question about the idea of women in society and persisting stereotypes of women, the responses given highlight the complicated nature of the category of 'woman'. One thing that remains clear, however, is that consistent ideas about femininity and appropriate feminine behaviour persisted, as did a largely unspoken

belief in the centrality of heterosexuality in accounts of what it means to be a woman. This confirms the order of woman-feminine-heterosexual. These ideas about women's bodies carried over into discussions of women's jobs and roles in society.

1.2. A woman's job

Following conversations about the category of 'woman', the participants discussed what they considered to be suitable or appropriate jobs and/or roles for women in contemporary society. Typical responses centred on two themes: women's jobs and roles (as constrained by dominant notions of femininity and the capabilities of women's bodies) and, conversely, women as capable of doing anything. Coltrane and Adams (1997) explain that despite the entry of women into the work force, they are still predominantly identified by their family roles and most jobs remain typed by gender. The stereotyping of specific jobs as masculine- and feminine-appropriate was a view that was echoed by some of the participants throughout their interviews:

Jo: *'I would probably say the first thing that came to my head was a school teacher, primary school teacher, stuff like that.'*

Jo here identifies the role of a teacher, which would generally be characterised as feminine. A primary school teacher in particular is one who looks after younger children aged 4 to 11, educating them. This highlights the idea of a primary school teacher as caring and nurturing, both stereotypically feminine characteristics.

Harriet: *'[pause] I think there are boundaries, like, I can't think of what a woman shouldn't be but I can think of what a man, like, you wouldn't ever expect a man to do your nails would you! But yeh, oh I have actually had my nails done by a man [laughs]! I take that back. I could never imagine a woman driving a forklift truck or anything like that.'*

Harriet describes job roles for both men and women that fit in with dominant stereotypes surrounding masculinity and femininity. She explains that it would be unusual for a man to 'do your nails', given that having nice nails is a defined characteristic of a woman who is performing an appropriate form of femininity. Subsequently, the forklift truck is symbolic of manual work, an occupation dominated by men. For some of

the other participants, women's roles in society seem constrained by their perceived lack of physical prowess.

Jade: *'Well I would like to say anything, but then obviously there are some things, like lifting heavy materials, stuff like that, men can do that and girls, just no. Girls wouldn't want to. It's rare, more rare, for a girl to be doing that than a boy.'*

Tammy: *'I wouldn't really say there is anything they can't do...maybe some of the heavy manual labour stuff, that's probably not what a woman wants to do, but I don't think there's anything you shouldn't be allowed to do.'*

Charlotte: *'I think some of the, maybe the physical...manual jobs might be a lot harder for women than they are for men, but I don't necessarily think that they couldn't do it.'*

Although the three participants here conclude that even though women can do anything, this 'anything' does not entail being successful at jobs that may involve demonstrations of physical strength and power. As noted previously, physical strength and power are stereotypically masculine characteristics, and as a consequence are seen as being in opposition to the expected behaviour of a feminine (and heterosexual) woman. We can see the power of the heterosexual matrix here. This perception that women shouldn't be doing manual jobs demonstrates the power of heterosexuality as a way of disciplining women's bodies. It seems that women cannot be strong, because they are feminine, and women must be feminine to be heterosexual, to be legitimate women. So, whether a man is stronger than a woman becomes irrelevant, because it would appear that women are simply not strong enough at all.

However, the idea of women as physically weak was not a uniform response amongst the participants, with around half of the women interviewed believing for example that there should be no limits to what women are capable of:

Stacey: *'I think a woman can be anything. I don't think that there's specific jobs that are appropriate for you. I don't think any, especially in today's society, are, or should be, closed to anything really.'*

Katherine: *'I think we've proved we can do pretty much anything. We obviously are very good fighters in the army, women, we represent nearly pretty much every sport, at a very good standard.'*

Katherine highlights the success of women in sport, and the presence of women in the army as evidence of women's capabilities. As Coltrane and Adams (1997: 330) explain, 'cultural representations of men and women historically have been permeated with sexist imagery', with men represented as lawyers and doctors, compared with women as secretaries and nurses. However, Coltrane and Adams (ibid) also note a change in cultural expectations for both women and men. Approximately half of the participants describe the possibility of women being involved in any job or role in society instead of simply those stereotypical roles outlined. This in itself is interesting considering the majority had previously discussed women's bodies as restricted by dominant notions femininity, which would historically have represented women weak and passive. A 'new femininity' perhaps opens up more opportunities for women, allowing women to have it all – as long as they remain feminine and heterosexual.

1.3. Women on the frontline

The idea of women in the army, and specifically on the frontline, was then discussed. For Claire A, gender differences do not matter when it comes to physical jobs; all that matters is being up to the required standard:

Claire A: *'When it comes to physical stuff for example like in the army or sometimes the police, there needs to be like a benchmark, so if you can reach a certain physical standard then you can do it but if you can't then I don't think exceptions should be made for women and men, if that makes sense. So if someone isn't physically able to do it, they shouldn't be there fighting for their country I don't think'*

Serena's view on women's jobs and roles was more confused:

Serena: *'Any job really. I think if you're a women and you want to be something, you should be able to. I think the whole army type thing is a bit different if I'm being honest. I do agree that some women would struggle'*

Despite believing that women should be able to do any job, this doesn't extend to women's entry into the army. This could be because of the feminine ideology, according to which women are weak, passive, and frail. Alternatively, her vision of the army as a place only for men could be because the military and warfare are so intimately tied to a

concept of masculinity. Warfare is central to the conception of a nation, and both realms are distinctly masculine (Yuval-Davis, 1997). The idea of women on the frontline disrupts the relationship of nation-war-man. As Kennedy-Pipe (2000: 33) explains, 'war was, and many would argue still is, in the Western world associated with masculine values such as physical strength, honour and courage'. Yuval-Davis (1997) explains that although numbers of women in the military are increasing, this still reflects the gendered civil labour market, with women in stereotypically feminine roles. In the UK, women are present in the armed forces, although to date they cannot engage in hand to hand combat with the enemy on the frontline.

All of the participants were asked for their opinions on women serving on the frontline. Only one of them expressed the opinion that women should not be able to serve:

Harriet: *'No. Because, it's not sexist or anything, but women just aren't as strong as men in the slightest so what's the point, you are putting all the guys at risk by putting a girl in your group, than having a guy. Imagine if they had to, I don't know...pick something up and the women couldn't carry it quick enough. Whereas a man could...do it quicker and fitter, he will get told exactly what to do, whereas women aren't as regimental I wouldn't say. It would just put men at risk; it would put other people at risk, even other women, if you put a woman on the frontline.'*

Harriet cannot conceive of the possibility of women serving on the frontline, her objections stemming from the expectation that all women are physically inferior to all men. However, Harriet was unique in her dismissal of the possibility, with all of the other participants open to, and in some cases advocates for, women working in the armed forces and serving on the frontline.

As Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) note, women as participants in the military are often seen in roles that are predominantly nurturing and supporting, such as nurses. This further identifies women in line with femininity.

Sophie R: *'I think they should be allowed too. Because I think that the world has come to the stage where there shouldn't be any discrimination now. Although I do wonder like on the front like, whether women could possibly lack things like*

aggression and the ability to make snap decisions under pressure. I think sometimes women can...bring emotions into it, too much.'

Despite Sophie R recognising that for there to be equality between the sexes, women must have the same access as men, she questions whether a woman would be successful. The woman Sophie R describes is consistent with conceptions of femininity, such as being emotional and lacking aggression. This idea of women as emotional and sensitive contrasts with what is required to be a successful warrior for the nation: strength, aggression and determination. For Sophie R, women should be allowed to serve on the frontline simply because it seems fair for them to do so, but she questions whether or not they would be good at it. This highlights how the participants view women's capabilities as restricted by the boundaries of femininity. Kennedy-Pipe (2000: 32) explains that one debate surrounding women in the military involves those who argue that 'women are physically and emotionally ill-equipped for the tasks required of 'warriors''.

Despite this, many of the participants noted that women should be allowed the same opportunities to fight for their country, as long as they are physically capable.

Kerys: *'If that's what women want to do, you know, and they are capable of doing it for their country so you shouldn't stop them, if they have got the physical capabilities to do it then yeh, you should do it.'*

Stacey: *'I think if a woman wants to, and isn't a detriment to those around her, because I know...that females have limitations, like I'm not as strong as a guy, I probably won't be able to do the same things as a guy, but I think if you are not a detriment to what would be the rest of your group then you should be given the opportunity.'*

If women are physically capable then, the majority of the participants identify the frontline as a realm in which they can succeed. Having women on the frontline is possible so long as women can meet the required standards, i.e. those set by men. However, imagining a woman on the frontline was still framed by femininity by some of the participants who questioned the physical capabilities and emotional strength of women. Joining the armed forces represents a way in which a woman can legitimately represent the nation, whether it is on the frontline or not. Keeping women off the frontline however (as femininity does), serves to retain the nation for men, and to

maintain the matrix of nation-war-man. Since femininity is inextricably linked to how the participants actively define what it means to be a woman, this was a concept that appeared even more as the interviews progressed. Therefore, how the women define femininity, and how the ideology of femininity may contrast with athleticism, were explored further.

1.4. Defining femininity

Sarah: 'Feminine to me, probably, again being quite stereotypical...I don't think it's so much about what you look like or what you wear, that definitely goes a long way to being feminine, but I think it's also about how you are personally, your mannerisms, your attitude, maybe your thoughts as well.'

The idea of multiple bodies and performativity has been influenced by the work of several scholars. Goffman's (1959) theory on performing is a useful starting point although it has been critiqued for overlooking gendered relations of power, and focusing too heavily on agency over structure. More recently, Butler (1990) introduced gender into discussions of the body and performativity, arguing that gender is not a given, but something that is inscribed upon us, by correctly performing and doing masculinity and femininity. As Roth and Basow (2004: 246, original emphasis) state, 'sexed bodies are constructed through the activities we *do* continually, often without conscious thought'. As a result, it is the body that functions as a site for the reproduction of femininity (Bordo and Heywood, 2004). Drawing upon Butler (1990) and Bordo and Heywood (2004), Krane et al (2004: 316) state that 'gender performance is not entirely voluntary because there are social retributions for not performing one's gender "correctly"'. Thus, because men are required to perform masculinity, as women are required to perform femininity, playing sport, with its history rooted in masculinity, represents a possible site for incorrect performance of gender by women.

Aside from the concept of a woman as the bearer of children and the homemaker, appearance (or what could be described as heteronormative femininity) featured very strongly in most of the women's discussions of stereotypical women. This is a version of femininity that is again inextricably linked to notions of heterosexuality and supports

Caudwell's (2003) ordering of sex-gender-sexuality. Given that femininity is contextual, the physical features described by the women represent a model of heteronormative femininity in England at this present time. It is important to consider what femininity means to these women, how they come to define and then articulate it, and, in some cases, how they define themselves in relation to their own definitions of femininity.

Asked whether or not she associated the word feminine with woman, Beth responded, *'I think I probably do, again, society kind of puts those two things together'*. This demonstrates that central to how the participants had come to define and understand the category of woman were their own subjective definitions, and understanding, of femininity. Krane et al (2004) explain that hegemonic femininity has a strong emphasis on appearance with the dominant notion of an ideal feminine body as thin and toned, an ideology supported by the descriptions given by the participants. Asked to describe a stereotypical woman, responses included:

Raff: *'Feminine, small, smaller than men...shorter, slim.'*

Jade: *'Well I don't know, these days I would say curvy, nice boobs, nice bum, like flat stomach. But then there is that really skinny, everyone wants to be skinny these days...I'd probably say blonde, as well.'*

Stacey: *'A really girly girl, so someone who has their hair done all the time, like extensions, nails and make up, and quite dressed up I guess.'*

Karen: *'A WAG...If I was being, stereotyping...I think she'd just be blonde hair, nails painted, constantly in high heels.'*

It is clear here that the performance of femininity, through physical appearance, is very important for the conceptualization of 'woman'. The preoccupation with femininity in defining what it means to be a woman was evident in the interviews with all of the women. As Bordo and Heywood (2004) explain, and as the participants suggest, femininity can be simply a matter of constructing an appropriate surface presentation of the self. Femininity in this case is simply looking 'right' in accordance with the social norms of what is expected of women in England at this time in history. In order to present a believable gender performance as a woman, it is necessary to look feminine.

Heteronormative femininity, as defined by the participants, does not focus solely on the physical appearance of women. If the gender performance is to be believed, women must also take into account their behaviour. Many of the participants focused on both appearance and specific behaviours as important aspects in defining femininity.

Sarah: *'For me, it's not just about if you wear make-up, if you've got your hair done, it's also like, the way you are, your mannerisms, your behaviour.'*

Liv: *'I think it's just, I don't know, it's more of a feel to be feminine, something that you give off I suppose...your mannerisms as opposed to how you necessarily look.'*

Claire A: *'Femininity? It's got quite a lot to do with behaviour, so how you are around other people, the clothes you wear, the way you speak, the way you conduct yourself. That sort of thing. Being quite girly.'*

Charlotte: *'I suppose her thoughts and the way she reacts to things, might be a completely different mindset to what men do.'*

As Charlotte describes, this idea of feminine behaviour exists in contrast to male behaviour which is masculine. This supports the construction of gender as a duality.

For Beth defining femininity seemed easier if considered in opposition to masculinity:

Beth: *'I guess in the way that women are different to men, so perhaps...gentler, maybe elegant, that sort of thing, grace...kind of the opposite of being a man, the alpha male kind of thing.'*

The dualism of masculinity and femininity in society prescribes that femininity is defined in contrast to masculinity, and vice versa. So how Charlotte and Beth define femininity is simply as not masculine, given that masculinity is the gender appropriate behaviour for men. However, Claire P found it easier to discuss femininity by describing non-femininity (which, using the binary dualism of masculine/feminine, equates to masculinity) and leaving what was not said as her implied description of femininity:

Claire P: *'It's probably easier to describe someone who you wouldn't describe as feminine...unfeminine would be someone with a crew cut hair cut, smothered in tattoos. Appearance, maybe have jean-shorts, or maybe like combats...I guess that would be what people would say would not be a stereotypical woman...People use the word 'butch', so feminine is someone that's quite dainty, and I guess like princess-like or whatever.'*

The 'butch' woman as a concept is something that will be explored in more detail later.

These concepts of 'femininity-as-behaviour', as well as 'femininity-as-appearance', appeared in other interviews. To the participants, femininity was more than just looking a particular way, but also conducting oneself appropriately.

Sophie R: *'To be feminine? [Pause] I don't know, because it's kind of changed. I'm thinking about really feminine girls I know, old-fashioned femininity...ok femininity. You are meek and mild, you are not bolshy, you don't swear, you aren't argumentative, you don't drink beer, you drink wine or spirits [laughs]! You blush when you speak to a boy.'*

Here, Sophie R admittedly describes femininity as old-fashioned, reminiscent of the women described by Friedan in 1963. However, despite this, there was also a slight indication of resistance to these dominant ideals, with discussions of new, independent, modern women. For example, Sarah noted a distinction between a femininity of the past and a newer, modern version of femininity:

Sarah: *'I think someone being feminine now has changed to what it was sixty years ago, when I think being seen to be feminine, it was, you stay at home, have nice hair, you look after your husband, you have kids, you know what I mean. That was the stereotypical view of a woman. But now, my stereotypical view of a woman would be, actually, an independent, modern day, working woman, and then the feminine side of that is now about the attitude of it.'*

What was apparent throughout is the contextual nature of femininity. Femininity is not static, but fluid, constantly changing and meaning different things to different people, as clearly evidenced here. However, there are elements of femininity which remain consistent, such as the importance of appearance, and nurturing, and caring characteristics. The participants in their descriptions of stereotypical women also highlight the operation of the compulsory order of woman-feminine-heterosexual.

2. Women, sport and femininities

“Nowadays, the message is if you’re sporty, you don’t have to be a tomboy – I think that’s a big difference for girls. We’re trying to encourage girls that you can be sporty and competitive without being seen as boyish, or that it’s not attractive.” (Faye White, cited in Adewumni and Kingsley, 2011, *The Guardian*, p. 8).

Given that heterosexual discourse posits a certain way of existing for women, such as being weak, passive and reliant on men, this operates in contrast to a sporting discourse which requires power and strength (Cox and Thompson, 2000). The female athlete as a paradox has recently received significant attention from academics (Clasen, 2001; Krane et al, 2004). Clasen (2001: 40) summarises the paradox: ‘by placing masculinity and femininity on opposite ends of a dichotomy, women have been excluded from the sporting world, because sports are defined by masculine characteristics’. Thus, being feminine is antithetical to being athletic. Not surprisingly then, the majority of the participants interviewed highlighted a contrast between the ideology of femininity and the practicality of being a sportswoman. The participants maintain that women who are not athletes are more likely to be considered feminine.

Defining femininity, Dani says:

Dani: *‘Girly girls, proper dress themselves up well, yeh make themselves look good. A lot of makeup, a lot of hair-do. Just really girly, don’t do sport. If I’m being honest.’*

Dani’s description is clearly aligned with heteronormative definitions of femininity. Given that sport is so central to masculine identity in England, this has resulted in her rejection of the possibility of being feminine and playing sport. Asked to describe what makes a feminine woman, Liv responded:

Liv: *‘There are so many, I mean like as you are interviewing me it’s quite a difficult thing to say, because people don’t associate sporty people with feminine people. And a lot of the girls I have played...netball with have been the most feminine people ever. You know, they don’t necessarily look too feminine on the netball*

court but take them off it and they are what you would perhaps stereotype as a feminine woman.'

Again, we see a distinction between being feminine and playing sport. Here, Liv identifies some women in netball as displaying overtly feminine characteristics off the netball court. However, she is careful to explain that whilst these women are 'the most feminine people ever', 'they don't necessarily look too feminine on the netball court.' Here, she is explicitly separating femininity from the realm of sport.

Asked if she associated the word feminine with woman, Katherine explained:

Katherine: *'In my world, no. In the general world, yeh. It's, that's a difficult question because in the sports that I play, if you're feminine with the sport you play, you get nowhere. But obviously that's how society wants you to be seen, but in the real world everyone, everyone's a bit of both...but, erm, yeh, in the sport that I play, it's all about being masculine because that's the best, apparently.'*

For Katherine, in sport masculinity and femininity are described as binary opposites, following on from the dichotomy of the sexes. Thus, men are masculine, women are feminine. Furthermore, Katherine links sport firmly to masculinity. After all, as Wheaton and Tomlinson (1998: 252) explain, 'historically, sport has been so closely identified with men – and masculinity – that the two have become synonymous in many Western societies'. Often success in sport is thus attributed to masculine characteristics, as Katherine confirms here. She makes the claim therefore that to be successful in sport, one has to be masculine, at least whilst in the sporting context, but 'in the real world', away from sport, women can then be feminine again.

One thing that Katherine also does, however, is begin to deconstruct the binary of masculinity and femininity, by stating that *'everyone is a bit of both'*. She appreciates that men and women essentially do not walk around as caricatures of hegemonic, heteronormative masculinity and femininity. Despite defining masculinity and femininity in opposition to each other, there exists a spectrum of masculinities and femininities.

Charlotte: *'I don't think of myself as a normal woman. So I don't think of other people as normal women either. So it's very...well you know the metrosexual man?'*

Ali: 'Yeh'

Charlotte: *'I kind of view society like that. And I don't know if it's because I play rugby or because I'm physically the way that I am or my sexuality, anything like that is probably, I'm probably quite fluid in [how I view] men and women anyway.'*

Charlotte also alludes to the ideas of masculinity and femininity as multiple and fluid. In describing women, she explains that she does not think of people as normal, and then explains she views society in a 'metrosexual way'. Miller (2005a: 112) defines a metrosexual as a 'feminized male'. Anderson (2005: 347-348) explains that 'metrosexual' is a recent pop cultural term, understood to describe a 'gay-friendly heterosexual male who presents himself with the style-conscious behaviours otherwise attributed to gay men'. The label 'metrosexual' then, in this understanding, simply means a redefinition and modification of traditional notions of masculinity that are aligned with male heterosexuality. In this sense, it could be seen as a feminised masculinity, and thus represents an example of the fluid, rather than dichotomous, nature of femininities and masculinities, and the inability of dichotomous terms to define such fluid identities. Despite this, it remained the case that the majority of the participants thought of femininity in a unified way. This mono-dimensional femininity, incorporating both appearance and behaviour, is constrained within the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990), and is apparently incompatible with an athletic body.

The media plays a strong role in maintaining sport as strongly aligned with notions of masculinity. Throughout the period of data collection, media articles that were collected displayed the five techniques identified by Wensing and Bruce (2003): gender marking, compulsory heterosexuality, appropriate femininity, infantilization and the downplaying of sport. A sixth technique, termed 'ambivalence' by Wensing and Bruce (ibid), was later added. These six techniques will be discussed alongside extracts from the interviews with the participants.

In most media articles, gender was a dominant framing device. It was clear that articles reporting on women's sport were gender marked, whilst those on men's sport were not. In all articles, the headline, subheading and main body of text contained 'women's' as a descriptor before the name of the sport or event (women's football, women's rugby,

women's World Cup etc). A Jonathon Brown article titled 'The stars of Germany 2011* (*That's the Women's World Cup)', had the following subheading: 'Their salaries and egos may be smaller, but they're ready to take on a man's world – and the England team could even win' (Brown, *The Independent*, 2011: 11). Robin Scott-Elliot was given the following subheading for his article on the women's rugby World Cup: 'As the Women's Rugby World Cup makes its live television debut, England's centre tells Robin Scott-Elliot about life in a man's game' (Scott-Elliot, *The Independent*, 2010: 51). The identification of sport played by women as women's sport, compared to sport played by men as simply sport, highlights the ways in which women's sport participation can be marginalised and trivialised by the media. The infantilization of women's sport was also evident in some of the media articles analysed. Following England's defeat by the England women's football team in the European Championship final in Helsinki, the Sun ran an article with the title: 'Hellsinki: Girls crushed by old enemy' (Orvice, *The Sun*, 2009: 74). The front page of *The Daily Telegraph* (2010: 1) the day after England's women's rugby squad lost the World Cup final read: 'Fearsome encounter for England rugby girls'.

The downplaying of women's sport results in a focus on women's looks, relationships, sexual orientations and lives outside of sport that devalue their sporting identities. This was evident in two articles published on the 25th June 2011, one in *The Sun* and one in *The Independent*. Both newspapers had decided to run a feature on the forthcoming women's World Cup, highlighting a few facts, figures and pictures of the women who were about to compete at the pinnacle of their sport. Rory Davidson's article, titled 'USA will fly solo to win it' (Davidson, *The Sun*, 2011: 73), was noticeably smaller than *The Independent's* article, but featured a summary of ten things their readers should know about women's football. These included only three facts that were explicitly relevant to football: 'best team', 'best star', 'best stats'. The second highlighted fact is 'best bruv' which discusses the English Premier League footballer Hugo Rodallega, a brother of one of the footballers from Columbia. The 'best name' and 'best muddle', both discussing the names of various players, are facts completely unrelated to football, as is 'best riddle', which highlights that 'three players are suspected of being blokes'. The 'best ref' stat was included because of an incident where the referee in question was 'famously accidently groped by an absent-minded player during a game'. 'Best babes' was represented as a

tongue-in-cheek way of describing the young average age of the Australian team, and finally the article concludes with 'best feminism', which highlights which venues 'nails most completely the idea that women's football is not quite top-drawer.' The subject of the article, obviously, had not been taken all that seriously by Davidson or the Sun.

Jonathon Brown's article, titled 'The stars of Germany 2011* (*That's the Women's World Cup)' (Brown, *The Independent*, 2011: 10-11), again could be seen to downplay women's sport. This article featured facts and pictures of 11 people involved in the women's football World Cup. Of these, there were four women in football kit, three of these were of the footballers in action, with the ball. Five of the pictures were of the footballers in non-sports clothes, with one picture of a man (a player's husband) and another of a psychic octopus. The eleven categories were, similarly to those in the Sun, not always focussed on the football event, despite the title of the article. On page 11 there is Abby Wambach 'The Tough Girl' and Birgit Prinz 'The Villain', who were featured for their footballing ability and achievements. Then there was Eniola Aluko, 'The Intellectual', who was featured because of her first class law degree; Kelly Smith was presented as 'The Hero', as the article focussed on her struggle with alcoholism as well as her expected starring role for the England national team; and then 'The Golden Girl' Jessica Landstrom, labelled 'the sports original pin-up'. On page 12, again there are two women featured for their footballing ability, Faye White, 'The Tough Girl II', and Marta Viera da Silva, 'The Special One', 'dubbed Pelé in a skirt'. After that there is Nadine Angerer, 'The Bisexual Trailblazer'; 'The Especially Controversial One' Genoveva Anonma, a footballer from Equatorial Guinea who has undergone a sex test; 'The Male WAG' Adam Feely, an NFL footballer whose wife is a member of the US national team; and 'The Psychic Cephalopod' Lola the Octopus. It appears that the event itself had not really been taken seriously by the media in either article, with a focus on the lives, sexuality and careers of many of the women. Furthermore, there is evidence of ambivalence towards women's sport. As Wensing and Bruce (2003) explain, and what is clear here, is that positive descriptions and images of women in sport (such as the active photos and descriptions of the star players) are juxtaposed with descriptions and images which undermine and trivialise women's sport.

It is often noted that journalists present women in ways that align with compulsory heterosexuality. Birrell and Theberge (1994: 341) note, 'media images...heterosexualize women athletes'. Again, examples in the media articles collected provide evidence of the heterosexualisation of female athletes, in some cases through the rejection of alternative forms of sexuality. Andrew Dillon wrote an article about the England's women's football team the day before their European Championship final match. Instead of focussing on the importance of the game ahead, this article was rather trivial in nature. Initially discussing the television singing contest X Factor, Alex Scott, a senior member of England's squad, was then quoted as saying: 'We don't have the equivalent of WAGs [wives and girlfriends], either. Some of us have boyfriends and they are at home working' (Dillon, *The Sun*, 2009: 67).

2.1. Characteristics and stereotypes: Strong women, butch lesbians

Asked to define certain characteristics that are necessary to be a successful sportswoman, almost all of the participants responded similarly:

Harriet: *'I think you have got to be passionate...I suppose some people are all for like it's the taking part that counts but it's definitely not [laughs]! Definitely got to win!'*

Liv: *'You have to be quite driven, not necessarily driven to achieve gold medals or whatever but driven to be the best you can be.'*

Sarah: *'I think that any sportsperson probably has to be quite determined, focused, in what they do. Dedicated. I wouldn't have thought that would have to be too different from male to female.'*

Sophie B: *'You've got to be determined that you can improve, you're never the best athlete you can be, even if you're competing at the top...motivation as well, it's not always easy.'*

Halbert (1997: 11) explains that 'successful athletes (whether male or female) are active, strong, aggressive, ambitious and competitive' - characteristics more closely aligned with the traditional ideology of masculinity. However, what is being claimed here is 'this is what it takes to be successful', and an acceptance of these characteristics is necessary. This could represent the possibility of an acceptable female (sporting) masculinity

(Halberstam, 1998), particularly for those performing at the elite level. Sophie R also identifies masculine characteristics in her description of a successful sportswoman:

Sophie R: *'I'm not saying that non sportswomen aren't like this but to be a sportswoman you have just got to be physically and mentally strong...To play sport you have to go through the pain of pushing out those extra minutes that would be really difficult, or making decisions, or dealing with losing and winning...thinking about it the women who play sport tend to be stronger, and stronger in character, more bolshy, more banterous.'*

Here, Sophie R is beginning to define a sportswoman as apart from women in general, and in contrast to dominant notions of femininity.

Kerys's initial descriptions of the characteristics of a successful sportswoman align with many of the other responses:

Kerys: *'Erm, I would say probably very motivated, obviously to be a sportswoman, if you want to go far in your sport you have got to be motivated to achieve and stuff. Diligent, you have got to go to training and stuff, you have got to be professional. Physically wise you have got to be like, you know, not a typical petite, you would probably be quite, not big but muscly, be more athletic than a typical woman. Yeh I think, just like, talented basically, you have got to have the skill to do what you do.'*

What is unique about Kerys's statement however is the overt description of the physicality of the successful female athlete. Whilst she appreciates that sportswomen would have a different body shape to a *'typical woman'*, this shape is still one that is *'not big'*. To be big, would read not feminine and possibly by extension, masculine. Women who exhibit athleticism or masculine characteristics can be perceived as maintaining a position that challenges conceptions of heteronormative femininity, thereby disturbing the woman-feminine-heterosexual matrix. Thus, it is clear that the ideology of woman-feminine-heterosexual constrains how Kerys conceives of a sportswoman, as her definition is limited within the realms of acceptable, heteronormative femininity.

The participants were also asked if they could define a stereotypical sportswoman. When discussing stereotypes of sportswomen, they began to highlight the multiplicity of women's bodies. Stacey was alone in her struggle to identify a 'typical' sportswoman:

Stacey: *'I don't think there is one. I think in my head, instantly loads and loads of different sportswomen come into my head and I can't think of something that is particular to all of them.'*

Jo and Sarah were both quite unusual in the way that they defined sportswomen. Jo states:

Jo: *'I think the right attitude, not necessarily physical because I see a lot of women who haven't probably got the physical capabilities, especially in netball, but you put the right attitude and hard work in..and I think women probably women are really good team players compared to guys!'*

This was supported by Sarah who said:

Sarah: *'I guess if you're within a team sport...you probably have to have some more feminine personality traits and behaviours, to be able to be part of a team.'*

Here, Jo and Sarah highlight a gendered aspect of defining necessary characteristics to be a successful sportswoman. In contrast to most of the other participants, they describe successful sportswomen in a gender stereotypical way, which is in line with notions of acceptable feminine characteristics. Jo puts an emphasis on a lack of physical capabilities, and the qualities she highlights could be described as stereotypically feminine, such as the ability of women to work well in a team. This emphasizes the cooperative, and social, aspect of playing sport, as opposed to the competitive, aggressive version of sport defined by and for men.

Some sportswomen were described in terms of their muscular appearance, with muscularity often defined in opposition to femininity:

Charlotte: *'Well I think that they, all sportswomen, whatever they do, will have muscular definition of some sort...I don't think you can get away with that, and if you aren't like that then you probably aren't training hard enough. So I think that yes, a stereotypical sportswoman will have a muscular physique of some kind.'*

The suggestion here is that to be successful, and taken seriously, a sportswomen must have a muscular physique; otherwise one cannot be training hard enough. Some

participants made it clear that developing a muscular body was imperative to actually achieve athletic success. But, Jo also mentioned the physicality of the stereotypical sportswoman:

Jo: *'I think quite feminine...but still underrated by loads of people because of, probably, their look.'*

Ali: *'What do you mean, their look?'*

Jo: *'Just if people were saying a stereotypical sportswoman I would imagine they would say blonde hair, blue eyes, kind of toned, they wouldn't have muscles pumping out of them, they would just be you know in physically good shape but they wouldn't be like hench. Yeh I think they would be described as like a prettier version of a guy playing sport.'*

For Jo, despite mentioning the muscularity of female athletes, the term sportswoman is associated with dominant notions about feminine appearance, congruent with descriptions of heteronormative femininity. Dworkin (2002: 333) identifies muscles as a paradox of gender for the female athlete, but also notes 'new definitions of emphasized femininity that have pushed upward on a glass ceiling of muscularity over time'. So, despite some of the participants having identified femininity in contrast to athleticism, according to Jo, a sportswoman with muscles *can* operate within the constraints of femininity. Identifying the idea of the sportswoman as 'prettier' than a man, toned but without 'muscles pumping out of them', is clearly an image of a woman that complies with definitions of femininity. She also explains that it is the look of these sportswomen that leads to them being 'underrated'. According to Markula (1995: 424), a modern woman is expected to be 'firm but shapely, fit but sexy, strong but thin', which is precisely what Jo is alluding to here. As Clasen (2001) noted, emphasized femininity in female athletes acts as a response to the female athlete paradox.

Jade's image of a sportswoman is in complete contrast to Jo's description of one with a feminine appearance:

Jade: *'You think they would be in baggy tracksuits all of the time, and have always got their hair tied up and not wear any make up and not care about what they look like, because they are just, you know, obsessed with sports or whatever.'*

Everything Jade describes here is antithetical to a heteronormative feminine performance. Her non-feminine descriptions, which therefore read as masculine, include the non-wearing of makeup, something other participants identified as central to femininity. It is these types of masculine stereotypes of sportswomen which lead to the assumption of homosexuality.

The women interviewed were not explicitly asked about their sexuality, given the nature of the research whereby anonymity cannot be guaranteed. However, sexuality was discussed in terms of the stereotyping of sportswomen. The stereotype of sportswomen as lesbians was one that manifested itself in a few, but certainly not all, of the interviews with participants. It is worth noting here that this stereotype was articulated by women involved in traditionally male sports, and unsurprisingly perhaps, no netballers explicitly stated that lesbianism was a stereotype associated with sportswomen.

Ali: *'How would you describe the stereotype of a sportswoman?'*

Sophie R: *'[laughs] This is what I said to my mum, "big fat lesbian"! I once said that to my mum.'*

Ali: *'Why?'*

Sophie R: *'I can't remember what it was, with me playing rugby I just remember saying I wasn't going to turn into a big fat lesbian...In male dominated sports like rugby, football, cricket, male sports, they expect the women to have male characteristics, usually in terms of looks.'*

Sophie R notes the male characteristics attributed to women who feature in male dominated sports. She also explicitly pinpoints appearance. This is unsurprising; given the centrality of appearance to concepts of femininity, appearance represents an obvious signifier of deviant gendered behaviours. As Kauer and Krane (2006) note, the stereotype of sportswoman as masculine and/or lesbian emanates from athletes' lack of conformity to hegemonic (heteronormative) femininity. Sophie R directly vocalises the perceived deviant gender order of woman-masculine-homosexual associated with female athletes. Female masculinity in this sense is problematic in that it disrupts the compulsory order of woman-feminine-heterosexual. Given that most sport is identified as masculine, and masculinity in women (and in particular women involved in sport), is a signifier of

lesbianism, we see a replacement of women as woman-feminine-heterosexual with woman-masculine-homosexual.

Beth: *'Well, I think it's a real shame but I think there is the stereotype of sportswomen as perhaps a little more kind of, a bit more butch than what people would normally think of a woman, but it's important that they are strong and you know, whatever...We talked about the behavioural characteristics of someone that's feminine, perhaps stereotypically people think that sportswomen aren't like that, they are a bit more, kind of, driven and focused and stuff, rather than gentle and you know, that kind of thing.'*

Beth describes a sportswoman as 'butch', a similar finding to Caudwell's (1999) discussion of the butch lesbian image in women's football in the UK. As Caudwell (ibid: 393) states, the 'butch represents a challenge to traditional notions of (hetero)sexuality'. The 'butch' woman is often presented as the antithesis to femininity, or an example of female masculinity. Again, the contradiction between a sporting body and a feminine (and hence a woman's) body is evident in Beth's descriptions. Furthermore, in indicating that it is in fact a 'great shame' that a female sporting body is identified as 'butch', which by implication means lesbian, highlights the othering of homosexuality, and the classification of 'lesbian' as a form of deviant sexual behaviour.

The 'butch' stereotype also appears in media interviews and articles, but often as a way of saying 'look at what I'm not'. In this way, the stereotype was described and then used as way to emphasize femininity and compulsory heterosexuality, two of the five techniques identified by Wensing and Bruce (2003). *The Sunday Times* magazine, 'Style', featured an interview with Lianne Sanderson, an England footballer. Asked how she would describe her style, Lianne responded:

'The thing with women's football is that people imagine we all look like men, that we're these butch women with short spiky hair. But it's not like that. If you look at the girls in our team, you see they actually look like girls.' (McGarry, *The Sunday Times Style Magazine*, 2010: 35).

Although Lianne highlights the stereotype of women in football as 'butch', she is quick to defend the image of women footballers in order to present to the media an image of a feminine (and therefore heterosexual) woman.

Instead of being explicit about a sportswoman's perceived homosexuality, Tammy implies it:

Tammy: *'Normally quite athletic looking, which is sometimes a bit of a turn off for guys [laughs]!*

Tammy notes the athletic appearance (or a masculine appearance) as a turn off for guys, and thus not aligned with compulsory heterosexuality (and thereby distorting woman-feminine-heterosexual). By describing being 'athletic looking' as a turn off for men, she is indicating that men would not find the athletic woman attractive. If a man is not attracted to a woman, there cannot be heterosexual relations, thus the woman can be considered homosexual by implication.

In contrast, Claire A is explicit in defining a sportswoman as a *'lesbian. Sort of, not feminine at all. Lifting weights, getting ripped, that kind of thing.'* For her, the epitome of a sportswoman is the deviant woman, one who lifts weights in the gym, a stark contrast to the aerobicizing female body Markula (1995) describes. The category of the 'butch lesbian' in sport is also identified by Harriet, although the identifier for this is the term 'Jan'. At present, this is a term commonly used to signify a lesbian within a sports club at Loughborough University, although its usage is becoming more widespread throughout female sporting networks. When discussing the perception of women's rugby as a masculine sport, Harriet states:

Harriet: *'I've thought oh god this is so masculine when you see some of the girls turn up and they are just huge and totally Jan-like it's unreal.'*

Ali: *'What do you mean Jan-like?'*

Harriet: *'It's just...like with the short hair, as gay as they can be, just like a stereotypical gay, who just does rugby. The name of rugby is so bad [but] there are so many feminine, like stereotypical feminine ...they look so like girly and...feminine, petite...Whereas these are just so, like, stereotypical. It's like they are putting a sign out that is like: I'm gay and I play rugby.'*

This is a stereotype of rugby also noted by Sophie R, who stated that rugby appeared to be a sport for 'left over' women, women who have not been accepted into other sports. Sophie says:

Sophie R: *'It's true, I've noticed it, they seem to play rugby, and they are bigger women, and they are quite often gay'*

As Ezzell (2009) notes, rugby players often find themselves stigmatized by outsiders as 'butch lesbians', but we also see the acceptance by women rugby players themselves that the sport can and does operate as a homosexual space.

Again emphasizing femininity and compulsory heterosexuality was a media article printed in the popular press. The subheading to a newspaper article titled 'We're all girlie girls' was 'England aim to lift the women's rugby World Cup on Sunday – and kick their butch image into touch' (Wyett, *The Sun*, 2010: 57). Whilst it seems unlikely that the England women's rugby team were focusing on the supposed 'butch image' of the sport during the preparations for a World Cup final to be played on home soil, this reminds the millions of readers of the Sun newspaper of those very perceptions. An interview with Emma Croker, an England women's rugby player, in that same article alluded to a recognition of this stereotype attributed to women in rugby:

'People have this idea about us but we are all girlie girls' (ibid)

Two members of the England women's rugby World Cup squad, in interviews with the media, describe occasions where there is surprise at their sporting careers due to their appearance not fitting in with perceptions of rugby players. In response to the question, 'how do people react to you being a rugby player?', Rachel Burford responds:

'The classic response from men is: "you don't look like a rugby player." "What does one look like?" I always reply. It's been a long time since I heard any of the old stereotypes concerning women and rugby.' (McGarry, *The Sunday Times Style Magazine*, 2010a: 49).

Not looking like a rugby player was also highlighted in an interview with Emily Scarratt:

'When people ask me what I do and I tell them they say "You don't look like a rugby player." But it doesn't bother me what the wider population think.' (Scott-Elliot, *The Independent*, 2010: 51)

The 'old' stereotype is also highlighted by Emily,

“The old stereotypes are there and probably always will be – ‘how can women play a contact sport?’” says Scarratt. “There is not much you can do about people like that – the perception is massively hard to change”.’ (ibid)

In the interview with Rachel Burford, Joanna McGarry asks her: ‘Do you ever worry about being seen as butch?’. This question highlights exactly how ‘butchness’, and therefore lesbianism, is othered by the media, demonstrating how heteronormative femininity is the only appropriate gender performance for women whether they are in sport or not. Rachel’s response was:

“I am happy with how I look. Before Nike became our sponsor, we used to train in oversized men’s shirts. Now we have fitted rugby kit designed specifically for women that feels much more feminine.” (McGarry, *The Sunday Times Style Magazine*, 2010a: 49).

It is not only the media that presents sportswomen in a particular way, then, but the women who are interviewed are also complying with notions of appropriate femininity and compulsory heterosexuality, often through a rejection of the butch stereotype and, by implication, lesbianism and homosexuality.

Caudwell notes that the ‘butch lesbian’ image is one of the most popular notions of women playing football in the UK, and it is apparent here that a similar stereotype is applied to women’s rugby cultures. The netballers did not mention the stereotype of the female athlete as lesbian during their interviews. Liv was the only one who explicitly noted the butch stereotype, although this was not a stereotype attributed to women involved in netball:

Liv: *‘I think it changes, people’s stereotypes change compared to what sport it is. In netball we have always suffered with almost, like a school girl stereotype. Whereas if you look at the top level now, none of the girls playing at the top level sport have any relevance or, look like a school girl at all. Some of the other stereotypes I think are that sportswomen can be butch, can be not so feminine.’*

This highlights the influence of stereotypes on women in sport. For those women involved in a female-defined sport such as netball, the stereotype of a school girl can be seen to trivialise the sport and their achievements, whereas those involved in male sports

have to contend with the butch lesbian stereotype, or as Harris (2005) called it, the 'image problem' in women's football (read male-defined sport).

2.2. Negotiating being a woman and playing sport

Kerys: *'...well personally I'm not that feminine [Laughs]'*

It is interesting to consider if these sportswomen interviewed conform to the cultural ideals associated with female bodies, as they have described, or whether they are actively involved in reconstructing female appropriate behaviour? Of the women interviewed, only a few defined themselves as feminine, and of these definitions, the participants neglected to describe themselves as feminine within a sporting context. Cox and Thompson (2000: 7) found that narratives of women football players showed how they 'conceived and used their bodies, consciously and subconsciously, in multiple ways depending on the context'. This appeared to be the case with the women interviewed here. When asked if she would describe herself as feminine, Stacey said:

Stacey: *'Sometimes. Probably not, when I have kind of my sport/athletics hat on. However, I think netball is actually a massively feminine sport and we play in dresses and stuff so I guess to some people that might be the epitome of a female sport. But I don't necessarily feel feminine when I am playing and training, but I think when I get the time to kind of relax and being in my own clothes and go out with my friends then I definitely make an effort to, I don't know, play up to the girlier side of myself I guess.'*

Stacey presents a strong definition of netball as a feminine sport, yet the division between being able to display femininity on the court and off it is also evident. If netball is indeed a 'massively feminine sport', it may seem strange that Stacey describes not feeling feminine whilst playing. However, the very process of being involved in sport can be seen as unfeminine behaviour, even if that sport is female-only. Despite being involved in an activity seen as 'only for girls', women who play netball still get sweaty, are still competitive and still have to demonstrate strength, power and skill - all perceived as masculine characteristics. Sports labelled as feminine are often those that emphasize attributes such as aesthetic beauty and grace (Koivula, 2001), definitions into which netball does not realistically fit.

For Karen, like Stacey, sport represents an arena in which femininity cannot be displayed. Given that football is often identified as a male appropriate sport, it seems obvious that displays of femininity are incompatible with playing the game.

Karen: *'Yeh, I enjoy make up, I enjoy wearing nice... tight fitted...feminine clothes, I hate wearing baggy stuff...I guess because of the kind of job I'm in, if I was doing a 9 to 5 job my appearance would matter a lot more, but like today I was in the rain for five hours, so is doing my hair a priority? No. And I guess that's where, especially women's football, our femininity...gets questioned because you know, we're not in our high heels 24/7, because we are training all day so we'll be in trainers and stuff.*

Again, central to both Stacey and Karen's definitions of femininity is appearance – the wearing of tight fitting clothes, looking nice and 'girly'. This is described in opposition to what is possible on the sports field. Given the obvious centrality of appearance and clothes to the participants definitions of femininity, it makes sense that wearing trainers all day, getting wet outside in the rain or sweaty on the court cannot marry with their dominant ideas of what it means to be feminine. This therefore involves a belief about how one should act, and an understanding of how all women are. Sophie B also described herself as 'girly' (and as such, feminine), but again, this was away from the football pitch:

Sophie B: *'I like to have my sport to the side but I still like to be, well the girls all call me girly, because I started, within football you can be seen as a tomboy but I suppose I'm not really seen as that in football'*

In the Style magazine interview, Lianne Sanderson also defines herself in feminine ways, but away from football:

'Off the pitch, I like to wear skinny jeans and dresses. I like going shopping and getting dressed up with my mates, like any other girl.' (McGarry, *The Sunday Times Style Magazine*, 2010: 35)

These extracts highlight the concept of 'selective femininity' (Ross and Shnew, 2008), and the possibility of seeing one's body as being constituted differently by multiple discourses (Cox and Thompson, 2000). Krane (2001) described the 'femininity balancing act' as the way in which women maintain a feminine appearance that conforms to the

norms of a heterosexist society, as well as meeting the demands of being an athlete, such as being physically and mentally strong. The way in which Stacey, Karen and Sophie meet these demands is to treat sport as distinct from the rest of their lives. Viewing their bodies in multiple ways allows them to conform to the demands of being both a woman and an athlete.

This is similar to the thoughts of Sophie R, who, despite wearing sports kit most days to meet the demands of training, feels the need to wear make up outside of the sporting environment in order to feminize her appearance:

Sophie R: *'I trained everyday maybe 2 or 3 times a day I used to make an effort to put make up on to go to lectures even though I was in sports kit, because I wanted people to know I was a girl underneath the sports kit... I was conscious of the fact that I was wearing boy's clothes so I have to make me look as feminine as I could, so I'd always make sure my hair looked half decent or I had make up on, you know, little things like that.'*

Krane (2001: 120) determined that female athletes 'perform femininity to protect themselves from prejudice and discrimination'. Sophie R is conscious of her appearance in her 'boys' sports kit, and as such, tries to counter this with the performance of femininity through the wearing of makeup, or the styling of her hair.

Whilst some women identified themselves as feminine outside of sport, there was also evidence of women who identified themselves as *not* feminine at all:

Claire A: *'I wouldn't say I was overly feminine. I think I'm one of the more feminine girls on my squad but I wouldn't describe myself as feminine really.'*

Sophie R: *'Very feminine, big boobs, curves, very vulnerable, exactly the opposite to me basically [laughs]!'*

Thus, Claire A and Sophie R represent sportswomen who do not overemphasize their heterosexuality and femininity, despite Sophie R previously emphasizing a performance of femininity. However, Claire A still identifies herself as one of the more feminine women on the squad, and perhaps simply struggles to identify as feminine in general due to the nature of playing rugby. However, there appeared to be a form of identity management by the women in order to perform heteronormative femininity outside of

sport. As Harris (2005: 195) concludes, 'there is a complex relationship between participating in a perceived male sport and constructing an appropriately feminine, heterosexual identity'. Negotiating the performance of heteronormative femininity while avoiding masculine behaviours, such as playing sport, becomes problematic for these physically active women. They face the paradox that to be successful in athletics, they must develop characteristics associated with masculinity, which do not align with heteronormative femininity. The idea of being a sportswoman is central to the participants' understanding of themselves, an integral feature of their identity. However, it appears that they define femininity in contrast to, and apart from, sport. Thus, they highlight the multiplicity of their identity as both sportswomen and women, and the complex, multiple ways in which they see their bodies.

2.3. Being sportswomen

It is essential to note now the centrality of sport to the participants' identities. When asked 'what does it mean to you to be a woman', what was instantly apparent was the importance of their sporting identity to their identity as a whole. As athletes, the issue of being a *sportswoman* inevitably came up in the discussion with some of the women. Being a sportswoman often appeared to be a defining part of the participant's identity. Sophie R explains that for her, being a woman can offer the '*best of both worlds*', as '*it's alright for women to play sport and be strong and to display more masculine features than they could before*'. So for Sophie R, the progression of women's sport represents a positive development, despite the perceived female athlete paradox. According to her, playing sport allows these women to actively redefine who women are and what they are capable of. This enables them to encroach into the man's world of sport. Claire A answered:

Claire A: '*Such a tough question. I think for me it's quite a lot to do with, I'm not like a feminist or anything like that but I'm quite into doing everything on equal. So, like doing the same things as blokes, so in work, training wise...I like to be seen as an equal almost*'.

Similarly to Sophie, for Claire A, sport represents an avenue where women can prove themselves, and be seen as equals. However, for Charlotte and Katherine, being a woman represented a stumbling block to their ambitions:

Katherine: *'It sucks [laughs]! What does it mean? I don't know. Well in my life it sort of means that you get a step down from everything. With me being an athlete, you get less pay, less facilities, less treatment...I'd say it means less.'*

Charlotte: *'I don't think it actually matters whether I was, whatever. Yeh, I have achieved what I wanted to achieve so I don't think it matters. Obviously I am extremely disappointed that I'm not a man in the sense that I can't be paid to do my sport....'*

For Charlotte, despite the initial insistence that sex does not matter, being a woman in sport clearly raised issues, as it did for Katherine. For these participants, being a woman in sport simply means facing inequality. History tells us that women's involvement in sport has been characterized by inequality and discrimination (Hargreaves, 1994), and what is evident here is the women interviewed still regard that to be the case.

The women were asked 'what does it mean to you to be a sportswoman?' This is where we really begin to see the importance of their sporting lives to how they identify themselves. As Collinson and Hockey (2007: 383) state, 'the concept of identity *per se* has of course been highly problematised within postmodernist writings, with their focus on the fluidity of subjectivities'. Consequently, it is important to realise the fluid and contextual nature of subjectivity. Not surprisingly, given the performance level of the participants, as well as the amount of time, dedication and commitment these women have put into their sporting careers, their sporting identity was indeed central to their sense of self, and integral to how they defined themselves.

Jade: *'It's a massive part of my life, and it's nice to be like a bit special and different, and to know that you are representing a team or your country or whatever, and just, like, not everybody can do that.... I don't know it's like a privilege, but then you have to work hard for it. So yeh, I think all of the hard work pays off.'*

Stacey: *'I think it means an awful lot, I think it's massively part of my identity at the moment, because although I'm also a student I think I would say I was an*

athlete first, and that's the first thing that most people would identify me for...so yeh, I think, yeh I think being an athlete for me is quite important.'

Serena: *'I like being it, I like this lifestyle and it's a lifestyle that I have chosen as well which is cool. I've never had anyone tell me I couldn't do it because I'm a woman...I always say I don't know what I'd do if I didn't play a sport really, if I didn't play netball. We always joke about giving up but we wouldn't know what to do I think, we would struggle [laughs]! Just because it's such a big part of our lives.'*

For Jade, Stacey and Serena, playing netball defines who they are, gives them a purpose, and is central to how they identify themselves. This is similar to Tammy and her experience of playing cricket:

Tammy: *'It kind of gives me an identity really, sort of it's something that I'm good at and I enjoy doing and kind of, it shapes what I do with my life.'*

Claire P finds it easy to explicate the centrality of rugby to her identity by recalling a time when the rugby was taken away:

Claire P: *'It's a massive part of what I am...sometimes you forget how big a part it is until you can't do it, or you're not selected. Like for the two years when I wasn't selected, it didn't take me long to realise that I wanted it back.'*

Here Claire P implies an identity that was taken for granted and forgotten until it was disrupted. Similarly, Harriet identifies being a sportswoman, or more specifically a rugby player, as important to who she is. She states:

Harriet: *'I don't know, I've never really thought about it. I think it gives you a bit of a purpose...if you aren't a sportswoman you just feel like, I don't know...'*

Being a sportswoman is so intertwined with her sense of self that Harriet finds it hard to comprehend what her life would be like without sport.

Sarah and Claire P describe being rugby players as a key facet of their identity, not only internally, but also in relation to how they are perceived:

Sarah: *'I think sometimes people only see that, like they see you as Sarah the rugby player rather than Sarah just a normal person or, doing my job.'*

Claire P: *'They do, they'll immediately, if you walk past them and stuff, they are like [simulates getting into a position ready to rugby tackle someone]. Especially*

guys, they give this...[simulates same movement] and I'm like oh, I'm not really sure I'm portraying that, I'm definitely not that aggressive, laughs. It's as if I should react to tackle them straight away!

Borrowing from Goffman's (1959) theory of the presentation of the self, the women can be seen to present themselves as rugby players and thus this is how they are received. Whilst they define themselves by their sports, this performance of their sporting subjectivities also results in them being defined by others in relation to their sport.

In general, the footballers also identify their sporting lives as a central aspect in how they identify themselves. However, this comes from a sense of achievement, in that what they achieve becomes who they are:

Kerys: *'I say I love it, I love, I think the achievements I have had, it sort of boosts your confidence and stuff knowing I have achieved something in life, you know you can look back when I'm older and say, you know I did achieve something there.'*

Dani: *'I think it's good for me, like, the fact that I have got ambitions in life...I think it makes you happier...because I feel like I am getting somewhere in life...what you get out of it is great, the opportunities to go places and meet people...it's a massive part of me.'*

Raff: *'I'm proud of it. It's just a part of my life, a big part of my life. I think because I have done it for so long. I don't know, it's defined a lot of my life.'*

Sophie B: *'I love it, that's just because I've been brought up with it...It is hard. But no it's good and you get your rewards at the end of the day.'*

These extracts highlight the importance of the women's achievements to their sense of identity. Who they are is not only defined by what they do, but what they have done.

For Claire A, being a rugby player meant an opportunity to not only be, but to prove, she is the best:

Claire A: *'I don't think it should be any different to how it is with a man in sport, but just ultimately train as hard as you can, play as hard as you can, to be the best player. That's all it needs to be, it's not like I see it as I'm a woman in sport, I see it as I'm playing sport.'*

This is similar to what Beth describes:

Beth: *'[Being a sportswoman means] everything, I've absolutely loved being involved, you know being involved in a sport, being able to play at a high level has been amazing, I've always loved sport so. Kind of being able to do what I want to do, everyday, is brilliant, and I don't think there's many people in the world that get the chance to do that. So yeh, it means everything, and like I said before in the female sports world, I think you know, perhaps in some cases, they are up against it a little bit more than the men, and I really enjoy being part of that and trying to push the profile of women's sports if we can just a tiny bit.'*

This attitude to their sports participation highlights not only the centrality of sport to their identity, but also the notion of wanting to prove themselves, to push the boundaries of women's sport and to be able to demonstrate their abilities. For Sophie R, her sporting identity clearly intersects with her gendered identity:

Sophie R: *'I really liked to, I suppose, shock boys about it, I really liked the idea that I could play boys at their own game. I know that women aren't as fast or as strong. England women's rugby the team would never be able to play the men's team and win, I know all of that and I don't have a problem with that, but I like the fact that guys would respect me and you know, I could be on the same level as them. That's important. And...women have obviously been born with the skills to play sport. It's cool to be able to do it.'*

Her participation in rugby enables her to 'shock boys', or in effect, challenge the limitations that conventional heteronormative femininity places on women's bodies. Interestingly for Karen,

Karen: *'I don't really consider myself to be a sportswoman although I am...It's very, very important but it's not the be all and end all for me, nor will it ever be.'*

Karen here is beginning to vocalise the idea of multiple identities, and multiple subjectivities, in that she identifies as a sportswoman to some degree, but recognises that this is not the extent of her identity. Again, this highlights the fluid and contextual nature of identity.

What is evident here however, is the high level of importance the women attach to their sporting identities. To a great extent, playing sport defines who they are, and how they wish to be seen. Given that so many of the women started playing sport at such a young

age, they have developed their sporting identities over a long period of time. The construction of, and continued reconstruction and performance of, this identity has occurred over time, and given that they perform for England, it would make sense that their sporting identity is intersected with both their gendered identity and their national identities.

3. Summary: Understanding a sportswoman's identity as multiple and fluid

Central to this work is an acknowledgment of the performative aspect of gender (Butler, 1990), allowing us to understand how sportswomen construct gender, and other identities, in different contexts. To summarise the findings of this chapter, it is evident that the women involved use their bodies in multiple ways depending on the context, showcasing an ability to perform a heteronormative form of femininity when necessary. This form of femininity is constrained by compulsory heterosexuality, which in itself is important for the nation – women must be feminine, and thus heterosexual, in order to fulfil their national roles as bearers of children and reproducers of national culture (Yuval-Davis, 1997). The paradox between being athletic and a woman (and thus feminine) was evident, although this was not necessarily articulated as a source of conflict, but as evidence of the multiple ways in which a woman's body can be used. Furthermore, despite the continued progress of women in sport, stereotypes and stigmas of female athletes remain from those both within and outside of sport.

Cox and Thompson (2000: 17) state that 'because the body is central to the sporting experience, female players continually have to negotiate the overlapping and at times contradictory discourses of sport, gender and heterosexuality'. Supporting these findings, and those of Young (1997) and Scraton et al (1999), it appears that the relationship between playing sports (and in particular traditionally male-defined sports) and the constructions of femininity are complex. Roth and Basow (2004: 249) contend that 'being feminine becomes crucial to a woman's sense of herself as a woman'. Similarly, it would appear that the women interviewed, for the most part, found it impossible to separate the ideology of femininity from the category of woman.

As Cox and Thompson (2000) note, the women were well aware of homophobia in and around women's sport (in particular those sports that are engrained in a masculine English culture). This may suggest why most of them felt compelled to emphasize traditional feminine traits outside of the sporting environment. A challenge to femininity can be mistaken for a rejection of heterosexuality (Halbert, 1997). So, given the association of female masculinity to homosexuality (lesbianism), the majority of women discussed the performance of heteronormative femininity outside of the sporting arena, in order to counter masculine athletic performance. Understanding of the order of sex-gender-sexuality, and subsequently woman-feminine-heterosexual, was evident in most of the women's interviews. For the participants, to be seen as women required them to be seen in some way as feminine, even if that means off the court or field of play. In this sense, outside of sport, the women in general maintained a performance of heteronormative femininity, which further labelled them as heterosexual women. According to Malcom (2003: 1387-1388)

Conventional wisdom suggests that girls and women who pursue sporting activities must relinquish their femininity because of the inherent contradictions of 'being and girl' and 'being an athlete'. Yet not all girls and women succumb to these pressures, and an ever-increasing number are finding a way to manage the cultural contradiction of female athleticism.

The performance of femininity, and the ways in which the participants defined women, worked in contrast to the required behaviour of a successful athlete. However, as sportswomen who represent England at the highest possible level, these are women who can negotiate the supposed female/athlete paradox (Clason, 2001; Krane 2001, Krane et al, 2004) through the performance of different types of femininities. Their performances are contextual and highlight the fluid capacity of gender.

As women who represent their country in sport, they are also more aware than perhaps any others of their national identity(ies). Given the centrality of their sporting subjectivity to their identity as a whole, what is left to do now is to examine their understanding of national identity, and how this may intersect and/or conflict with their gendered identity.

Chapter 5

Discussion: Englishness and Britishness: The complexity of national identities

Following discussions about conceptions of womanhood and gender, the interviews then focused on exploring the national dimensions of the participants' identities. It was important to consider how they articulate their national identity(ies), how they conceive of their nation, and subsequently what their nation means to them. Furthermore, discussions also focussed on national representatives, symbols, characteristics and stereotypes. The responses centred on the women's own national identification with England and Great Britain, what they imagine is central to England, and who they conceive of as representative of England.

1. Nationality and national identity in England

Ali: *'So, before this conversation, would you have thought of England and Britain as the same?'*

Kerys: *'Yeh, yeh. I would.'*

National identity has been claimed to be one of the most important aspects of one's identity (Smith, 1991). It has long been noted, however, that the national identities of those living in the British Isles is complex. The conflation of Englishness with Britishness, or the merging of Englishness into Britishness, has been discussed by many authors (e.g. Kumar, 2003; McCrone, 2006; Fenton, 2007; Robinson, 2008; Kumar, 2010). Robinson (2008: 218) states that 'for many, especially in England, the distinction between Englishness and Britishness is by no means clear-cut' because, as Kumar (2003: 262) notes, 'Englishness has for centuries slumbered unconsciously, and uncaringly, in the arms of Britishness'. Kumar (2006a: 429) highlights 'the notorious English-British confusion', and goes on to state that 'the English, in casual, everyday use, have become accustomed to speaking of "England" and "the English" when properly they should say "Britain" and "the British"'. First, the participants were simply asked 'what is your

nationality?’ The answers instantly demonstrated the complexity of national identity, nationality, Englishness, Britishness and the confusion and conflation of the two.

To summarise, of the nineteen women interviewed, eighteen were explicit in identifying their nationality (in most cases as defined by their passport) as British, with only one (Stacey) explaining that she believed her passport marked her out as English. Then, thirteen described their national identity as English (Jo, Liv, Stacey, Sophie R, Claire A, Charlotte, Sarah, Claire P, Dani, Raff, Sophie B, Tammy and Katherine). This highlights an understanding on the differences between nationality and national identity. Karen identified herself as *‘from England, but I’ve got an Irish background’*. Beth, with both English and Welsh roots, described having an attachment to both a British and English national identity. Two² participants (Jade and Serena) highlighted their national identity as multiple and complex. However, the participants’ discussions of national identity were not as straightforward as the numbers suggest, particularly when sport came into the conversation, and their responses are now looked at in more detail in order to expose the complex and often confused nature of English and British national identities.

Initially, it appeared that some of the participants were confused over what the term ‘nationality’ meant, often equating nationality with national identity. In the interviews, one’s passport was used as a signifier of nationality. This is because, as McCrone (2006) notes, being British ultimately means having a British passport. For some participants it was evident that their national identity is English, despite acknowledging that their nationality (often as defined by their passport) is British:

Ali: *‘How would you describe your nationality?’*

Jo: *‘English.’*

Ali: *‘Is this what it says on your passport?’*

Jo: *‘It probably says British on my passport.’*

Ali: *‘So you would describe yourself as just English?’*

Jo: *‘Yeh.’*

² The term non-white has been used in the same vein as McCrone (2006), simply to group together participants from different and varied ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. It is not the intention to privilege whiteness, or to imply whiteness is the standard against which different skin colours should be defined.

Despite Jo recognising that her passport denotes her as a British citizen, she explains that she is, or feels, English. This was the same for Charlotte:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Charlotte: *'English.'*

Ali: *'Is this what it says on your passport?'*

Charlotte: *'British.'*

Ali: *'How English do you feel?'*

Charlotte: *'100% English.'*

These two extracts are similar to the initial comments made by Claire A and Claire P. All four women initially confuse nationality with national identity, and demonstrate being or feeling English, in contrast to defining their legal nationality as British. This reveals a civic understanding of British identity, compared with more ethnic understandings of an English identity – an English identity that occurs through place of birth and/or as a matter of blood, or even simply an emotional preference.

Whilst explaining that she considers herself to be English, Karen also described her Irish background, her father's parents having been born in Ireland. She explains that, despite *'winding him up'* by claiming to be *'full English'*, she also indicates that she is proud of her Irish heritage. This demonstrates the multiplicity of national identity, and once again an ethnic understanding of national identity.

Similarly to Fenton (2007), notable was the presentation of Welsh and Scottish identities by the participants as points of reference to which their English identities were compared.

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Sophie R: *'In terms of what? Like just being English?'*

Ali: *'Would you say that you are English?'*

Sophie R: *'I'd say I'm English...'*

Ali: *'...Is this what it says on your passport?'*

Sophie R: *'[pause] It says, yeh, British I guess.'*

Ali: *'...So you wouldn't say that, despite that it says you are British on your passport, you wouldn't say you are British in any way?'*

Sophie R: *'No I would always say I'm English. I don't know why, I've never ever thought for one minute that I'm British. Which is strange because I am? But Britain is not England, it's England and Scotland and Wales, and Northern Ireland [laughs]! But, no I'm not British, I'm English.'*

As Kumar (2003) notes, all identities depend on 'othering', or identifying oneself through knowing who one is not. Evident from Sophie R's account is the acknowledgement that whilst she is English and as such a part of the United Kingdom, what she *is not* is Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish. Thus she cannot be British, as being British incorporates notions of Welshness, Scottishness and/or Northern Irishness. The feeling of being *only* English overrides any identification with Britishness.

Katherine noted the difficulty in expressing how she feels about her national identification, initially explaining that she is '*white-British*' and then going on to say:

Katherine: *'I'd say I was, yeh, very English.'*

Ali: *'...what would you say you identify more with, being English or being British, or do you sort of class them as the same thing?'*

Katherine: *'It's quite hard isn't it? If you think about it, I would say I was English, just because, that's the country I was born in, but I mean if we are a united sort of thing then I'm British.'*

Ali: *'So like on all the forms you'd write British?'*

Katherine: *'Yeh, yeh.'*

Ali: *'But you feel English?'*

Katherine: *'[laughs] Definitely, yeh!'*

Here, we have seven women demonstrating the complex nature of national identity in England. Whilst the participants are in most cases aware that they are categorised and defined as British in a formal way, what is evident is that they appear to identify with their home nation, England, much more than with the nation state of the UK.

The complexity and confusion surrounding being both English and British was even more apparent for some of the other participants,:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Raff: *'British.'*

Ali: *'Would you say...'*

Raff: *'English.'*

Ali: *'Oh, well, British or English?'*

Raff: *'English.'*

Ali: *'Is this what it says on your passport?'*

Raff: *'No, it says British [laughs]!'*

Ali: *'So how do you feel, do you feel British or English?'*

Raff: *'English. Actually no, British. No, I feel English.'*

The conversation with Raff offers further evidence of this confusion and conflation of Englishness and Britishness. Raff is evidently confused over how she identifies herself, and about whether or not she is British and/or English. This is exactly what Kumar (2006a: 429) meant when describing the 'notorious English-British confusion'. Raff highlights the possibility that she may never have considered her national identity and/or her nationality before, resulting in this conflation of Englishness with Britishness. The confusion over being British and/or English was also evident with Sophie B:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Sophie B: *'[pause] As in what I am? Like white-British? Is that what you mean?'*

Ali: *'Yeh.'*

Sophie B: *'Yeh [laughs]!'*

Ali: *'Would you identify with England as well, like, would you say you were English, too?'*

Sophie B: *'Yeh...if someone asked me I would probably say I was English.'*

Ali: *'Yeh?'*

Sophie B: *'But it's just because British came into my head. English, if someone asked me.'*

What is clear for both women is the confusion between what would appear to be a British nationality and an English national identity. It appears Sophie B and Raff understand the formality of their British nationality. However, in beginning to try to communicate how they feel about their national identification, they appear to have a stronger attachment to Englishness.

Dani also demonstrated the conflation of Englishness with Britishness:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Dani: *'English.'*

Ali: *'Is this what it says on your passport?'*

Dani: *'It says British on my passport.'*

Ali: *'How do you feel about that?'*

Dani: *'British, it's the same thing.'*

Ali: *'Do you think of English and British as the same?'*

Dani: *'Yeh, yeh.'*

Dani explicitly states that, for her, Britishness is equal to Englishness. McCrone (2002) noted the ways in which Englishness and Britishness have merged, stating that England and Britain are often (con)fused, as demonstrated in Dani's narrative. Whilst not fusing Englishness and Britishness together, Sarah is aware of having a dual identity:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Sarah: *'What, as in, what am I?'*

Ali: *'Yeh.'*

Sarah: *'Well I always put British down on everything. And I guess I am British, but then I obviously play for England and I'm English at the same time, so I think normally when people say, you just say British don't you?...I would say that I was English, probably not British.'*

Sarah seems unsure of her Britishness, but acknowledges it all the same, whilst remaining aware that at the same time she is both British and English. However, she does conclude that ultimately, she is English.

Stacey was very sure of her English national identity. Unlike the other participants who were clear about their (passport defined) British citizenship, Stacey's discussion on nationality and national identity differed as she was actually incorrect in her identification of her nationality as highlighted by her passport:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Stacey: *'I would say that I was English.'*

Ali: *'Is this what it says in your passport?'*

Stacey: *'Yes.'*

Ali: *'Sure?'*

Stacey: *'Yeh, I had to have a think but I'm pretty sure, yeh. It wouldn't say anything else [laughs]!'*

Ali: *'Not British?'*

Stacey: *'I don't think so, it may do, but I never write that.'*

So for Stacey, it would appear that her overriding national identification is with England. However, not all the women identified themselves in this way. Harriet was initially adamant that her nationality is British:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Harriet: *'Erm...British? Can I say that?'*

Ali: *'Yeh, if that's what you think!'*

Harriet: *'I'd say British, because of my grandparents were Welsh as well, on my dad's side, so I'm a bit of a mixture.'*

In defining herself as British, Harriet is considering her mixed heritage from another nation of the British Isles. Given the complexity of her background, it appears logical to her that she cannot be English, as she has Welsh 'blood' in her family. This links to a concept of ethnic nationalism. Harriet is not defining being British in the same civic terms as the other participants, but through ethnic definition, due to having blood ties with more than one home nation.

On the other hand, Kerys appears to feel British because of the way in which she has to identify herself on official forms:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Kerys: *'British [laughs]! Is that it? British?'*

Ali: *'Yeh! If someone asks you where you are from, where would you say?'*

Kerys: *'Yeh, Britain'*

Ali: *'Would you ever say that you are English?'*

Kerys: *'Erm, no. I know because when you see it you fill in surveys and that, it says British not English, so I would always say British.'*

In these initial discussions surrounding national identity, both Kerys and Harriet were clear that their nationality is British. For Kerys here, there doesn't seem to be a strong attachment to a sense of national identity, aside from the formalities of filling in surveys.

In particular, at this point she has no sense of Englishness at all. As we will go on to see, her sense of national identity becomes much more apparent in the context of sport.

However, for two of the non-white participants, the concept of nationality and national identity was a little more complicated. Jade and Serena both display how their nationalities and national identities are complex and sometimes a source of confusion:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Jade: *'Well, I'm British, but I'm like, I don't know, because I'm half from St. Kitts aren't I. So I would say Caribbean-English.'*

Ali: *'Is that what you would put on a form?'*

Jade: *'Yeh, I would put black-British. No black-Caribbean. No, what are they? Because you get like Caribbean, or African ones, so I would be like, Caribbean-British.'*

Ali: *'What does it say on your passport, British?'*

Jade: *'Yeh.'*

Ali: *'Do you ever feel English?'*

Jade: *'Erm, English? I don't know. I don't really think about it. I suppose. Yeh, just because...'*

Ali: *'Compared to British? Or would you always say British?'*

Jade: *'Erm...no I would say that I'm English.'*

What is clear here is the confusion Jade has over how her racial background intersects with her national identity. She explains that she is 'half from St. Kitts' and that she was 'English'. However, she also moves seamlessly between defining herself as British and English, again demonstrating the confusion over and conflation of the two terms. Furthermore, Jade highlights the complex nature of national identity, not only for the English but especially for black and Asian British citizens born in England. Serena also demonstrates a lack of understanding over identifying as British and/or English, and moves between the two terms in a similar way to Jade:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Serena: *'British I guess? English? I don't really...yeh definitely British, obviously mixed race, but yeh.'*

Ali: *'Do you identify with Jamaica much?'*

Serena: *'Erm yeh, I do feel mostly English to be fair, like obviously I know that I am half Jamaican, but that doesn't really, that thought never really came into my head.'*

So, whereas Jade incorporates her black-Caribbean heritage into her conceptions of nationality and national identity, for Serena, being Jamaican did not appear to intersect with how she identifies herself. This may be due to a complex family background— her father was born in Jamaica but she was raised mainly by her English mother and stepfather on the island of Jersey. Kumar (2010) argues that it has been assumed that black and Asian people in England are prepared to think of themselves as British but not English because of the racial connotations of the latter. However, here we have examples of non-whites identifying with being English.

1.1 What does Britishness mean?

To examine further the participants' understanding of nationality and national identity, discussions then centred on the concept of Britishness. In general, for the majority of the participants, Britishness did not mean a great deal. For Claire A,

Claire A: *'I think [Britishness] does [still exist], in the form of just ticking boxes and filling out forms, but I wouldn't say so really.'*

Katherine describes Britishness as more of a surface identity, but if you keep on scratching, you will arrive at a truer sense of (ethnic) national identity, linked to place of birth:

Katherine: *'I think most people would say British, just because they are used to saying it. But I think if you kept asking the question, more would say English, just because they are born in England.'*

Charlotte imagines the possibility of a united sense of Britishness, but ultimately concedes that Britishness at present is 'splintered', and subsequently identifies herself as 'more English':

Charlotte: *'I know that Scotland has got its own government now and it's kind of pulling apart [from Great Britain], but does that mean that we should disband Great Britain because, you know, if everyone pulled together it'd be great, and we'd have this really strong, powerful force in anything, sport, culture,*

government. But because we haven't and we have kind of splintered, and yeh, I'm probably more English than I am British.'

For Charlotte, the political landscape of the UK provides evidence of the decline in Britishness.

Claire P describes Britishness as citizenship. She understands that, formally, most people in the UK are British, but also (and perhaps more importantly) identifies more with their home nation.

Claire P: *'I think there are definitely British people because people they become British, do you know what I mean, just by citizenship they become British citizens...I think there is a...line between you're English, you're Scottish, you're Welsh, because of accents. Everyone is British, because we are known as Great Britain and Northern Ireland.'*

Jade describes the centrality of England to the union, and both she and Serena hint at the ways the other home nations of the UK want to separate:

Jade: *'I think it's more England [that] like to be called Great Britain. And yes it's fine for us all to merge, but I think sometimes Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales would prefer to be separate.'*

Serena: *'I don't think there is [a British identity] at all. I think a lot of the countries have tried to distinguish themselves as slightly different even though we are all connected...I think they have tried to distinguish their own countries culturally more differently to establish their own national identity more.'*

Jade highlights the way in which England has submerged its own identity into Great Britain, whilst the other home nations are more pronounced. Serena also notes how the other home nations have managed to develop unique national identities distinct from Britishness.

For Raff, the difference between England and Great Britain is that Great Britain is not unified:

Ali: *'How would you describe the difference between England and Great Britain?'*

Raff: *'Well they hate, well it just feels like they hate, Wales and that, they hate us, they hate England.'*

The use of 'them' (the Welsh) and 'us' (the English) categories by Raff demonstrate how the home nations are thought of as distinct from one another, and indicate that the 'other' is being identified. Tuck and Maguire (1999) and Tuck (2003, 2003a) discussed the use of us/them categories in research on sporting national identities. Tuck and Maguire (1999) argue that the nation is one of the strongest formants of I/we identities, enabling 'us' to share things in common, whilst separating 'us' from 'them'.

The perceived anti-English sentiment of the other home nations (in particular the Welsh) was mentioned by other participants, and served to increase the likelihood of the participants identifying as English:

Jade: *'I think that everybody is just proud of their national identity. And so, Welsh people just hate English people...People have that thing against England because everyone wants to beat England. I don't know, I don't mind being Great Britain, but I think other countries might perhaps prefer to be seen a bit more seriously and a bit more independent, instead of being lumped in with England.'*

Claire A: *'I can't think of anyone, if they are from England, who would say they are from Britain rather than England. And there's quite a lot of, well, the Welsh absolutely hate us, there's no way they would say I'm British, it's always I'm Welsh. There's absolutely no way, I can't think why anyone would say British.'*

It has been claimed that the English have often identified themselves as both English and British, and in some cases have been reluctant to call themselves as 'English only' (Bryant, 2003; Bond, 2006; McCrone and Bechhofer, 2008). However, whilst the participants indeed identified themselves as British and English, they were more often than not inclined to define themselves as English. This supports Heath, Martin and Elgenius's (2007) findings that there has been a decline in Britishness even among the English since 1997, leading to an increase in the number who chose English as their primary national identity. As Robinson (2008: 218) states, 'within England, English and British do still blend into each other'. What is evident from initial discussions with the participants about how they conceive of their own national identities is that on the whole, the distinction between being English and British remains blurred. However, there was one aspect of their lives that clarified the confusion about being English and/or British – namely, sport.

2. Sporting nationalism

Ali: *'Feeling English, is that something you are quite aware of?'*

Stacey: *'I think so. When you represent your country, you kind of, you have to form certain feelings around that, it has to mean something.'*

Endorsing Robinson's (2008) description of the way in which England exists as England only on the international sports field, sport provides the participants with an avenue to clarify their thinking and understanding of England as a distinct nation. Robinson (ibid: 220) further states that sport is the place where 'Englishness and Britishness no longer merge'. Given the extent to which the participants have already identified sport as central to their identity, it came as no surprise that some of them found it easier to articulate their national identities in a sporting context. According to Tuck (2003), sport also forms one of the most significant arenas by which nations become 'real'. For most of the women interviewed, whether or not they identified as English and/or British in the first place, they were all very much English in a sporting context:

Ali: *'How would you describe your nationality?'*

Liv: *'My nationality is British.'*

Ali: *'How would you describe your national identity, if you think that's any different?'*

Liv: *'Because, purely because I play for England, I'm English. But, I still think my nationality is British.'*

Liv explains how she *is* English, but accepts her nationality as British. Tammy similarly describes her nationality as British, although goes on to state that she also feels English in a sporting sense:

Tammy: *'When I do, sort of pull on the England shirt, it's very much England...It's just England then.'*

Here, both Tammy and Liv demonstrate the way England is imagined in sport. Although Dani explained in the first place that her nationality was English, she is even more explicit in identifying how sport allows her to embody Englishness:

Ali: *'When do you feel English?'*

Dani: *'Playing for your country, getting called up...you know when you are like, 'I play for Chelsea and England''.*

This is an experience also described by Sophie B and Jo:

Sophie B: *'[Playing for England is] when I recognise it more, because when you are coming up against another country you are like, 'yeh, we are England'.'*

Jo: *'I feel English quite a lot, because of the nature of my sport, we don't compete as Great Britain, we only ever compete as England so, every time I'm training I'm only ever training for myself as an England player...I'm also working as an England team, I do get quite patriotic and think of myself only as English and not British.'*

For some of the participants, sport represents an environment where they can identify with England, but outside of sport there remains the possibility of identifying as British, highlighting once more the fluid, multiple nature of their identities. Jade states that with Britishness and Englishness, in general she *'kind of see[s] it as the same'*, although she adds that:

Jade: *'With the whole England netball thing, we are not a British team, if that makes sense, so in terms of netball I'm an English netball player, but in normal identity I'd be fine saying I was British.'*

Similarly, Beth explains that representing England in sport means that, in sporting contexts, she identifies as English, but outside of sport, she identifies as British:

Beth: *'I would say that's quite difficult actually, because I would say British, yeh. That's what I would say. Probably within my sport that's quite different, I'd be English because I'm playing for England. But generally, if someone asked, I'd say British.'*

Kerys identified herself as British initially, but explained that she feels English *'when you are watching England versus Wales'*. Despite Harriet initially identifying herself as British, the more she thought about the concept of her national identity, the more confused she became:

Ali: *'So you never feel just English?'*

Harriet: *'No I don't think so. Oh, actually I do. Going back to playing rugby, when you play them, you're literally like, I'd never want to be on the Welsh or Scottish*

team, I'd never want to play for them...I'd feel like I was playing for the wrong team. So I do feel English, yeh.'

For Harriet, identifying as English here occurs through the process of 'othering' both Welsh and Scottish identities. As she does not want to play for Wales or Scotland ('them'), she must be English. Sarah explains that her identity also becomes more obvious in a sporting context:

Sarah: *'It usually depends on sporting events which is quite bad isn't it [laughs]! I dunno like, obviously we are English, growing up in England, and you sort of had this sort of jokey, 'oh I wouldn't wanna be Welsh or I wouldn't wanna be Scottish' [laughs]!'*

In both Harriet and Sarah's descriptions, what is evident is the concept of identifying one's national identity through the rejection of other national identities. As McCrone (2002: 315) states, 'we know who we are in terms of who we are not, even though such simplicities do violence to complex reality'. Although Sarah describes understanding her identity as English, this is the result of knowing that she does not want to be Welsh or Scottish, whilst Harriet acknowledges that playing rugby for either Wales or Scotland would feel like playing for the 'wrong team'. Like Sarah and Harriet, Claire A states:

Claire A: *'I think because I've played for England, and we often play against Wales, Ireland and Scotland, and although they are from Great Britain, 9 times out of 10 when I play them I want to smash their heads into the ground [laughs]! That's why I would probably say I'm more English.'*

Whilst sport served to clarify their national identity for some of the participants, as well as highlighting the multiple and contextual nature of national identity for others, Claire P explains how sport increases the importance of a national dimension to her identity. She explains that, due to her sporting career, her national identity has become central to how she imagines herself:

Ali: *'How important is being English to you? To your identity?'*

Claire P: *'I think it's, yeh, it's massively important. There's so many, from a sporting perspective, everyone who plays at the level we're at, you're playing for the passion and pride of that country...it's really important'*

Claire A also explains that it is in a sporting sense that her national identity comes to the fore and is important in terms of who she is:

Ali: *'How patriotic are you?'*

Claire A: *'I'm not one of these people that gets the national flag put on my bicep or things like that, and I'm not huge on St. Georges day or things like that, but when it comes to playing for England, going to England training and what that represents, then I'm hugely, hugely patriotic.'*

In sport, Claire P indicates that being English is important given that she embodies Englishness on the rugby field:

Claire P: *'For me as an England player, viewing myself as a true English person, it's really important.'*

Claire P also notes that she views herself as a 'true English person', and by this she means English in an ethnic sense – she was born in England to English parents and grandparents, and as such, in her eyes, has 'true' English blood. She struggles to understand how those who are not 'truly' English could want to play for England:

Claire P: *'You have to be (patriotic)...Even with the men's rugby you can look at Tuilagi or Flutey who are Kiwi born. And I still think it must be, we've got a Kiwi in the Squad, La Toya...It must be hard for her to be playing for us, when she could be playing for New Zealand, she could be a New Zealand player...Unless I had a true, a really true link, like if my grandparents were Scottish and I had some affinity to Scotland, or Wales, then I could understand. It's when you have got players who are playing because they're grandparent was born in Scotland, but they've never been...I find that weird.'*

Here Claire P highlights numerous issues surrounding belonging. She finds it 'weird' that people who were not born in England could play sport for England, despite having a grandparent from the nation that they would be representing. Thus, even with the possession of a blood link to the nation, one still might not belong and be accepted as English, and as part of the dominant, in-group.

Sport also played a role in discussions about Great Britain. When talking about Britishness, what Great Britain means and whether there was anyone the participants

would associate with Britain, there were two overriding themes in the discussions: the Scottish tennis player Andy Murray and the Olympics. Claire P explains that she feels British when she watches Andy Murray play tennis: *'I support him even though he's not English. He's British.'* Asked whether she sees England as different from Great Britain, Claire P states:

Claire P: *'Erm, no, I wouldn't say so. Like when I'm watching them, I think that they're part of us, I don't look at them as any different, I didn't even know Andy Murray wasn't English originally, until I found out. Then I was like, oh, because I've always supported him, and I wouldn't not support him. And I know there's English people who wouldn't just because he's Scottish but I really wouldn't just because he's like, it's Great Britain.'*

Despite Claire P explaining that she supports Andy Murray because 'it's Great Britain', the theme running throughout her narrative is actually the divide between the English and the Scottish. There is also evidence of the English assumption that Great Britain equals England, with the admission that she had previously thought Andy Murray was English.

However, unlike Claire P, Sophie R struggles to imagine Andy Murray as British, because he is Scottish:

Sophie R: *'I kind of think of them as completely different. Interestingly, I always think of Andy Murray as...Scottish, I never think of him as British. I just never ever think about the term British or Britain...I find it weird now if I sit here and think I'm in Britain at the moment, because I'm not, I'm in England...Like Ireland has got, every country has got completely different characteristics.'*

Sophie R here demonstrates the ways in which she imagines each of the home nations as distinct and separate from one another. Given that each nation has 'different characteristics', or persistent national stereotypes, this subsequently means she struggles to comprehend the idea of a unified Great Britain.

The only thing Raff associated with Great Britain was *'The Olympics. Nothing else.'* Similarly, Sarah struggles to think of things that remind her of Britain.

Sarah: *'I don't really know what else we do, as Great Britain, apart from like the Olympics, and we have the British Lions in rugby.'*

There was evidence of the participants' strong sense of Englishness in discussions on Great Britain. Kerys admitted to presuming that all members of the British Olympics squad were English, again highlighting how the English are often seen to assume that England *is* Great Britain, and vice versa:

Kerys: *'When I watch the Olympics, obviously it's Great Britain, but I automatically just think they are all English. I don't realise that they could be Welsh or Scottish.'*

Karen, however, describes the way she accepts the team as representative of Great Britain, but considers each athlete not to be British, but English, Welsh, (Northern) Irish or Scottish:

Karen: *'At the end of the day its Team GB, but I still think that I'm English, that persons Welsh, that persons Irish, that persons Scottish.'*

Ultimately, it still appears that the strength of the participants' English identity very much overrides their relationship with Britishness.

3. What is England?

As Robinson (2008: 219) noted, 'England exists more in imagination than it does anywhere else, as England lacks many of those political or cultural institutions that are usually taken to embody the nation (state)'. Like Robinson (ibid: 216), I am interested in the cultural space that is Englishness, including 'a set of ideas, practices, beliefs, experiences, genealogy and history, all of which are essentialized and reified in the identity and ethnic rhetoric of the people of England'. Chen and Wright (2000: 7) posed the English question – 'what does it mean to be English?', and this was similar to the questions that the participants were asked.

In keeping with Condor (2006), accounts of nationhood collected in the interviews revealed how it is conceived not only as people, but also as places, activities, events or non-human objects. For Edensor (2002: 72),

Still the most obvious and recognisable ways in which national identity is performed are at those national(ist) ceremonies with which we are familiar, the grand, often stately occasions when the nation and its symbolic attributes are elevated in public display.

Some common themes emerged when discussions turned to what England means to the participants. The Queen, the Royal Family, the Royal Wedding, and London were the most popular responses. These represent the stages on which Englishness is performed (Edensor, 2002). What is unusual, though, is that the Royal Family should in fact be symbolic of the United Kingdom as a whole, but instead is often associated only with England.

Kerys: *'I think of the Queen [Laughs]! She is like the symbol of England.'*

Tammy: *'The Queen, that's probably the first one you'd say'*

The Queen and the Royal Family were perhaps at the forefront of the participants' imagination simply due to massive amount of media attention the Royals were receiving at the time of the interviews following the wedding of Prince William to Katherine Middleton. Broadcast live on the BBC, on the 29th April 2011, the wedding was the second most watched television programme in the UK that year (Conlon, 2011). The Royal Wedding represented a national 'symbolic stage' (Edensor, 2002), upon which national identities could be played out. Given that the interviews were conducted between May and October 2011, the wedding was inevitably still prevalent in the minds of many of the participants.

Claire P: *'Celebrating who we are, having the Queen, St. George's day...the Royal wedding, all very, very English.'*

Liv: *'The Royal wedding, for example, because that is quite fresh in everyone's mind. So foreign people looking in will identify England as quite regal, and Buckingham Palace and London, and that's why they would come to England.'*

Jo: *'I suppose at the moment it's the Royal family because of the whole royal wedding. Stuff like London, if someone said England I would always think of London, because it's the capital city obviously. The red and white flag, yeh, that's pretty much it.'*

Jade: *'Times like the Royal wedding actually kind of make you think that actually you know, there is a sense of national pride.'*

Jade explains that the Royal wedding highlighted the nation's pride; however, it is unclear whether she means a sense of British pride or English pride, or whether she regards the

two as one and the same. As Kerys explains, despite the Royal family being the British Royal family, there is still a common belief that they represent England:

Kerys: *'Big occasions like the Royal wedding, that sort of made you feel English then because of all the flags, even though there was loads of Britain flags, I don't know I thought of that as England.'*

Discussions surrounding the Royal family further indicate the complexity surrounding the (con)fusion of what it means to be British, and what it means to be English.

Something that the participants identified as an uncontested symbol of England was the flag of St. George. Jo and Tammy both highlighted the red and white flag, as did Dani, alongside descriptions of iconic symbols of London:

Dani: *'The red cross. Erm, and Big Ben, that just came into my mind [laughs]!...Oh red buses!'*

Harriet gave a similar response to those already mentioned when she discussed what reminds her of England. However, Harriet also started thinking of fish and chips, often seen as one of the traditional English and/or British meals:

Harriet: *'The flag, the Royals, the Prime Minister. Fish and chips, I don't know why I thought of that!'*

Sophie B and Karen also identify specific foods as symbolic of England:

Sophie B: *'Like a Sunday dinner, like English breakfast.'*

Karen: *'I got quite homesick...when you are away from home, home comforts make a big difference, like tea. Every time I had a visitor, they'd come over with 80 bags of Tetley! And it made a flipping difference. You'd get homesick and you'd just need that little bit to cheer you up...You can't get orange squash. Not having Robinson's orange squash used to drive me insane!...It's the things you don't realise 'til you're over there, and you're like "oh my God I could do with this, I miss having a Sunday roast, I'm fed up of fries".'*

Fenton (2007) discusses the importance of context to national identity, and found that in England, sport and 'being abroad' were two significant contexts for national identity. Karen's identification of food types that she associates with England stems from the time when she lived in America. Food was also mentioned by Serena:

Serena: *'Everyone thinks British, ok, let's think fish and chips, and double decker buses and things...like London...obviously you have got the full English breakfast and things.'*

Similarly to how Serena articulated her nationality and national identity, she again demonstrates the conflation and confusion between England and Britain. Despite being asked explicitly about England, Serena's initial response was to identify what she perceived as 'British' things.

Dani highlighted food, but also landscape, in her descriptions of England:

Dani: *'You have got like the coast and Brighton...a really nice place to go and visit and you would have to have your fish and chips on the pier. So yeh, it's a mix, you have got the hustle and bustle and then you have for the nice chilled out seaside and countryside.'*

Dani begins to describe England as a physical place, indicating that traditional fish and chips are best enjoyed on the coast, but highlighting the diverse nature of England, with 'hustle and bustle' cities and 'chilled out' countryside. These are further examples of English 'symbolic stages', where national identity can be performed (Edensor, 2002). Whilst discussing England as a physical place, the participants were asked how they would describe England, perhaps to someone who may never have visited. Many commented on London with its 'massive buildings' as 'amazing', 'busy and lively' and 'diverse'. The English countryside also featured in most discussions.

Sophie R: *'If someone said describe England...I would immediately go for rolling hills and quaint little villages, and London.'*

Liv: *'I come from a little village, so England is like a local country pub and a post office, proper old fashioned but, to a degree, it does come back to the green rolling hills.'*

The England that Sophie R and Liv imagine is one that may be described as 'quintessentially English'. Paxman (1999: 147) describes how 'the English mind kept alive the idea that the soul of England lay in the countryside'. Furthermore, Bairner (2009) recognises the relationship between landscape and national identity, and refers to the way in which national anthems often invoke images of landscape as symbolic of its importance to the national imagination.

In addition, the weather featured in many interviews. As Fox (2004: 25) explains, 'any discussion of English conversation, like English conversation, must begin with the weather'. When asked to describe England, then, it was unsurprising that the weather was also mentioned:

Stacey: *'Erm, bad weather!'*

Karen: *'I'd probably describe [it] as being wet [laughs]! I'd be like, 'it's wet, it's really wet, it's boring!'*

Tammy: *'It rains a bit [laughs]! But erm, it's sort of, yeh, just rains a bit.'*

Claire A: *'The weather's shit [laughs]!'*

All of the participants were able to identify certain things that symbolise England (to them), or remind them of England – from the Royal family to little things such as fish and chips. Surprisingly, only Claire P and Sarah discussed St. George's Day, the day dedicated to the patron saint of England.

Sarah: *'I sometimes feel like we're not as patriotic as we should be, like as a nation...All the Irish celebrate St. Patricks Day more than we celebrate St. Georges Day! Do you know what I mean? I sometimes feel that that's a bit sad, like, why as a nation we don't celebrate it and aren't as sort of like, "Yes, this is our country, this is what it means". We like to celebrate other people's days. I dunno like, the Welsh and the Scottish they seem more patriotic and passionate about themselves and their countries than we do about ours which is a little bit sad.'*

Despite Sarah describing an England that is not patriotic, again there appeared to be one sphere in which the Englishness of the participants came to the fore, and that was in sport. Interesting here is the use of the word 'should'. This demonstrates a possible compulsion to identify with the nation and be open and obvious about such identification. It highlights the Irish as an example of what nationalism *is*, and marks the English out as failing in that regard. However, this is what Tuck and Maguire (1999: 36) found with research on England's rugby men: Englishness is 'frequently misunderstood due to the typically more reserved displays of patriotism and national identity that underpin the national culture'.

3.1 Football and masculine Englishness

It was evident that the participants found it much easier to imagine England in a sporting sense than anywhere else. Edensor (2002) states that one of the most powerful forms of popular national performance is found in sport. When Dani was asked, 'what do you think are important things in England that make people feel English', she responded very simply with the word 'football'. Football was also important for Karen:

Karen: *'I guess football is a big part of making people English. Like the Royal family, you know, like London. Like venues, say like Buckingham Palace, you know it's typically English, or the countryside. Every country in the world has a shopping centre, every country in the world has a sports venue, but not every country in the world has a Royal family, or a palace, or you know a London Eye or a Millennium Dome. Things like that maybe, or like Stonehenge.'*

Karen highlights most of the symbols of England that the other participants noted, such as the Royal family, and symbolic stages, such as London landmarks. However, her first response was football, as it was for Kerys:

Kerys: *'Big sporting events like...when the football is on you obviously feel a bit more English then, because everyone sort of gets together, when the World Cup is on you get people hanging the flags out of their windows outside their houses, don't you. You feel more patriotic at times like that.'*

Not surprisingly, football was central to how Dani, Karen and Kerys define Englishness. As footballers who represent England themselves, you would expect this to be the case. However, football was mentioned across participants from the other sports too. Sarah also noted football, among other sports, as central to defining Englishness:

Sarah: *'Sport, football teams, rugby teams, events that bring people together so like the Royal wedding this year...I know she's the Queen of Great Britain but I think people still sort of see it as English.'*

Sarah here again identifies the association of the Royal family to England, and the importance of events such as sport and the Royal wedding to 'bring people together' and foster a sense of national pride. Beth explains that it is whilst watching football she is more aware of her national identity as English:

Beth: *'I'm pretty patriotic, when I watch England play football.'*

Tammy indicates a sporting influence to what might indicate England to her:

Tammy: *'The red and white [flag]. The three lions, which is like what we have on most sports shirts.'*

Tammy identifies the three lions, the insignia used on the England national team's football and crickets shirts, as a symbol she strongly associates with England. Stacey also discussed the role of football in helping to create a sense of an English national identity, but was more explicit about the role it plays for the nation's men specifically:

Stacey: *'I think English people have quite like, a different kind of pride and passion towards lots of things...I could never quite understand the way men go absolutely nuts over football.'*

Furthermore, when asked 'what do you think are some important things in England that make people feel English?', Stacey responded with *'I'd still say football, I think that's a massive part of a male English identity.'* The important thing to note here is the role sport (and football in particular) seems to play in defining a masculine Englishness. As Harris and Clayton (2007: 213) state, 'as the [English] national sport, football has come to embody the nation's collective claim to authority in a power relations sense and, as such, provides the ideal arena for the creation of heroes and figures of hegemonic masculinity'.

The type of sport that the participants describe as central to Englishness is specifically men's sport. As Hobsbawm (1990: 143) noted, 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people'. This team, however, are not just *any* people, but men. It remains that the national sporting arena is one dominated by men, and it is these men's sports teams, and in England, the football, cricket and rugby teams in particular, that embody the nation. Men are the faces of England during the eighty minutes, ninety minutes, or even five days of sporting competition. According to Rowe et al (1998), it is men who are the representatives of national character. National identity is then constructed, established and confirmed through the achievement of male sports stars. Harris and Clayton (2007: 214) explain that, subsequently, 'male sports stars emit the masculine status of the nation's men', and as such it would seem that the

Englishness that is most often imagined is masculine. This will be looked at in more detail when the participants consider who is representative of England.

4. Who is England?

Discussions surrounding what reminded the participants of England led to questions such as ‘who do you associate with England.’ Many of the participants had already mentioned the Queen and the Royal family as people that they immediately associate with conceptions of England. The non-sporting people that were mentioned included the Queen and/or the Royal family, discussed by fourteen of the participants, and the Prime Minister (sometimes identified specifically as David Cameron) by six participants. Other non-sporting people mentioned by the participants included singers (Elton John twice, Cliff Richard once), television personalities (Jonathan Ross, Stephen Fry and Hugh Grant, once each) and important historical figures (Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher and Henry the Eighth, also once each). Indicative again of the importance of sport to the participants imaginings of the English nation, sporting personalities were often mentioned as symbolic of England. Notably, David Beckham was mentioned by sixteen of the nineteen participants, Kelly Holmes and Jessica Ennis by six of the participants, with Martin Johnson and Jonny Wilkinson receiving five mentions each. In total, there were twenty different sports personalities identified as representative of England, fifteen men and five women. The differences in the numbers of men and women identified as symbolic of Englishness and England again highlights the gendered nature of both sport and the nation. The participants responses will now be examined in more detail.

The Queen appeared in all of the discussions of Englishness and people whom the participants associate with England. Similarly, political figures featured, although not as frequently. This was in spite of the fact that both the monarchy and the government rule over the whole of the UK, and not just England.

Serena: *‘The Queen. For England that would be about it really, the Queen.’*

Kerys: *‘The Queen, erm, maybe the Prime Minister. Even though I don’t take much interest in politics.’*

Jade: *'I suppose just political people like the Royal family and unfortunately David Cameron, they're all, you'd see England.'*

Despite occasional mentions of television personalities, singers and historical figures, the majority of the responses centred on sporting personalities. Unsurprisingly, David Beckham was a central figure in discussions of Englishness.

Tammy: *'All the Royal family obviously, and then, erm, sort of like the Prime Minister at the time, so like David Cameron or someone like that...I guess like, other people that have represented England as well so like David Beckham.'*

Claire A: *'Apart from the Royal family...David Beckham maybe. Probably the big, like, sporting heroes more than anyone else.'*

Raff: *'David Beckham. Sports people probably, Rooney, erm, Tim Henman [laughs]! Who else, yeh, Jessica Ennis.'*

Karen: *'Probably Beckham, he's a global superstar, but has remained in his tradition to be England and again his patriotism, like, I think he is really patriotic and I really, really like that and I admire that.'*

As Harris and Clayton (2007: 208) state 'Beckham has become a cultural icon and a symbol of national identity and masculinised sporting pride'. Harris and Clayton (ibid: 219) further explain that 'Beckham is not just a national celebrity but is one of the most visible athletes in the global media'. His visibility in the popular press, coupled with being a former captain of the England football team, strengthens his relationship to England. For Karen, it is Beckham's overt patriotism to England that makes him stand out for her as symbolic of England.

Male sporting heroes dominated the responses, particularly those from the sports of football, rugby and cricket. In England these sports are arguably the most popular in terms of both participation and media coverage, as well as having a close relationship to (varying types of) masculine Englishness.

Sophie R: *'Yeh David Beckham...Jess Ennis maybe? Then people like Martin Johnson, the rugby player, Lawrence Dallaglio. The England rugby team...from the World Cup. Jonny Wilkinson obviously. So, maybe John Terry...and Freddie Flintoff possibly.'*

With the exception of Jess Ennis, six of the seven sportspeople Sophie R describes are men. She then goes on to explain what it is about those athletes that make her associate them so strongly with England:

Sophie R: *'...they are the ones that have been in the news for good or bad reasons...David Beckham has got to be one of the most famous people in the world and he's English. So people automatically associate him with England. The rugby players that won the World Cup...And Jess Ennis, because everyone is obsessed with her, because she is beautiful and amazing.'*

For Sophie R, it appears that Beckham's popularity stems from his celebrity status around the world, whilst the rugby team are mentioned due to their sporting success. Ennis, however, is mentioned for being beautiful. This demonstrates the ways in which women and men are represented and perceived differently in the national sporting arena. Despite her success, Ennis is often presented in overtly (heterosexual) feminine ways in the media, as is common with media reporting of female athletes (Wensing and Bruce, 2003; Bruce, 2008). This also demonstrates what Sophie R perceives to be the generally accepted characteristics for males and females.

Aside from Sophie R, the other participants who discussed sportspeople, including female athletes, often referred only to their achievements and success on the international sporting stage. Raff identified Beckham, Wayne Rooney, Tim Henman and Ennis, and explains her choice:

Raff: *'Probably because they are like, accomplished athletes and that...[they] represent England on that kind of stage.'*

This is despite Ennis being most notable for her performances for Great Britain. Having identified Beckham, Darren Gough, Kelly Holmes, Linford Christie, Andrew Strauss, Mike Catt and Phil Taylor, Katherine explained what it was about those particular athletes that makes her think of England:

Katherine: *'The achievements that they have made and what they have done for this country, obviously makes them pins ups for this country, they are really what make this country stand out and look good...everyone needs to have somebody, some hero for their country, and most of the time it's not the Queen or a Prince or whatever, it always is a sportsperson.'*

Only two participants that initially discussed a female sports star as opposed to male sports stars, and both were from netball. This again indicates the relationship of male sport to (masculine) Englishness, given the absence of sportswomen in most discussions.

Jade: *'Well I'd say Jess Ennis, because I like her...probably Liv [Murphy] actually, my coach...because she played for England...for ages, she was captain of the senior team for like ten years...I'd say she was one of the iconic faces of netball in England.'*

Like Katherine, Kelly Holmes is a sportswoman whom Serena associates with England:

Serena: *'Probably Kelly Holmes, just because she is a good athlete and has done well for England in terms of winning as well.'*

She goes on to say:

Serena: *'I think Kelly Holmes just because of the fact that she was followed quite a lot through when she wasn't successful, and then obviously got, what was it, double gold? I personally like that because I think it is always good to see someone who was a woman, it wasn't your typical British women she was mixed race, and came back and won for Great Britain.'*

Serena again demonstrates the way she confuses, and often conflates, England with Britain and Englishness with Britishness. Outlining the way that being mixed-race marks Holmes out as not your 'typical British woman' highlights the racial connotations associated with Englishness and Britishness, which will be explored in more detail later.

4.1 Stereotypes of the English

As Kumar (2006a: 430) states, 'the study of national identity has frequently taken the form of reflections on the 'national character' or national culture of a people'. Indeed, popular works by Paxman (1999) and Fox (2004) look more specifically for behavioural codes of Englishness. In discussing Englishness with the participants, there was some evidence of the types of 'behavioural grammar' that Fox (ibid: 414) describes. Charlotte explains:

Charlotte: *'Politeness, it's very English, although, yeh, not making a fuss about things, it's very English. You know, kind of getting on with it!...We are not a*

complaining nation, we are quite happy to queue up for things...I think English people like structure, not very good with change.'

Sarah and Liv also noted similar stereotypical behaviour characteristics of the English.

Sarah: *'English people tend to keep themselves to themselves don't they. Very orderly.'*

Liv: *'I think as a nation, we like to moan [laughs]! We like to stand in line.'*

Whilst some of the participants mentioned generic personal characteristics, the main themes surrounding stereotypes of English people centred on social class and race. Discussing stereotypes of an English person, both Sophie R and Claire A conjured up similar images of people who are white and upper-middle-class:

Sophie R: *'An English person, an English man, would be pale-skinned, not tanned, and he'd have floppy hair, and he would be wearing a tweed jacket...An English woman would have a gilet on, a handbag with a stupid little pathetic ratty dog [laughs]! Very 'rah-rah' and pearls.'*

Claire A: *'If you were going to go for stereotypes, I'd go for a posh man in like a waistcoat, flat cap, corduroy shoes, really well spoken, and a pipe, maybe. And a Labrador. A woman, again, quite posh, well spoken.'*

Many of the participants discussed the English within a binary of upper and lower-class stereotypes. The duality of Englishness meaning both upper and lower-class was found in Lindsay's (1997) research on Scottish opinions about the English national stereotype. The two most popular characteristics of the English by the Scots was either 'arrogant/snobbish/stuck-up' or 'lager louts/hooligans' (ibid: 140). For Harriet, in England there are the 'stuck-up' upper classes and the 'normal' middle to lower classes:

Harriet: *'They are mostly friendly, but then you have the few that are...I think in England there are a lot of stuck-up people...and they have the stereotypical English accent, which is awful...but anyway, I think it's kind of split, like pretty much upper class and then you have like the normal middle class to lower.'*

Serena also highlights the class divide:

Serena: *'Well it depends what you are thinking, whether you're thinking upper class or just your average cockney kind of...Londoner, gravelly voice, enjoys a good*

time and a drink, things like that. Or the more upper class who like to do upper class things like shooting those, what are they called, clay pigeon shooting and fox hunting, things like that.'

Here, Serena sees the difference in social classes through the allocation of particular activities; fox hunting and clay pigeon shooting as stereotypical of the upper classes in England, whilst the lower classes occupy themselves with drinking and having a good time.

Sophie R also identifies the dichotomy of the social classes, and indicates that the lower classes contribute to a 'bad' reputation for England:

Sophie R: *'I think there is a massive divide between the middle-upper class people...and the people below that...England has a reputation, sometimes quite bad, based on the lower class.'*

Sophie B also describes the class binary, although she relates the differences between classes to a generation gap:

Sophie B: *'It depends...I'd say some are quite like posh, and a bit like, snobby...but I think that's probably for the older generation rather than the younger generation. I don't know why I think that, because I work with the elderly and they're not all like that...I'd say like for the younger generation a bit more like chavvy, do you know, like roughuns [laughs]!'*

Lindsay (ibid: 144) found that the strongest stereotype of the English amongst the Scots was an upper middle class image, but the current stereotype is quite different, that of 'a rather loutish, anti-foreigner working-class'. Lindsay (ibid) further noted that the two stereotypes should 'sit rather uncomfortably' together but, like the participants in this research, she found that most people 'seemed to be able to combine these two-facets.' Like Sophie B, other participants mentioned the word 'chav' as a term used to indicate lower-class citizens.

Sophie R: *'[the English people are] very straight-laced...they are very proper and have very high standards...and the people that don't meet those standards are considered to be bad people, which they're not. What I'm saying about chavs, they're not bad people, but I think, they don't suit England. They are not living up to the Englishness of being straight-laced and kind of dull, boring maybe.'*

Kerys: *'Typical white, pale person...I would say like up for a laugh like, Briton's have got a good sense of humour...maybe a bit chavvy, there are a lot of chavs around aren't there.'*

Asked to describe a 'chav', Kerys responded: *'like tracksuits, hoodies, walking around the streets like drinking and smoking, stuff like that.'*

Despite Beth explaining that it is difficult to pinpoint stereotypes or characteristics, she eventually follows a similar path to the other participants in describing English people as belonging to one of two social class categories:

Beth: *'It's quite difficult really isn't it, all sorts of different people, culturally, racially, personality characteristics...Well I think there are probably two that I think of, your kind of well-spoken middle class, upstanding citizen, and then your other side is probably your football supporter, you know, a bit of a lad, a bit rowdy.'*

For Beth, the 'lad' of the lower classes will be a football supporter, highlighting again the link between football, masculinity and Englishness, as well as the class connotations of the sport. Beth admits that her visions of what embodies Englishness consist of images of men. Asked if she thinks there is a stereotypical Englishwoman, she explains: *'there's probably a woman that fits into the kind of middle-class kind...maybe a mother, you know, the kind that is well-spoken, does things properly, quite strict on the children, that type of thing.'* Whereas English men are identified by things such as appearance and activities, Beth indicates the stereotypical English woman is the nation's mother who is quite strict with the children. This is in line with how the participants conceived of womanhood as discussed in the previous chapter, again highlighting heteronormative femininity.

Harriet and Claire P describe a stereotypical English person in keeping with the participants' descriptions of lower-class Englishness:

Harriet: *'All I can think of is brown hair, quite tall, and like, all I can think of is bald-headed lorry drivers with a beer belly!'*

Claire P: *'A stereotypical Englishman...t-shirt off in the sun, beer belly, tattoos, being obnoxious, upsetting everyone around them [laughs]!'*

Again, the women imagine Englishness in relation to men. Like Beth, Harriet and Claire P admit that they cannot picture a stereotypical image of an *Englishwoman*. The stereotypes described by the participants indicate an Englishness, more often than not, imagined as masculine.

As has already been touched upon, issues of race and skin colour came into discussions on what it means to be English and stereotypes of the English. Kerys noted that an English person would be a 'white, pale person', and this racial stereotype of Englishness persisted throughout the discussions with the participants. Serena states:

Serena: *'I don't think it matters but if you were going to typically describe an English person they would probably be white.'*

Serena initially explains that skin colour is not relevant, but then goes on to claim that typically, an English person is white. Despite commenting that Englishness invokes the image of a white person, Harriet was conscious of whether or not this statement made her seem like a racist:

Harriet: *'A stereotypical English person would be white. Does it sound racist to say that?'*

Jade agrees with the relationship of Englishness with whiteness, despite being black yet born in England. However, she does go some way to explain how times may be changing:

Jade: *'[An English person is] still probably white. That's just predominant...because of history...you know, English was traditionally white people...but then, in the current world, well now, it's kind of just anything. Everyone comes to England so it's very diverse and has got every race. Predominantly still white but there are, there is a bigger variety of minorities as well.'*

For Jade, although Englishness used to equate to whiteness, there seems to be further possibilities for what could constitute being English. Dani refers to the 'mixed cultures' of England, although similarly to Harriet, she was concerned that her opinions on Englishness and race would mark her out as racist:

Dani: *'I think you have got mixed cultures, so then everyone is different in that sense, you don't just meet one sort of...'*

Ali: *'Could you describe a stereotypical English person, or do you not think there is one?'*

Dani: *'I don't think there is one anymore. No I don't think there is, I think there are all sorts these days. That sounded really bad as well by the way!'*

However, Dani goes on to say:

Dani: *'I think an English person, not being horrible, is white. And I don't really, if you see a coloured person or a mixed-race person you know that they are not English. That sounds really racist doesn't it? Wow.'*

Parekh (2000) explains that both Britishness and Englishness have systematic racial connotations of whiteness. It has been noted that while 'people in England are more willing to adopt the national descriptor of 'English'...the term 'English' is reserved largely for white 'natives'; almost an ethnic identity that the non-white population feels excluded or excludes itself from' (McCrone, 2002: 305). Despite the persistent link between Englishness and whiteness, there is evidence of an appreciation that the colour of Englishness has changed, and is now multiple. This is particularly apparent given the black participants' identification with Englishness. As Bryant (2003: 408) notes, 'some black and Asian British can and will identify with elements of England and Englishness – black and Asian successes in English contexts such as footballers and cricketers playing for England will ensure that'. Sport, then, again plays an integral part in modern conceptions of Englishness.

4.2 Englishness and cultural diversity

Kumar (2003a) notes that English society is now more 'multicultural' than ever before. Growing ethnic diversity following the immigration of people from other countries of the commonwealth represents a challenge to England, where most of the immigrants settled, and to historical and/or traditional conceptions of an English national identity (McCrone, 2006). The idea that England whilst predominantly white, is now a changing, multicultural society persisted in many of the discussions with the participants:

Stacey: *'I think English people, yeh, would be predominantly white, but I think that's one of the things about England, is that it's becoming to be such a mixed*

identity because so many people from so many different ethnic backgrounds and stuff live here.'

Liv: *'Wow, there is a huge range of people. I love people watching as well [laughs]! So I should have a great answer to this question...I think it's a really difficult thing to do...from an appearance point of view it's almost impossible. You know, black, white, Asian appearance, all those kind of things can still be English.'*

Both Liv and Stacey describe the changing composition of England. Some of the women identified London as the specific catalyst for the increasing diversity:

Charlotte: *'Well I think the percentage of the population is massively still white isn't it. So the stereotypical English person would be white. I think in London it would probably be different, it would probably be mixed race. And it is changing.'*

Claire A: *'If you were going to go for stereotype, I'd say white...[but] nowadays we have got like huge diversity, especially in London.'*

The participants seemed on the whole to adopt a 'narrative of national diversification' (Condor, 2006: 668). Condor (ibid: 668) defines this narrative by reference to 'an ongoing historical process by virtue of which the country had transformed from an original condition of ethnic nationhood, to a more inclusive, civic form of national community'.

However, despite proclaiming England as a new multicultural nation, there was still evidence of ethnic nationalism in discussions with some of the participants.

Dani: *'I think we are a proud nation. Yeh, we are quite free spirited, we let all sorts of people in the country. Am I allowed to say that?'*

Ali: *'Say whatever you want, honestly!'*

Dani: *'Oh right ok, yeh. So, in that sense it's a bit weird, we need to be a bit more stubborn and not let so many people in, but I'm not the government, so.'*

Dani explains how England 'let all sorts in', and despite being wary of what to say and to an extent how to say it, she continues to indicate that England ('we') are 'letting' too many immigrants into the country. The use of 'we' and the idea of 'letting people in' function to 'construct powerful boundaries between those who un/conditionally belong' (Skey, 2010: 725). A similar reading emerges from both Karen and Katherine's interviews:

Karen: *'I think England has been, I don't even want to go there, because it might come across as the wrong thing to say. But I think some of the English history has*

probably been destroyed over the recent number of years, which is disappointing....I'm all for allowing multicultural into society and everything like that...but I get disappointed that it's kind of, losing our English way.'

Katherine: *'I'd say we are a very caring country, we have a lot of mercy and we look after people, as much as they want to say they get kicked out, we allow a lot of immigrants into the country and we look after them.'*

In the extracts from conversation with Dani, Karen and Katherine, there is evidence of the ways in which the dominant group (in this case, the white English) treat the outside group (ethnic minorities and non-whites) as possessions, or something that must be monitored and managed. This indicates 'the ability of the dominant group to define the conditions of belonging' (Skey, 2010: 725). The boundaries of the in- and out-groups must be carefully controlled in order for the in-group to feel that they belong. In particular, Karen describes history as a national possession and one which is almost at threat from the increasing diversity of England's residents.

Jade: *'England's a bit, because there isn't as much of a sense of like national pride anymore. You know, because it's such a diverse country, and everything has to be politically correct these days and like, to cater for everybody.'*

For Jade, national pride seemingly relies on a homogeneous culture, given that she attributes a decline in national pride to an increase in diversity and 'political correctness' that must cater for everybody (thus including those from minority groups). As Bond (2006: 610) states, 'formally, national inclusion has been established through the granting of citizenship to those (or at least a majority of those) residing within national boundaries', an example of civic nationalism. However, Bond (ibid) also cautions that those with formal citizenship may not be accepted by the majority, and subsequently not imagined as fellow members of the national community. This appears to be the case in the descriptions of the increasing diversity of England, when the participants use terms such as 'they' and 'them' and 'we' and 'us'.

5. Summary: The meaning of Englishness

It has often been stated that the English have no nationalism, and Fox (2004: 1) states that 'we are constantly being told that the English have lost their national identity – that there is no such thing as Englishness'. England represents an interesting case for studying national identity in that its stateless nature suggests that formal citizenship cannot be used as a surrogate for national belonging. To be English is not determined by ownership of a passport, but invokes more ethnic nationalist imaginings of belonging through birthplace and blood ties. Discussions surrounding nationality and national identity focused on the holding of a British passport as a signifier of British nationality, but explored the feelings and attachments of the participants to both England and Great Britain.

Fenton (2007) found that young interviewees in Bristol were often indifferent to national identities in general, and English and British identities in particular. However, this was not the case for the participants in this research, with their national affiliations being amongst the strongest parts of their identity. Barnett (1997: 292-293) has observed:

The English...are more often baffled when asked how they relate their Englishness and Britishness to each other. They often fail to understand how the two can be contrasted at all. Englishness and Britishness seem inseparable. They might prefer to be called one thing rather than the other – and today young people increasingly prefer English to British – but, like two sides of a coin, neither term has an independent existence from the other.

This was the case, to some extent, with these participants. What was certainly evident in the initial discussions was the multiplicity of identity. National identity appeared to be contextual, and identification with England and/or Great Britain depended greatly on circumstance. However, whilst there were moments of confusion and conflation about what it means to be English in relation to Britishness, it appeared that in most cases the women identified more with, and better understood, Englishness. The participants were blunt in their summary of Britishness as quite often an identity they use when 'filling out forms' or 'ticking boxes'. However, given the contextual nature of national identity, there were instances when the participants concluded that they did identify with Great Britain.

Thus, they demonstrated that national identity is a complex phenomenon which can operate on more than one level at any given time, and in different situations. In some instances there was the perception that perhaps one *had* to identify with the nation (whether this was Great Britain or England); that everyone has a nationality and national identities. What differs across nations, and within nations, however, is the strength of that attachment and the instances when national identity is brought to the fore. However, where Englishness may seem 'less patriotic' comparatively, this demonstrates a characteristic of the English, as identified by Tuck and Maguire (1999), as more reserved in their national affiliation.

Bragg (2008: 86) questions, 'where does Britain end and England begin'. It was in discussions surrounding sport that Englishness really was imagined. Whilst English nationalism and Englishness may not have taken off as a mainstream political idea, it is apparent that in the world of sport, Englishness is highly relevant and important. According to Bond, Jeffery and Rosie (2010: 463), 'we find ourselves in a historic moment when the English...have a clear conception about the distinction between England and Britain, Britishness and Englishness' – and sport became the place that the participants could imagine, and embody, Englishness. Furthermore, sport is also an arena which highlights and exacerbates rivalries between the home nations. There was a strong perception of anti-English sentiment by the other home nations amongst the participants, which served to increase the likelihood of them identifying with England more than with the (dis-)United Kingdom.

The participants all highlighted the ways in which the England men's football, rugby and cricket teams contribute to a sense of English national identity, and actually embody Englishness. Therefore, as Harris and Clayton (2007: 214) state, 'national identity is established through the achievements of male sports teams' which promotes a 'masculine ideal within England'. Further discussions of stereotypes of the English found that, despite the participants often commenting on the multiple natures of Englishness in terms of racial connotations, it remains that, in reality, Englishness is still aligned very closely to whiteness. Furthermore, in keeping with Lindsay's (1997) findings, the participants presented the English in a binary of upper-class 'snobs' or lower-class 'chavs'.

Conceptions of Englishness were also more aligned with masculine connotations, with some of the participants explaining that whilst they were capable of imagining a typical *Englishman*, it was notably harder to do the same for a typical *Englishwoman*. When they could do so, it was a national woman who bore and raised the nation's children. As a consequence, Englishness appears to be conceived of as masculine in nature, with England's sportsmen above all cast in the role of national heroes. But where does this leave the participants, England's sportswomen, in the national imagination?

Chapter 6

Discussion: Women as National Sporting Beings: The narratives of England's heroines of sport

Modern sport is linked to the geopolitical ideology of nationalism, with the pinnacle of sporting achievement being realised in international competition. Consequently, sport remains inextricably linked to the construction and reproduction of national identities (Bairner, 2001). However, it has often been noted that the construction of the nation, nationalism and national identities, particularly in sport, has been dominated by men, and often reproduced through male (sporting) achievements and male (sporting) heroes (Tervo, 2001; Harris and Clayton 2007; McCree, 2011). The contribution of women to the relationship between sport and national identity formation has been unquestionably ignored. So where does this leave our national sporting females? This is one of the key questions informing this research. Several relevant themes emerged throughout the interview process with England's sportswomen, presented here and supplemented by media extracts.

1. Sport and national identity

Kerys: *'I think it's really important...I think it unites people.'*

As noted in the previous chapter, the idea of sport being integral to imagining an English national identity was prevalent across the majority of the participants. Sport proved to be one arena where England was real (Robinson, 2008). As a consequence, the participants were asked how important they considered sport to be to a nation. For most, sport provided an important avenue through which they could express their national identification and not surprisingly, the participants believe that sport plays an important role when one attempts to imagine a national collectivity:

Serena: *'I think it's really important, I think it's brought nations together in the past, it's helped keep a nation together like South Africa in the apartheid when they won the [rugby] World Cup. Yeh it brings people together...so everyone can see just what a country's about and what their culture's about...There are always*

people bidding to hold a big event, a big sporting event, because of what it can do for a country. Especially if a country is particularly good at a sport as well, I think that can be part of a national identity...so the success of the sports is almost linked to the success of the country as well.'

Here, Serena alludes to the ways in which sport is often seen as reflective of the condition of the nation. Both Charlotte and Beth also identified the importance of sport to national identity:

Charlotte: *'I think it is because of national identities, because of national competition, because you are showcasing yourself, showing off to the world.'*

Beth: *'I think it is really important for national identity I guess, and something that unites the country. Probably like nothing else, I'm not sure there is an equivalent to sport.'*

A persistent theme throughout the narratives of the participants was the idea that the national dimension of sport enables the nation to come together in support of national teams. International sport was then seen to foster a sense of community within a nation. Sport was also understood to provide a platform from which a nation can display its culture and 'show off' to the rest of the world. In particular, it seemed that football was the sport that was central to imagining the English nation:

Harriet: *'I think it's important because, I don't know, it brings people closer together and stuff. Like in the [football] World Cup, everyone just, when you are winning, everyone is so much happier, I don't know why it is, it's like England as a whole, it's like you're winning if England win.'*

Liv: *'At different times I think it's massively important, obviously something like, the [football] World Cup that kind of thing when England are being represented or whoever you might follow, are being representative, there is a massive feel good factor...The feel good factor, although its short lived, I think from a nation's point of view it's the one time that people do seem to get together or feel quite passionate about something. I know not everyone likes sport but I think for those people that do it is a tie that they are brought together.'*

Here, some of the participants alluded to the ways in which success in sport can reflect back upon the whole national society. In a sense, therefore, sport acts as a way to dull

the people's awareness of the state of their society, through the 'feel good factor'. Sport is also a catalyst for bringing people together. Karen notes the way that sport has become a surrogate religion in an increasingly secular English society, and how it can contribute to a sense of national identity:

Karen: *'Its massive, it's like a religion, so much that it's a religion that sport is now played on a Sunday on a regular basis, which is wholly ridiculous! Its massive, it kind of gives an identity to certain countries, especially England.'*

Sarah notes how rugby can be symbolic of the English nation during major international sporting events, such as the Six Nations tournament:

Sarah: *'Oh, I think it's probably massive. I think even non-sporty people who might not play any sport, I think if the nation's on TV, especially if it's a major event, I think they'll get behind them. I know a lot of people who are, at the moment talking about the rugby and how England are doing [during the 2011 Six Nations rugby tournament]...I think that's where we become more patriotic.'*

Beth also identifies rugby, as well as football and cricket, as symbolic of England:

Beth: *'What do you think of when you think of England...well I immediately think of kind of the England football team...cricket, rugby, whatever. So I think it is really important for national identity I guess, something that unites the country, probably like nothing else.'*

Tuck (2003) notes how particular sports often come to symbolize the nation, as discussed in Chapter 1, with cricket and football tied to particular types of Englishness. Some of the participants described the ways in which (male) athletes become representative of the nation.

Dani: *'I think its massive...sport seems to be the only good thing we have got really...even though we are a small country we are quite powerful in that sense, like, with our football teams, people know our players'*

Dani uses the term 'our', which links the national football players to the English people.

Sophie R also describes the importance of having people represent the nation:

Sophie R: *'Massively important...Sport is like, possibly the only thing that brings everyone together, because of the national identity; even if you aren't interested in sport you want to know if England won the football. It's the one thing that*

brings everyone together, you know the time England were in the football World Cup, everyone in the country was interested in England and wanted to support England and then it's really important that England play well and the team itself represents well...So yeh, it's really important...the teams are representing the country on a world stage...In football that's eleven people standing up for all of the country.'

Sophie R highlights the eleven people standing up for all of the country, in a similar vein to Hobsbawm's (1990: 143) much used quote, 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people'. Despite both Hobsbawm and Sophie R using the term people, it remains likely that they both meant eleven men, rather than eleven women as representative of the whole nation.

Thus, on the sports field it is clear that it is men who actively embody the nation during international competition. Maguire and Poulton (1999) describe the ways in which male footballers, during major international tournaments, become embodiments of the nation, and 'patriots at play' in media accounts (Tuck, 2003). It is evident that for the participants in this study too, male sport is symbolic of the nation and can help to foster a sense of togetherness and community. The participants allude to the sense of national pride that can be fostered through (men's) sport. As such, male athletes can become active embodiments of the nation. However, what about the role of women's sport in the national imagination?

1.1. Women's sport and nationalism

Whilst it is quite clear that many sportsmen, such as David Beckham, are often described as representatives of the English nation, what about the nation's sportswomen? It was interesting to understand how the participants themselves articulate the place of women's sport in the national imagination. Some of them were asked during their interviews how they assessed the importance of women's sport to a nation. Harriet explains that 'for women's sport you have to be winning for it to be big', although this is something that Sarah contests:

Sarah: *'I'd love to say it was very important, I think the fact that women's sport doesn't get as much publicity as it should do is a major factor in that. I think if it was on TV more, and more publicised, people would get behind it...When it becomes in the public eye people are interested and it's important to them. But until it gets to that point people don't even know it's happening, which is sad. It's like the women's cricket when they won all those, every event, everything they could have won, but because it wasn't really in the news or in the public eye, it wasn't important to people that didn't know about it. Which is, well, if it had been the men...they would have been so proud.'*

Sarah expresses her disappointment at the ways women's sport is represented in England. She identifies the lack of media coverage of women's sport as key to its subordination. Given the lack of publicity, women's sport in England cannot be seen as of similar importance to men's, and as a result, it would appear that England's female athletes are not embodiments of the nation in the same way or to the same extent as the men. Sarah uses the example of the England women's cricket team as evidence of how success does not necessarily equate with media attention.

Beth also describes a lack of media attention as problematic:

Beth: *'I think it should be exactly the same and as important as the men, obviously. I think realistically, I think if you asked a random person on the street, you know, what do you think of if you think of English sport, I think they would say the football team and the England rugby team and the cricket. Maybe the Olympic athletes. I think you may get the individual females, but I don't think people would ever think of the women's football team bringing the nation together. And I think it's purely because of the coverage and the awareness of the public really...I think it is difficult for female teams...to get the same kind of recognition as the male teams.'*

It seems that for the women involved in international sport, the issue of recognition through media coverage is very significant. The ways in which sportswomen are generally portrayed in the media has already been discussed in Chapter 4, but what happens if we introduce national identity into this discussion?

2. Women's sport, national identity, and the media

As outlined previously, the sports media play an integral role in fostering national identity through sport. Newspapers can act to 'remind' readers of their own nation and who they are (Rosie et al, 2004), through what Billig (1995) termed 'national flagging'. National flagging is often evident in reporting on men's sport, with words such as 'we', 'our' and 'us' being used to link the men's national sports teams to national populations. However, the relationship between the media, women's sport and national identity is rarely researched. As Billig (ibid: 119) explains, 'all the papers, whatever their politics, have a section in which the flag is waved with regular enthusiasm. This is the sports section.' These sporting pages define and repeat national stereotypes, which are distinctly masculine. As such, the 'we' that the popular media presents to us is narrow and male, reinforcing the stereotype of who dominates the national sporting arena.

It is often noted that the popular sports media persist in underreporting women's sports throughout most of the year. Wensing and Bruce (2003: 387) confirm that 'analyses of the western media conducted over the past 20 years have discovered consistent patterns of low coverage and inconsistent quality in women's sport, particularly in everyday sports reporting.' This is something that has recently been highlighted in the sports media itself. An article written by Harriet Walker was titled 'I have 29 sports channels. And the only women are in leotards' (Walker, *The Independent*, 2011: 12-13). The article addresses the controversy caused by the naming of no women in the shortlist for the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award 2011. Walker questions:

'Does the prevailing hegemony decree that female sports are not interesting enough for TV? Is it because women don't watch sport? Is it because there are simply fewer events and therefore less to show?' (ibid: 13).

She then goes on to add:

'How will women in sport ever get the publicity they deserve if they are not represented on this list? TV certainly won't make them household names.' (ibid: 13).

Charlie Wyatt explains that women's football in the UK 'is no longer ridiculed but it is hardly taken seriously. Equally the game is not well supported.' (Wyatt, *The Sun*, 2011:

60). His article, titled 'Hope 'n Glory', features an interview with the current manager of England's women's football team, Hope Powell, who is quoted as saying:

'People are aware women's football exists. But does it get the kudos it deserves? Probably not. Do we get the air-time we deserve? Probably not. Generally, women's sports get a raw deal. Our women's cricket team is really successful but they do not get the airtime. Even women's tennis does not get as much coverage. Women's sport is not as valued as men's sport. Fact. Everyone needs to take it more seriously' (ibid: 60)

Amol Rajan ran a feature in *The Independent's* 'Opinion and Debate' section, posing the 'Big Question', 'How did Britain's sportswomen become such world-beaters?' (Rajan, *The Independent*, 2009: 26), highlighting recent successes in football, cricket, cycling, swimming and athletics by England and/or Team GB. Rajan notes that 'despite improved representation in sports pages, women's success doesn't get the coverage of their male counterparts' (ibid: 26). Rajan then goes on to state that 'true parity will only come when the likes of our women cricket and football teams are in the headlines because of their lack of success, rather than the opposite' (ibid: 26). Despite the existence of such articles, it is fair to say that, in general, the sportswriters themselves are guilty of ignoring the very women they write about.

Unsurprisingly, the lack of media coverage of women's sport compared to men's sport was something of which the participants were acutely aware:

Liv: *'It's splashed across the papers that most of the sport that is represented is male-dominated.'*

Karen: *'When you turn on the telly you know what the football score is for the men because it's in your face but for the women you've got to go and find it.'*

Harriet: *'I don't think they get as much media coverage, nowhere near as much as men, but then I don't think there is a following there. Like if there was a woman rugby player on the back page of the Daily Mail, I don't think a guy would want to pick it up.'*

Here Harriet identifies the ways in which the sports pages are written about men, for men (Billig, 1995). Subsequently, the ignoring of women's sport maintains and reinforces the notion that sport is a male preserve.

As outlined in Chapter 4, when women are featured in the popular press, there exist six techniques or unwritten rules that have long been employed by the media to suggest appropriate femininity: gender marking, compulsory heterosexuality, emphasised femininity, infantilization, the downplaying of women's sport and ambivalence about the sport (Wensing and Bruce, 2003; Bruce, 2008). However, Wensing and Bruce (2003: 393) note that 'coverage during international sports events...may be less likely to be marked by gendered discourses or narratives than reporting on everyday sports'. For this reason, it was important to try to incorporate, where possible, examples of media representations of England's sportswomen, given the importance of the media in constructions of national identity, and their role in strengthening the relationship between national identity and sport with men and masculinity. Bruce (2008) completed a media analysis in New Zealand, focusing on gender ideologies and the positioning of sportswomen who represent the nation on the international stage. She describes how coverage during major sports events demonstrates that 'women who win for the nation are highlighted as worthy of attention.' (ibid: 62). Indeed, Bruce (ibid: 66) found that 'in stark contrast to gender ideologies of female weakness, they were represented in ways that emphasised physical power, strength and domination'. She states:

Thus, from this analysis of print media coverage, it became apparent that the concepts of gender marking, compulsory heterosexuality, appropriate femininity, infantilisation, downplaying sport and ambivalence, provided very little help in understanding the way that these female athletes were represented. In this case, nationalism almost completely overrode the usual ways that the sports media report on female athletes.' (ibid: 67)

Furthermore, Wensing and Bruce (2003: 389) found how 'generally accepted rules for media coverage of female athletes may be challenged under particular circumstances.' They note how it 'appears that media conventions may be "bent" to accommodate nationally important female sports stars' (ibid: 388).

It is certainly the case that in some media articles, England's sportswomen are highlighted as worthy of attention, and represented in ways that do not focus on their gender, but on their sporting performance for the nation. Many of the media reports that were collected centred on major international sporting events: the women's football

team's appearance in the European Championship (EC) final in 2009, the women's football World Cup (FWC) in 2011, and the women's rugby team's appearance in the World Cup (RWC) final in 2010.

Despite the women's football team losing 6-2 to Germany in the EC final, and the women's rugby team losing 13-10 to New Zealand in the RWC final, their appearance in a final was considered a success. Arguably, this was due, in part, to the failings of the men's football and rugby teams in major international tournaments in recent years³. As a result, instead of focusing on femininity and sexuality, in the match reports of the two final appearances there was little or no evidence of gendered reporting. In stark contrast to gender ideologies of female weakness and passivity, the women were represented in ways that emphasised physical power, strength and domination:

'England showed their resolve with some fearsome defending, one thumping tackle from Danielle Waterman on Brazier preventing what seems a certain try.'
(Mairs, *The Daily Telegraph*, 2010: S17)

'When the final whistle went, England's rugby women slumped to the turf at The Stoop, battered and bruised, physically and mental shattered, having given 100 percent to wrest the World Cup from New Zealand.' (Jones, *The Sunday Times*, 2010a: S5)

'[England's] defeat was the stuff of legend. Heroic defence, last-ditch tackles made without a thought for personal safety, every ounce of effort left on the pitch.' (Speck, *The Daily Mail*, 2010: 74)

These three extracts highlight the ways in which England's rugby women were reported in the British press. Before the tournament, the media often focussed on the lives of the women outside of sport, appearing to not take women's sport seriously. However, the immediate pre- and post-match reporting on the RWC final demonstrates a 'bending of the rules', as described by Bruce (2008).

³ The England men's football team have not progressed past the quarterfinal stage of either the World Cup or the European championship since 1994. The England men's rugby team only reached the quarterfinals of the rugby World Cup in 2011, having contested the final at both the 2003 World Cup (winners) and 2007 World Cup (runners-up). Although winning the Six Nations championship in 2011, the men's rugby team hadn't won the tournament since 2003.

Given the importance of sport to national identity, most sports fans (with the help of the media) cast their sporting heroes in the role of 'proxy warriors' for the nation (Hoberman, 1984). Garland and Rowe (1999) identified how, during major international (men's) football tournaments (such as the World Cup), journalists seem to embrace George Orwell's characterization of (men's) sport as 'war minus the shooting' by frequently drawing on military references to dramatize their accounts. The use of such rhetoric by the media further links sport with war and national identity. There was some evidence of war metaphors in the match descriptions of women's sport. This was similar to the ways in which the sports media usually present male national athletes, and highlights how sportswomen can on occasion also assume the role of proxy warriors for the nation:

'Battling England narrowly failed to dethrone the all-conquering Kiwis who have ruled women's world rugby for 16 years...New Zealand had to fight every inch of the way' (Talbot, *The Sun*, 2010: 53)

'Against a team who were fast, accurate and crunchingly brutal, England did not hide from the physical battle from before the start, when they advanced in a line towards New Zealand as they performed the haka, to the final whistle...England continued to put everything into the tackle...Nothing illustrated their never-say-die attitude more than McGilchrist.' (Kidd, *The Times*, 2010: 66)

These two extracts evoke war-like connotations in their descriptions of the match, using words such as 'battle', 'fight' and the imagery of advancing in line. Likewise, in an article titled 'Overpowered: England can't halt the mighty Germans' (Gray, *The Daily Mail*, 2009: 105), the coach of the women's football team was quoted as saying 'we didn't lie down and die', implying that the women carried on fighting until the very end.

Furthermore, descriptions of the players themselves adopted war-like imagery:

'Their bravery had been extraordinary, the strength of their willpower almost scary...England's valour in defeat was magnificent...Emily Scarratt put her body on the line to spectacular effect...Barras's try...was stunningly brave.' (Kitson, *The Guardian*, 2010a: 8)

'Those who cannot comprehend that women have the same relish as men for the physical, the confrontational and the gladiatorial aspects of the game can be referred to Amy Garnett, a 34-year-old Metropolitan Police officer, England's

hooker through two World Cups and a gruelling 86 caps. “It is definitely the battle up front that is the attraction”.’ (Jones, *The Sunday Times*, 2010: S15)

‘England have a fierce pack in which Rochelle Clark is an imposing scrummager and Amy Garnett a warlike hooker’ (Jones, *The Sunday Times*, 2010a: S5)

Defining the sportswomen in this way allows them to be imagined as national, sporting ‘proxy warriors’, in the same way that national sportsmen are presented in the press. However, this presentation is contextual, and only apparent in these special circumstances, such as major championship final appearances.

In the press coverage that was examined, there were two examples of the use of the words ‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’ that serve to link the national sports team to the national population. The use of personal pronouns links the sport’s team to the national population (Billig, 1995). An article titled ‘Hellsinki: Girls crushed by old enemy’ (Orvice, *The Sun*, 2009: 74) referred to the England women’s football team as ‘our girls’ and ‘our women’. In another article titled ‘I’m absolutely gutted we couldn’t do it’ (Kitson, *The Guardian*, 2010b: 8), there appeared a quote from Catherine Spencer, the captain of England’s rugby team. Although it is a quote, the use of ‘we’ in the heading makes the reader associate the ‘we’ with the national population. Subsequently, ‘we’ reads as ‘England’.

Despite the positive presentation of the sportswomen, there were a few examples of reporting during this period that perhaps did not consistently take the sportswomen as seriously, even in special circumstances.

‘That Pocock subsequently left the field on a stretcher was unfortunate but, in a way, strangely reassuring. Had she bounced straight back to her feet it would have been definitive proof that women’s rugby has not merely smashed through the glass ceiling of male indifference but entered a whole new stratosphere of concrete-limbed superwomen.’ (Kitson, *The Guardian*, 2010: 8)

Here, women rugby player’s ability to get hurt is ‘strangely reassuring’ to him, and provides evidence of woman’s fragility. Thus, ‘concrete-limbed superwomen’ is implied as negative, and suggests a belief in female physical inferiority.

An article in the Daily Mail described the haka, performed at the RWC final by New Zealand, in less complimentary ways:

‘The New Zealand haka, or should that be hakette, was also more pleasing on the eye, a beguiling fusion of tribal challenge and South Sea island welcome committee.’ (Speck, *The Daily Mail*, 2010: 74)

The haka is ‘one of New Zealand’s most identifiable national sporting rituals’, performed before entering the ‘battlefield of sport’ to demonstrate a ‘unity of passion, commitment, and assertiveness’ (Jackson and Hokowhitu, 2002: 127). Because the haka is used to intimidate the opposition (ibid), to describe the women’s attempt as a ‘welcome committee’ seems rather demeaning. In the same article, a rather backhanded compliment is paid to the rugby women, whose game was described as fluent simply because of their technical failings:

‘Forget the sniffy notion that women’s rugby is played by feminists and watched by fetishists. The kicking out of hand may be shaky, the power of the boot not as omnipotent when it comes to slotting over penalties, but that all lends itself to a more fluent game with fewer stoppages.’ (Speck, *The Daily Mail*, 2010: 74)

However, comments like these were few and far between. Far more journalists were positive about the possibilities for women’s sport:

‘Regardless of the outcome, the popular notion that women’s rugby is but a pale imitation of the men’s version has been laid to rest this past fortnight.’ (Kitson, *The Guardian*, 2010: 8)

‘Whoever wins today, England, the Ferns and the other teams must be congratulated for obliterating what convention, chauvinism, or maybe their own psyche, once saw as the limits of the sex’ (Jones, *The Sunday Times*, 2010a: S12).

Despite this, some did question how women can break through that ‘glass ceiling’:

‘Forget any patronising thoughts about women’s sport, though; this was just great sport, full stop...How, though, do you breach that invisible black wall?’ (Jones, *The Sunday Times*, 2010a: S12)

‘Could an England victory over Germany in the women’s European Championship final in Helsinki tonight be a breakthrough moment for the female game in this

country? You can understand why there is caution beneath the optimism. In women's football, new dawns do not always lead to bright skies.' (Dart, *The Times*, 2009: 86)

On the whole, during the reporting of important international events such as the RWC and EC final, it appeared that nationalism overrode the usual ways in which the sports media present women athletes. It seems possible that some women's sport can be symbolic of the nation. Vincent, Kian and Pederson (2011: 621) note how 'the national soccer team is central to both national and masculine identity in England'. They expand on this, explaining that 'it has traditionally been associated with an ethos of high physical work rate, honest endeavour, commitment and the notion of fair play' (ibid: 621). The presentations of the women in this way open up a space for them in the English national consciousness. Through the media discourse, the English women were presented as the (almost) national heroines, embodying a specific type of masculine Englishness during the eighty or ninety-minutes of play. This is made possible when nationalism overrides gender in the reporting of events.

Whilst the media demonstrates the ability to celebrate and take women athletes seriously in particular circumstances, it remains the case that before and after those major events, gender is often more significant in relation to how women are reported (as noted in Chapter 4). Furthermore, the patterns of coverage highlight that, despite the fact that women may be presented as national heroines, they continue to get their place in the media spotlight only infrequently.

3. English sporting national identities

As we have already seen in Chapter 5, sport is central to imagining England and Englishness. Tuck (2003) highlights how international sports are forms of 'patriot games', with the individuals who are engaged in these activities becoming highly visible 'patriots at play', as active embodiments of the nation. With this in mind Tuck's study aimed to investigate the idea that the participants are possibly 60-minute, 80-minute, 90-minute, or even 5-day patriots; only patriotic and aware of their national identity in and through sport. Tuck (1999) found that some international (male) rugby union players develop a

strong national sporting identity, whereby their main source of national pride stems from personal experiences on the rugby field. This finding served to endorse the notion of the rugby players as 80-minute patriots. The participants in this study were asked about their sense (and strength) of national identification during moments when they represent England. Charlotte was very clear about how she felt about her national identity following her involvement in sport.

Charlotte: *'I definitely feel more English having played for England.'*

Asked whether playing netball for England had made her feel more English, Jo replied with a simple 'yeh, definitely'. Like Charlotte and Jo, some of the other participants felt that representing England on the sporting stage had influenced their national identity, in that it made them more aware of their Englishness:

Claire A: *'I think it certainly makes me more patriotic, definitely. I don't know...I wouldn't say I'm really patriotic in general, I didn't go wild for the Royal wedding and stuff, but, when it comes to sport I really am quite patriotic towards England.'*

For Claire A, it is in sport that she becomes aware of her Englishness, highlighting once again the contextual and fluid nature of national identities. Harriet states:

Harriet: *'Erm, yeh, definitely. I'm not a really national proud person but it definitely does. You feel part of something to do with England. Like, erm, when there is news reports or something, I don't know, you feel like, yeh you do.'*

Playing rugby for England has enabled Harriet to develop a sense of belonging to the nation. She indicates feeling a 'part' of England, and through sport she is presented with an opportunity to embody the nation. What is clear is that Claire A and Harriet both describe a sporting national identity. Harriet admits that she is not usually overly patriotic outside of sport, as does Claire A. As rugby players, this arguably lends support to the notion of Claire A and Harriet as 80-minute patriots.

We have already seen in the previous chapter how the women all possess a relatively strong sense of an English national identity in general. Thus, unsurprisingly, some of the participants explained that their representative honours had not made them feel more English, given that they were already very aware of their English national identity in the first place.

Karen: *'I don't know, no not really, I've always considered myself English... I always said I want to play for England...I don't think playing for them has made me think I'm more English because I always considered that anyway.'*

Stacey: *'Hmm, no I don't think so...I think I was already very aware that I was English and I had never really thought about being British or having any affiliations like that. Playing for England perhaps reinforced that, but I didn't think it was a key thing.'*

Serena: *'Not particularly. Erm no, I guess I've not really thought about it like that. I guess in a way playing for England makes me, emphasises the fact that I'm proud to be English and I wanna play for, well, I play for England. But I don't think it has made me, myself, more proud to be English. I'm proud to be playing netball for England but in terms of my Englishness that's pretty much I think stayed the same.'*

The process of 'othering' different nationalities, in a sporting sense, serves to confirm Englishness for some of the participants:

Sarah: *'Just being around other countries, like at events and competitions and actually being able to say you represent your country, you represent England, probably does make you like, 'yeh I'm from England', because you associate with being, so that's quite an important thing to do.'*

Sarah explains that the presence of other countries at international sporting competitions acts as a reminder of her Englishness, emphasising the 'us' and 'them' aspects of national identity and the feeling of belonging to a nation. This is also felt by Tammy:

Tammy: *'I think so, I think you definitely feel more English after representing England at something. I think you would just kind of feel part of Britain if not, but when it's actually separated into England and, I've played against Scotland and I've played against Ireland and that kind of thing, it does become just England and where you come from in the country, as opposed to just sort of living in Britain.'*

By playing cricket against Scotland and Ireland, Tammy highlights how this works to remind her that she must be English, and explains how competition between the home nations prevents her from feeling a 'part of Britain'.

Liv also recognised that her patriotism is emphasised in a sporting context:

Liv: *It's difficult to say because it's what I have always done, so it's difficult to say if I would have been any different a person or different feeling, I think anyone who has pulled on a representative dress or shirt or whatever has a very personal passionate feel to what that definition of England means to them at that time, I think. I'm not, if someone said to me are you patriotic, I'm probably not patriotic, but I am the moment I have got the red and white on.'*

The wearing of her national sporting uniform invokes a sense of patriotism in Liv that she insists would not be there in a different context. Unlike Liv, however, Kerys indicates that it is in relation to all sport that she feels patriotic, towards both England and Great Britain, and not just during her own sporting performances:

Kerys: *'Yeh I would probably say I am a bit more patriotic, and I always, whenever it comes to England I always want them to do well. I would probably say more so than some other random people...When it's sport stuff really...you always want the British or English team to do well. Probably say it's more towards sport, because I'm a sportsperson, so I'm just interested in sport anyway.'*

Overall, as Robinson (2008) claims, it appears that sport serves to highlight Englishness. During sporting competition, the women actively embody Englishness, which acts to further remind and reinforce their primary national identity in a sporting context. The initial confusion between Englishness and Britishness, discussed in the previous chapter, is confronted, and the multiplicity of national identity is collapsed in a sporting context. In some cases, an English national identity is developed through a sense of belonging to the English nation ('us'), and through the 'othering' of different nations, and in particular the home nations ('them'). Interestingly, some of the women could have represented different nations in sport, a consideration that was discussed next.

3.1. Competing sporting allegiances

The possibility of playing sport for another country came up in four of the interviews. This again brought to the fore ideas surrounding what it means to belong, and whether national identity is conceived of in civic and/or ethnic terms. Serena explains that she never considered playing netball for Jamaica:

Serena: *'I don't really, I didn't really grow up thinking I was going to play for England to be fair like I was just one of those people who just like to play sport. So I did and this is kind of just where it has led me...But no I have never considered [playing for Jamaica] and I never would. Yeh it's bizarre actually the fact that I am actually half Jamaican I would never have considered playing, just because I didn't grow up there. Like in terms of sport I'm an English player, I wouldn't go internationally anywhere else.'*

Serena highlights that the process of growing up in England meant that she would not have considered playing sport for any other country. This is similar to Jade, who, when asked if she would have ever considered playing for St. Kitts, states:

Jade: *Oh no, [it's] always been for England...Just because I have got into the system from when I did, that's just been the natural route for me to take.'*

For both Serena and Jade, it appears that the location of one's upbringing is crucially important in defining national identity.

Raff and Karen could both have been selected for the Irish national team, due to their Irish heritage. Despite this, playing for Ireland was never really an option that Raff seriously considered:

Raff: *'I think initially when I was younger, my mum said if you don't get anywhere like if you don't ever get anywhere with England you can always go and play for Ireland.'*

Ali: *'Have you ever felt Irish?'*

Raff: *'Pause. A little bit, but not really, because obviously I was born here.'*

Ali: *'Would playing for Ireland...'*

Raff: *'I would have been a bit like a...'*

Ali: *'Would it have meant as much to you?'*

Raff: *'No, probably not. It's like a cheat I think. Do you know what I mean? Like, a few of the girls who have come through England are now playing for Wales and stuff, the ones that hadn't really made it. It's just like, it's good for them, wanting to play for their country, but I dunno, it would just be a bit...'*

Ali: *'Would you have done it?'*

Raff: *'Probably not, no.'*

Raff links her national identity to her birthplace and not necessarily to blood ties, revealing that she conceives of national identity in a more civic sense. This leads to her explaining that she would 'probably' not have chosen to represent Ireland if she had not have succeeded with England.

On the other hand, Karen indicated that had her England career faltered, she would have been more than willing to represent Ireland:

Karen: *'I do like to wind my dad up and say, oh well I chose to play for England and not for Ireland [laughs]!'*

Ali: *'Would playing for Ireland ever be an option?'*

Karen: *'Yeh, when I went to my England trials at 13, if I didn't get into England I would have gone to Ireland trials. And I would have gone on to play for Ireland, or would have tried to, without a doubt, I'd have gone for it. But I've always said since I was a young girl I consider myself to be English with Irish heritage, but I always said I want to play for England I'm going to play for England and that's always been in my head, England, England, England. But it doesn't make, no I don't think playing for them has made me think I'm more English because I always considered that anyway.'*

Despite claiming that playing for Ireland was an option, she also explains that she had always wanted to play for England, and emphasises her Englishness. Karen identified herself as English, but also as English with Irish heritage during the interview process. This provides more evidence of the multiplicity and complexity of identity, and the layering of national identities. What remains clear, however, is the way in which the participants prioritise their English identity.

4. What does it mean to play for England?

As has already been noted, the sporting experiences of England's women are relatively underreported, particularly in the context of research on national identity. This section aims to explore what it means to the players themselves to be representatives of a nation. Interviews provide an opportunity to address how international sportswomen perceive their own national identity, and how they articulate their international sporting

experiences. As Tuck (1999) notes, important dimensions to understanding national identity are the roles and perceptions of the players who represent their nation on the field.

4.1. Initial experiences

In discussing how the participants first got involved with national level sport, discussions initially focused on their call-up and first 'cap'⁴. In general, the participants described feelings of pride in being selected to represent their nation. Both Tammy and Beth remember their shock at being selected:

Tammy: *'It was a real shock because I didn't think I was anywhere near the standard of the England team. I was really sort of proud and you felt sort of lifted, within yourself...it was really nice to be recognised.'*

Beth: *'It was a bit of a shock to be included. And it was just amazing, I think you don't even think about it until afterwards because you kind of get carried along with it...but yeh, it was brilliant.'*

Kerys and Karen both discussed how it was their dream to represent England:

Karen: *'When I was first called up, I was...so bloody excited! Probably more nervous, because you're young and you don't know what you're going in to...I was just over the moon...it's been my dream since I was a kid to play for England.'*

Kerys: *'I was just like, I was so happy. I had been dreaming to play for England, it's a dream isn't it, to play for England.'*

Referring to the experience as a dream indicates just how highly some of the women value playing for England, and how important the experience is for them.

For many of the other participants, such as Karen, feeling nervous is also a strong memory:

Soph B: *'Oh God I was so nervous! Like, that's always what I have been playing football for, but you never think it's going to happen...It was a relief as well, like*

⁴'Caps' refers to the number of times an athlete has represented her country, and is often given to an athlete as a symbolic recognition of her achievement.

off your shoulders, for all that hard work you do. Then you're actually getting recognised for it. And it's a proud moment as well, for your family.'

Claire A: *'I was like, shitting myself [laughs]! I was really, really scared. But also, almost like a relief that I had finally made it, you've been playing for so long, all the hard graft you've put in, it's almost like, finally, I've made my goal. But yeh, a huge, huge thing to represent your country.'*

Like Claire A, others saw the call up as reward for the hard work and dedication to their sports:

Raff: *'I was ecstatic. It is obviously what I've worked for, trained for, for the past like, 5 years. It was a good feeling.'*

Claire P: *'Ok, so when you are selected for the squad, that means they consider you one of the top 22 players in the country. So when you are presented the shirt, regardless of whether it is your first cap or your hundredth cap, you know that you've done more than thousands of other people to play. So I've done more than all of those people to have the right to have that shirt. And that's massive.'*

Liv: *'You feel like you have put in all of the hard work to get there as opposed to it's a massive surprise or a massive announcement...Before you play your first game I think is the most proud moment because you know that you are going to have to sing your national anthem, you are going to be lined up with the rest of your team that you have worked really hard work with to get to that point.'*

A constant theme throughout the discussions was the feeling of being 'proud' to represent 'your' country, thereby demonstrating the women's ownership of the nation and conversely how they see themselves as belonging to the nation. For them, the achievement of playing for England represented a culmination of hard work and dedication to their sport, the realisation of their talent, as well as the pride in representing 'their' country, and the nerves associated with performing at the highest level.

Following discussions on their initial experiences playing for England, the participants were then asked questions to begin to explain the importance they placed on these experiences. Answers to questions such as, 'what does it mean to you to play for England?', revealed how important their sporting national identity is to their sense of

self. Some of the participants discussed that, whilst they are on the pitch or the court representing England, for the most part they are only focussing on the performance and the result.

Liv: *'When you actually step onto the court, all you are thinking about is winning the game.'*

Whilst Liv noted that ultimately the players step onto the court or pitch with the intention of winning, when the participants began to consider further their emotions and feelings surrounding representing England, it became obvious how important it is to them. Talking about playing for England, Harriet describes turning nerves into excitement as a preparation technique. She explains that the nerves come from the level of representation:

Harriet: *'I think it's playing for England, but I make out like it's just playing rugby. It's definitely playing for England.'*

Serena and Katherine initially struggle to put into words what it means to them:

Serena: *'You can't even really explain it to be fair [laughs]! Obviously it means a lot, it's what you train for isn't it. It's why you get up early and wanna just, oh there are so many hard sessions where you wanna stop and you don't because you want to play for England.'*

Katherine: *'It's very hard to explain obviously, unless you pull on the shirt yourself...it's an individual feeling you know...it's a really excitable feeling, a proud moment...And to be honest I didn't think, I think I thought that that feeling would be just that one in that moment [of my first England cap]. But every time I've put [an England shirt] on, it's the same. And I never get any less nervous, or feel any less pressure, it's the same.'*

Katherine highlights the demands associated with elite level sport. Despite saying that representing England is an exciting and proud moment, she explains that the nerves and the pressure always remain. Other participants also described the pressure of performing for England, with Dani explaining that *'Because you are playing for England...you know you have to do well.'* The pressure of expectation was developed by Tammy:

Tammy: *'You feel like there's an expectation, and sort of like, it is a bit nerve racking, knowing that you're going out to be the best 11 in the country. But it is again, like I said, it's really sort of a pride among it...Playing now, you know what's expected, you know that it's actually, you're there because you're good enough to be there, not that you know the whole country is expecting you to do whatever, well, it never was the whole country [laughs]!'*

Tammy similarly describes the pride of representing the country, but also the idea that the whole country expects. This might demonstrate the way in which sport is symbolic of the nation itself, although, Tammy laughs off this idea, perhaps by reflecting on the most customary view of women's sport in England.

The difference between playing for club and country was discussed by the participants. For many, playing for their club or county side is *'more fun...less pressure, [and] the stakes are less'* (Raff).

Kerys: *'To play for Birmingham is probably more enjoyable...But with England it is more important to me, it is more of an emotional attachment, knowing that you are sort of following your dreams and you have got to represent your country, so there is maybe more pressure to do well. Well, it's not really pressure; it's like, wanting to win all of the time.'*

Karen: *'Obviously it's like the highest level, I love playing for Birmingham, I loved playing for Chicago and I loved playing for Arsenal, but you've got to take your game to another level when you are playing internationally because you are playing against the best players in the world...you have to go even further when it's for your country.'*

Sophie B: *'It's still like, I still want to win, it's still the same motivation and stuff, but when you're playing for England it's country. When you're putting on that shirt, like an England shirt, you're like 'wow!'...I think it's just the whole thing of, it's England, like, you play for your country.'*

Despite the women identifying that representing England is a culmination of dedication and hard work, resulting in feelings of pride in their own personal achievements, it is also clear that their narratives emphasise the notion of 'playing for your country'. The feeling of representing the nation, and performing in the name of the nation, seems to override

the sense of personal achievement, demonstrating again their ownership over England and the centrality of national identity. The women undoubtedly see themselves as representative of the nation in a sporting context.

4.2. The national anthem, the three lions and the rose

Liv: 'The dress is very important...the flag is important, the national anthem is important, they are the emotive bits as opposed to stepping onto the court and playing.'

The interviews then went on to discussions of the 'little things' associated with representative sport, namely, the singing of the national anthem and the wearing of the national kit. As Billig (1995: 6) states, 'the term banal nationalism is introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable the nations of the West to be reproduced'. Throughout the interviews, the participants repeatedly used terms such as 'we' and 'us' to describe the national population, whilst using terms such as 'they' and 'them' to denote outsiders, the 'other'. This is a technique often adopted by the media in their descriptions of (men's) international sport, yet less frequently in relation to women's sport, as we have seen. Furthermore, the wearing of national emblems and the singing of national anthems that form a key component of international sport, act as banal reminders of who the women are and where they come from. During the course of the discussions about the women's own experiences of representative sport, many noted the importance of the national anthem and the wearing of their national kit.

Stacey: 'It means a lot...it has quite a strong impact on me, like I feel quite proud, I think sometimes you can forget you and you can take for granted, that you are actually playing for your country, and that's something that not many people get to do.'

Claire A: 'Yeh, like, amazing...the thing is like, playing for your country is probably the biggest thing you can do. Especially when you are singing the national anthem, like arm in arm with like, almost like your best friends, who you have worked properly hard with. You can't really describe it, almost like tingly...Everytime I step on the pitch playing for England you always feel really, really proud.'

Sarah: *'I feel proud when I play for England, it's a massive honour, not everyone gets to represent their country. Ever since I've known there has been a national team to play for I've always had that dream to play for them...It means like everything, to stand out and sing your national anthem in your shirt, it's incredible.'*

The participants are engaged here in the process of national flagging (Billig, 1995), as representatives of the English nation. They routinely sing the national anthem, wear national emblems and logos and wave the national flag. As Tuck and Maguire (1999: 30) state, 'one only has to observe the way in which players clutch their national symbol on the rugby jerseys and sing 'their' national anthem vociferously before the match to understand that these players see themselves, and are seen as, the embodiment of various nations'.

Katherine explains how wearing her England kit reminds her of her national identity:

Katherine: *'Obviously you are always reminded of [being English], every time you wear your England shirt, you call it your England shirt and nothing else, that's what you call it. So obviously you are reminded of that. In the media we're the England women's team, on my cricket bag it's the England women's team. So you are always reminded of that fact that you are representing England.'*

For Dani, the practices of singing the national anthem and wearing the badge (the three lions) work to make her feel 'more' English:

Dani: *'It makes you more aware that you are English because you have to sing the national anthem and wear the badge. So yeh, I'd say it's made me more English.'*

The singing of the national anthem was discussed with all of the participants. Most of the women described how important the national anthem is to them. There emerged numerous themes related to the singing of the anthem: the anthem as a reminder to the women that they are representing 'their' country, as an important part of the process of international sport, and what the singing of the anthem meant to the participants.

Jo explains that during the national anthem, *'a lot of pride goes running through my head'*, and Karen notes that, when she sings the national anthem, she is often thinking *'just that I'm so proud to play for my country, like this is what I've always dreamed of.'*

Similarly, Jade explains: *'you just think, oh wow, I'm representing the country.'* Others mentioned the national anthem providing a moment of reflection, during which they are reminded they are representing their nation:

Kerys: *'I think we always say, we always aim to be louder than the other teams, and we just try and sing. Personally I just go for it, I just belt it out you know! I think no, it's a defining moment, the national anthem. That's when you realise, right, I'm representing England here, I'm doing it for my country.'*

Beth: *'[The national anthem] is just an opportunity to remind you that you are representing your whole country. And that kind of united, everyone together. I think it's really special.'*

Explaining that she is representing the 'whole', 'united' country, Beth demonstrates how sport is seen as symbolic of the whole nation. As Beth suggests, those representing their country in sport are active embodiments of the nation at that moment.

Katherine explained what it means to her to sing the national anthem:

Katherine: *'We don't always do it but when we do it, it does do something for you. Everyone will say you are stood there, in front of thousands of people, and you're singing your heart out...Obviously try and be as loud so that they can hear you down the bottom end and that everyone in the crowd can sing along with you. And when everyone starts singing with you, it's even better. It gives you that boost before you go out, the reason why you are doing it, 'cause you're representing your country....and all of these people have come to watch you do well and for England. To win.'*

Here Katherine describes how singing the anthem in front of, and with, a large crowd reminds her that she is representing her country, and that what she is doing is playing cricket for England. There is this idea here that what Katherine is doing is *for* her country, not just in the name of her country.

The first time Dani had to sing the national anthem, she admitted that she did not know the words (*'it's shocking, now'*) and adds that she *'just kind of mimes'* now. She does think that, although English athletes by her admission may not sing the loudest (*'the Americans just bellow it out'*), *'it still makes you, your presence, you're there. It's not just*

your opponents, there's another team as well...It's a symbol isn't it really, of who you play for'. Dani claims that the anthem is important not only for the nation itself, but also as a way for outsiders to recognise England. This is despite the fact that the English national anthem is the same as the anthem for Great Britain, and thus fosters a sense among foreigners of that same confusion the English have about themselves.

The national anthem serves to emphasize the 'we/us' 'you/them' dichotomy. For example, both Sophie B and Karen also allude to the way in which the national anthem highlights national differences:

Sophie B: *'Like we've all got our arms around each other, we're all a team, us 11 out there or whoever it is. Or even if we're on the bench...we're all a team...you know when you go out these, and you're all singing that, you're all in it together, that's the main thing...I think it's quite, has a strong impression on the other team as well, if we're all stood there.'*

Karen: *'It's really important, you get to look into the crowd and get, it's massive, again it's that patriotism, it's that difference between the two teams, so when you hear other teams you're like, it's what gets you in the zone and if that doesn't get you up, the national anthem, and gets you in the right frame of mind and gets you pumped for the game then nothing ever will.'*

The impression that the singing of the anthem makes on the opposition is important for Sophie B, whereas Karen indicates its role in emphasising the difference between the teams. In this sense, the national anthem serves to maintain insider/outsider group relations. Karen also mentions how the anthem gets her 'pumped' for the game. Raff makes a similar point:

Raff: *'[The national anthem] is very, very important. Like, I hate it when people don't sing it. They just stand there...I sing, even though I can't sing, I sing it...I feel like it helps me get up for the game.'*

Tammy describes how singing the national anthem:

Tammy: *'Makes you really pumped up for the game, and you do feel like you're really going out to represent your country that day. And it really does lift you up,*

and sort of drive you towards going out and almost like doing battle with the opposition.'

It is worth noting that Tammy invokes war imagery in her description of the sporting field, emphasising the link between sport and war as highlighted earlier in this chapter.

Claire A similarly states:

Claire A: *'Really, really important I think. I think our national anthem is a bit boring, but I do like it because it's, everyone always buzzes off the national anthem, as soon as the national anthem is done everyone is ready to go, ready to like, almost like go to war, so it's, if we didn't play the national anthem it would be like part of our routine building up to the game definitely gone.'*

The notion of going to battle highlights how sport is conceived of as a proxy war, and here Claire A is indicating that perhaps these national sporting women can be the nations 'proxy warriors' on the sports field.

Indicating a level of emotional attachment, Jo explains that when gaining her first cap she 'had a little cry during the national anthem'. Others also remarked on the emotionally charged experience of singing the anthem. Asked how important the anthem is to playing for England, Stacey replied:

Stacey: *'I think it's quite important, when we went to the Commonwealth Games and the song had been voted for, and it was Jerusalem, and no one had a bloody clue. It was really bizarre, like I don't think you can feel proud or buy into the whole ceremony of it if you don't know the song or...if you can't affiliate your own meanings behind it...If you have to sit down and learn the words, it's a bit, I think it's taking away the passion behind it.'*

Stacey then added, 'when we are able to come back and we get to pick what we want to sing and we sing 'God Save Our Queen', it's nice. I like it, it's quite important.' Clearly, the actual song is important to some of the participants, and not just the process of singing. However, unlike Stacey, Charlotte commented that she does not have a strong attachment to 'God Save The Queen' as an anthem:

Charlotte: *'I don't think it's as arousing as 'Land of Hope and Glory', or 'Jerusalem'. But that's not going to change we are always going to have the same*

one. But yeh, it's nice to do it at the beginning, it gives you something more special than what you do anywhere else.'

The national anthem certainly did not provide a strong emotional attachment for all of the participants.

Charlotte: *'It didn't bother me at all to begin with, I was like oh, yeh, and I don't really sing it now to be honest, I pick and choose.'*

Harriet: *'I don't get off on it, it doesn't motivate me. Some people are like, oh my God I'm singing the national anthem this is it. For me it's just part of the process, I don't get nervous about it, I don't get excited about it, I just think oh we have to do that before. But if you didn't do it, it wouldn't feel like you were playing for England at all.'*

Despite Harriet admitting that the anthem does not motivate her, she recognises the role the national anthem plays in the process of international sport. Indeed, like Harriet, several other participants noted how important the anthem is as part of the routine of playing for England.

Sarah: *'I think it's, I think it's quite big, I think there's been times where we haven't had the national anthem for one reason or another and it's been like, 'oh, we are just going out and we are starting to play rugby?'...You can focus on the game and that it's England you're playing for and what it means. And it kind of gets you up for the game. And when we don't, and it's only a rare occasion that it's, it just doesn't, it's not quite the same it feels like there is something missing, almost. I'm not sure if the words are, matter that much, it's the process, and singing something that's associated with representing the country...it's, now you're playing for England.'*

Sarah suggests that it is not necessarily the words that are important, but the process of singing this song that represents the country. When playing for England, it acts as both a reminder and a signifier of what the women are doing – representing their nation.

Claire P describes a unique situation in which the national anthem was not played:

Claire P: *'It's part of the routine isn't it? You have to sing the anthem. And again we've been to tournaments where the decision was made that you weren't going*

to sing the anthem. I played England A and we were playing on the back pitch against Spain, it was an international but not a capped international, a friendly, and the decision was made that there was no way of playing either anthem so we sung it in the changing rooms, before we went out onto the pitch...People wanted to sing it, there was a need to sing it. We are England players, whether you are playing A team, under 20s, the elite, you are an England player, you are putting that shirt on, therefore you expect to, that is an expectation that you would sing it.'

This underlines the importance of the national anthem for most of the women. Singing the national anthem represents part of the performance of being an English athlete, and allows the women to actively perform their national identity, whether or not it is on the pitch or in the changing rooms (Edensor, 2002). It would appear here that the national anthem is thus integral to understanding national identity as performed in some way. For the women, the singing of their national identity acts not only as a reminder of their Englishness, but also a way to demonstrate and embody Englishness.

For many of the participants, receiving their first playing kit or tracksuit was also an important moment in their sporting careers, and one that they all remember:

Harriet: *'Oh my God, it was amazing. Literally, we just got a big bag and it just had your name on it...When you first get the kit it's such a big deal...Because it's got England on it.'*

Dani: *'[The kit] is the best bit...you go in the kit room and they give you all of your kit and it's a massive deal.'*

Dani goes on to say that wearing 'the badge' made her feel more English: *'I don't notice it when I'm playing now, but I did when I was younger. Now it's just like, it's your uniform sort of thing. You have to wear it, yeh, I'd say it is quite important.'* For the netballers, receiving their first England dress was clearly important:

Jo: *'I got selected for the World [Netball Championships] and I got my kit with my name on and that...it was great. I didn't want to put it down [laughs]! And yeh, it meant a lot to me, and I think it still does, like I have kept my first dress, I have framed my Comm[onwealth] Games dress and just looking at it will fill you with all of the emotions.'*

Serena: *'To put on the kit, obviously to put on the dress is amazing and to have the kit that no one else has unless you're in that specific team is an honour and is obviously something that I'm very proud [of]...You're always proud to wear it and put it on and show off that you are an England player and no one else can take that away from you really, you know once you've worn the kit. That's nice.'*

The kit is symbolic, not only the nation, but also of their individual achievements.

For some of the participants, the colour of the kit is even important. In general, the rugby and football team play in white, the cricket team play in white or dark blue, and the netball team in red:

Raff: *'When you put the full kit on, obviously we train in kit but once you put the official kit on it's like shit [laughs]! If I make a mistake, everyone knows where I am from! No yeh, I dunno, it's nice. It's weird as well especially when we play in the white kit it's like pure, clean white and it just feels...like the perfect kit and you have to be perfect.'*

Liv talked about playing *'one competition in a blue dress, and that was just all wrong for me [laughs]! Because at that point England is red and white.'* Stacey similarly talked about the importance of the colour red for the netball kit:

Stacey: *'I think the kit is the bit that everybody always thinks about...but it is really important...England netball has quite a good system in that kind of as further up the rank you get, the more red you get in your kit. So when I was younger, like under 17s and under 19s, it was all kind of white and blue but with like red dashes through it. But now I have my own red dress and red tracksuit and stuff, yeh I'm quite proud of it, and it's probably a treasured possession for sure.'*

It is not only the colour of the kit that is important for the women, but also what is on the shirt:

Ali: *'Would it be a bit weird if you were playing for England in a plain white shirt?'*

Beth: *'Yeh I think it would be. I mean still it actually wouldn't be any different, but just the idea and the whole national anthem, the three lions, it all adds in to that united, we are playing for our country.'*

Some of the cricketers and the footballers mentioned the 'three lions' when describing the kit.

Tammy: *'For me, [the kit] was one of like the biggest highlights, like when I first pulled open the box that we get and you see your name on the back of your shirt with the three lions on the front it was a really special moment.'*

Karen: *'[Wearing the national kit is] massive. Putting on the shirt, wearing the three lions...going in there and seeing your kit...hanging up with my number and name on, like it's such a dream.'*

Katherine: *'The three lions are important, I know a few lads who have got them tattooed on them, Flintoff, Pieterston. I know Isa Guha is getting it done actually, she's just getting the one lion, which I keep having a go at her about, because it's all about the three lions.'*

Asked if she would consider getting a tattoo of the three lions, Katherine responded:

Katherine: *'I don't think I need to. It's quite, you know, it's cool that you want to show how proud of it you are, but I don't think I need to. I mean I show it every time I pull on my shirt, and I've got that shirt for life. And I'll never forget those moments, but I don't think I need to show it on my body.'*

Clearly, the three lions as a symbol of England are very important, not only for the women interviewed but also for their colleagues and male counterparts. Beth further indicates the symbolic role of the three lions in imagining Englishness.

Beth: *'I think we're quite lucky having the three lions, I know every nation has their own kind of emblem but I think the three lions is really kind of epitomises England. We talk about the shirt as the three lions and you know you really want to put the three lions on...so I think it does have a real...significance.'*

For these women, the three lions crest is symbolic of representing England. Furthermore, Beth indicates that the three lions are also symbolic of the type of (masculine) Englishness they are expected to display – brave, courageous lion-hearts (Hand, 2002). Indeed, England's football captain was described as a 'lionheart' in one media article. Initially dubbing her a 'tough girl', Jonathon Brown then went on to write:

'England skippers of all kinds have long enjoyed a lionheart tradition. Faye White is no exception.' (Brown, *The Independent*, 2011: 12)

The three lions are initially symbolic of England because of the men's football and cricket teams, but this symbolism has been transferred to the women's game. The media have picked up on this in their reporting of the women's game. However, the term is often gendered and transformed to 'lionesses': 'Hope and glory for Lionesses' (Clarke, *The Sun*, 2011: 53).

Unlike football and cricket, the netballers did not mention identifying with their sport's logo. The emblem on their playing kit is of a netball, which does not invoke strong images of England. However, symbolic of England rugby is the red rose, which is evident in the use of the term by the media in headlines following England's World Cup final defeat: 'Trampled rose: England fall short' (*The Guardian*, 2010: S1). Sarah was asked her thoughts on the importance of this emblem:

Ali: *'What about the rose?'*

Sarah: *'Yeh, it's like, ever since we have come in, on our first cap we get presented with a real rose, the night before, all the new caps....The captain does a little speech and present them with a rose. So the rose starts, right from your very first cap, that starts the meaning of it all the way through. And you get like a little pin badge which is a rose on your first cap as well, and when you get to fifty caps you get a gold rose, so it all sort of stems from there really. And it's symbolised as English rugby. I think it means quite a lot, I think it would feel a bit strange..'*

Ali: *'If it was just plain white shirts?'*

Sarah: *'Yeh, yeh. It means quite a lot, I think it's quite symbolic which I think it quite important within sport that you can symbolise that as something, no other sport has the same emblem, so that's something you associate with rugby and with playing for your country.'*

However, other members of the squad do not have the same emotional attachment to the rose as Sarah:

Claire A: *'The rose? Erm, everyone always bleats on about it, like in team speeches, you know, for the rose girls. I don't, I like it I do like it but it's not, I wouldn't say I really identify with it. But I like the fact that it's on our shirt.'*

Charlotte: *'Some people really say that, you know, the red rose, and they get pulled to it...that's not really a pull for me, it doesn't matter what I'm wearing I'm the same underneath, so yeh, it doesn't really matter.'*

Despite this, Claire P commented:

Claire P: *'I don't know whether you know, the RFUW used to, we didn't have a rose before, we had a bud...Then we were allowed, I guess, or the decision was made that we would take on the rose...I think even with the bud that we used to call it, it was still important, because then it was only going to be a certain amount of people wearing that kit...All of the kit, the symbol on it, means that you are a good player, you are representing your country at that level.'*

The lack of attachment to the rose may stem from the fact that it is a relatively new addition to the women's kit. However, Claire P indicates that both the bud and the rose carry the same symbolic meaning – that you are representing your country.

5. Summary: England's sporting heroines

Tammy: *'There's nothing really else I want to do with my life, it's that really.'*

To conclude the interviews, the participants were asked to summarise their feelings about playing for England. The following statements demonstrate the importance the women place on their sporting careers. Playing for England not only represents the pinnacle of their sporting careers, but for many of the participants it is also the highlight of their entire lives to date:

Stacey: *'I think it's probably one of the most important things that I'll ever do.'*

Katherine: *'I'd say it's everything to me, it means everything. So it means, erm, it means, my biggest achievement, it means making my family proud. It means being recognised for once. It means supporting women and aspiring athletes.'*

Serena: *'It means the world to me really...I've given everything up, I've put everything into this, it's what I want to do, playing for England. It's basically my life really; it's almost like a job without the good pay. So it's something that I've not always wanted to do, but now it's what I always want to do. I want to continue to try and be best the best at it, until I retire.'*

Beth: *'So to be in a position where you can represent your country is just amazing. And like, so far beyond anything I thought I'd ever do...It is my whole life...its getting the opportunity to do what I love doing, and you know putting on an England shirt is the best feeling that I know of at the moment in my life.'*

Sophie B: *'I would just say it's something that I've always dreamt about doing since I was a little kid...There's nothing better that I could ever dream of doing...Just because I love the game, I love playing football, I love everything about it.'*

Claire A: *'I think it's, it's just like a huge pride thing for me. I like the fact that, how hard you've got to train, how hard you've got to work, the sacrifices that you've made, the fact that, you know, I've chose this lifestyle almost, all of that gets embodied into playing for England.'*

Claire P: *'I would say it would be one of the biggest achievements that I have, to date, and I really can't see me topping that...So you know, it's massive, difficult to put into words. It will be with me forever, because that's what I am.'*

Evident here are the pride, passion, commitment and dedication invested in their sporting careers. They have all chosen this life. They have all worked hard and made sacrifices to get to where they are as sporting representatives of England. Claire P concludes by saying *'that's what I am'*, she is an England women's rugby player, highlighting the way in which gendered, national, and sporting identities overlap and intersect.

As Tuck and Maguire (1999: 27) suggest, 'international sports are a form of 'patriot games'. Individuals who represent 'their' countries become highly visible embodiments of these nations – they are 'patriots at play''. Following Tuck and Maguire (ibid: 26), 'this collection of emotions, attitude and feelings provides some original evidence for viewing national identities "at play" through the eyes of elites sports[wo]men'. The use of 'we' images identifies both insiders and outsiders in everyday speech. Through playing for England, the women demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and owning the nation. Feelings of national pride were often emphasised in the build up to sporting competition – for example during the singing of the national anthem. The wearing of national kit and

national symbols also allow the women to perform their national identity on the sports field.

In the player's eyes, men's sport is an important source of national pride, and a central part of English national culture. However, as for women's sport, the participants describe that a persistent lack of media attention dulls public awareness of their achievements. This leaves the majority of the nation's sportswomen on the sidelines, and not considered as national sporting heroines. McGregor (2006: 30) states that,

'The main thing women want from the media is to be in it. We don't just want to be firsts, bests and onlys, sex symbols, wives, mothers or victims. We want to be recognized in both our complexity and diversity.'

On the 22nd June 2011, Hope Powell was quoted as saying, 'let's not make it a gender issue. Let's talk about football, not whether someone's male or female.' (Adewunmi and Kingsley, *The Guardian*, 2011: 8). However, success in major international competitions seems to open up an avenue for sportswomen to be presented as legitimate national representatives, rather than discussed in terms of their femininity and heterosexuality. The women embody a version of masculine Englishness during their sports performances. Given that masculinity is relational to femininity, their performance of masculinity is in contrast to elements of acceptable, heteronormative femininity. However, where this would not normally be acceptable, as seen in Chapter 4, nationalism appears to override gender in this instance (Wensing and Bruce, 2003).

Despite this, the participants were often quick to add that recognition and fame are not their driving motives for them wanting to perform for England:

Beth: *'It's just about playing for your country. And I don't think anyone does it for recognition or fame, or money, because there isn't any!'*

Claire A: *'If I got bogged down in, you know, the recognition we get, then you would just be eternally frustrated. And I don't do it for fame and fortune, I just do it because I love playing, I love playing for England.'*

For those involved, it is clear that sport is an important part of English national culture and a major source of national pride. There was plenty of evidence that the women were 'patriots at play', as active embodiments of the nation on the sports field.

Conclusion

In this final chapter, I offer some concluding remarks in order to summarise and bring together the three discussion chapters. I will also comment on how effectively the research has addressed the initial research questions, and discuss issues surrounding the sample and how these may have impacted the analysis. Finally, future avenues for research that can expand on this current research are outlined.

1. Addressing the initial research aims

As identified in the introduction, the overall focus of this research project was to examine the ways in which women represent their nations, not least on the field of play, and shed light on the complex intersections of gendered, sporting and national identities. More specifically, the aim was to analyse the experiences of England's elite sportswomen, giving them a voice in an academic field where they have largely been ignored. As highlighted, little was known about Englishwomen's experiences of playing sport for their nation, and how this may impact or influence their imaginings of national identity. The initial research focus could be broken down into smaller aims, summarised as:

1. A discussion of women, womanhood and femininities, and their relationship to sport.
2. A demonstration of the complex relationship between Englishness and Britishness, and the ways in which sport can serve to distinguish between the two.
3. An examination of the intersection of gender and national identity, and a description of the ways in which gendered and national identities can be complex, fluid and contextual.
4. Evidence of international sport as a site for the performance of both gendered and national identities.
5. A way to document the stories, narratives and experiences of England's elite sportswomen.

These research aims were addressed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, which will now be concluded here.

2. Concluding the discussions

Chapter 4, on women, sport and femininities, utilised work by Butler (1990) on performativity, and Caudwell's (2003) discussion of the sex-gender-desire matrix, which here translated into woman-feminine-heterosexual. This work was central in order to explore the ways the participants understand femininity and the female body. In the general discussions about women and womanhood, it was apparent that, on the whole, the participants imagined a stereotypical woman as heterosexual and feminine – particularly in their primary national function as biological and cultural reproducers. Most often, women were described as having jobs that suited traditional feminine characteristics, and it appeared that the extent to which the participants could imagine the possibilities of what it means to be a woman was inherently restricted by the woman-feminine-heterosexual matrix. The participants were, however, open to the idea of women serving on the frontline, despite this being seen as a typical area of exclusion for women throughout history, the military, and war, having intimate relations to men and masculinity.

This represented an instance where the participants discussed possibilities of 'new' femininities, although it was often the case that these were still within the confines of heterosexuality and traditional conceptions of femininity. Given the centrality of femininity to discussions of women, the participants were asked more about how they define and imagine femininity, and it was clear that Butler's (1990: 25) concept of performativity played a central role. As Butler states, 'gender proves to be performance – that is, constituting an identity it is purported to be'. The 'stylization of the body' is 'understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self' (Butler, 1988: 519). For women to be seen as feminine, the participants explained, requires a believable performance of both behaviour and appearance – a feminine woman looks and acts in the *right* way – and this, again, is commonly aligned with heterosexuality.

Throughout the discussion, it was clear that femininity was something that the participants explained could be performed depending on different contexts and situations – and sport was an arena often considered unsuitable and incompatible with femininity. Cox and Thompson's (2000: 7) initial observations of the women footballers in their study suggested that 'they conceived and used their bodies, consciously or subconsciously, in multiple ways depending on the context'. Findings in this research support this, in that heteronormative femininity as a construct appeared to be neither embodied at all times or rejected in its entirety by the majority of the participants. Instead, it was something that could be performed, when necessary, in line with the athlete's initial conception of what it means to be a woman (and therefore feminine and heterosexual). This performance, however, was only relevant outside of the international sporting arena. Given that sport is identified as a male-domain that valorises masculine-defined characteristics, it appears obvious that this does not represent an arena in which femininity is appropriate, as the participants explained.

The media continue to play a fundamental role in maintaining and reinforcing the notion that women's sport is subordinate to men's, and that women should continue to display feminine characteristics in sport. Furthermore, as Wensing and Bruce (2003) and Bruce (2008) identify, the printed press trivialise women's sport through a focus on femininity and sexuality over sporting achievements. In the media articles collected for this study, there was some evidence of the downplaying women's sport by the media. However, in the sporting arena, the women interviewed explicitly stated that femininity had no place on the (elite) sports field. The participants describe the importance of muscularity and physical prowess. Thus, in a sporting environment, the women can be seen to be performing aspects of what could be defined as a form of 'female masculinity' (Halberstam, 1998). The characteristics, which would align with commonly accepted notions of masculinity, highlight the ways in which gendered identities are in fact fluid and multiple. Similarly, it highlights the inability of the binary gender classification system to suitably define this type of fluid gender performance, which seems to be neither femininity nor masculinity in their normative forms.

The participants represent women who are actively pushing the limits of their bodies, and the boundaries of femininity. In this sense, these women can be seen as transcendent individuals. Malcom (2003: 1388) states that 'as a result of women's greater participation in sport and society's concomitant growing acceptance of female athleticism, female athletes no longer downplay the traditionally masculine traits of aggression and toughness as they relate to the athletic competition'. This is certainly the case with the women interviewed, who are proud of their dedication, determination and toughness in the sporting environment. They understand that being weak and passive will not succeed in the male arena of competitive teams sports, [articularly during international representation. However, as Malcom (ibid: 1388) contends, despite this acceptance of a masculine performance, 'they continue to overemphasize traditionally feminine traits'. On the whole, what was evident were the ways in which the participants describe the complexity of their bodies and the performativity of their gendered identities. Similarly, there was also an argument for the performance of a national identity.

Chapter 5 aimed to explore the national dimensions of the participants' identities, and more specifically Englishness, Britishness, and the complexities of national identities. What emerged here was the manner in which the participants' national affiliations were amongst of the strongest aspects of their identity, and clearly important to their sense of self. The participants' passports were used as signifiers of nationality; with many of them acknowledging that this marked them out as British. The participants' emotional attachments and the feeling of belonging to a particular nation, in this case England, were used as evidence of national identity. On the whole, the participants identified themselves as English. This often had an ethnic dimension, linked to the family blood line and birthplace. However, there were examples of a civic relationship to the nation, especially in the case of those participants who had familial links to nations other than England. This demonstrates the seemingly false dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the relationship between nationality (Britishness) and national identity (in most cases, just Englishness), was not as clear-cut as it may seem.

Evidence of the confusion of Britishness and Englishness has been described by numerous authors previously (e.g. Kumar, 2003; McCrone, 2006; Fenton, 2007; Robinson, 2008; Kumar, 2010). This confusion and conflation of Englishness with Britishness was often evident in discussions with the participants. The participants often associated British institutions (such as the Royal family) as symbolic of Englishness, and some participants used the terms 'English/Englishness' and 'British/Britishness' almost interchangeably.

In fact, sport provided the participants with an avenue to understand Englishness more clearly. For the participants, sport is where Englishness and Britishness no longer merged. As Robinson (2008) suggests, Englishness seemed more real on the sports field (and more specifically the football, cricket or rugby pitch) than anywhere else. Whether watching or playing international sport, the participants identify as English. Yet, outside of sport their national identity may, and in some cases often does, change. This again highlights the fluid, multiple and contextual nature of identity. Moreover, the type of sport that the participants describe as central to imaginings of Englishness is specifically men's sport. This helps us to begin to understand more fully the relationship between sport, national identity and gender.

In discussions surrounding who and what represent and symbolize England, we see how national identity is conceived not only in relation to people, but also to places, activities, events or non-human objects (Condor, 2006). The participants envisioned men from football (e.g. David Beckham, John Terry), cricket (e.g. Andrew Strauss) and rugby union (e.g. Martin Johnson, Jonny Wilkinson) as symbolic of Englishness. On the field of play, these are men who embody England, and become visible representations of what it means to be English. Harris and Clayton (2007) highlight the importance of the achievements of men in sport (and in particular, football) to a sense of nationhood in England. Thus, traditional conceptions of Englishness are often considered to be masculine in nature. An *Englishman* is tough, ready for battle (both literally and metaphorically) and a lion-heart in character.

Englishness was also defined as white. Despite this, the non-white participants still had a strong relationship to Englishness, and were at ease in defining themselves as English.

Kumar (2010) argues that it has been assumed that black and Asian people in England are prepared to think of themselves as British but not English because of the racial connotations of the latter. The participants here demonstrate that, despite the strong relationship between Englishness and whiteness, it is still possible for non-whites to identify with the English nation, but perhaps only if they 'represent' England. Similarly, the participants characterised Englishness as a two-class system, with the rich, 'posh' upper class and poor, 'chavvy' lower class. However, the sample of participants was distinctly middle class, highlighting yet more differences between the stereotype of Englishness and the lived reality of being English.

Chapter 6 focused on the sporting narratives of England's sportswomen and their experiences of representing their nation on the sports field. As sporting representatives, these women have a role in the nation that is apart from those identified by Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989), and defined by the woman-feminine-heterosexual matrix. At the start of this chapter, we see confirmation of the importance of sport to the participants' national identity, as well as clarification of the significance of national identity to their sense of self. The participants initially identified the media as key to this relationship between sport and national identity. The portrayal of sportsmen as symbolic of Englishness, as also discussed in Chapter 5, highlights this relationship. Maguire and Poulton (1999) offer us the term 'patriots at play' to describe the men who embody their nation on the football pitch. The media then refers this image back to the English nation.

The participants highlighted the lack of media coverage of women's sports as a stumbling block to public perceptions of women's sport as constituting national sporting events. In some cases, as we saw in Chapter 4, the media portray women's sport as trivial and unimportant. However, during international sporting competition, the relationship between women's sport and national identity becomes much more complex than previously thought. Following Wensing and Bruce (2003) and Bruce (2008), it appears that women who win for their nation are considered worthy of national media attention. Thus, the media conventions are 'bent' (Wensing and Bruce, 2003) in order to represent the women as strong and dominating national champions, descriptions that are not traditionally associated with heteronormative femininity. The utilisation of print media

texts confirmed the role of the press in 'evoking and invoking national sentiment' (Tuck, 2003: 193). However, whilst the women's status as national heroines may only be transient, e.g. for eighty or ninety minutes, their positioning as such remains interesting and important nonetheless. The media utilised war metaphors in their descriptions of the women athletes, propelling them to the status of 'proxy warriors', much like one would expect of their male counterparts during international sporting competition. Indeed, some of the participants themselves described international sport as a 'battlefield'.

The women also highlighted how their own sense of national identity was heightened during the periods of time that they represented England. The national anthem, the three lions and the rose served an important purpose for the women involved in international sport. For many, these banal aspects of nationalism ultimately serve to remind them of who they are and whom they are representing. Edensor (2002) states that one of the most powerful forms of popular national performance is found in sport. Indeed, international sport represents a stage by which the women can actively perform their national identity (*ibid*), as well as their gendered identity (Butler, 1990).

3. Limitations and future research

As with much research, this research project was not without its limitations. The nature of the data collection technique – snowball sampling – has led to a relatively white, middle class sample. Subsequently, despite an intended focus on the intersections of identity, race, ethnicity, sexuality and social class do not feature much in the discussion. Similarly, some may complain that the small sample size and selective nature of participant recruitment may reduce the generalizability of the findings. While it is true that this research can only offer a limited discussion of issues surrounding Englishness, sport and national identity, sport and gender relations, and the relationship between these three research areas, its contribution is unique. Furthermore, whilst these may be limitations of this study, they ultimately present us with ideas for future research.

There are many avenues in which research can build upon and utilise this work. Future research could focus on how ethnic minority, or non-white, athletes identify with concepts of Englishness and Britishness, and how this intersects with their national and gendered identities on the national stage of elite sports performance. Further scope for research might also include researching women who have represented Great Britain as well as England. For this research, all the women involved at the time of interview had only ever represented England on a sporting stage. However, some of the study's participants were involved in the London 2012 Olympics - Sophie Bradley, Karen Carney and Claire Rafferty were all part of Team GB's women's football squad. It would be interesting to question them on their imaginings of national identity and their relationship to Englishness and Britishness following the London 2012 Olympic Games. It will be interesting to consider whether it is just about sport. For the athletes that move from representing England to Team GB, does this prompt a change in the attitude of the athlete to their sense of national identity? We have seen here that sport is very important to national identity, but is this peculiar to the home nations of the seemingly fragmented United Kingdom?

4. Concluding remarks

The initial research question enshrined a desire, and need, to speak to female national sports stars on their interpretations of their own national identities. Few research studies have adopted this approach of speaking to athletes about their national identities, although significantly, these were not women (see Tuck, 1999; Tuck and Maguire, 1999; McGee and Bairner 2011). As a result, this has been an area in works on sport and national identity that has almost been completely overlooked. However, the challenge was not only to integrate personal experiences into discussions of sport and national identity, but also to try to incorporate gender into these very discussions. For so long, academics have focused on the ways in which male sport plays a key role in (re)producing national identities. The question here is whether women's sport can play a similar role in the national imagination, and how do those very women who embody their nation on the field of play articulate their experiences.

Central to this research is an understanding of the ways in which we perform aspects of our identity. Building on work by Butler (1990) on gender and Edensor (2002) on national identity, we can understand how international sport provides a site where multiple identities are performed. In this study we see the ways in which the participants use their bodies in multiple ways. Ultimately, international sport represents a site/stage for the simultaneous performance of both gendered and national identities. Outside of sport, many participants described performing a type of heteronormative femininity. Whilst representing the nation in elite level international sport, however, the participants described a gendered performance that aligns more with traditional notions of masculinity, or a 'female masculinity' (Halberstam, 1998). Indeed, many appeared to believe that this is actually a requirement to succeed in sport – heteronormative displays of femininity on the sports field were perceived to hinder not only the public's perceptions of female sport, but the sports performance itself.

This display of what would traditionally be labelled as masculine characteristics also aligns with the perceived masculine notions of Englishness, as defined by the participants. The women themselves describe an Englishness in ways that are often associated with masculinity, perhaps invoking ideas of the lion-heart often seen to represent traditional Englishness (Hand, 2002). As Robinson (2008), among others highlights, Englishness is itself only really embodied on the field of play. Thus, in this instance, the gendered sporting performance represents an acceptable national performance. Performance of this 'masculine femininity' means that the women can be seen legitimately as English sporting athletes, not defined (as much) by their gender as one would normally expect of women in sport. In this way, the participants can be considered as legitimate national representatives during international sporting competition. The analysis of newspaper extracts about England's sportswomen further confirms this. Although there are instances where sports performances by female athletes are subject to trivialisation and sexualisation by the sports press, we have also seen that there are occasions when this pattern is not adhered to (Wensing and Bruce, 2003; Bruce, 2008). This is during international sporting events, when the women in question are successfully representing their nation. Here women are presented not primarily in relation to their gender but by

reference to their sports performance. Thus, as Bruce (2008) identifies, national identity overrides gendered identity in these cases.

The thesis bears the title 'That's what I am, I'm an England Player': Exploring the gendered, national and sporting identities of England's elite sportswomen. The quote, from Claire P, was chosen as it represents very neatly what much of this research has revealed: these women see themselves as embodiments of England, and their interrelated sporting, national and gendered identities are all central to their sense of self. Essentially, playing sport for the women's national teams is who they are and how they define themselves. However, this does not do justice to the complexities and intersectionality of identities and subjectivities. For the participants, national identities are gendered, for example in the ways in which (English) national characteristics and traits were conceived of in masculine ways. Similarly, their gendered identities are national, in the sense that gendered behaviour is normalised in particular (national) societies. What was clear throughout the research was the multiple and fluid nature of these identities, with both national and gendered identities subject to change dependent upon circumstance. Similarly, the performative nature of identity was evident (Butler, 1990; Edensor, 2002).

To borrow from Tuck (2003), these are the (wo)men in white (or for netball, red), wearing the three lions or the rose, active embodiments of Englishness. They are proud to call themselves English, and represent so much about what a modern vision of a civic *and* ethnic Englishness is, and can be. These women were born in England, have ethnic ties to the English nation, yet they are not all white and not always upper class or lower class, but multi-ethnic, multi-national, multi-racial. And in sport, those who represent the nation, and who are the embodiments and heroes of England, are not always men.

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Appendix 1: Information Sheet



Investigating the relationship between women, sport and national identity in England

Main Investigator: Alison Bowes

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What is the purpose of the study?

This is a sociological research project looking at the relationship between women, sport and national identity in England.

Who is doing this research and why?

The research will be conducted by Alison Bowes, a PhD student studying the sociology of sport at Loughborough University. Alison is supervised by Prof. Alan Bairner, also of Loughborough University. This research is looking to fill a gap in existing literature, which has largely ignored the experiences of women who play sport for their nation, and how this impacts on their imaginings of national identity.

Are there any exclusion criteria?

In order to take part in the study, the participants must have represented England at either youth or senior level in netball, football, cricket, or rugby union. Furthermore, because the research is investigating women's relationship with the nation, men will not be interviewed.

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes! After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have we will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form, however if at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

Will I be required to attend any sessions and where will these be?

You will be required to attend one interview session, which will be arranged in order to best suit you.

How long will it take?

The expected time for the interview will be approximately 45 – 90 minutes.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked questions of a range of topics, starting with your background information and involvement in sport. We will also discuss general issues surrounding women in society, national identity, and finally, your personal experiences of playing sport for your nation.

What personal information will be required from me?

Personal details such as name, age, home town and occupation, and then whatever else you chose to disclose throughout the course of the interview.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The interview will be recorded, and the recordings and subsequent transcriptions will be kept safe and secure. Due to the nature of the research and the research question, interviewing elite athletes means that some of your response may make you identifiable, for example, the number of caps you have, where you made your international debut, or a particular experience. Therefore anonymity cannot be guaranteed. However, you will be asked before and after the interview whether or not you agree to the data collected being used in the research. You will be asked whether or not you agree to have your name put into the research. This is entirely up to you, and you have a right to withdraw at any point. If you do not wish for your name to be used in the research, but still wish to take part, every step will be ensured to make sure you cannot be easily identified.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the research will form part of a completed doctoral thesis, which will be available upon completion at Loughborough University library. Some of this work will be presented at conferences, and may be published in research journals.

I have some more questions who should I contact?

Contact either the main investigator, or the research supervisor.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

The University has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at

[http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing\(2\).htm](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm).

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form



Investigating the relationship between women, sport and national identity in England

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(To be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee.

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

I understand that, due to the nature of the research, anonymity cannot be guaranteed and therefore I give my permission for my name to be used in the research.

I agree to participate in this study.

Your name _____

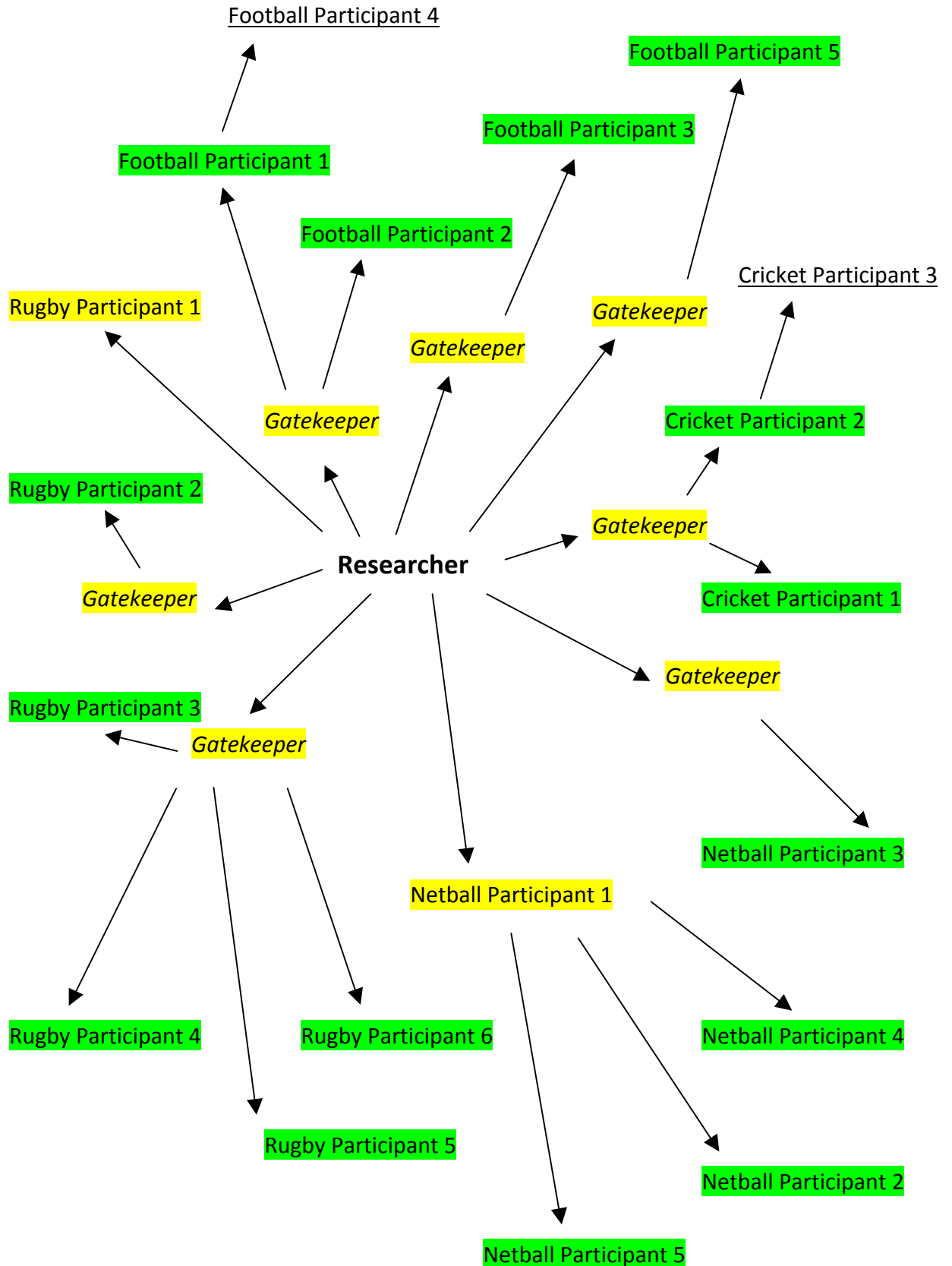
Your signature _____

Signature of investigator _____

Date _____

Appendix 3: Participant Access Web

Key: Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 of Snowball Sample Mechanism



Appendix 4: Participant Biographies

The details, told to me by the women themselves, are correct from the time of interview, which was between May and October 2011. The biographies have been grouped according to sport. Where there is a name in brackets, this is what the women will be referred to in the analysis.

1. Netball

Joanne Harten (Jo), 22, is a central member of the England netball team, with 25 senior international caps and a Commonwealth bronze medal. Aged 22, Jo is from Essex, England. Jo's mother and father are both from England.

Olivia Murphy (Liv), 34, captained the England netball team for 6 years before retiring, accumulating 95 international caps, 2 Commonwealth bronze medals and one World Championship bronze. Olivia was born in Burton-on-Trent, England, to an English mother and father, and has distant Irish and Lithuanian heritage.

Jade Forbes-Wattley, 20, has played for England netball approximately 17 times at youth level. She was born in Berkshire, England, to Caribbean parents.

Stacey Francis, 23, has represented England netball 13 times, winning a Commonwealth bronze medal. She is from Birmingham, England, as are her parents. Her mother's parents are from England and her father's parents are from St. Kitts.

Serena Guthrie, 21, has 7 international caps for the England netball team. Born in Peterborough, England, she grew up in Jersey with her English mother and stepfather. Her biological father is from Jamaica.

2. Rugby

Harriet Mills, 20, is currently the England women's rugby team under 20 captain, with approximately 9 representative caps at this level. She is also a member of the elite

squad. Born in Manchester, England, Harriet's mother's family is Scottish, while her father was born in England to English parents.

Sophie Russell (Sophie R), 21, used to be a member of the England women's rugby team under 20 squad, and has represented England twice at youth level. From Cambridge, Sophie's father was born in Kenya to French and English parents who were in the British Army. Sophie's mother is from England.

Claire Allan (Claire A), 26, has got senior 24 caps for the England women's rugby team, and is also a member of England women's rugby sevens squad. She is from London, England. Her father is from Newcastle, England and her mother is from Manchester, England, and she has English grandparents.

Charlotte Barras, 29, currently plays for the England women's rugby team. She scored a try in the women's rugby World Cup final in 2010, which England lost 13-10 to New Zealand. She has 48 senior caps. Born in Northampton, England, she has English parents and grandparents.

Sarah Hunter, 26, plays for the England women's rugby team, and played at the women's rugby World Cup in 2010. She has got 31 senior caps. She was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, as was her father, and her mother was born in Wigan. All of her grandparents are from England.

Claire Purdy (Claire P), 31, has 28 senior caps for the England Women's Rugby Team, and was a member of the England women's rugby World Cup squad. Claire was born in Surrey, England, to English parents. Her grandparents are also from England.

3. Football

Kerys Harrop, 20, is currently in the England women's football under 23 squad. Throughout the youth system with England women's football, Kerys has played in two under 19 European Championship finals, winning one, and in the under 20 World Cup.

She has an estimated 25 competitive youth caps. Kerys was born in Birmingham to English parents, with English grandparents.

Danielle Buet (Dani), 22, is a member of the England women's football team, and was in the squad for the European Championships in 2009, where England lost in the final 6-2 to Germany. She has 7 senior international caps. Danielle, born in Kent, has a Welsh mother, an Irish grandmother and a Welsh grandfather, and an English father.

Claire Rafferty (Raff), 22, is a member of the England women's football team, and played at the 2011 women's football World Cup. She currently has 5 international caps. Claire was born in London to an Irish father and an English mother.

Karen Carney, 23, has 60 senior caps for the England women's football team, and scored in the European Championship final defeat in 2009. She was born in Birmingham, England, as were her parents. Her mother's family is from England and her father's family is from Ireland.

Sophie Bradley (Sophie B), 21, has 10 full international caps for the England women's football team. She was part of the squad that played in the women's football world cup in 2011. Sophie was born in Nottingham, England, as were her parents and grandparents.

4. Cricket

Tamsin Beaumont (Tammy), 20, plays for the England women's cricket team. She has 7 one day international (ODI) caps and 6 twenty-over (T20) caps. She is from Dover, England, with English parents and grandparents.

Katherine Brunt, 26, is a member of the England women's cricket team. She has 7 test match caps, 58 ODI caps and 24 T20 caps. She was born in Barnsley, England, as were her parents. Her mother's parents are English, and her father's parents Scottish. Some of her achievements include being the women's number one bowler in the world, as well as winning two world cups and three ashes series.

Beth Morgan, 30, plays in the England women's cricket team. She has 7 test match caps, 72 ODI caps and 28 T20 caps. She was born in Middlesex, England. Her parents were also born in England, her mother to English parents and her father to Welsh parents.

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule

1. Introduction and Background Information

To start with, I just want to get some initial background information on you and your involvement in sport

- What is your name and age?
- Where were you born? Where do you live now?
- What is your occupation?
- If student – what course?
- Can you briefly describe your parent’s jobs and backgrounds?
- What sport do you play?
- How were you initially introduced into the sport you play?
- Did you play at school?
- Where you family and friends supportive?
- When were you first involved in the England set up?
- What are your achievements and international honours in this sport, and any others you may play? For example, club team, number of caps, captain etc.
- Did you play other sports? Why and how did you come to specialise in this one sport?

2. Attitudes about women

Ok, now I just want to briefly discuss with you your opinions and thoughts on the role of women in society and sport.

- When you hear the word woman, what are some of the images/words that you think of?
- How would you describe a stereotypical woman?
- What does it mean to you to be a woman?
- How would you define femininity/characteristics needed to be feminine?
- What do you think are suitable jobs and roles for women?
- Do you think women should serve on the front line?
- What does it mean to you to be a sports woman?
- What sorts of characteristics are necessary?
- How would you describe the stereotype of a sports woman?

3. National Identity

Ok, now we are going to discuss your understanding of national identity

- How would you describe your nationality? Is this what it says on your passport?
- How would you describe your national identity?
- How English do you feel? Or how important is being English to you?
- How British do you feel?
- What does England mean to you?

- What are the important things in England that make people feel English? If someone asked you to describe it, what would you say? People, places, words, symbols etc.
- Which people do you identify with England? Sports people?
- Why have you chosen them, what is it in particular that make you link that person to England?
- What does Great Britain mean to you?
- What makes people feel British?
- Which people do you identify with Great Britain? Sports people?
- How much do you identify with your region, would you say you define yourself regionally, more so than nationally?
- How important do you think sport is to the nation/England?
- How important do you think women's sport is to the nation?

4. Sport and National Identity

Finally, I want to ask you on your experiences of playing international sport

- When was your first England cap?
- Can you describe the feelings when you got called up for the first time
- What does it mean to you to play for England now, compared to then?
- Do you have any particular memorable experiences playing for England?
- When you step out onto the court/pitch to represent England, can you describe how that feels?
- How does this compare with playing for a different team, such as your club/university?
- What is the importance of: the anthem, wearing of the national kit, victory?
- Do you sing the anthem? How does this make you feel?
- Has playing sport for England made you feel more English? In particular contexts or in all aspects of life?
- How do you feel when you watch the equivalent men's team?
- Do you follow other women's sports? Do you support women's sport?
- What do you think the nation's perceptions of the female teams are?
- How do you think the public view women's national teams?
- And compared to the men's team?
- What do you think the impact of the media is on women's sports?

SUMMARY QUESTION: What does it mean to you to be a woman representing England at international sport?

TO END: Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix 6: Interview Transcript

Name: Claire Purdy

Location: Richmond, London

Date: Saturday 1st October 2011, 3pm

What is your name?

Claire Purdy

How old are you?

31

Where were you born?

Frimley

Where do you live now?

Hounslow, near Guildford way.

What is your occupation?

I'm an underwriter for an insurance company.

Where are your parents from?

Both actually from Putney, London.

And grandparents, are they from England as well?

Yep, yep.

What sport do you play?

Rugby

How were you first introduced into playing rugby?

Erm, both my housemates played at uni, so in my last year, I'd been a hockey player up until that point,. And they said come along to training so I went along and it started from there.

When did you first get involved in the England set up then?

First, the first sort of, you start through, there's obviously set programmes that you go through, so 2001 I went for England students trials.

So you had only been playing for a year?

Well yeh, well only a few months, for the rugby season. And then it must have been the middle of that I went for England student trials. At that point I was playing 8, and at that point they moved me to prop.

Why?

Well a prop is at the front of the scrum, that's my job. At 8, when I was at uni I was bigger, I drank a bit, so I was probably one of the biggest players at 8 which is at the back of the scrum, but my destiny was going to be a prop. So yeh English students 2001, and then that summer I went to, what was known as performance academs, like a summer thing, and that's where I met, and that was in Camberley where I live with my parents. And that's where I met a load of waspie girls because they were at the camp as it was the closest one to London. Ness Huxford, who was the wasps prop at the time lived in Fleet which is about 10 minutes from my parents, so she drove me up. When I left uni she would drive me to training every week, and that's when I became a wasp.

Became a wasp, laughs.

Laughs, yeh. Ten years this year. So from then on I went from students to England academy. And I've been in the set up since 2001, and I had two years when I wasn't selected and probably the last 2 or 3 years I'd consider myself a regular, elite, full squad member. But it's taken a bit of time to get to that point, to be a regular fixture in the full squad.

How many international honours have you got, how many caps?

28.

What are your stand out achievements?

I was vice captain in the world cup against Kazakhstan. I've had players player at wasps a couple of times. One of my first England tours was to South Africa as part of the development squad. And we played the blue balls in rusten...?? And I scored my first England try, well first try in an England shirt, and then I started against, we then played, well they are now called South Africa but they are now called the President's select. It was the first time a women's rugby side had played against a South African side. And we played in front of the zulu king, which was pretty impressive. That was in 2003. World cups, obviously, is one of the pinnacles. Playing at Twickenham the December before world cup against New Zealand. And I started that game. And again, the start for that game, I was fortunate, obviously other players were unfortunate, but a few injuries occurred to a certain extent the coaches hand was forced, they had to start me. And still it is one of the best games I've played in that shirt. So I laid my marker out for the world cup, and we had the squad selection in the May and I think that played a good part in that.

Ok, we'll come back to your rugby later. Ok, attitudes, perceptions about women. Go into as much detail as you want. What are some images, words, descriptions that you think of the word woman. What immediately comes to mind?

A woman sportsperson or just a woman?

A woman in general.

Feminine. Mum. Sister. Friend, Best friend.

How would you describe a stereotypical woman?

A stereotypical woman? Jeess. In terms of like height and stuff, or just mannerisms?

Both, appearance, mannerisms.

Ok, a stereotypical woman has probably changed since...but we still see them as the mother essentially, someone that is caring, is going to look after you. Have a job. I don't know, that's a difficult one.

A tricky question?

Laughs, yeh it is tricky, ask me about rugby, I'll talk to you about rugby! Laughs. Yeh I don't know, there are various guises of what a stereotypical woman is in terms of shape, pear, apple, you know skinny, curvy and all that. I guess you could describe a stereotypical woman in terms of those shapes.

Do you think there is a stereotypical woman? Nowadays?

I don't think, I don't think there is think it was probably easier to stereotype someone like years and years ago when you could say right well, ok, the husband works and the mum's the homemaker and she doesn't go to work because she looks after three kids and that's her role. but now, if you look at what women do and what they achieve. Obviously there are still women who choose. Well, everyone has a choice but there are women who choose not to work or have the opportunity not to work, and then there's women who have to work so they may look up to, I don't know, they call them the superwoman don't they who can balance it all don't they. They work in London and things like that. But I guess it just changes depending on where you are.

You've already said you associate the word feminine with woman, so what do you mean by feminine?

Erm, I guess so, things like long hair, pretty. Pause. It's probably easier to describe someone who you wouldn't describe as feminine.

Ok so do that.

Unfeminine would be someone with a crew cut hair cut, smothered in tattoos, appearance maybe have jeans shorts or maybe like combats or stuff like that, you know like. I guess that would be what people would say would be not a stereotypical woman.

Ok so you're talking about femininity and 'not' femininity as appearance, do you think there are behaviours, attitude?

Yeh like, people use the word 'butch' so feminine is someone that's quite dainty and I guess like princess like or whatever. And they you have got people that you'd call butch. So like, quite strong in their opinions and the way they conduct themselves so they may come across as quite aggressive, in their manner and in the way they talk to people. Yeh.

Ok, what does it mean to you to be a woman?

Erm, I don't know...I guess different things. I personally am not very maternal, so like, my thoughts on being a mum and stuff aren't as strong as, obviously my sisters. I guess I still see myself as someone who is caring.

Be a good auntie!

Be a very good auntie, yeh!

How would you describe a stereotypical sportswoman then?

A stereotypical sportswoman. Again that depends on the sport, but like, would probably be sports that people see the most in the media, people like Sally Gunnell. A type of woman, someone who is tall, lean, who has muscles, so would be deemed as muscular in comparison to a normal, everyday woman. And then

erm, but they are still themselves, in would seem weird to say but in a feminine way, how they are. But then you think of some tennis players and you think the other way, like Mauresmo and Navratilova and stuff would be a prime example. I think if you look at the women in the media and the ones that they pull out, you have got the pentathlons, the ones that ones the gold medals and stuff and they are all long haired, brown, blonde, good you know, good looking women. Wouldn't necessarily have, what's the javelin thrower that we have Fatima Whitbread (?) you wouldn't necessarily have her on a poster but.

What about the ones that aren't in the media then, so team sports, rugby...

Yeh rugby, cricketers yeh. But again there's different sports. You know...?...one of the good things about rugby is that it doesn't matter your build necessarily there will probably be a position on the pitch for you. Cricket, I guess if, I don't know a lot about cricket in terms of what the physical attributes have to be but my view would be that you would have to be fairly long limbed and that for bowling, quick feet, so light on your feet, probably tall, slim I guess. Footballers and stuff, you are going to be runners predominantly, going to have good endurance, and they are going to be leaner than a rugby second row.

Do you think there is a stereotypical sportswoman, or is it the same as what you say about women, that it's very varied?

Yeh I think it is, I think if you are. The thing is the media and stuff they generate stereotypical sportswoman, so then they can use that to people what they could look like. So if you like, Kelly Holmes and stuff, and she's been used in sort of loads of advertising. People want to look like Kelly Holmes, or Denise Lewis 'cause she's got a six pack. Or they wanna look like Sharon, the swimmer, Sharon Davies, because she's tall, lean, things like that. So I guess if you ask someone what stereotypical would immediately that type of shape, body shape and stuff, rather than a rugby player, or a footballer, but that's because they are less known.

Do you think there are any particular characteristics that a sportswoman needs to be successful?

Erm, determination, selfishness, commitment, drive, belief in themselves and what they are doing, because you have to put in so much time to succeed. You have to have a lot of support around, whether it's from the team itself, or back up. If you are an individual sports player obviously you would have you physio and stuff like that. The biggest thing would be family as well. Because financially, depending on what sport you do, you might need back up. And you know hopefully your mum and dad would be able to do that if you needed that. So I think yeh, that's key. Though you could say that for anything like if you want it bad enough.

Yeh, yeh. How do people see you in relation to you being a sportswoman do you think?

At work they see me as, what do they call me, they don't call me big, they say 'oh yeh you're quite well built', or 'you're stocky'.

Do they always do that (imitates having big shoulders)?

Yeh, yeh. They do, they'll immediately, if you walk past them and stuff, they are like (simulates getting into a position ready to rugby tackle someone). Especially guys, they give this...(simulates same movement) and I'm like oh, I'm not really sure I'm portraying that, I'm definitely not that aggressive, laughs. It's as if I should react to tackle them straight away!

Do you quite often feel like you are seen as Claire the rugby player. Is that a big part of...

It is, yeh, it's a massive part of what I am, and I'm really fortunate that work know that and are really, really supportive. I couldn't ask for anything more. When I was going to the world cup I actually took 5 months off, and they were able to, even though the company wasn't doing so great, with how things were, especially in the UK. We weren't in a bad position but weren't the best it could have been. I really wasn't,

they said that they wouldn't be able to support me but to be honest it was in their busiest time, I was taking it off in our busiest peak for my, I do education so it was the busiest period to have off. And erm, it was actually when I left the following week, my big big boss at the time, phoned up and said look, we are going to sponsor you...it was amazing, and then two weeks later they ended up paying me 2 months pay, over that 5 month period. Like work know that is, and they've been to games, and they find out what I do and put stuff out on the intranet and stuff like that so as an elite amateur, which is what we are, you have to. Like when I'm at work I'm 110% there and I have to prove that I'm worth it. And they wouldn't do what they've done if they didn't think I was value for money for them. So, it's, you know, you have to play your cards. I can go in at 10, leave at 12 because I've got training, and that's not...I can do that every day, we work flexi so I can go in at 10 and if I have to leave at 4 they know that the following day I will make that up and I'll work hard when I'm there. So yeh, it is, rugby is, sometimes you forget how big a part it is until you can't do it, or you're not selected. Like for the two years when I wasn't selected, it didn't take me long to realise that I wanted it back. Even though I was fairly early on in my...

What two years was that?

What happened was in 2003, the six nations trial weekend, having a really good trial, still new to the squad, and everyone was like oh you're doing well, you're doing well. And then I broke my wrist in the training camp. Someone tackled me that shouldn't have done. And then I came back after that and at that point I was a prop, and then they decided they wanted to see me as a hooker. I didn't realise but I was actually only given a 12 month window to be an international hooker. Well a hooker at that level takes a lot longer to develop. 2006 season, 2007 season I wasn't involved at all. And yeh, that was tough. But then I went back to prop, and I went back to my club, did some hooking but went straight back to prop. The hooker's real job is the line outs, so it's quite a closed skill, it's like a kicker.

So hours and hours of training for that?

Yeh. So like Jonny Wilkinson's main job is to kick, the hookers job is to restart the game when the ball goes out. It's a skill that now I can do, but at the time I wasn't ready to make that change.

Do you think there are any jobs or roles that women shouldn't do or can't do?

In my opinion, erm, I don't understand, and this is weird because I play a contact sport. I don't understand boxing.

Oh really?

Yeh, I don't get that, I wouldn't like to be one on one with someone. I'm not saying women shouldn't do it but I don't quite understand it. I don't think. I think you have just got to be realistic, you know, when they, when people try and compare women's rugby to men's rugby, there's no real comparison. Physically I'm not going to be as strong as an 18 stone guy, it's not possible. So like I guess if you look at jobs like that, can a woman realistically be as strong doing log felling possibly, is that really going to be a good strength for her. It's hard isn't it because like fire-fighters, you get firewomen and stuff like that. People just have to make a decision, just physically and stuff there are just things that women just can't do, and there are things that men can't do for sure. But I guess everyone should just have a go, and go until you fail...?...its a risk, but I suppose it's got to be a measured risk, but you can't know what you can do or how far you can push yourself.

What about women on the front line?

Again, I play rugby and stuff but there's no way I wanna be shooting people on the front line. So, I've got friends that are in the army and they love it. A couple of the girls that are in the squad. They live and breathe their job because they thoroughly enjoy what they do. But if that's what they enjoy and that's what their strengths are. One of the girls is, and she's doing really well, you don't get promoted if people don't see potential. So if you deserve it you should be given the opportunity to improve.

Now we are going to talk about national identity. How would you describe your nationality?

English.

Is this what it says in your passport?

Oh I don't know. No it says British, doesn't it? I think. British yeh.

So would you say you ever feel British?

No because I'm an England rugby player.

So if I said how English do you feel, would you say without a doubt English?

Yeh, yeh.

How important is being English to you? To your identity?

Erm, I think, I think it's, yeh, it's massively important. There's so many, from a sporting perspective, everyone who plays at the level we're at, you're playing for the passion and pride of that country. So a South African is playing for pride and probably a 101 other reasons, for what it means to them. For me as an England player, viewing myself as a true English person, it's really important. I have got friends that have gained citizenship and things like that. But they're not, I don't, they're not born and bred in England, I don't think you're an English person. And that's not a colour thing, because you can have black English or Asian English, things like that.

So it's like being born here, growing up here?

So one of my colleagues at work, so I've got an English surname, well a pretty down the line surname...?...one of my colleagues who is from Slovenia is going to change her surname. I was like, that's your family name, why would you want to change, that's your heritage, why do you want to change it. But it's all, she is changing it to fit in with being in England, so I struggled with that because that's changing who she is, and I don't think she is changing it to a Smith or Jones, but she is changing it to fit in.

What does England mean to you?

Summer's sitting next to Richmond! The Thames, London. Having a shandy yeh. I don't know being English, so celebrating who we are, having the Queen, St. Georges day, having a birthday, the royal wedding, all very very English. You know and that's. Going to Windsor Castle, all that kind of stuff, being a tourist. That's all what makes, that's why people come here.

How patriotic are you then?

Erm, pause. For the world cup, I bought myself an England duvet! I had that for the whole tournament!

It was almost a lucky duvet as well!

Almost a lucky duvet yeh. It's not burned so I've still got it as well, it still could be a lucky duvet.

Next time.

Yeh next time.

So very?

Yeh, you have to be, like, you can't, to a certain extent I don't think you can, again, and even with the men's rugby you can look at Tuilagi and Flutey who are Kiwi born. And I still think it must be, we've got a Kiwi in the squad, La Toya, and erm, I still think, it must be hard for her to be playing for us, when she could be playing for New Zealand, she could be a New Zealand player. I mean she has chosen to play for England and she can because of heritage, her grandparents. But I find that odd but...

So like, the amount of commitment it takes and the sacrifices that you put yourself through, you couldn't imagine doing that representing Wales for example?

No. no. If I wasn't good enough for England...?...then I;m not going to go a trot off and play for Wales.

Does it happen? Do you know girls...

We've got girls from Wasps that play for Wales. Like a girl who played regionals and that type of stuff, never made it through the system, so is now a starting player for Scotland.

Would you not do it, even for that international recognition, get a chance to play in the six nations, the world cup?

I don't know, I don't know.

Would it seem weird because you've played for England?

Unless I had a true, a really true link, like if my grandparents were Scottish and I had some affinity to Scotland, or Wales, they I could understand. It's when you've got players who are playing because they're grandparent was born in Scotland, but they've never been or they've never, that's the only thing they have. And I find that weird. If I had a strong affinity to. But then that would be passionate then because I would have a strong affinity to that place through my family. So yeh I think it would be difficult just to play for the sake of gaining a shirt.

Yeh. Ok, what would you say are important things in England, or particular things that make people feel English?

The Queen, she's gotta be a big one. Pause. I don't know I'm not very politically minded so I don't know if that has an impact on what people think. Like, I'm not into all of that ... stuff, but I guess we are democratic, like, you can vote, make decisions, and we are lucky in that respect.

What about little things?

Like strawberries and cream? And Shandies? Yeh, like, I was in Canada recently, visiting family and stuff, and their different little nuances like food and, what they do at Christmas time. Christmas for me is get up ridiculously early, open all of your presents. By 7! Then eat all the way through to dinner at 2, eat as much food as you possibly can, then have boxing day when you eat even more. And Canada is different, they will have like a big family get togethers and they will do like skits and little panto things. I'm going on one reference but I know a few Canadians like that. And I just think that every country has got it's little things and, food. Yeh like things you'd miss, like you're never that far away from London are you, or the beach, you're only ever pretty much, from where I was living with my parents I'm only an hour away from the beach, an hour away from London and stuff like that

You think you could describe a stereotypical Englishperson?

Yeh, a stereotypical Englishman. Englishman. T shirt off in the sun. Beer belly. Tattoos. Being obnoxious.

Laughs.

Upsetting everybody around them! Erm, actually it's quite funny today, sun, out, everyone, any guy (looks around and counts 1,2). Immediately, shirts come off. Yeh that's what people think of England. Erm yeh, and then like, it's a bit like 'Little Britain', people see 'Little Britain' when they are abroad and stuff, or like Eastenders actually, or Coronation Street is massive in America and Canada, and American's always think that we have teeth like Austin Powers! Honestly, no word of a lie, that's their, that's what they imagine that English people always have bad teeth. And yeh eastenders so whenever I go to Canada to myself, they will do an English accent, and they are quite adamant they sound English, as we would if we were doing Canadian.

Yeh that's like when I was in Thailand this summer, whenever they found out we were English they were all like 'lovely jubbly'! Laughs.

Laughs. Yeh! 'All riiiiight!' And you're like no, we don't talk like that. So yeh I think that would be my stereotypical, but that would be an Englishman. An Englishwoman, erm, pause.

Do you think there is one?

Pause. No, not unless you want to look at Waynetta, Laughs.

Laughs. Ok, are there any particular people that you identify with England, obviously you've already said the Queen, but anyone else.

Tim Henman, Henman Hill. Pause. Who else. Pause. Cliff Richard!

Oh, I've not had Cliff yet!

It's 'cause of tennis.

And we are sitting on this hill in the sun?

It was yeh. Tennis, yeh, Tim Henman, Cliff Richard, so Elton John then you'd be looking at. Princess Diana. Very English. Obviously Will and Kate now, they're going to be a big hit aren't they. English? Sooty and sweep? Pause.

Any sports people?

Nope, the things like horseriding and hunting and all that is viewed as quite English, and afternoon tea.

That's quite like stereotypical English.

Yeh, yeh. Countryside, rolling hills and stuff like that.

Any sports people you identify with England? Apart from the ones you already said?

Linford Christie. Audley Harrison the boxer. Erm, Tim Henman.

I'm surprised you haven't said any of the rugby lads.

Well, to be fair I don't watch much rugby, I don't know the men's game inside out. But you know, I know some of the, obviously Martin Johnson, Lawrence and all that lot.

If you're thinking of English sportspeople are they not the ones you instantly...

No, I watch match of the day religiously, yeh, so JohnTerry, Lampard, Rooney obviously, Beckham. Beckham would be, actually Beckham and Posh are massive aren't they in terms of their celebrity. Yeh that's who I'd go to.

If we were going to think of Great Britain, as separate or different from England. Now, you don't particularly identify as being British, so do you see there being such a thing as Britishness anymore? Pause. Or do you think people are very much English, or Welsh, or Scottish...

No I think there are definitely British people because people they become British, do you know what I mean, just by citizenship they become British citizens. And erm, people come here because they can, because they are in the euro and things they are European citizens and they become British citizens. I think the divide between. I think there is, in my opinion, there is a stronger line between you're English, you're Scottish, you're Welsh, because of accents. Everyone is British because we are known as Great Britain and Northern Ireland. And you become British just by passing the test. I don't think, well, maybe it's just got a bit merged.

Do you think sport plays a part in that, with separate teams.

Well, it will be interesting won't it with the next Olympics. Isn't the next Olympics include football, so you then, you've got to then have Welsh Scottish English and, Northern Ireland? Southern Ireland compete on their own don't they?

Yeh.

So that will be interesting, in how people, how people feel about that and how it would be made a decision on that. I guess the Olympics is a for that isn't it? Because people will relate to, not necessarily the runner..26min 30???

How much would you say you identify with the region that you're from, compared to nationally?

From surrey? Erm, yeh probably, well just accent wise and things like that. When I was in Chichester and Bath, like, apparently my accent changed from where I'd been in Surrey and then I was down in Sussex and stuff. I think you relate to where you're from. In the squad and stuff you know, theres some from the north and we're from the south and we go up there and get a nosebleed!

Do they call you guys anything?

I don't really know! Southern Scallies? They get more abuse than we do I think, there's more of us so. But yeh, definitely, I'd say I lived in London but that's a bit of a stretch as its outer London. But yeh I guess you would say that I was from Surrey.

Is that like when you're here, and then outside of the UK...

Yeh, I'd say I was, when I'm talking to people and they say where I'm from, it's easier to say I'm from London because everyone knows where it is, if I was to say Surrey, people are like oh right, near London.

Ok, last question, how important do you think sport is to a nation?

Massive. You've just got to look at the film Invictus, I don't know if you've seen it?

Yeh.

That shows how important it is, or can be, and how it can change a nation....??. And sport will bring people together, it will also divide people, but when you're team's on a winning streak it's going to be the biggest

thing in the world. Tim Henman, people will be like right we're watching Wimbledon, and everyone's English. Greg Rusedski, being a tennis player who's Canadian English. Sports always, people that watch sport are passionate about it so it's definitely something that will bring people together...?...People's interest, through what you are achieving and stuff.

How important is women's sport to a nation, to the idea of national identity?

I still think it's as important, like it's going to a sport which is a girls sport, but that's just how much media that gets but you know, using America as an example, like women's sport, women's football is massive over there and like the money they get over there and the funding and stuff like that, and the colleges and the universities and the funding. And it's the same, the French women's rugby team and the South African women's teams are actually quite unique in the way that they work and operates and stuff like that. For them being a woman in sport is actually potentially a way out of the life that they have, that's how important it is to them. And for us it's an honour and a privilege that we obviously earn the right to be a part of that. It's important to me as anything else I'd do, but then that's who I am, I'm a sportswoman.

Ok now we are going to talk about you playing rugby. When was your first senior England cap?

Against Spain for five minutes, last kick of the game, 2005.

Ok.

May 12th.

Very good! What did it feel like the first time, or describe what it felt like the first time you got selected to the squad.

Absolutely nerve-racking. My first cap was as a hooker, because the 3 other hookers in front of me were all injured.

So was that how it became that they wanted you to be a hooker?

Pretty much....but yeh it sort of happened, but the opportunity, there was injuries.

Ok, what does it feel like then, first going onto the pitch, not necessarily you're first game?

Hmm. Ok, so when you are selected for the squad, that means they consider you one of the top 22 players in the country. So when you are presented the shirt, regardless of whether it's your first cap or your hundredth cap, you know that you've done more than the thousands of people that play. And there are now thousands of other people that play. So I've done more than all of those people to have the right to have that shirt. And that's massive. As soon as you put it on, and you sing the national anthem, like. There's only one game where I got emotional, in terms of being upset, but...

When was that?

That was, I actually captained in the nations cup against South Africa, and I had been horrendously ill, I had one of my worst games. But it was still an emotional time, I had been given that privilege to lead the squad out. And that's what it is, every time you wear that shirt, you have to remember that while you do a 101 things to have that shirt, you might not get selected again, you may not play for two years. Three years, four years, and so every game you have to treat it as potentially your last. I'm in a position now where my target is the next world cup so 2014, and then I will be looking to spend another season with wasps and then retire. So every game I play now, every little niggle I now get because I'm now, without Garnett being in the squad the oldest player in the squad at 31. I have to be mindful that I am getting older, and although I'm.

Be a bit more careful?

Well I think it's difficult to say be more careful...

Look after yourself.

Yeh, to appreciate that ok, I'm probably going to need a massage, stuff like that, or start like, even if I'm not injured maybe going to see the physio just to check that everything is still aligned and all that stuff. And the position that I play, they say that for me in the scrum, it's the equivalent of having a car crash every time, because you've got the force of the other players, through your back and you know, when I stop playing I'll only be 34 I have potentially got another 40 or 50 years to live and I've got to live in the body that I'm in. So, it's about yeh, managing that, and just treasuring the opportunity that we have.

How important is the national anthem, to playing for England?

Smiles. I only smile because it's really funny when you go to tournaments or games and stuff, it depends which version they play. Sometimes they play the version that we know, which is one verse, two verses. Or they will play this extended version and we will be singing and the music will carry on, and we've got no more words! I think our anthem is powerful, and it is a massive part of what we are and that's the anthem we sing but, you know you hear the French anthem and you hear the Irish anthem, the Scottish anthem, and they're, everyone knows them as well. I still think it's massively important but it can be a bit, god, we don't know anymore words!

What are you thinking about when it's on, apart from, I really hope it's not the long one!

Laughs. Erm honestly not a lot, just I've got to be able to sing those words. I'm quite, I don't know really...

You don't get sentimental about it, at the time?

No, no, I don't think so. Before when I've been injured and I've watched other people singing it, but that's more because they've got your shirt on, that's when you start to feel a bit emotional because you're not there singing it. It does, it's still linked to what we do because that's how we start the game that's what gets us pumped up you know. It's part of the routine isn't it? You have to sing the anthem. And again we've been to tournaments where the decision was made that you weren't going to sing the anthem. I played England A and we were playing on the back pitch against Spain, it was an international but not a capped international, a friendly, and the decision was made that there was no way of playing either anthem so we sung it in the changing rooms, before we went out onto the pitch.

Oh really? Because it's part of the process?

Yep. People wanted to sing it, there was a need to sing it. We are England players, whether you are playing A team, U20s, the elite, you are an England player, you are putting that shirt on, therefore you expect to, that is an expectation that you will sing it. And it would be weird not to, because you are playing international rugby.

How important is the rose, to you?

I think it's got more important, and only, probably, only because, I don't know whether you know, the RFUW used to, we didn't have a rose before, we had a bud.

It's only when you joined?

Yeh it merged. Then we were allowed I guess, or the decision was made that we would then take on the rose. Whether that was a kit decision or, I don't know. I think, even with the bud that we used to call it, it

was still important, because then it was only going to be a certain amount of people wearing that kit. Not everyone has the, and I'm not just talking about the shirt but, we'd have specific kit that you would have as a player, you would have as a student player, that no one else would have. And all of that kit, the symbol on it, that means that you are a good player, you are representing your country at that level. It's like these rucksacks and stuff, again, they give them to us as part of our kit. There is definitely kit that we only get that you can't. Match socks you can't buy, you know. So you've got all of them and stuff like that.

What does it mean to you to be a woman playing for England, the England women's team.

I have a lot of pride and passion in what I do, but still sometimes I feel, there's still a point where you are still trying to justify why you are playing rugby, like, because of the, what people's perceptions are around it, and that it's not a women's game. And rugby, and this again will vary between sports, and rugby historically is an old boys' network and even at club level with wasps you're trying to break through or get through to the old boys of wasps that we are a good playing premier side and we deserve the respect that the men's sides, you know the men amateur's get, we deserve that if not more, because the level of players we have in the squad. Something that can help is the way we conduct ourselves and our achievements and stuff, but some of it is just stubbornness and trying to break through the barriers of what people think the women's game is. So to play and, especially the last few years, were we have had massive media attention and been on Sky. I mean Sky, our games on Sky, with all the cameras. Obviously we're playing well but it can't do anything but help having a Sky camera whizzing up and down and follow you down and do close ups and, it just makes it look more professional. If davo, our statsman, had a shaky camera, if that's realised as highlights? There is a difference between a sky covered game and your Sunday league.

So would you say it's improving, getting better slowly?

Oh yeh, yeh, yeh. 100 times.

The more you guys keep doing well?

Yeh, and the more media attention, the more options we get to play at Twickenham. There's still, you're never going to impress 100% of people but if you can impress the majority then that will help.

What was it like playing at Twickenham, in the game against New Zealand?

Oh, amazing. I don't really remember a great deal, like, I don't really, you can't hear the crowd, there was 10,000 people there. If I'd have known that I think I might have been a bit...

Laughs! Yeh.

10,000 people inside and something stupid like...or was that the world cup? The world cup there was like 250 countries all watching our game. It was some stupid stats. It's amazing. But yeh Twickenham, there was 10,000 people watching our game.

Had you guys played at Twickenham before then?

There had been opportunities, I had played but not for an international, I played there for super 4s. But yeh, some of the girls had. So yeh that was my first experience.

Would you say playing rugby for England has made you feel more English or aware of being English?

Erm, to a degree yeh, because, how I conduct myself can reflect on the England squad, so with the media and all of that type of stuff. So what I do at a weekend or at an England camp, or what we do you know, to celebrate a win or a victory, can either be a good positive representation of England women's rugby, or it can be a poor show of what we are.

Do you sort of follow England sport in general, like men's team?

Yeh, yeh, football probably more than rugby, but I like watch the highlights of the rugby and I go to Wasps and things like that, and watch the athletics. Didn't get any Olympic tickets which I'm a bit disappointed about.

Oh neither did I.

But if sport's on and we've got it then I'll watch it, or if we got the opportunity to go and see something then I'll go.

What about other women's sport?

I have been to the FA cup final a few times. I have been to see tennis. Yeh, I like sport anyway. I just like sport generally, if it's on and I've got the opportunity to go then I'd go.

What do you think the perception is of women's national teams, so you girls, the football girls, cricket, netball?

I think, when you are playing at that level, you'd hope the perception would be that it's higher than. So for instance, women's rugby, if we used women's rugby. If we asked anybody here now what would their perception be of women's rugby, it would be, short hair, gay, just not very good players. But we got so much feedback and positivity from the new Zealand game, the world cup. I think that perception has changed, not dramatically, but there's certainly, it's starting to. And it all helps. If you can change 2 in every 10 people, then hopefully their kids will play or, they will have a different opinion. Think it's schools and stuff who have a massive impact on how people go through life perceiving things, and how women's sport in school level is treated.

What do you think the impact of the media is on women's sport. DO you think it goes hand in hand with perceptions and improvements?

Yeh, it's got to be, it's like anything isn't it. However they choose to portray it is going to have an impact whether negative or positive. You know, they chose to take a picture of Paula Radcliffe in the gutter. They made the decision. Is that going to enhance the sport? No. What's it going to highlight? That she's doing a long marathon and she had to go to the loo. But then you've got like the picture of Kelly Holmes winning the 800m, and just the shock in her face, that's an amazing picture, so powerful. She obviously, at that point in time didn't believe that she'd won, and then she won it. I think however they chose to portray it, whether negative or positive is going to have an impact, so it's how we help portray it a bit better. So for example there was a national sevens tournament a few years ago now, and it was I think it was U17s or something like that. And it became page 4 in the Daily Mail, massive headline, 'neck injury, helicopter had to be flown in' and it did, a helicopter did have to land, but, like in any injury, any sports injury where it involves a neck, that's what happens, but it was girl's rugby. It was lots of people, created a media story and managed to, for whatever reason, got into the Daily Mail and the national press. The person was fine, so there was really, other than that, papers coming in, that was the picture and that's what they chose to make that story about. Rather than actually they had 60 odd teams there playing national 7s rugby, some of them would become internationals. Their 'pictation' of that was that it's going to be a neck injury and they shouldn't play rugby.

What is it like to captain your country?

Erm, a very surreal experience, in the sense that it then becomes on your shoulders. Not only have you got to play well, but the expectation you'll lead on the pitch, but then you have to make 101 decisions that you then don't know about. And I made a, well not a wrong decision, but in the South Africa game, we had a free kick, and I opted for a line out, but actually we should have...?,.. but that's my lack of knowledge. But it's just the buzz of people saying, 'oh you're the England captain today'. Isn't that massive? How many

other people can say they have captained England. Not many. Not many in the England squad that can say that. Yeh, and having the coaches trust that you can do that job is a big thing as well. I'm hoping that I might get a few more opportunities.

Ok, last one. If you could summarise what it meant for you to play for England, what it feels like?

I would say it would be one of the biggest achievements that I have, to date, and I really can't see me topping that. Having the opportunity to have done it, having been able to see so many places with it, and just being known as being a good prop and a good player, and people knowing me, because of who I am and what I do, and to a certain extent people fearing me. That's what I am, I'm an England player. So you, it's massive. Difficult to put into words, it will be with me forever, because that's what I am.

When it stops what will that feel like? Or do you not think about it?

I have thought about it, I've had to think about it because just as you say I've targeting 2014, but I honestly don't know., because everything I do from Sunday to a Sunday at the moment involves something of rugby whether it's training, playing, coaching, admin, that is what I am. Everything I do is revolved around rugby and it has done for the last 10 years. And for the past 3 or 4, its been built up to the world cup, and again at the moment we are on a plateau but from next year we start working up again. Next year, next summer will be the first summer we have had off, so we're not doing the nation's cup, we're not doing a tour, it will be the first summer a lot of us have had off in 8 years.

You can go on holiday for a change!

Yeh yeh. I mean I was fortunate this year, we did do a few holidays and stuff, the way it worked out I didn't think I was going to the Euro's but I did, we tagged on a holiday onto the end of the nations cup, but you have too otherwise you just won't do it. But it had, especially with the world cup cycle, you go from season to season, literally, and you're England preseason will start before club preseason, so, whereas everyone else is away you'll be going to camps, and you'll be doing fitness and stuff. But next summer, we will not be!

Thank you very much!