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A comparison of two television news items shown on Belgian television, one on Italian female soccer fans and one on Turkish female soccer fans, provides good examples of verbal and visual representations of "Italianness" and "Turkishness" in sports reporting. Part of a larger corpus of media messages concerning the Euro 2000 soccer championships, this chapter also analyses conversations from focus group interviews where these news items were shown to both male and female Italians and Turks living in Belgium.

Key words:

Italianness
migration
soccer
television
Turkishness
**Introduction**

We are mainly concerned with sport as an expression and symbol of collective identity in this book […] However first it is worth noting briefly that sport can be argued to play a formative rather than simply an expressive role in relation to human identity at the personal and collective level. Also this formative role can be interpreted in normative as well as explanatory terms: that is, as helping to provide criteria for evaluating the progressive and humanistic character of modern culture and society as well as helping to explain features of modernity (Roche, 1998: 4-5).

The sociology of sports springs from the assumption that sport can be seen as an indication of social developments. The idea that sport is a “mirror of society” can be considered a key idea in this particular type of sociological thinking. There is, however, also a second perspective, focusing on the formative role of sports, as explained by Maurice Roche. This chapter integrates these two perspectives, applying them to a specific case-study of female soccer fans. It means making these perspectives somewhat more narrow, because the expressive and formative relationships between sports and society cannot be studied as such, unless one is determined to stay on a very theoretical level. In Roche’s *Sport, popular culture and identity*, the study of identity issues is the main concern; this chapter goes even further in narrowing down the study perspective, analysing the role of gender and national identities during soccer tournaments, and focusing on two empirical mass communication examples that are a part of the media coverage of the Euro 2000 soccer tournament on Belgian television.

This focus on two specific examples could be considered a disadvantage from a certain methodological perspective. While systematic survey could give a picture of broad tendencies in a certain corpus of media materials, it is argued that a lot of useful information gets lost. Norman Fairclough (1995: 15) gives a very useful summary of this debate:

> It is true that analysis of language tends to get very detailed about very few texts […] But analysis of language has certain advantages over other forms of analysis. […] Texts provide usually temporary and short-lived ways of resolving the dilemmas into which people are put by the tensions and contradictions which frame those texts. Textual
analysis can give access to the detailed mechanisms through which social contradictions evolve and are lived out, and sometimes subtle shifts they undergo.

Fairclough gives many concrete examples. He is using material from newspapers as well as from audiovisual sources, but in the audiovisual examples the role of visuals remains somewhat underanalysed. This could be seen as an example of a general trend in media analysis: “[T]he fact remains that when focusing upon news media mass communication researchers have tended to concentrate upon properties of written and verbal language, while paying little if any attention to accompanying visuals. It is in language that messages and meanings are thought principally to reside” (Cottle, 1998: 189). Sports coverage is often not considered a part of news media mass communication as such, because it contains elements of other genres than news, like entertainment and drama (Whannel, 1992; O’Connor & Boyle, 1993). But the emphasis in newspapers analysis is certainly as strong in research on sportsjournalism (e.g. Da Silva Costa, 1989; Blain & O’Donnell, 1999; Maguire, Poulton & Possamai, 1999) as it is in research on more conventional news media. Most sports studies are based exclusively on newspaper data. Newspapers remain of course important in their agenda-setting functions, but one cannot deny the growing influence of television in contemporary media culture (Leurdijk, 1999). So the focus here is on television examples, integrating visual dimensions in the analysis.

Two methods are combined: The first, a discourse analysis of the examples, is an application of the method advocated by researchers such as Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995, 1998) and Van Dijk (1983, 1998), in combination with elements from visual semiotics (Cottle, 1998; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). To broaden the validity of these research findings, a second method is used, following the advise of Gemma Penn (2000: 242) in this respect: “In order to assess the extent and use of socially shared cultural knowledges within a given group of people, semiotics may be combined with some form of interactive data gathering. Focus groups or interviews are the obvious choice, and the interviewer’s job will be to focus participants’ attention on the material without leading their responses.” (2000: 242) Following in the tradition of so-called “reception analysis” (Morley, 1981; Liebes & Katz, 1993), focus groups were used whereby television examples were shown to different audience groups.
In this chapter, material will be used from four interview groups: Turkish and Italian male and female migrants living in Belgium. The choice for these groups was motivated by the content of the television examples. Both examples represent female soccer fans living in Belgium, but cheering for the soccer team of the country where they or their parents once lived, before they migrated to Belgium.

Two problematic identity conflicts come together in these examples. The first one has to do with national identity. The migrants represented in these audiovisual examples and interviewed in these focus groups have a double attachment as far as national identity is concerned: they live in Belgium, but they also have connections with Italy or Turkey. The second problematic identity has to do with gender. Sport and sports talk can be considered a male-dominated discourse, a “unique window into the psyche of men” (Fuller, 1999: 162). For a team sport, like soccer, this is even more true:

The individual achievements of women athletes may be of great media significance, but at the level of team sports, where the source of pride is collectivized, women are denied the status of bearers of national qualities that the media and the apparatus of the state conventionally accord to men. This is usually even the case when women represent national teams, as is demonstrated by the contrasting coverage and fanfare concerning the male-only Davis and female-only Federation Cups in tennis. In short, heroines may enunciate desirable qualities of femininity, but that significatory power rarely extends to the domain of the team, the group of like-minded and –bodied representatives of national pride. (Rowe, McKay & Miller, 1998: 126).

Focusing on female fans shows a contradiction between male discourse and female reactions to it. By analysing these two media examples, one can zoom in on the role of sports and sports media as mirrors of society and as a factors potentially contributing to social change - the expressive and formative dimension, in Roche’s terminology. In particular two rhetorics of “othering” (Riggins, 1997) are given attention: the othering of women and the othering of
migrants. Before describing the empirical materials, or understanding the empirical examples, some contextualization on the history of immigration in Belgium is needed.

Migration in Belgium

It would be impossible to give all the details concerning the history of immigration to Belgium here, but some elements that are necessary to make sense of both empirical examples are described as background.

After world war II, the Belgian economy had to be reconstructed. Amongst other problems, there was an urgent need for labour power; to fulfill this need the Belgian government started campaigns in foreign countries to make Belgium interesting as an immigration destination. Another dimension of this immigration policy involved bilateral treaties with other countries to ensure systematic immigration (Michielsens, 1991; Morelli & Schreiber, 1999).

Italy, as an example, had to deal with the social and economic consequences of 20 years of fascist policy and ten years of war, so for many Italians it turned out to be a good idea to emigrate to Belgium to escape from problems of their impoverished home country. Italy became a major immigration country in the period 1945-1955. From 1956 onwards, the Italian immigration in Belgium diminished, because of two reasons (Michielsens, 1991) The first dealt with the poor safety conditions for Italian people working in Belgium. The Italian government had already complained about this situation, but nevertheless a huge accident happened in 1956, making immigrating to Belgium less attractive. Another dimension was the economic integration between some European countries that was created by a treaty in 1957 (‘The Treaty Establishing the European Community’). That meant that organized campaigns to create immigration were no longer possible between Italy and Belgium. Individuals became able to choose their new home countries, which also diminished Italian immigration.

The sixties were, from an economic point of view, extremely successful in Belgium, meaning that there was a need to continue the immigration policy to make sure that there was enough labour power. Mainly Moroccan and Turkish immigrants were attracted to fill this gap. When economic conditions began getting worse, in the seventies, immigration lost its impact as a policy strategy.
Nowadays, almost ten percent of the Belgian population has a foreign official identity. But, due to naturalization and the adoption of Belgian nationality, the number of people with foreign connections can be considered as 25% of the population (Morelli & Schreiber, 1999). The Italian and the Turkish community are considered two important communities, forming a part of the broader immigrant community in Belgium.

In the mass media coverage of the Euro 2000 soccer tournament, quite naturally, both immigration communities became particularly interested because there were “Belgium-Italy” and “Belgium-Turkey” games on the tournament schedule. The choice for these two countries as a case-study is thus rather coincidental, but these two countries clearly represent the two main types of immigrants in Belgium.

As has been already mentioned, there is an historical difference between Southern European immigrants, like Italian immigrants, and immigrants from Turkey (and Morocco). They belong to two different historical “immigration waves,” but the difference between both communities could be considered more influential than only a difference in historical background. There are important differences between the way these two communities are “constructed” in contemporary everyday and mass media discourses in Belgium, as will be discussed here.

In the empirical examples, these two discursive constructions are compared by using two contemporary examples. It may be interesting, however, to make a link between the history of immigration and the history of the discourse on immigration and immigration communities. At first, the immigrants coming from Southern Europe were seen as a threat to society, but when the immigrants from Morocco and Turkey came to Belgium, they gradually replaced the role of the Southern Europeans as threatening foreigners. Dienke Hondius (1999) calls this the “succession hypothesis”, a phenomenon she recognized in her study of intercultural marriages in the Netherlands since 1945, where partners from Spanish or Italian backgrounds were more easily accepted once there were also potential Moroccan or Turkish partners in Dutch society, who could be considered even more threatening. Although there are some differences between the position of immigrants in the Netherlands and in Belgium, their history of immigration waves is quite comparable.

The Belgian sociologist Marc Swyngedouw has written: “By the end of the 1980s very few people would think of categories other than Turks and Moroccans when mention was made of
‘the migrants’. In fact about 80 per cent of the population was making this link” (Swyngedouw, 1995: 335). The Belgian anthropologist Eugeen Roosens (1997, 1998) has made a similar observation, explaining this by referring to the history of the European Union. The tendency towards economic and political integration in Europe makes Southern Europeans our fellow citizens, and Turkish and Moroccan people do not form a part of this process, although being a part of Europe is very much a political issue in Turkey.

This very brief sketch of the social and discursive history of different immigrant communities gives some elementary background knowledge to understanding the empirical examples. One further remark should be made: an essential feature of the Belgian state and Belgian society is that it is bicultural and bilingual. Since there are two languages, there are also different television programmes for each of the two communities. The two examples chosen here were broadcast in the northern, Dutch speaking part. One is made by a Flemish public broadcasting company, making programmes for the entire northern part of Belgium (“VRT”). The other is produced by a Flemish regional broadcasting Union (“RTV”). The fact that these are examples from the Flemish, Dutch speaking, northern part can have some influence on the way Belgian attitudes are represented, because, as research shows (Martiniello, 1994: 172-182; Maddens, Billiet & Beerten, 1999: 310-311), the French speaking, southern, Walloon part of Belgium tends to be less xenophobic.

**Some methodological remarks**

These both items are in Dutch language. To analyse this two items, a system of analysis described by Deacon, Pickering, Golding and Murdock was adopted:

We thus proceed from (1) identifying shot, which is mainly useful for reference purposes; to (2) a consideration of framing, which is concerned mainly with the technical codes of television camerawork; to (3) attending to what substantively is in the scene, its visual semiosis as opposed – at least analytically – to the form given to it by the technical framing of the camerawork; and finally to (4) transcribing what is said by the source indicated by the person(s) identified in the scene. (Deacon, Pickering, Golding and Murdock, 1999: 227)
These transcriptions are analysed using the methodology of critical discourse analysis: “The theoretical foundations of critical discourse analysis are based on perspectives that see the relations of words and truth highly tenuous and problematic. Any form of writing is considered to be a selection, an interpretation and a dramatization of events.” (Riggins, 1997: 2) It means paying close attention to the linguistic structure of the text. But as these are audiovisual texts, an additional focus on visual semiotics is included.

Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt summarize the epistemology of discourse analysis as follows: “The key epistemological assumption involved is the contention that language, speech and writing can never be fully referential” (1993: 485). To turn this epistemology into a methodology one has to look at the linguistic structures. These structures can be divided in three types: vocabulary, grammar and larger textual structures (Fairclough, 1989: 110-111). One has to look at how the use of these linguistic elements creates a certain meaning in the text.

To fully grasp the meaning of audiovisual texts, the same critical attitude has to be used in evaluating the visual dimension. This requires a special research attitude since visual representations are basically iconic signs, i.e. signs whereby the relationship between signifier and signified is based on the quality of being like:

With photographs the denotative properties or qualities are foregrounded and connotation is repressed. An iconic sign stridently acclaims its ‘thereeness’ but is remarkably silent about its ‘howness’. Because it offers an apparently palpable, objective reality, it is capable both of invisibly reinforcing the symbolic, the mythic and of rendering the symbolic or mythic invisible (Deacon, Pickering, Golding en Murdock, 1999: 189).

Since there are 65 shots involved, the application of the above mentioned transcription system results in 65 pages of material to be analysed. The first example, representing female Italian fans, contains 32 camera shots. The second example, representing female Turkish fans, contains 33 shots. It is impossible to give a detailed discussion of all the linguistic and discursive mechanisms that can be discovered on these code sheets. Instead of that, some of the most interesting findings will be mentioned.
Along with these findings, some findings from the reception analysis setting will be discussed. Both audiovisual items were shown on video to interview groups giving their reactions on the media messages shown. The four groups were selected by snowball sample via migrant organizations in Belgium. According to the psychology of group interviews (Hansen, 1998; Livingstone and Lunt, 1996), the number of members of these groups has to be between 6 and 10, to obtain the most productive interaction between group members. Although the actual number of participants varied, the range of variation was determined by this rule.

The optimal number of focus groups to discuss a topic varies between three and five (Morgan and Scannell, 1998). In this research project, four focus groups were organised. This was a good number, because each combination of the two relevant identities could be included in the research design:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National identity</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Female Italians</td>
<td>Male Italians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Female Turks</td>
<td>Male Turks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again following standard focus group methodology (Morgan and Scannell, 1998), these groups were internally homogenous, so group members could reflect on their shared social and cultural conditions. The interviews were organised in a setting where the interviewees were feeling at home. The Turkish men were interviewed in their own soccer club, and the Italian men in their own soccer fan club. The Turkish girls gave their reactions in their own club house. The interview with the Italian girls took place in the living room of the house of one of the Italian women who participated.

It would be impossible to describe all the relevant information from these interviews, so some highlights will be discussed, along with the most interesting findings from the textual approach.
The case of Italian-Belgians and soccer

The first empirical example is an item broadcast on the 30th June, 2000 on the regional broadcasting company “RTV” in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Here, we see female Italian fans shouting at their heroes, the Italian soccer players, who are not only seen as sporting heroes, but are also adored for their beautiful appearance. Some interviews with these young women let them express their feelings towards these Italian athletes.

The fact that there is a lot of enthusiasm for these Italian players, filmed in these Flemish television shots while they are in training, is made more visible by the verbal and visual intervention of the mass media. Many close-ups of these Italian girls create a suggestion of intimacy (Berger, 1991; Cottle, 1998). On the contrary, male fans are portrayed using more long distance camera shots, so they can’t be considered as the object of an intruding gaze. The close-up can be recognized in the portrayal of the male players, seen as objects of the desire of the Italian female fans. The specific “passionate” media frame which is enhanced by these camera techniques is further enlarged by the soundtrack, such as in the song “Ti Amo” (“I love you” in Italian) as background, so viewers are invited to feel along with these Italian girls and their passions. The verbal voice-over commentaries further facilitate the tendency towards this “passionate” media frame. The remark that “Italian soccer in itself can be beautiful, but for the true supporter it has a lot more to offer” (a remark made by a Flemish television reporter), suggests that the appearance of passionate people, especially female fans, adds extra value to the experience of watching Italian soccer games.

A further, linguistic, element that contributes to the construction of this passionate media frame is the use of Italian words in this Flemish television item. In advertising research the process whereby language is used to communicate something more than just information is well documented (Haarmann, 1984; Chesire and Moser, 1994; Kelly-Holmes, 2000). Kelly-Holmes explains this process quite well:

In current intercultural advertising in Europe, languages are used not for their communicative function (what could be termed their utility value) nor any of the other established functions of language in advertising communication, for example persuasion
or hyperbole. Instead, it is their symbolic function that has come to have the greater value. Thus, it is unimportant whether the advertisee understands the foreign word in an advertisement, so long as it calls up the cultural stereotype of the country with which the language is associated. We have therefore, in Marx’s terms, ‘form without content’. Language in intercultural advertising has become fetished, imbued with value, existing as a thing in its own.(2000: 67)

One can observe something similar in this particular example of sports journalism. Expressions as “Ti amo”, “tifosi” (“fans” in Italian”) and “squadra azzura” (which means something like “the blue team”, referring to the colour of the shirts of the Italian players), are used by Flemish television reporters, and this particular form of language helps to create an “Italian” atmosphere, adding an extra element to the atmosphere already created by the camera techniques.

How can one make sense of this process of stereotyping? This identification of a stereotype, is not something that has been made up by the Flemish television reporters. The “spectacle of heroic masculinity,” as Eduardo Archetti (1999) calls it, is a well known and recurrent theme in the experience of sports and sports fans, and Italians are surely eager to participate. Furthermore, art, beauty and the cult of appearance are not only stereotypes used by foreign countries to make a judgement on Italy and Italians, but are, in fact, also an important dimension of the way Italians understand themselves (Gundle, 2000). As Hans Verstraeten (1998) remarks, the study of stereotyping tends to focus on the stereotyping of a culture by another culture, and the process whereby a culture creates stereotypes concerning its own identity is by and large neglected.

This stereotype of Italian and Italian female soccer fans in Belgium can thus be considered not too harmful, because it is not only a heterostereotype (imposed on a culture by other cultures), but also an autostereotype (a stereotype supported by the culture itself). A further dimension mitigating this stereotype is that it could be considered a positive one. Stereotypes could be defined as “a conception of a group composed of a set of simplified existential beliefs” (Davis, 1978:47). Nothing in this definition excludes a positive stereotype, although the process of stereotyping is often considered to be mainly negative. And a stereotypical connotation of passion and enthusiasm can hardly be considered negative.
However, this representation deserves further analysis. An important remark that should be made is that these female fans shown here are migrants or, more likely, daughters from Italian migrants, and this stereotype is thus constructed as a part of a discourse on immigration. It is not only a discourse on sports fans, but also a discourse on the position of a particular immigrant community in Belgium. Norman Fairclough remarks (1995: 102): “Both selections amongst available discourses and selection of particular ways of articulating them together are likely to be ideologically significant choices.”

By using only the ingredients of textual analysis, one cannot determine for sure whether this combination of two discourses, on Italian sports fans and on immigrant communities in Belgium, is in fact a correct interpretation of media messages, which is why the additional data, from focus group interviews, are a useful source. After having seen this stereotypical item, a Turkish male migrant remarked that this television image could not be considered a good image of what Italians are like, in his opinion:

Hassan: “Look at that song, that song on romance, love, you know,... The media are playing a very big role in this. If they are going to interview Turkish soccer fans, they will never interview girls while playing a romantic song. They will do it in another way. I guess, in a more brutal way. I don’t think it will be as romantic. While in the Italian “Serie A” (the first league in Italian soccer) you can possibly find the biggest hooligans, you know. The media are to blame for this.”

In the focus groups there was a consensus on the fact that this stereotypical passionate media frame is not only Italian, but it is put forward as an image of Italy. Also Italians tend to agree on that. Italians do recognize themselves in the passionate and enthusiastic image that is given of them. The Italian women also recognize this, although the women in my interview group themselves were not huge fans, but they did know other female fans, also Belgians from an Italian origin, who are. They did emphasize, however, that the male Italians were the most enthusiastic about soccer, which the interviews confirmed. One woman told me, for example, that her husband, when visiting the Italian players during Euro 2000 training, had his identity card signed by Alessandro Del Pierro, the Italian star player.
The interviews made clear that soccer can still be considered a predominantly male territory, but the passion of the female Italian fans was recognized as being realistic, even if the female Italian fans were mostly interested in the physical appearances of the soccer players. An Italian-Belgian woman, when asked why she liked Del Pierro, that she liked him because he was beautiful, and, after pausing a while, also because he can play soccer. In discourse analysis, the first mentioned idea is interpreted as being more important than the idea that is expressed later on in a text (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1998). Of course, this is also a form of autostereotyping at the level of gender stereotypes, because the young woman gives her personal opinion, but it was the interviewer employed by the media who made the choice to interview someone who clearly was fascinated by other dimensions of the soccer game, apart from the sportive dimension.

From a feminist viewpoint, this item on Italian female fans could be considered an item that has male chauvinist connotations. From a cultural viewpoint, it could be seen as a rather positive stereotyping process, because it contains references to warmth, emotion, and passion, which are not bad characteristics. However, also from a cultural viewpoint, this remains an “othering” perspective. The Dutch anthropologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse writes that the relationship between northern and southern cultures is fundamentally ambivalent (1990: 172) The southern cultures are seen to be more bodily oriented, and to be in a closer relationship with their primitive emotions. These cultures are thus less rational, and in a way inferior to the northern cultures. This ambivalence can be seen as sexual openness and spontaneity on the one hand and as aggression and irrationality on the other. This representation of Italian female fans is an example of the open and spontaneous level of ambivalence.

The position of southern European immigrants in Belgian society is thereby mirrored in this particular example of mass media coverage of sporting behaviour. The Southern European migrants are seen as different, but harmless. It can be argued that this particular media message is merely expressive. It is formative because it is reproducing an existing stereotype, and social reproduction is a key part of social reality, but is not formative, as far this concept means that it contributes to social or discursive change. It does not contain a new vision on the organization of social reality.

The Turkish respondents recognized the enthusiasm and the passion of this Mediterranean soccer fan behavior. In their opinion, this could be also considered a key characteristic of Turkish
fan behavior; but, as a Turkish woman fan remarked, “The key difference is that they [Italian women] are accepted, and we [Turkish women] are not.” One can get a broader view on the difference between Italian and Turkish women in the next section, which discusses the structure and reception of media messages on Turkish women in Belgium, cheering for the Turkish national side.

The case of Turkish-Belgians and soccer

Next is a comparison of the representation of Italian female fans with the representation of Turkish female fans, a broadcast on the 19th of June, 2000 on the VRT. While these two media examples were not particularly designed to be compared, and are not the result of experimental research design, their circumstances are identical, except for national identity of the interviewees. These two fragments contain many elements that are a part of broader discourses on sport and migrant fan behavior.

The reporter who announced this item on Turkish female soccer fans said that the combination of women and soccer can be considered to be one, even more when the women are Turkish. This means that Turkish women are considered as standing outside of the sports discourse, and thus, in as far as sports is part of social reality, outside society. This is quite another frame, compared to the one used in the Italian example. We hear a romantic Italian song, framing the Italian female fans in a very recognizable stereotype. Turkish women, on the contrary, seem to be less easy to be given a profile. Linguistically, this problem of recognition is reflected by the fact that we do not hear any Turkish words. Italian words are used in Dutch language, to evoke Italian stereotypes, but for the Turkish language a comparable linguistic pattern is not available.

This does not mean that Turkish women do not exist in Belgian discourse. A lot of exotic cultures could have very particular characteristics that may not be known in Belgium or in the West in general, because the only way to get to know them could be by reading specialized anthropological publications. This is clearly not true for Turkish women. As women wearing a headscarf, a symbol related to their Muslim religion, they are very recognizable. This headscarf is also the object of a lot of public discussions. Should it be allowable in public settings, such as
educational settings? It does not seem that easy to make a link between this visual image and the discourse on sports fan behavior.

However, watching television on the 19th of June, 2000, we see women wearing headscarves, talking about their soccer preferences. This can be seen as a strategic visualization. The stereotype of women wearing headscarves is that they are not allowed to speak, but this media item gives them the right to speak for themselves, which is in a way unusual, because Turks are often stereotyped as being rather patriarchal in their gender relations.

Looking at the interviews by reception analysis, Turkish men and women alike say that sporting fan behavior for Turkish people is something experienced by both of them, although men tend to be somewhat more fanatic. So, giving a voice to Turkish women to talk on sports matters is not that exceptional as this media message could suggest, because they do indeed participate in the sports fan experience. This media message was an attempt to create a more positive image of Turkish women. When I interviewed Turkish women who were also interviewed on television, they recognized that this media message could be seen as an attempt to create a positive image. In their opinion, it was a succesful attempt, and they said that they appreciated that in the editing, the things they said that could be seen as more problematic were omitted.

The possibility of problematic answers has to do with Turks’ position in Belgian society. Because they are not very accepted, and sometimes confronted with racism, it is important for their community to be careful and watch what they say, because their opinions could be interpreted as a sign that they are not willing to integrate in Belgian society. Because their position in Belgian society is problematic, the discussion of their fan behavior can be the same. Although they still support Turkish teams, they say they are very happy to live in Belgium. In the audiovisual media message with the Italian women, this was not an issue. For Italian migrants it is not problematic. If they choose to prefer the Italian team, they are our fellow Europeans. But Turkish people need to explain themselves. Their presence in Belgian society is not that easily accepted.

This problem with being accepted is also clear when one compares the interpretation of the Turkish headscarf in the Turkish interviews with this interpretation in the Italian interviews. Wearing a headscarf is tought to be a personal choice, which has to do with personal religious conviction. Turkish men and women report agreeing on this in interviews, but Italian men and
women do not always see it that way. Sometimes they see the headscarf as a personal choice, but sometimes they see it as a visual symbol of resistance against being a part of Belgian society. This opinion is even more prevalent, when Belgian autochtonous citizens are interviewed on the same topic. It means that there is a meaningful difference on the way this visual symbol, shown in this particular item on sports fan behaviour, can be interpreted. The “outsiders” see it as a symbol of personal identity, the “insiders” as a symbol with another meaning altogether.

In this television example, there are three Turkish women having the opportunity to explain themselves and giving their personal opinion on soccer. They give detailed and personal accounts of their situation and the implied ambivalence of being bicultural. Theo Van Leeuwen (2001: 96) made a visual analysis of a picture with three immigrant women wearing headscarves, walking in the same direction, reading: “The three women […] not only look similar but also all walk in the same direction and are angled towards the viewer in more or less the same way. This reinforces the ‘they are all the same effect’ that constitutes generalization.” This generalization effect is clearly absent in the audiovisual example, because these three women express very personal opinions. One of them does not wear a headscarf and the ones who do not present themselves as being fundamentalist. Nevertheless, some people who saw this example in a reception analysis research setting make comments on it, as if wearing a headscarf was a symbol of being resistant to being integrated into Belgian society.

The Italians who expressed these opinions are particular interesting. At the level of ethnic identification, they prefer the Italian soccer team above the Belgian team. This orientation is the same as that of the Turkish migrants, who preferred the Turkish team over the Belgian one. At least this was the orientation in these focus groups. Survey research among second generation immigrant youngsters in the Netherlands, a country with a comparable immigration history, pointed towards similar results (Phalet, Van Lotringen & Entzinger, 2000), although the questions asked in that survey were more general, and not specifically related to soccer. Only exceptionally did immigrants prefer the host country above the country of origin. An example of the latter situation was found in a research project whereby highly educated Turks living in Belgium were interviewed to give their opinions on their relation to Belgian monarchy (Gilissen, 2002). Higher education in the host country might be a factor contributing towards changes in national identification, but in general immigrants in Belgium tend to prefer their country of origin.
At the level of identification, one can see a resemblance between Turkish and Italian immigrants, but at the level of integration, the Italian immigrants consider themselves to be more integrated. The example on the headscarf proves this. As an Italian immigrant said in an interview: “We consider ourselves to be first class immigrants.” This difference between Italian and Turkish fans can also be found in another discussion: there is a certain association between Turkish fans and violence, and not entirely based on racism. There have been some problems with Turkish immigrants who got into trouble during the Euro 2000 soccer tournament, largely because of provocations by English hooligans. But the discursive relevance of the violence topic exceeds the relevance of this topic in real life. This panic on violence is also to be found in interviews with Italian immigrants, echoing the Belgian common sense, or at least the common sense in the northern part of Belgium.

Conclusions

This chapter gave an overview of the social and discursive history of Italian and Turkish immigrants in Belgium, regarding their media reactions to soccer. We illustrated this history with two examples, one on Italian immigrants and one on Turkish immigrants. The focus used was a comparison of two interviews in the mass media, the first one an interview with Italian female soccer fans living in Belgium, and the second one an interview with Turkish female soccer fans there. These interviews were also shown to focus groups, in which Italian and Turkish men and women participated.

The results of this research project showed clear differences between both communities. The Italian female fans were portrayed as being very enthusiastic and passionate. This passion was also an element which was recognized by the Turkish fans in the focus groups as being typical of their fan behavior. However, this unproblematic passion was not an element of the media portrayal for the Turkish women. In the audiovisual example with Turkish female fans, the intention was to give them a voice and the opportunity to speak; whereas they are mostly not allowed to speak because of being influenced by a discourse that treats them as irrational and aggressive. The Italian example could be seen as merely expressive of an existing social situation, whereas the Turkish example is the product of an attempt by media professionals to play a formative role, giving a voice to people who are often voiceless. It has to be said, tough,
that at the level of the reception of this message, many Flemish people, and also Italians, do not pick up this intended message.

The position of immigrant women in Belgium can be problematic. Women tend to play an inferior role in discourses on sport, but this becomes even more clear when womanhood is combined with a position that has a low ranking in an ethnic hierarchy. In this chapter, the analysis has not included the traditional gender stereotyping processes, based on male superiority in the sports discourse; instead, it looked at some additional stereotyping processes that immigrant women have to face. The Italian women are portrayed as being exotic and passionate, the Turkish women as hidden behind a veil and voiceless, although the audiovisual example discussed has to be seen as an attempt to change this. Nevertheless, all these women have to face a triple inferiority: as women in society, as being of secondary importance in the sports discourse itself, and as being of immigrant origin. This means that to get a better position they should benefit from three processes of social emancipation. Obviously, sports journalism cannot be held responsible for this macrosociological state of affairs. Nevertheless, it can play a formative role. Stephen Harold Riggins explains this very well:

Critical discourse analysis should not be seen as an indictment of individual journalists, who operate within larger discourses that transcend them. Nevertheless, journalists can contribute unwittingly to the marginalization and denigration of Others. [...] A better understanding of the way in which discourses operate might contribute to more efficient self-monitoring on the part of journalists, who constantly are asked to write about groups to which they do not belong. (1997: 25-26)

In this chapter the connections between some television examples and the discourses on gender, national identity and immigration were explored. Studies on the significance of these connections have an important function in increasing the awareness of their existence, and in assessing the role of verbal and visual language in it.
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*Representations of Female Soccer Fans from Mediterranean Cultures and the Rhetoric of 'Othering': A Discourse- and Reception-analytic Approach.*

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