

initiative of the Spanish FA, bringing together the league champions of France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The Latin Cup was played over a four year cycle, each summer in one of the four participating countries (Relaño, 2005, p. 23).

Thus, the foundation of the European Cup can be seen as yet another symptom of the need to close the wounds left by two devastating wars on the European continent. One should not lose sight, however, of the fact that the main objective of such a competition was to decide, on the football pitch, the supremacy of one country over the others. There is a twofold dynamic in the creation of the European Cup. On the one hand, there is an undeniable integrating effort to create a supranational football competition. On the other hand, national championships were maintained and clubs represented their own national FA when competing in the European Cup. The resilience of the nation-state in football terms is well portrayed in the well established one member-one vote decision making mechanism maintained by both FIFA and UEFA since their creation.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is well plausible to argue that the favourable climate towards European integration could have influenced the decision to create the European Cup. However, our content analysis of the press reveals no mention at all to the political agenda of the time. The thematic analysis reveals a total lack of mention to the European integration process. A possible explanation to this finding is methodological. It is of course possible that our search, quite restricted and focused on discourse around Real Madrid and particular matches, has missed the wider picture. However, it is necessary to remind that the main focus of this research (and this chapter) is the discourse and the perception of Real Madrid's victories. This chapter contributes to wider research within the FREE Project on collective football memory. Thus, references to the European integration process would need deeper references to the socio-political context of the time and, naturally, a wider research effort that is outside the scope of this chapter. Finally, it is also necessary to point out that this chapter has focused on two countries (Spain and the United Kingdom) that were extremely peripheral to the European integration process in the late 1950s. The United Kingdom only joined the European Communities in 1973 and Spain even later, in 1986. Moreover,