

# *Handbook of Race and Ethnicity in Sport*

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## Chapter 11: Racism and European Football

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In July 2015, the FC Ufa and ex-Arsenal player, Emmanuel Frimpong was sent off for reacting to Spartak Moscow fans who were aiming racist chants at him throughout the game. Three years earlier, members of the Landsrona fan-group at Zenit St Petersburg wrote an open letter to the club stating that they should not sign 'dark-skinned players' or 'sexual minorities'. Despite media stories to the contrary, these episodes are not unique to Russia or Eastern Europe. In January 2013, Kevin-Prince Boateng, AC Milan's Ghanaian midfielder walked off the pitch in a friendly match against Pro Patria. He had received sustained racist abuse and was supported by his teammates in his decision to leave the field. These small numbers of examples demonstrate the pervasiveness of racism in football across Europe. Yet these events do not only take place in the football stadium. The British anti-racism organisation Kick It Out released findings into racism in English football in May 2015. Not only did they reveal that racism continues to be a major problem in English football, they demonstrated how it was finding new mediums of expression. Social media in particular was frequently used to target players. Mario Balotelli received over 8000 abusive tweets, half of which included racist abuse. Frequently, the fans are the focus of the authorities and media. It would be a fallacy to argue that these attitudes do not occur elsewhere in the football hierarchy, particularly given the paucity of non-white players in administration and coaching across Europe. Indeed, details of text messages sent between former Cardiff City manager Malky Mackay and his sporting director Iain Moody showed how racist language was used to denigrate players and agents.

What these examples show is how pervasive racism is in European football. As the demographic constitution of European nations has changed with greater migration, this has

been reflected in the composition of football teams. This rapidly changed after the passing of the Bosman ruling in 1995. Jean-Marc Bosman played for SRC Liège in the Belgian first division. His contract expired and he wanted to sign for Dunkerque in France. Liège refused to sanction the move after there was a disagreement over transfer fees. Bosman was forced to train with the reserve team and had his wages reduced. With the support of FIFPro, the players' union, Bosman successfully challenged the Belgian football federation's regulations that permitted this situation. The European Court of Justice saw this as a restriction on the movement of workers, in contravention of EU law. After the Bosman ruling, players were free to move between EU countries and permitted to move at the end of their contract without a transfer fee imposed. This coincided with a dramatic economic transformation of European football. New television deals and corporate sponsorship packages dramatically increased the income of clubs who then purchased a range of star players from across the globe. The makeup of teams across Europe dramatically changed.

Despite these changes, racism has been part of European football for decades. The Imperial and Colonial histories of European nations witnessed players from across Empires playing in early football matches. The conflation of nationhood and race in the late nineteenth century had an impact on sport. Clearly this reached its nadir between the World Wars when Nationalist ideology explicitly excluded those who did not conform to the notion of *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship by bloodline. Jews, gypsies and non-nationals were excluded from sports clubs and national teams. Despite this ideology, rules were flexible. Mussolini permitted South American born footballers with Italian families to play for the Italian World Cup winning teams for 1934 and 1938 (Martin, 2004). Since the 1970s European legislatures have introduced equality laws to tackle structural racism. Yet it should not be assumed that making racism illegal automatically stops the practice of this phenomenon. As previously noted, racism still occurs in football across Europe. As a result, charities and organisations like Kick It Out in England and Never Again in Poland have been established to raise awareness of the problem and campaign to remove racism from the sport. This chapter locates racism in European football and shows how focus has been on racism from fans, but not in the hierarchies of the game. It also outlines the anti-racism organisations who have campaigned tirelessly to try and eradicate racism from football.

## Racism and European Football

In his essay, 'The Sporting Spirit', George Orwell traced the rise of competitive sports to the rise of nationalism. "Serious sport", Orwell argued, "has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting". Orwell's analysis correctly focussed on the negative and divisive aspects of football. It divides teams into rival teams of winners and losers. It also acts a vehicle for various forms of identity. Since the nineteenth century, football has been a ritual that permits people to perform their local and national identities through symbolic victory over rivals (Dunning et al; Hargreaves; Collins). The roots can be traced back before the sport became codified. Localised identity in Italy manifested itself in the intra-city rivalries displayed in the *palio* in Siena, *palio marinario* in Livorno and the violent football game of *calcio fiorentino* in Florence (Doidge 2015a; 2015b). Indeed, hooligan rivalries have been formed through the symbolic violence of masculine fan groups gaining superiority over opponents (Armstrong, 1997; Dunning et al; Spaiij; Doidge, 2015a).

Although nationalism is important in understanding racial and ethnic difference in football, it is not the only answer. A growth in localism during the 1970s and 1980s across Europe has also contributed to a heightened sense of localised identity in football (King, 2003). This has been particularly acute in Italy, where there has been a longstanding identification with the locale long before the formation of the nation-state. Historical city-states preceded the nation of Italy and ensured that the Italian state has struggled to impose itself on citizens. This localism, or *campanilismo* has enhanced the identity of football fans in Italy, and has been incorporated into the identity of the *ultras* (Doidge, 2015a). Localism entered the political arena in the 1980s with the growth of the Northern League who openly sought cessation from Italy. As Podaliri and Balestri (1998: 95) argue, "This link to the small 'mother country', which is very close to extreme right-wing values, facilitate racist and xenophobic behavioural patterns inside the stadia". This was reflected in chants and banners such as 'Bergamo is a Nation, all the rest is South', and 'Brescia to the people from Brescia'. At the same time, chants and banners denigrated the South of Italy, particularly Napoli who was performing well in Serie A, by declaring 'Welcome to Italy' or 'Forza Etna' ('Go Etna') (Doidge, 2015a). This 'territorial discrimination' has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup>

Century and was linked to racism by the Italian authorities in 2013 (Doidge, 2014). This ritualistic abuse highlights how groups become racialised and situated in a hierarchy of difference.

Racism (and other forms of abuse) has to be situated within fan rivalries (Back et al, 2001). Understanding broader football fan culture helps to locate the abuse that is taking place. De Biasi and Lanfranchi (1997) have argued that the 'importance of difference' is central to the *ultras* identity. Highlighting what 'we' dislike, is reasserting what 'we' are not; denigrating rivals is part of this ritual. Abuse is directed at those that don't fit into what Back et al (2001) call a 'structure of antipathy'. Racism is part of this wider performance of abuse. As King (2003) highlights, racist abuse falls into a hierarchy. When fans sing 'I'd rather be a Paki than a Turk' they are implicitly saying that being Pakistani is considered to be cultural and morally low in the list of nations; being Turkish is judged as worse.

Various markers of difference are utilised by fans to distinguish them from their rivals. Often, it can be related to the club colours, symbols or players (Doidge, 2015c). Race, nation and ethnicity can be added to this list (Back et al, 2001). In each case, these symbols are not absolute but relative and contingent on specific contexts. For example, Back et al (2001) use the example of a black England fan attending a game against Scotland and noticing someone from Combat 18 (a far right group). There was an acknowledgement that the common enemy that day was Scotland, not each other. It is for this reason that fans who chant racist abuse at a rival black player can equally valorise their own players from black and ethnic minorities. Acceptance is contingent on various factors, including localised notions of nationhood, masculinity and class (Back et al, 2001).

Despite the links to nationalism and localism, racism in European football is not always ideologically or politically motivated. Racism manifests itself in the stadium in two broad ways. There are fans who are ideologically motivated and politically driven. These fans are members of far-right organisations and they seek to use football to promote their ideological beliefs. This is 'instrumental' racism (Back et al, 2001) or 'real' racism (Müller et al, 2007). In contrast, there is 'organic' racism (Back et al, 2001) or 'accidental' racism (Müller et al, 2007). This is where the crowd respond to events on the pitch, and use chants

that can be considered racist, but without the wider political intent. This form of abuse is usually aligned to the 'importance of difference' in broader football culture. Fans (and players) see denigration of rivals as a way of giving their team an advantage. It also helps foster a group identity by reinforcing what they are not. This is achieved by highlighting and extenuating these markers of difference such as skin colour, height, hair (or lack of it), and perceived masculinity.

Understanding racism also needs to be culturally understood. Europe is a diverse continent that has many different historical and geographical distinctions. The colonial history of some Northern and Western European nations has facilitated certain patterns of migration and become multicultural much earlier. Eastern European nations had severe restrictions on migration under the Soviet era, while some Southern European nations have historically been spaces of emigration, rather than immigration. It is this complexity that means we should look at *racisms*. This helps identify the phenomenon's heterogeneous nature. As Garland and Rowe (2001: 52) argue, this is important in 'moving away from singular conceptions of racism, which seek to explain it as though it were a unitary phenomenon, and towards an understanding which recognises the plurality of racisms'. Whilst racism based on skin colour is a clearer marker of distinction, other forms of ethnic abuse remain strong across Europe. Anti-Romany and anti-Jewish abuse remains culturally strong in parts of Eastern and Southern Europe and is not seen as racist in the same way as abuse directed at players of African origin (Doidge, 2014). For example, the term 'Jew' is used pejoratively in Poland to denigrate rivals. Teams and groups of fans are associated with Jewish founders or players and this is then turned into a term of abuse. In particular, Cracovia are targeted as being Jewish, even though the majority of their fans are Catholic. Similarly, fan groups at Lazio have chanted anti-Semitic abuse at Livorno and Roma fans for their perceived Jewish roots. Removal of nationalism in the stadium would not solve the problem of this anti-Semitism. Consequently, anti-racist measures will find resistance and/or confusion when implemented across the continent.

The problem with the term of racism is that it implies there are separate and distinct races. There is no 'black' or 'white' race, but attributes are assigned to individuals based on

phenotypes, like skin colour. Garland and Rowe (2001) seek to move towards racialisation as an approach to the phenomenon as this reinforces its socially constructed nature, rather than assume that race is predetermined. In some jurisdictions, racism is seen as only directed against people with black skin. This issue was highlighted by Burdsey (2009) who observed that a black/white dualism emerged in anti-racism campaigns in the 1960s; this dualism 'remained dominant and unchallenged in English football for longer than in other institutions' (Burdsey, 2009: 105). Effectively this rendered other ethnic groups, such as British Asians absent from attention. Significantly, outside of Britain, the black-white dualism of Anglo-American discourse does not have the same history (Van Sterkenburg, 2010; Doidge, 2015c). As diverse migration patterns have affected various European nations differently, ethnicities are also utilised.

As Back et al (2001) demonstrated, 'common sense' understandings of abuse are located within fan rivalries. Referring to skin colour (or any other marker of difference) is not always seen as racism. When the former Prime Minister of Italy, Silvio Berlusconi, complimented Barack Obama for being 'young, handsome and sun-tanned', it was not deemed offensive in Italy. Indeed, many anti-Berlusconi protestors showed solidarity with Obama by blackening their faces. Something similar occurred in Treviso in 2001 when one of their players was racially abused; the rest of the team 'blackened up' to show solidarity (Doidge, 2015a). The problem here is that in the Anglo-Saxon world, especially in the UK And US, this is seen as an insult based on a longstanding minstrel tradition that sought to mimic African culture.

Racism in European football is highly nuanced and complicated; abuse is not automatically racism. The case of Mario Balotelli highlights how complicated this phenomenon is (Doidge, 2015c). Balotelli has played for AC Milan and Inter in Italy and Manchester City and Liverpool in England. He was born to Ghanaian migrants in Palermo who were unable to afford his medical care when he fell ill as a child. Balotelli was adopted by a white Italian family in Brescia. Whilst at Inter, he was subjected to a wide range of abuse from rival fans. The most common was "*se saltelli, muore Balotelli*" ("If you jump up and down, Balotelli dies"). This is not automatically racist as the same chant was aimed at Cristiano Lucarelli, a Livorno player who was noted for his Communist politics. Yet Balotelli is simultaneously a

threat to the rival team, and seen as a symbol of difference to the fans. His perceived attitude and petulance deemed him inferior and not worthy of the masculine world of football. Further analysis of the abuse targeted at Balotelli also highlighted that many racialised slurs were incorporated into the abuse, including comments like 'There are no Black Italians'. This is not to say that *all* people abusing Balotelli are racist, but some are using racist language. Understanding the nuances of racism will help challenge this abuse in football stadiums.

### **Structural Racism**

Much of the academic and media focus has been trained on racism in the stadium. The problem of racism is always seen as a problem of a minority of fans attending matches. What the Malky Mackay case showed in Britain is that managers and coaches also hold racist attitudes and use racist language. It is a fallacy to think that only fans hold views that are widespread elsewhere in society. Burdsey (2011) argues that the blight of racism has not disappeared in England, and recent events have only reinforced this. Yet these examples are often attributed to individuals. The examples of Luis Suárez and John Terry were attributed to individual players (Burdsey, 2014), whilst the example of Chelsea fans aggressively pushing a black Parisian off a metro train in the French Capital were seen as a minority.

Whilst great strides have been made, this does not mean that racism has been eradicated in European football. 'Common sense' arguments point to the number of players from around the globe in teams across the continent. These proponents state that football cannot be racist precisely because there are players from numerous ethnicities in every team. Extending this logic, it would be possible to argue that nineteenth century plantation owners were not racist because their slaves were black! Burdsey (2011: 5) observes that

Overly optimistic views of progress neatly sidestep questions around power and politics, and ignore the fact that to look beyond the multiethnic spectacle on the pitch, in Europe at least, football remains a primarily white institution: games are watched by crowds of predominantly white supporters, controlled by white match

officials, and teams are run by white (male) managers, coaches, owners and directors.

Structural issues remain within football and this excludes members of many different groups from access to the game. Old white men remain in positions of power within the sport.

Much of this approach can be addressed with a growing individualisation of racism across Europe, predominantly in Northern Europe. Coinciding with a similar neo-liberal approach in other areas of society, success and failure are individualised. Wealth accumulation and career success is seen as reward for individual hard work and enterprise, whilst the poor are seen as feckless and lazy. As part of a broader neo-liberal project across North America and Europe, structural issues are marginalised as governments seek to justify their reduction in the role of the state. This situation has also occurred in regards to racism. Goldberg (2009: 331) states that 'in diluting, if not erasing, race in all public affairs of the state, neo-liberal proponents nevertheless seek to privatize racisms alongside most everything else'.

Through this 'colour-blindness', racial neo-liberalism removes states' or institutions' obligations to deal with racism. As (Goldberg, 2009: 362–3) argues, 'the individualization of wrongdoing, its localization as personal and so private preference expression, erases institutional racisms precisely as conceptual possibility'. By locating it as the individual failure of the person engaging in racist behaviour, or the lack of hard work by the person of colour who has not succeeded, then the authorities can absolve themselves from responsibility. Ultimately, 'colour-blindness works as an ideology by obscuring the institutional arrangements reproducing structural inequalities and does so in a way that justifies and defends the racial status quo' (Rodriquez, 2006: 645). Moreover, colour-blindness is publically argued by predominantly white populations who suggest that they do not see colour. This is particularly apposite in football as club owners and administrators deny that race is an issue (Burdsey, 2014). As Long et al (2005) show, those in power often place the blame for lack of minority ethnic players and fans on the groups themselves. More pertinently, Ratna (2007) suggested that white coaches and administrators in the women's game thought that the lack of British-Asian footballers was due to issues within South Asian communities, rather than racism.



Denial is often the starting point for clubs and football authorities. Back et al. (2001: 164) argued that:

the typical “public” response of football clubs and individuals associated with the game to allegations of racism has historically been one of denial: denial that the problem exists at any significant level at individual clubs or amongst players, denial that there is a problem within the game more generally and, on occasion, denial that racism exists itself as a problem in society.

Denial of structural issues is even more pronounced. Long and McNamee (2004) has highlighted the slow and conservative attitude towards change within the administration of football. As noted earlier, ‘common sense’ arguments are identified to show that there cannot be racism as there are numerous different nationalities and ethnicities playing the game. This argument, as Burdsey (2011) states, doesn’t deny that racism existed; it argues that racism has disappeared. This aligns with the broader categories of racism identified by Back et al (1999; 2001) and Müller et al (2007), where racism was motivated by politically ideological groups. These have been removed and consequently, any racism is ‘accidental’ (Müller et al, 2007) or down to individual failure.

Responses from governing bodies and clubs are wildly different across Europe. Governing bodies either go straight into denial about racism, or pass a superficial sanction. After the Suárez and Terry incidents in 2011, the president of FIFA, Sepp Blatter, stated that these issues should be dealt with by shaking hands at the end of the match. This attitude was also clear after the sending off of Emmanuel Frimpong in Russia in July 2015. The general director of Ufa, Shamil Gazizov, said the taunts were "an unfortunate incident" and that Frimpong was in the wrong and ‘sometimes you even have to hold back the tears and just put up with it’. These attitudes locate racism within the broader culture of abuse in football. Players have to develop a thick skin and perform a specific form of masculinity to demonstrate that they are physically and psychologically able to deal with the rigours of the game. Sensitivity to abuse is identified as an individual weakness rather than a structural issue.

In keeping with these attitudes, governing bodies have failed to successfully challenge the

systemic racism within the game. Where sanctions are imposed, the fines amount to a few hours wages for star footballers or clubs. For example, the Italian football federation fined Juventus €20,000 and ordered them to play a match behind 'closed doors' for the various episodes of abuse directed at Mario Balotelli (Doidge, 2015a). To put this into context, they fined Inter's manager Jose Mourinho €40,000 for making a crossed-arm 'handcuffs' gesture after his team had two players sent off. This was insinuating that the federation was corrupt and they were trying to prevent Inter from winning the title. As Doidge (2015a: 160) states, 'When accusations against the Federation are punished more severely than widespread racist abuse, there is little surprise that the problem continues'. Elsewhere, the Italian federation has suggested that players enter the field with 'No Al Razzismo' banners. These empty symbolic gestures have been reflected elsewhere in Europe and represent the 'non-performativity' of anti-racism in sport (Ahmed, 2006; Hylton, 2010).

Racist attitudes pervade all hierarchies of football. The Malky Mackay case in England illustrates the discussions and views held in private by management. The disclosure of private texts between the former manager of Cardiff, Malky Mackay, and his sporting director, Iain Moody, illustrated how groups were identified on the basis of their perceived race or ethnicity. Black players were seen as going to jail, South Koreans as dog-eaters and Jews as money-grabbing. Twelve months after the case was leaked to the media, the English FA took no action as it stated that it had no jurisdiction as there was a 'legitimate expectation that these messages were only for the eyes of the other person. A similar approach was taken with Richard Scudamore, the Chief Executive of the Premier League, when it was alleged he had sent sexist emails. As they were private, he escaped censure. In contrast, Paul Elliot, the former player and trustee of the Kick It Out anti-racism campaign was forced to resign by the FA after a private text emerged in which Elliot used the 'N-word' in an argument with a business partner. The 'non-performativity' of anti-racism reflects your position in the hierarchy as well as your skin colour.

Similar issues occur across Europe. Club presidents have made racist comments about players and have not been sanctioned. The president of Palermo, Maurizio Zamparini, described the former Chelsea and Fiorentina player, Adriano Mutu, as a 'crafty little gypsy' (Doidge, 2015a). When Mario Balotelli moved to AC Milan in 2013, the brother of the club's president (and former Prime Minister) and editor of *Il Giornale* newspaper, Paolo

Berlusconi, invited attendees at a political rally for his brother's political party to come back for a party and meet 'the nigger of the family [Balotelli]'. Later, in the summer of 2014 the Italian football federation held its elections for president. The favourite, Carlo Tavecchio, made a speech that lamented the number of foreign players in Italy and suggested they were the reason for Italy's failure at the World Cup in Brazil. As part of this speech he referred to Opti Poba, a fictional player 'who was previously eating bananas and now is a first team player for Lazio'. Tavecchio inferred that players from Africa were monkeys and not worthy of playing in Italy. Sadly, Tavecchio was still elected as head of the Italian football federation. This illustrates how many presidents and administrators are ignorant or wilfully blind to the issues of racism in sport.

Despite the failures of national football federations to adequately tackle racism in football, UEFA has finally begun to provide a uniform approach across Europe. Whilst some of this can fall into the 'non-performativity' of anti-racism, UEFA has started to take a moral stance. The European football federation has introduced a zero-tolerance approach to racist chanting by fans in European competitions. They have also lent their support to national federations, such as Italy, to sanction racist abuse in national leagues. UEFA work in partnership with Football Against Racism Europe (FARE) and other European anti-racism groups to communicate a clear anti-racism message. These actions are vital when addressing the issue of racism across Europe. There needs to be clear boundaries and an unambiguous approach. However, it is also important that UEFA and these groups work with fans to educate them and explain how and why these actions are unacceptable (Doidge, 2014). Taking a moralising tone will push certain masculine fan groups into acts of resistance, some of whom feel persecuted by the authorities. In some cases, sanctions bring about the very behaviour the punishment is attempting to stop as the fans resist and rebel against authority (Doidge, 2014; 2015a). Fines should be used to encourage education schemes and stadium closures should only be the last resort. It is an imperative that authorities and groups work with fans as they often have led the way in challenging racism in football.

### **Anti-racism in European Football**

The failure of the authorities to tackle racism in football has resulted in players and fans

tacking the initiative themselves. The 1990s were a significant time for the politicisation of football fans in Europe (King, 2003). The economic changes that transformed the sport into a global media spectacle encouraged many fans to mobilise to challenge the changes. Many of these Independent Supporters Associations and *ultras* groups incorporated anti-racism and anti-discrimination into their activities. Other groups also emerged to explicitly challenge racism in football. This coincided with many black players openly criticising racism in the game. In the past they were encouraged to develop a thick skin, as was suggested for Emmanuel Fringpong in Russia. By the 1990s, the generation of players from the third generation of immigrants in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands were increasingly vocal about racism. It was the combination of fans and players that helped challenge the conservatism and inaction of the clubs and authorities.

Ironically it was the actions of a white player, Eric Cantona, which helped propel the issue of discrimination into the public spotlight in England (Back et al, 2001). In 1995 Manchester United's mercurial French striker was sent off in a game against Crystal Palace. As he trudged off the pitch towards the changing room, he suddenly jumped into the crowd, feet first and struck a Crystal Palace fan called Matthew Simmonds square in the chest. This kung fu kick became an instant media sensation and Cantona was roundly condemned. He was banned from playing for ten months and ordered to undertake community engagement work. This situation also highlighted the abuse that was directed at Cantona by Simmonds. Cantona's nationality was invoked and he was told to 'fuck off back to France', alongside some other choice words. For decades footballers of Afro-Caribbean heritage have been abused in similar and more systematic ways and told, like Emmanuel Fringping, to 'turn the other cheek'. Cantona received similar abuse and reacted. Although he received widespread condemnation from the authorities and media, as a white European, Cantona remained in a privileged position. Had he been less skilful, or of Afro-Caribbean heritage, it is unlikely the player would have been allowed to recover their career.

Many grassroots, fan-led anti-racism initiatives emerged during the 1990s. In Poland, the *Nigdy Więcej* (Never Again) association formed in 1992 to challenge the growing racism in the country after the fall of Communism. Highlighting the conflation of racism and fascism during this period the *Bündnis antifaschistischer Fanclubs und Faninitiativen* (BAFF,

Association of Antifascist Fan Clubs and Fan Initiatives) was formed in Germany in 1993. This name was changed to Association of Active Football Fans in 1998. In Britain, the first anti-racist fan group was established in 1994 under the title of Leeds Fans United Against Racism and Fascism. Again, this highlighted the mistaken link between fascism and racism. Not all racists identified as fascist, so challenging their behaviours required a more nuanced approach. These organisations utilised similar approaches to raise awareness, lobby authorities and directly challenge racist behaviour.

Italy was the site of one of the more innovative projects to challenge the growing racism in stadiums. The Emilia-Romagna section of *Unione Italiana Sport Per tutti* (UISP) helped establish *Progetto Ultra*, an organisation that sought to work with the hardcore fans, the *ultras*, in order to educate them around racism and Fascism. *Progetto Ultra* was also important because it became a space break down barriers between rival fans and discuss a wide range of issues that affected *ultras* and fans. *Progetto Ultra* is no longer funded, but it's legacy remains with the *Mondiali Antirazzisti* ('Anti-Racist World Cup'). This annual event began in 1997 and takes place in Emilia-Romagna every July. Over two-hundred teams attend and the format has been expanded to include other sports like basketball, cricket and rugby. Crucially, the tournament is non-competitive and seeks to be an inclusive space that can break down barriers between groups (Sterchele and Saint-Blancat, 2015). The challenge for the *Mondiali*, as with other anti-racist initiatives, is to reach beyond those groups who already engage in anti-racism activities.

Kick It Out in England demonstrates the successes and challenges of anti-racism campaigns in football. Let's Kick Racism Out of Football was launched by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Professional Footballers' Association in 1993. It changed its name to Kick It Out in 1997. When the campaign was launched, the *Alive and Still Kicking* report (1996) highlighted how many clubs did not see racism as a priority. More strikingly, some clubs did not want to be associated with the campaign as they thought that fans may suggest that the club was racist. Since then, the campaign has been successful in raising awareness of racism in football, not just in the stadiums, but in relation to under-representation in administration and coaching and codes of practice within the amateur game. Kick It Out has worked hard with the authorities to tackle the issue of racism, as well as clearly reporting

levels of racist abuse. It has developed ways to make it easier to report racist abuse, through education of clubs and stewards, as well as launching an app for smartphones that allows fans to anonymously report abuse.

As the campaign has developed, it has also attracted some criticism. Working closely with the authorities can lead to accusations that it is not working with fan groups or players. Much of the funding comes from the FA, Premier League and Professional Footballers' Association. Seeing as the Premier League has rescinded funding for Supporters Direct (an organisation to campaign for fan democracy) after critical comments made by former chief executive Dave Boyle, organisations like Kick It Out can be seen to be politically compromised. Yet this has to be seen in light of the limited funds and a small number of staff. A year after the Suárez and Terry incidents, a number of black footballers refused to wear Kick It Out T-shirts that called for an end to racism. Jason Roberts was the most vocal of those making the protest and argued that he felt that Kick It Out was not strong enough to challenge the authorities. Roberts felt that the T-shirts were an empty gesture and the organisation needed to be strong enough and represent his experiences of football. Whilst these organisations and campaigns have achieved some relative success, the fact that racism is still being discussed within European football shows that alternative approaches need to be utilised.

Anti-racism initiatives like Kick It Out and Never Again are significantly underfunded and this limits the impact they can make. They also tend to sit outside of fan groups, which can lead to resentment from supporters. In Germany there is an alternative approach to challenging fans' anti-social behaviour. These Fan Projects work with fans to educate them about the impact of their actions. They are part-funded by the club and the regional authorities and work as social work projects. Importantly, the role of the football club is vital when communicating with fans (Doidge, 2014). At Borussia Dortmund, for example, the fan project has access to the stadium for workshops, which are attended by the star players. This helps to create a clear link between the football club and the anti-racism message. As fans remain more loyal to the club, rather than the football federations, rival fan groups, or anti-racism organisations, the message becomes unsullied by perceived political connotations. More importantly, Borussia Dortmund actively works with the fan project and

other fan groups to listen to their suggestions in how to tackle discrimination. The club supported an initiative, organised by the *ultras* group The Unity and the fan project, to visit Auschwitz. Borussia Dortmund lent the fan project their team bus so young fans to see the potential impact of racism, and it's links to German and Dortmund's history.

Poland has recently adopted a similar scheme, called *Kibice Razem* ('Fans United') and trialled at seven different clubs (Doidge, 2014). Because of the different civil society traditions in each European nation, there are a variety of challenges for these schemes. In Poland, the *Kibice Razem* are almost building civil society from the base. There is a reason Fan Projects started in Germany as there is more of a co-operative culture between the state and community groups. The libertarian traditions of British political culture means that this approach would be more complicated in England. Football Unites, Racism Divides (FURD) in Sheffield is almost unique in this respect. It is a youth work organisation that works with the local youth community to educate and support their life choices. They work with both football clubs in Sheffield (Wednesday and United) and visits schools and prisons. They setup an initiative called Streetkick which took inflatable goals to different neighbourhoods and used football as a way of educating players on the impact of racism (Johnson, 2009). The success of this approach has seen it adopted by fan projects in Germany as groups and campaigns share ideas across Europe.

The difficulty for anti-racism groups is that difference and rivalry are seen as fundamental parts of the game by the dominant masculine groups that claim legitimacy over the sport. As Ratna (2010) shows, it is not possible to tackle discrimination of female British Asians by only focussing on racism. Anti-sexist agendas are also important for the inclusion of women from black and ethnic minority groups. In recent years FARE, Kick It Out and FSF have expanded their focus to include other forms of discrimination. Kick It Out has explicitly changed its subtitle to 'Tackling Racism & Discrimination', whilst FARE also have anti-homophobia campaigns. The FSF have launched the 'Fans for Diversity' campaign under the stewardship of former West Ham United player Anwar Uddin. This project seeks to bring in fans from all its communities, including fans who are disabled, LGBTQI and black and ethnic minorities. Strikingly, fans with disabilities have also been less visible in these campaigns. Organisations like Level Playing Field and Centre for Accessibility in Football Europe (CAFE)

are raising awareness of this issue. Slowly the different organisations are becoming more collaborative which is important when communicating a clear message.

There is a clear European approach to anti-racism and discrimination developing across the continent. Where the 1990s saw a number of nationally based organisations emerge to tackle the problem of racism, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen European-wide groups established. These include CAFE, the European Gay and Lesbian Network and Football Supporters Europe. Specifically related to racism and discrimination, Football Against Racism Europe was established from a variety of anti-racism groups, supporters associations and fan projects from across Europe in 1999. FARE are supported by UEFA and help organise the Fan Embassies at UEFA events, like the European Championships. These spaces help communicate anti-racism messages and the UEFA 'respect' agenda.

## **Conclusion**

Football's popularity is unsurpassed as a global activity. It can bring people together from different backgrounds, ages and genders. But it also provides opportunities to distinguish yourself and your group from others through abuse, violence, racism and discrimination. Racism remains one of the most prevalent anti-social behaviours associated with football. From sustained abuse directed at Mario Balotelli in England and Italy to Zenit St Petersburg fans calling for the club to only sign Slavic or Scandinavian players, racism is a pervasive problem in European football. For racism to be eliminated from the game, it requires action from *all* sections of football. This includes the fans themselves, governing bodies, media, politicians and players. UEFA and some national federations have reinforced a clear message in an attempt to underline the importance of anti-racism, but some fans view their actions with suspicion. Likewise, anti-racism campaigns like FARE, Kick It Out and Never Again are important in producing the literature, guidance and training to help educate various groups about the extent and various ways racism manifests itself. But they also have to be careful not to be seen to be distant from football fans.

It is important to understand the nuanced and shifting nature of racism in football. Often racism is located in inter-club rivalry and is used as another form of abuse to denigrate



rivals. Not all racism is ideologically driven. Whilst certain fan groups, like the *ultras*, want to be confrontational, not all fans do. Rather than immediately enforcing sanctions that impact all fans, or making empty gestures advocating 'no to racism', authorities need to engage in educational projects that communicate the impact of racism and abuse to fans, coaches, and directors. These approaches have worked well with FURD, fan projects and kibice razem. They need to be safe spaces that allow trust to be built and cross-cultural understanding fostered. The danger of treating all fans as potentially racist will only succeed in alienating these fans and potentially make the situation worse.

Most importantly, authorities have to recognise that racism is not only performed by fans. There are structural issues impacting racism and the continued under-representation of women, disabled, LGBTQI, and people from black and ethnic minorities in administration, boardrooms and coaching of the game highlight that there is a long way to go before racism is eliminated from European football. Football is a powerful tool that can bring people of different backgrounds together. There are many fan groups and anti-racism campaigns across Europe and these are sharing ideas and experiences and providing spaces that help to remove barriers and promote cross-cultural understandings. It's important to acknowledge that football unites people in a shared passion and that's what we should all focus on.

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