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Representation and structural discrimination in football in Europe: The case of minorities and females

Summary report of key findings

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1. Introduction and context

This research project has been undertaken by Dr Steven Bradbury at the Institute of Youth Sport, Dr Mahfoud Amara and Dr Borja García at the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy and Professor Alan Bairner at the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University. In the first instance, the research has been designed to identify levels of representation in football in Europe amongst minorities and females in terms of the following three tiers of the game:

- Playing
- Coaching
- Leadership

The research has also been concerned to identify the existence of a series of structural barriers which might limit the potential for increased representation of minorities and females in each of these three tiers of the game. In doing so, the report has focused on four key areas of structural discrimination impacting on levels of representation. These include:

- Socio-economic and cultural barriers
- Overt racisms or sexism
- Physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions
- Organisational provision and institutional discrimination.

In examining issues of representation and the ways in which processes of structural discrimination have impacted on the inclusion of minorities and females in football in Europe, this research remains keenly aware of the different histories, infrastructural development and cultural contexts in which football has been 'played out' across the continent, with particular respect to the gendered separation of the men's and women's game. This latter gendered separation is also reflected in much of the existing academic and policy based literature under review which has focused singularly on either the men's or women's game. This literature has also tended to evaluate minority experiences almost exclusively in terms of men's football.

Accordingly, the findings in this summary report reflect this analytical separation and focus in the first instance on issues relating to minority representation and discrimination in terms of the men's game, and secondly on female representation and discrimination in the women's game. However, the females section does provide further analysis relating to issues impacting on minority females in relation to playing the game, and with regard to issues impacting on the crossover of females into the men's game in terms of coaching and leadership positions in football.

2. Methods and data collection

The findings featured in this report are based on the analysis of existing academic and policy based literature pertaining to issues of equality, representation and discrimination in society, sports and football in Europe. This literature varied significantly in its focus, scope and content. Whilst much of

the policy based research offered a broad overview of issues relating to patterns of minority and female representation and discrimination at a wider societal and sporting level across Europe, it often lacked some specificity of detail and presented a relatively homogenous picture of the experiences of marginalised groups. Conversely, much academic research has exhibited a more detailed focus on the socio-historical experiences of minorities and/or females in football, but was often limited to highly localised contexts within, rather than across, national contexts, and featured a disproportionate focus on issues related to playing the game.

There was also little available empirical data collected by national associations or at UEFA outlining the levels of representation of minorities and females in the three tiers of the game under examination. It is probably also the case that data collection procedures focusing on these groups have previously been afforded little priority by those charged with the administration and governance of the game at the national and European level. It is likely too, that in some cases, the lack of empirical evidence on this score reflects a general apathy and marked defensiveness to collecting data of this kind. This is especially the case in countries in which the demographic make-up of national populations are perceived to be relatively culturally homogeneous and/or where gender equality issues feature relatively low on the political agenda. It is, of course, also the case, that some national associations have few financial resources and limited infrastructure within which to obtain data of this kind.

The findings featured in this report are also based on analysis of extensive interview data drawn from interviews with sports academics, NGO's and senior administrators at national associations and at UEFA. These interviewees were identified through a process of consultation with Kick It Out and UEFA and through networks of individuals known to the Loughborough research team and with significant experience of the issues at hand. In total, the principal investigator conducted 18 telephone and face-to-face interviews with interviewees drawn from 13 different countries, including; England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, France, Norway, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Malta, and the Netherlands. All interviews were conducted between April and June 2010, were semi-structured and lasted for between 60 minutes and 90 minutes respectively. This methodological approach afforded the opportunity for the principal investigator to explore and build on some of the themes to emerge from the initial literature review process. It also allowed the principal investigator to capture narratives which referenced themes of comparability and difference in the levels of representation and types of structural discrimination experienced by minorities and females in the three tiers of football under examination.

Finally, it is important to recognise some key methodological considerations which have impacted on the focus, scope and content of the findings featured in this report. In particular, the nationality of the principal investigator and the relatively limited research budget allocated to this project. This inevitably restricted the literature review process to examine only English language texts (although some French translation was drawn on) which tended to feature articles and information drawn from Northern and Western European sources, rather than those from elsewhere in Europe. It was also the case that the interview process was also limited to a cohort of English speakers, although this did include a number of interviewees drawn from a broad range of countries across the continent. A number of these interviewees also had significant experience of relevant issues in other countries where available literature and interviewees were a little less accessible. To this end, whilst recognising some of the methodological difficulties involved in conducting research of this kind, the Loughborough research team is confident that the findings in this report reflect, as far as is possible, an overarching and illuminating picture of processes and events pertaining to issues of representation and discrimination in football.

3. Minority representation and discrimination in the men's football in Europe

3.1 The broader context

Minority populations are significantly under-represented in all areas of social, economic and political life in Europe. Research suggests a strong causal link between levels of minority under-representation and their disproportionate experiences of overt and institutional discrimination at the individual, organisational and societal level.

European level measures to tackle minority discrimination and under-representation include the work of the Council of Europe: European Commission against Racial Intolerance and the European Union's Charter for Fundamental Rights. National level measures differ markedly in their scope, content and focus and are informed by wider political models of national identity and citizenship which include; non-intervention, assimilation, integration and multiculturalism. The latter models emphasise the organisational benefits of cultural diversity and use equal opportunities and positive action measures to address social, economic and political inequalities

3.2 Levels of minority representation

(i) Playing

Research indicates mixed levels of minority representation as players in the men's amateur and professional game. Black-Caribbean (UK), Surinamese (Netherlands), and North African and West African (France, Belgium, Portugal) minorities were all over-represented. In contrast, South Asian (UK), Turkish and Moroccan (Netherlands), Somali (Denmark) and Roma (Central and Eastern Europe) minorities were all under-represented

In addition, 32.7% of players in the higher echelons of the men's professional game in Europe were 'expatriate migrant' players. The top five countries of departure for 'expatriate migrant' players in Europe were Brazil (502), France (239), Argentina (238) Serbia (201) and Portugal (129) and tended towards clubs in domestic leagues in Western Europe.

(ii) Coaching

Research indicates the general under-representation of minority coaches in the men's amateur and professional game across Europe. This is the case even in countries where minorities have a longstanding connection to the game as players.

(iii) Leadership

Research also indicates the marked absence of minorities in leadership positions in football. Less than 1% of senior administrators and executive committee members at men's professional clubs or at national federations are from minorities.

3.3 Socio-economic and cultural barriers

(i) Playing

Research indicates that socio-economic factors such as the cost of club membership fees, equipment, facilities and transport, and unsociable working hours have acted as a structural filter between playing recreational 'street' football and accessing the organised men's amateur and professional game for minorities. Cultural, religious and familial constraints, educational and residential segregation, wider national political narratives around the meaning of sport and the lack

of social and cultural capital have also contributed to the under-representation of minorities in the men's amateur and professional game

(ii) Coaching

Research indicates that socio-economic and cultural factors impacting on minority playing under-representation have had a strong cumulative impact on the shaping the low levels of minority representation as coaches in the men's amateur and professional game. Experiences and perceptions of barriers affecting the transition from playing to coaching in the men's professional game have lowered the confidence and aspirations of many minority professional players to engage in relevant coach education courses.

(iii) Leadership

Cultural explanations for low levels of minority representation in leadership positions include; the historical specificities of in-migration trajectories, the distributional residential spread of minorities, low levels of educational attainment amongst minorities, the limited 'diversity pool' of suitably qualified minority candidates, and the generational distribution of leadership positions in the football industry. The low levels of visibility of minorities in leadership positions in football and experiences and perceptions of a 'glass ceiling' effect have lowered the confidence and aspirations of minorities to pursue career pathways of this kind.

3.4 Overt racisms and minority abuse

(i) Players

Research has identified the continuation of overt racism and minority abuse directed at players by spectators, coaches and other players in the men's amateur and professional game across Europe. This has included; anti-black, anti-semitic, anti-gypsy, islamophobic, ethno-nationalist and sectarian sentiment.

Structural explanations of fan racism reference the tendencies of national and domestic formations to conjoin general anti-immigrant sentiment with right wing political ideologies and to 'defend' prized (white, male) cultural spaces of football stadium against wider social (and multicultural) change. More nuanced accounts which draw subtle distinctions between consciously 'instrumental' and emotional 'impulsive' racism from fans and players in match-play situations, and reference the widespread use of racist jokes, banter, stereotype and caricature in the everyday occupational settings of dressing room culture. Research also suggests that racism is still considered 'part and parcel' of the game in the heavily masculinised arena of football and that there are strong expectations on minority players to ignore rather challenge abuse of this kind.

(ii) Coaching

Few research studies identify overt racism and minority abuse targeting minority coaches. Findings here are strongly informed by the limited number of minority coaches in the men's professional game. Research suggests that limited opportunities to gain 'entry tickets' into coaching positions encourage minority coaches to ignore rather than challenge overt racism and minority abuse.

(iii) Leadership

There is little empirical evidence identifying the incidence of overt racism and minority abuse within the 'white collar' occupational settings of men's professional football clubs and national football federations Findings here are strongly informed by the apparent lack of minorities in positions of this kind. Research suggests that where cultural oppositions to the inclusion of minorities in

leadership positions do exist, they are likely to be expressed privately or take the form of more subtle, nuanced, and coded attitudes and behaviour

3.5 Physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions

(i) Playing

Research suggests that physical and cultural stereotypes of minority players are normalised through mediated and populist narratives and have a common currency with club coaches in the men's amateur and professional game.

Physical stereotypes describe black players as possessing innate speed, power and athleticism and lacking analytical skills, aptitude and mental reliability. South Asian players experience physical stereotypes which allude to frailty, weakness, and lack of co-ordination. Cultural stereotypes describe black players as being unstable and likely to lose their temper easily. Minority players from the Balkans region are described as difficult, troublesome and not willing to fit in with dominant norms and values. South Asian communities are conceptualised as having little interest in football and as being subject to restrictive familial, cultural and religious constraints.

Physical and cultural stereotypes are often realised in opposition to the presumed abilities of white players which premise hard work, perseverance, cognitive and motivational skills. They contribute to the under-representation of some minority players by positioning them as being outside of the 'cultural marketplace' of youth player recruitment processes.

(ii) Coaching

Research suggests that most coaches in the men's professional game are recruited from former players who have had on-field defensive and central midfield organisational roles: positions which have traditionally been allocated to majority population players in contrast to the practices of 'stacking' of minorities in peripheral positions. Research also suggests that many professional club owner's offer racialised assessments of abilities premised physical and cultural stereotypes which effectively 'filter out' minorities from accessing professional coaching positions

(iii) Leadership

Research has indicated that processes of stereotypification regarding 'physicality over intellect' and the 'cultural incompatibility' of minorities are a commonplace feature within men's professional clubs and national federations throughout Europe and have contributed to 'filtering out' minorities from accessing leadership positions in the football industry. Research also suggests these perceptions are especially strong in countries where dominant political narratives remain largely unchallenged and where there is little civil or constitutional legislation designed to address these attitudes and behaviours

3.6 Organisational provision and institutional discrimination

(i) Playing

Research suggests that patterns of minority under-representation as players in the men's amateur game are strongly informed by processes and practices of institutional discrimination. These include; the denial of access to existing amateur clubs and their failure to adapt to the social, cultural and religious minority communities, the denial of access to facilities for minority football clubs, the unwillingness of national football federations to engage with minority football clubs, and

the operation of restrictive legislative approaches which deny minorities access to regional and national representative teams

Research suggests that patterns of minority under-representation as players in the professional game are also strongly informed by processes and practices of institutional discrimination. These include; the operation of 'culturally closed' approaches to youth player recruitment and talent identification, the limited cultural awareness of youth academy staff and limited conditions of equality for minority players within youth academies.

(ii) Coaching

Research suggests that patterns of minority under-representation as coaches in the men's professional game are strongly informed by processes and practices of institutional discrimination. These include; the institutionalisation of stereotypical attitudes which perceive minority coaches in terms of uncertainty and risk, and the tendency to recruit coaches from within dominant social and cultural networks of known applicants with shared norms, values and cultural backgrounds.

(iii) Leadership

Research suggests the concept of institutional discrimination has significant applicability in terms of evaluating the 'open secret' of the under-representation of minorities in leadership positions in football. This is evident in the relatively closed recruitment procedures for leadership positions at professional football clubs which are largely premised on the basis of personal recommendation and from an existing 'knowledge bank' of applicants positioned within the dominant social and cultural networks of the football industry. It is also evident in the processes of patronage and sponsored mobility which underpin selection to executive committees at the regional, national and European level of football federations. These latter processes tend to reward individuals already positioned within dominant social and cultural networks and favour individuals with shared norms, values and cultural backgrounds.

Research has identified some cultural resistance to efforts to encourage more equitable change in selection procedures for leadership positions in football. This resistance is informed by a number of factors, including; broader dominant political paradigms of assimilation and/or non-intervention, a lack of problem awareness and/or non-acknowledgement of the processes and outcomes of institutional discrimination, and a reluctance to surrender accrued personal gain and rewards.

Research strongly alluded to the benefits of cultural diversity and its positive impact in the wider business and political sector. To this end, research also referenced the practical and cultural value of positive action approaches such as quotas as a means of increasing the representation of minorities in leadership positions and enhancing the functioning and legitimacy of national and European football federations

4. Female representation and discrimination in women's (and men's) football in Europe

4.1 The broader context

Females are significantly under-represented in all areas of social, economic and political life in Europe. Research suggests a strong causal link between levels of female under-representation and their disproportionate experiences of overt and institutional discrimination at the individual, organisational and societal level.

European level measures to tackle gender discrimination and increase female representation include the work of the Council of Europe declaration and recommendations on 'making gender equality a reality' and the European Union's implementation of workplace legislation and Charter for Fundamental Rights. National level measures differ markedly in their scope, content and focus, and are informed by wider national political approaches and different cultural traditions around gender equality. National political approaches informed by second wave feminism emphasise the organisational benefits of gender diversity and use equal opportunities, positive action and gender mainstreaming to encourage more balanced female representation in key areas of social, economic and political life

4.2 Levels of female representation in football

(i) Playing

Research indicates low levels of representation of female players (8.2%) in comparison to male players (91.8%) and a significant distributional focus of female adult (87.2%) and female youth players (76.8%) in just five countries in North Western Europe. This distributional focus is informed by a number of related factors. They include; national political approaches and the cultural impact of measures to promote gender equality, the ideological link between national identity, masculinity and football, and the different pace of the infrastructural development of the women's game across Europe.

(ii) Coaching

Research suggests the general under-representation of female coaches in the women's (and men's) amateur and professional game. This is especially the case in countries where national political approaches to gender equality and the infrastructural development of the women's game feature low on policy agendas. However, even in countries with a longstanding commitment to developing the women's game, there is a distinct lack of throughput of female players into coaching positions.

(iii) Leadership

Research suggests low levels of female representation in leadership positions at men's professional clubs and at the regional, national and European level of football governance, with some notable exceptions in a small number of Nordic and Scandinavian countries, especially Norway.

4.3 Socio-economic and cultural barriers

(i) Playing

Research suggests that wider hierarchical gender relations and the unequal division of domestic labour have limited opportunities for female participation in playing football, especially minority females. Research also suggests that the social and historical construction of football as a distinctly 'masculine space' has limited females cultural connection with the game and has focused their sporting preferences towards other, more gender inclusive, sports.

(ii) Coaching

Research suggests that social and cultural factors shaping female participation as players have had a strong cumulative impact in shaping the low levels of female coaching representation. This is especially the case in countries where issues of gender equity feature low on national political and cultural agendas and where strongly hierarchical gender relations predominate, especially amongst some minority communities.

(iii) Leadership

Cultural explanations for low levels of female representation in paid leadership positions at men's professional football clubs and in football governance at the regional, national and European level include those referred to above in relation to playing and coaching. They also include a number of other key factors, such as; the limited 'diversity pool' of suitably qualified female candidates and the generational distribution of leadership positions in the football industry. The low levels of visibility of females in leadership positions has contributed to perceptions of a 'glass ceiling' effect and have consequently lowered the confidence and aspirations of females to seek to pursue career pathways of this kind.

4.4 Overt sexism and gender abuse

(i) Playing

There is little available data to suggest that females have experienced overt forms of sexist abuse as players in the women's game, at least, in comparison to that which is experienced by minority males in the men's game. These findings reflect the tendency of the women's game to attract low numbers of mainly female spectators and to lack the heightened atmosphere and cultural meanings associated with the male game. Nonetheless, research suggests some females have experienced homophobic abuse from opposition players, coaches and spectators. Further, the deeply masculine and heterosexual culture and overt and casual sexism inherent within the men's game can act as a dissuading factor for women and girls to take part in the sport overall.

(ii) Coaching

There is little available data to identifying overt sexist abuse targeting female coaches in the women's game and is reflective of the largely female spectatorship at matches featuring women's teams. The lack of evidence suggesting overt sexism targeting female coaches in the men's football is strongly informed by the lack of high profile female coaches in the male tiers of the game. However, the deeply masculine culture and overt and casual sexism inherent within the men's game is likely to limit opportunities for female coaches and dissuade females from pursuing career pathways of this kind.

(iii) Leadership

There is little empirical evidence identifying the incidence of overt sexism within the 'white collar' occupational settings of men's professional football clubs and regional and national football federations. Whilst findings here are informed by the apparent lack of females in positions of this kind it is also likely that in some cases prior experiences of overt sexism and homophobia in terms of playing and coaching might have implications for reducing the aspirations of females in pursuing leadership positions in strongly male environments. Further, where cultural oppositions to the inclusion of females in leadership positions do exist, they are likely to be expressed privately or take the form of more subtle, nuanced, and coded attitudes and behaviour

4.5 Physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions

(i) Playing

Research indicates the ways in which physical and cultural stereotypes of females in sports are normalised through mediated narratives and have a common currency with the distinctly 'masculine space' of football.

Physical stereotypes have focused on perceptions of the biological body and have referenced the 'natural' and unequal distribution of physical abilities between men and women and include pseudo medical arguments to do with muscle conditioning and damaged reproduction capacities. Cultural stereotypes have positioned the women's game as novel, recreational and less worthy than the men's game, has questioned the appropriateness and suitability of female participation and trivialised female football achievements. Female players have also experienced sexualised stereotypes and homophobia and have been pejoratively labelled as lesbians, irrespective of their real sexual orientation

The women's game receives far less media coverage and is presented as less interesting, exciting, of less value than the men's game. The low media visibility of the women's game has had knock on effects in terms of attracting sponsorship and has slowed the pace of infrastructural development and limited participation opportunities for female players

(ii) Coaching

Research suggests that within the distinctly 'masculine space' of football, football coaching is perceived as a gendered occupation in which technical expertise and knowledge have become naturalised as the properties of the 'male expert'. The notions of the 'male expert' has become the standard against which perceived female coaching attributes have been measured, devalued and invalidated and has contributed to female coaching under-representation in the women's and men's game.

(iii) Leadership

Research suggests that the notion of the 'male expert' has a common currency within the senior administrative and governance tiers of the football industry. These stereotypical perceptions which equate females with a lack of suitability and competence have contributed to 'filtering out' females from accessing leadership positions at men's professional football clubs and at the regional, national and European level of football governance.

4.6 Organisational provision and institutional discrimination

(i) Playing

Research suggests that the low levels and distributional focus of female playing representation is informed by a number of factors relating to the organisational provision of the game and processes of institutional discrimination. These include; national political approaches and the cultural impact of measures to promote gender equality, the ideological link between national identity, masculinity and football, and the different pace of the infrastructural development of the women's game across Europe.

Research has identified a small number of progressive national football federations in mainly Nordic countries, a more gradualist and recently accelerated approach at other national federations in Northern Europe, and a much more limited infrastructural development of the women's game in Southern and Central and Eastern Europe. There is a general consensus amongst research studies and interviewee narratives which suggest that the lack of prioritisation, design, and delivery of organisational provision for female players constitutes a form of institutional discrimination, since it has failed to take into account the sporting preferences of females and resulted in unequal treatment on the basis of gender.

(ii) Coaching

The different pace of the infrastructural development of the women's game Europe and consequent limited playing opportunities has had a cumulative impact on shaping the low levels of females as coaches. Research also suggests that a lack of targeted mechanism or succession programmes to engage females in coach education courses and the lack of a coherent professionalised structure for paid coaching opportunities in the women's game have limited the throughput of female players into coaching positions.

The notion of the 'male expert' was felt to be strongly institutionalised within operational practices at men's professional clubs (and at some women's clubs) and underpinned tendencies towards the recruitment of coaches from within dominant social and cultural (male) networks. Females were considered to be outside of the 'cultural marketplace' for coaching positions and experienced a 'glass ceiling' effect to this end. Research also indicated the notion of the 'male expert' was strongly institutionalised within the practices of coach education, and that female competencies were invalidated and devalued within this overtly masculine environment. There was a strong consensus amongst research studies and interviewees which suggested the benefits of female-only coach education courses as a mechanism of engaging, empowering and increasing the technical skills of female coaches in a supportive environment

(iii) Leadership

Research suggests the concept of institutional discrimination has significant applicability in terms of evaluating the 'open secret' of the under-representation of females in leadership positions in football. This is evident in the relatively closed recruitment procedures for leadership positions at professional football clubs which are largely premised on the basis of personal recommendation from an existing 'knowledge bank' of male applicants positioned within the dominant social and cultural networks of the football industry. It is also evident in the processes of patronage and sponsored mobility which underpin 'selection' to executive committees at regional, national and European football federations. These latter processes tend to reward individuals already positioned within dominant social and cultural networks and favour (male) individuals with shared norms, values and backgrounds.

Research identified some cultural resistance to efforts to encourage more equitable change in selection procedures for leadership positions in football. This resistance is informed by a number of factors, including; the broader context of national political approaches to gender equality and limited cultural impact of feminism in some countries, a lack of problem awareness and/or non-acknowledgement of the concept of institutional discrimination, and a reluctance to surrender accrued personal gain and rewards.

Research identified an increasing emphasis amongst European and national level policy makers to support positive action approaches to increasing female representation in leadership positions in political, business and other sporting institutions. There was a strong consensus amongst research studies and interviewees that positive action approaches such as quotas should be introduced as a means of increasing female representation in national football federations and at UEFA. The potential benefits of positive action approaches in football, included; harnessing under-used talents, increasing the diversity of leadership styles, stimulating specialist provision, mainstreaming female perspectives within planning, policy and decision-making processes, and increasing the functioning and legitimacy of football governance at the national and European level.

5. Measures to increase representation and tackle discrimination in sports and football

5.1 European level measures

European level measures to increase minority representation and tackle discrimination in sports and football have gathered pace since the 1990s and initially focused strongly on issues of spectator racism and xenophobia in sport, with a strong emphasis on men's professional football. In recent years, there has been a more general broadening of scope in sports and in football to identify and address institutional forms of discrimination impacting on minority representation in all tiers of the men's professional game. This is evidenced in the FIFA Buenos Aires resolution against racism (2001), the UEFA tackling racism in club football brochure (2006), the Council of Europe: ECRI General policy recommendations for combating racial discrimination in the field of sport, and the recent European Union Federal Rights Agency report entitled 'Racism, ethnic discrimination and exclusion of minorities in sport: A comparative overview of the situation in the European Union' (2010)

European level measures to increase female representation and tackle discrimination in sports have also gathered pace since the 1990s, following the first (of many) international conferences on women in sport which took place in Brighton, England, in 1994. Central to the 'Brighton Declaration' and the ensuing campaigning and legislative focus has been to increase the numbers and involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles, with a specific emphasis on leadership positions. These efforts have arguably been spearheaded by the International Olympic Committee through their innovative work to encourage national sports federations to engage in a range of equal opportunities, positive action and gender mainstreaming measures to enable a more balanced representation of females in leadership positions.

The work of the European Commission Sports Unit has also been central to work to increase representation and tackle discrimination in sports amongst minorities and females. In particular, the European Commission published the White Paper on Sport in 2007 and has through its recent preparatory actions in 2009 and 2010 prioritised the promotion of racial and gender equality in sports. The EU Social Dialogue is also an instrument which has significant potential for application in establishing greater equality across all sectors of sport, including football.

5.2 Models of good practice in increasing representation and tackling discrimination

5.2.1 World United intercultural football project

World United is an intercultural football project based in Belfast in Northern Ireland and is designed to increase the participation in organised football as players and as coaches amongst refugees and asylum seekers and members of 'settled' minority communities. The project is also intended to encourage increased social capital and community integration amongst minorities. The project presently features around forty players drawn from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds drawn from Somalia, the Ivory Coast, Portugal, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Poland, and Iran, as well as indigenous Irish communities from both sides of the Catholic and Protestant religious divide in the country.

The project was initially created in 2003 by the Irish Football Association's Football for All campaign, and has received financial and in-kind resource support from a wider strategic partnership featuring; the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, UEFA, and the EU programme for peace and reconciliation. In the first instance, the project began by providing an environment in which young, socially vulnerable and marginalised minorities could come together to play football in a safe space free from racism,

discrimination and sectarianism. The project was able to access funding to cover the costs of pitch and facility hire and transport costs: all factors which had inhibited prior participation in the game amongst this cohort of players. Since this time, the project has established the World United team, which now plays in organised leagues and competitions, and with some success. In 2008, World United won the prestigious Blanchflower international tournament in Belfast. Exceptionally talented players are also signposted towards other amateur clubs, semi-professional and professional clubs in Northern Ireland through a growing network of contacts within the game. The project has also accessed regular and qualified coaching provision in support of player development, including from former international players. In 2006, the Irish Football Association funded five World United players to undertake Level One coaching courses and for three others to complete their UEFA B licence. These young qualified coaches are presently further developing the talents of players at World United.

Central to the focus of World United have been efforts to utilise the power of football to promote anti-discrimination, equality, and integration. To this end, World United has developed strong links with other clubs and youth projects in Belfast and in other towns and villages in Northern Ireland. World United players have also assisted NICEM and the IFA in delivering anti-racism workshops. Participation in World United has also engendered increased bonding and bridging social capital amongst players and coaches and contributed to their wider societal integration to this end. This is evidenced through linkages between football participation and the take up of opportunities to access language skills and other educational courses. These increased academic skills have also better enabled participants to contribute to - and take ownership of - the structural development and direction of the project.

The success of World United is all the more commendable given the breadth of cultural backgrounds and experiences of its participants and their more general marginalisation from a society which already features deep social, religious and political divisions, as well as high levels of social and economic deprivation. To this end, the project can be viewed as template for the development of other football based community cohesion projects and for tackling processes of structural discrimination and has significant transferability across a range of national contexts across Europe.

5.2.2 The Kick It Out Equality Standard for professional clubs

The Kick It Out Equality Standard sets out a series of measures in a framework document designed to encourage and support the development of equality and diversity practices at men's professional football clubs in England and Wales. Whilst the initial focus of the standard was 'race', it has since 2009 been widened to include other areas of diversity, including; religion, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation. The initiative is an evidence gathering and portfolio building exercise designed to formalised clubs commitment to make professional football accessible to all. Achievements are supported by relevant evidence and verified by an independent accreditation panel.

The Kick It Out Equality Standard is based on three levels of preliminary, intermediate and advanced achievement and covers two main areas of action at each level. The first area of action focuses on the organisational practices of professional clubs and requires them to demonstrate their commitment to equality by developing internal policies and procedures. This includes developing a written equality action plan and an equal opportunities policy setting out clear employment policies and practices and encouraging involvement and commitment from employees in all areas and at all levels within the club. Assessment of training needs and the delivery of equality and diversity training to all members of staff are central to this process. The second area of action focuses on supporter and community involvement and requires clubs to ensure their

stadiums are free from discrimination and that they are making positive, meaningful and multi-layered efforts to engage diverse local communities in club activities

Since its official launch in 2004, a total of 32 professional clubs in England and Wales have achieved the preliminary level of the standard and a further 9 clubs have achieved the intermediate level of the standard. The key beneficial outcomes of the standard include; an increased tendency towards more inclusive marketing and community outreach work at clubs, and a more positive brand perception of clubs amongst local communities. Importantly, there is evidence to suggest that the standard has also encouraged the development of more equitable recruitment and employment practices and an increased understanding of social and corporate responsibility at clubs. This is most evidenced at clubs where there is strong senior management level 'buy-in', and strategic clarity and inter-departmental cohesion around issues of equality and diversity.

It is certainly the case that the implementation of the standard has been most effective at those clubs in the higher echelons of the professional game in England and Wales, with co-ordinated operational systems, modern stadium facilities and relatively sophisticated community out-reach schemes. The benefits of having a nationally co-ordinated anti-racism football campaign that is resourced by the national governing body, competition organisers and state funded equity agencies should not be under-estimated in evaluating the success of efforts to promote and implement the standard. Nonetheless, equality standard has significant potential for transferability to other football settings given the broad comparability of roles, responsibilities and operational make-up of elite clubs across Europe. To this end, the strength of the equality standard as a model of good practice is probably best understood in terms of its capacity to be flexibly adapted (rather than statically adopted) by professional clubs in lieu of local knowledge and cultural sensitivities and with reference to the wider national infrastructural development of the game and dominant political paradigms around equality and diversity.

5.2.3 The Rooney Rule

In 2002, prominent civil rights lawyer Johnny Cochrane produced a high profile report featuring fifteen years worth of statistical information which detailed the American Football National Football League's (NFL) 'dismal record of minority hiring' of head coaches, despite the longstanding involvement of minorities (mainly, African Americans) in the sport. At the time of publication of the report in 2002, minority players accounted for 67% of all players in the NFL, and 28% of assistant coaches, but just 6% of head coaches (just two out of 32 head coaching positions) at NFL clubs. Prior to 2002, there had only been three minority head coaches at NFL clubs throughout the history of the game.

Collins (reference) has argued that the historical lack of minority head coaches in the game has resulted from the unconscious bias of key decision makers at NFL clubs and identifies two key areas of institutional discrimination to this end. Firstly, Collins argues that key decision makers at NFL clubs have traditionally held strongly stereotypical perceptions which equate African American players with physical performance attributes and as having limited intellectual capacities to handle the degree of organisational complexity in American football. This is especially the case given complex human resource and specialised coaching tiers within clubs and the high levels of supervision skills required by head coaches. Collins also argues that key decision makers have tended to recruit coaches from an 'old boys club' of dominant and predominantly white social and cultural networks of industry insiders from which minority players have traditionally been excluded.

In response to the report (and the threat of legal action), the quickly constituted NFL committee on workplace diversity voluntarily implemented a unique policy aimed at increasing the number of minority head coaches at NFL clubs. The policy, entitled the 'Rooney Rule' after the head of the committee and owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers, Dan Rooney, mandated that every NFL club

interview at least one minority candidate upon the vacancy of a head coaching position, or be subject to a significant monetary fine. To this end, the Rooney Rule can be understood to be a 'consideration forcing' mechanism rather than as a hard quota. The minority interviewee gains no entitlement to the head coaching position and must still compete with all other qualified applicants none of whom are automatically excluded from consideration.

Since the implementation of the Rooney Rule the number of minority head coaches has risen to 22% (seven out of 32 head coaches in 2010 are from minorities) and the number of minority assistant coaches has risen to 37%. This included the first minority coach to lead an NFL club to Super Bowl victory in 2007. Whilst the Rooney Rule has attracted some controversy and opposition from inside and outside of the sport, it has also garnered significant support from minority players and coaches and from some White NFL club owners. Supporters of the Rooney Rule have argued that it has been effective in challenging racial stereotypes, expanded previously restricted coaching networks, and broadened the awareness as to potential skilled applicants from minority backgrounds. To this end, the Rooney Rule has significant transferability as a mechanism for disabling practices of institutional discrimination and enabling the increased minority representation as coaches in other sports, including, most notably, football.

5.2.4 International Olympic Committee: Women and leadership in sport

In 1997, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) adopted the following ground breaking proposals regarding women's involvement in decision making structures and leadership positions within its member organizations. National Olympic Committees (NOC's), International Federations (IF's), National Federations (NF's) and other sports organizations related to the Olympic movement were required to immediately set a target of achieving at least 10% of all of the offices in all their decision making structures (in particular, legislative or executive agencies) to be held by women by 2000. The IOC added that this percentage should increase to 20% by 2005. Importantly, the IOC has regularly collected statistics on the numbers of women in each of these organizations and has measured progress towards the achievement of these targets.

Research undertaken by the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy at Loughborough University in 2004 (reference) reported on initial progress on this score. Findings indicated that on average women represented 12.6% of the membership of the NOC General Assemblies and 15.4% of the Executive Boards at NOC's. More recent figures referenced by the Women's Sports Foundation suggest further progress to this end. For example, in 2005, 77% of NOC's and 54% of IF's had achieved the minimum 10% target and 32% of NOC's and 23% of IF's had achieved the 20% target of women's representation at board level. Women's representation at IOC Executive board level (6.6%), IOC membership level (12.4%) and on IOC commissions (15.3%) has risen slowly but steadily from only a handful of women in 1997. Around three-quarters of all women in leadership positions at the IOC, NOC's and IF's have been appointed since the targets were announced in 1997.

The target setting approach of the IOC has had the merit of providing a simple, understandable, measurable and transparent policy goal. Research has suggested that 64% of related bodies had implemented a range of special measures designed to modify and 'open up' some institutionally closed practices embedded within organisational selection criteria within the governance of sports at the national level. These measures included reserving places specifically for women, revising their statutes, encouraging sports federations to nominate women candidates, and through directly approaching suitably qualified women. In some cases, these sporting bodies adopted hard and soft quotas, co-option and committee expansion as a means of increasing women's representation.

Central to realising these more numerical objectives has been significant efforts to nurture, develop and increase women's competencies in sports leadership, administration and governance. For example, 27% of all participants to have benefited from IOC training programmes and 30% of successful applicants for IOC degree course scholarships since 2001 are women. The IOC has also

provided funding to support women to attend international sport management seminars. Reported benefits of the increased representation of women in key leadership positions in the IOC, NOC's, IF's and NF's include; an increased diversity and fresh impetus of leadership styles, the stimulation of specialist provision to engage women in sports, and the increased input and influence of women on policy, planning and decision making and consequent shift towards gender mainstreaming approaches in sports. The IOC processes of target setting has had clear positive impacts on increasing women's representation and changing the culture of many governing bodies in sports and has some significant applicability and transferability to football, with specific reference to UEFA and its membership of national associations.

5.2.5 Norwegian football federation and gender quotas

Following the appointment of a women's committee to the Norwegian football association in 1976, the development of regional and national competition infrastructures in the late 1970s helped formalise the already significant participation in the game amongst women. The Norwegian football association's women's committee also focused significant efforts on developing a sustainable infrastructure for the women's game which included the implementation of targeted mechanisms for the recruitment and education of women coaches and referees. In 1985, the Norwegian football association first introduced a 'mild quota' system which stated that there should be at least one woman on each of the central committees of the association. The introduction of quotas in football in Norway reflected the wider progressive national political paradigm around gender equality and the implementation of positive action measures to engender a more balanced representation of women across other areas of social, economic and political life. Between 1985 and 1989 the numbers of women on committees at the Norwegian football association rose from three to ten. Since the early 1990s committee level membership has featured around 40% female representation, including at executive board level. In 1996, the Norwegian FA appointed the first female vice president, who later went on to become General Secretary of the organisation with responsibility for the administration and development of all of the game at a national level.

The implementation of gender quotas in Norwegian football were consciously designed to – and have significantly addressed - patterns of institutional discrimination embedded in neutral criteria approaches to selection to decision making positions in the sport. They have quickened the pace of change and have enabled 'entry tickets' to women into the previously male dominated tiers of football governance. They have contributed significantly to challenging the notion of the 'male expert' and have enabled the development of – and afforded due value to – the significant competencies of women at the highest level of the game. The importance of quotas as an initial mechanism for affecting change and engendering more balanced gender representation are illustrated in the personal reflections of one senior female figure within the association:

'I worked my way through the club, as a player and an organiser, and then I did regional federation work. I'd say when I was picked and elected as a member of the Norwegian FA, I was quota'd into that position, but I was not quota'd as the Vice President or as the General Secretary. But I would never have been able to prove my competence if I wasn't quota'd into that position in the first provision. You need to break up the traditional view of competence and experience in the first place for entering these bodies. But when you have entered you have of course to prove yourself for further provisions. But quotation is extremely important in the first situation'

The benefits of the positive action approaches enacted by the Norwegian football association are manifold and include; harnessing the talents and experiences of women, the incorporation of women into the planning, policy and decision making processes of football administration and governance, the consequent acceleration of the infrastructural development of the women's game, and the positive beneficial outcomes for increasing opportunities for females as players, coaches

and in leadership positions. To this end, the work of the Norwegian football association has direct applicability and significant transferability as an exemplar of good practice across football in Europe, with particular reference to its success in dismantling processes of institutional discrimination and increasing the representation of women at all levels of the game.

6. Some final recommendations

6.1 Monitoring and evaluation

UEFA, national football associations, and professional football clubs should conduct a full audit of the ethnic/cultural background and gender of all playing, coaching, and administrative staff and those involved at the governance level of football. This will provide a comprehensive benchmark figure of representation in the game against which progress can be measured.

Data collection procedures pertaining to representation should be appropriately designed and standardised to encourage comparability of findings across different nation states and across the different tiers of the game under examination. Data collection should be centrally co-ordinated by UEFA and measured at appropriate intervals over a ten year period

UEFA should commission a comprehensive research study to examine further and in more detail the processes of structural discrimination impacting on minorities and females identified in this report. Research should be appropriately funded and undertaken through collaboration between research organisations with strong experience of work of this kind across all regions of Europe.

6.2 Provision and practice

National and regional football associations should allocate greater resource support towards football projects situated in 'minority heavy' socio-economically deprived urban and rural locales and towards projects designed to increase girl's participation in the sport. Projects should feature a strong emphasis on engaging children and young people in football and establishing clear and structured pathways into the organised amateur and professional game

National and regional federations should allocate greater resource support and a clear strategic focus towards the delivery of coach education courses targeting minorities and females. Courses should be delivered flexibly and inclusively in targeted locales and be subsidised to negate cost issues and encourage stronger participation rates amongst marginalised groups. National and regional associations should also implement mechanisms to encourage increased representation of minorities and females as coach educators.

Professional football clubs should review all existing practices of youth recruitment and talent identification to incorporate a broader range of sites and settings in which young minority players are present. This should include concerted efforts to build meaningful and productive links with minority football clubs.

6.3 Policies and procedures

Professional football clubs should review all existing practices of recruitment to non-playing positions, including senior administrative employment. Professional clubs should adopt and adhere strictly to equal opportunities legislation regarding employment and should implement measures to evaluate the outcomes of these processes in terms of the representation of minorities and females

UEFA and national and regional associations should review all existing practices of recruitment to leadership positions at the decision making committee levels of football governance. Governing bodies should immediately address the processes and practices of institutional discrimination embedded within 'neutral criteria' approaches to selection which contribute to the under-representation of minorities and females.

UEFA and national and regional associations should creatively implement a range of positive action approaches to encourage and increase the representation of minorities and females in leadership positions in the decision making committees of football governance. Positive action measures should include; target setting, quotas, co-option and committee expansion

6.4 Education, training and awareness

UEFA, national federations, professional football clubs and other related football bodies should work collaboratively to develop and deliver an industry standard cultural and gender diversity training programme across the football industry

This industry standard training programme should be designed to address a number of key areas, including; legislative issues around equality, challenging physical and cultural stereotypes, understanding institutional discrimination and the promoting the value and benefits of diversity to all football organisations

This industry standard training programme should be undertaken by; youth academy and professional players, coaches, administrators and directors at professional football clubs, and all administrators and committee members in decision making positions at regional and national associations and at UEFA.

7. Contact details

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