



# **Representation and structural discrimination in football in Europe**

## **The case of minorities and women**

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## Executive summary

### Minority representation and discrimination in men's football in Europe

#### 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

#### 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 origin 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 game and their strong distributional focus at a small number of minority football clubs. Minority coaches are also under-represented in the men's professional game as first team coaches and within youth development frameworks at professional clubs. Within national and regional federations, minority coaches generally have fewer coaching qualifications and are less likely to be employed on a full-time basis than their white counterparts.

##### (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 national and regional federations are from minorities. Similarly, less than 1% of all 'white collar' staff at professional clubs are from minorities, even at clubs situated in culturally diverse locales.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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 owners offer racialised assessments of abilities premised on 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.

## **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

## **Women's representation and discrimination in women's (and men's) football in Europe**

### **The broader context**

Women are significantly under-represented in all areas of social, economic and political life in Europe. Research suggests a strong causal link between levels of women's 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 women's 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 women representation in key areas of social, economic and political life

### **Levels of women's representation in football**

#### **(i) Playing**

Research indicates low levels of representation of women players (8.2%) in comparison to male players (91.8%) and a significant distributional focus of women (87.2%) and girl's 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 women 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 women players into coaching positions.

#### **(iii) Leadership**

Research suggests low levels of women's 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.

### **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 women's participation in playing football, especially minority women. Research also suggests that the social and historical construction of football as a distinctly 'masculine space' has limited women's 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 women's participation as players have had a strong cumulative impact in shaping the low levels of women's 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 women's 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 women candidates and the generational distribution of leadership positions in the football industry. The low levels of visibility of women in leadership positions has contributed to perceptions of a 'glass ceiling' effect and have consequently lowered the confidence and aspirations of women to seek to pursue career pathways of this kind.

## **Overt sexism and gender abuse**

### (i) Playing

There is little available data to suggest that women 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 women 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 women 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 women coaches in men's football is strongly informed by the lack of high profile women 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 women coaches and dissuade women 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 women 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 women in pursuing leadership positions in strongly male environments. Further, where cultural oppositions to the inclusion of women 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

## **Physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions**

### **(i) Playing**

Research indicates the ways in which physical and cultural stereotypes of women 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 women's football achievements. Women 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 as and 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 women and girls.

### **(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 women's 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 women with a lack of suitability and competence have contributed to 'filtering out' women from accessing leadership positions at men's professional football clubs and at the regional, national and European level of football governance.

## **Organisational provision and institutional discrimination**

### **(i) Playing**

Research suggests that the low levels and distributional focus of women's 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 women players constitutes a form of institutional discrimination, since it has failed to take into account the sporting preferences of women and resulted in unequal treatment on the basis of gender.

#### (ii) Coaching

The different pace of the infrastructural development of the women's game in Europe and consequent limited playing opportunities has had a cumulative impact on shaping the low levels of women as coaches. Research also suggests that a lack of targeted mechanism or succession programmes to engage women 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 women 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. Women 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 women's 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 women 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 women's 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 women's 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.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Evaluation 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 women in terms of playing, coaching and leadership positions. 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 women 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. They are socio-economic and cultural barriers, overt racisms or sexism, physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions, and 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 women 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 focuses 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 (see section 1.2).

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 women's representation and discrimination in the women's game. However, the women's section does provide further analysis relating to issues impacting on minority women in relation to playing the game, and with regard to issues impacting on the crossover of women into the men's game in terms of coaching and leadership positions in football. This separate but inter-related analytical and presentational focus is intended to offer a more subtle and nuanced account of issues of representation and the ways in which different processes of discrimination have impacted in different ways on minorities and women. Equally, it also affords the opportunity to identify and explain some shared experiences of exclusions and marginalisation between minorities and women and with respect to both the men's and women's game.

### **1.2 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 women's 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 women 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 federations or at UEFA outlining the levels of representation of minorities and women 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 women 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 possible, an overarching and illuminating picture of processes and events pertaining to issues of representation and discrimination in football.

### **1.3 Structure of the report**

This report will begin by offering some broader context in terms of the recent political, cultural and demographic shifts which have contributed to the increasing cultural diversity of populations across Europe. The report is then broken down into two sections: minorities in the male game and women in the women's (and men's game) game. Each of these sections will follow a comparable format and will begin by examining wider societal levels of representation and discrimination and measures designed to address ongoing inequalities to this end. Each section will then identify and examine levels of representation in the following three separate but inter-related tiers of football:

- Playing,
- Coaching
- Leadership

The report will then identify and examine a series of structural barriers to increased representation in each of these three tiers of the game. These structural barriers will include;

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

The report will then examine some broader measures within sports and football to increase representation and tackle discriminations and will identify some models of good practice to this end. Finally, the report will offer some recommendations for future work in this area.

## **2. Europe and its diverse populations**

### **2.1 The political and economic context of Europe**

In 2010, Europe has approximately 50 recognised sovereign states stretching from Iceland and Portugal in the far north-west and south-west of the continent respectively, to the transcontinental nations of Russia and Turkey to the far east of the region. In the case of the sovereign state of the United Kingdom, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are amalgamated under one political union. Similarly, the Faroe Islands, Monaco, and the Vatican City operate as relatively autonomous principalities under the wider political umbrella of the sovereign states of Denmark, France and Italy respectively.

The present nation state formation of Europe has emerged from a relatively turbulent period in modern history in which the continent has undergone significant social, cultural, economic, political and geographical transformation. Between 1945 and 1989 the political (and military) map of Europe was largely divided between NATO countries in the west and the Warsaw pact countries in the east of Europe. The fall of soviet led state communism in many eastern bloc countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s gave rise to myriad processes of political unification, partition and fragmentation in the region. Since this period, the rise of ethnic nationalisms and antagonisms in some post communist countries has led to the re-emergence of longstanding territorial disputes and enmities, and in the case of the Balkans region to armed conflicts and civil war. In Western Europe, sub national groups in Spain and religious minorities in Northern Ireland seeking greater cultural recognition and political autonomy remain engaged in fractious disputes with national governments.

Conversely, the emergence of international organisations such as the Council of Europe (COE) and the European Union (EU) has increased the potential for - and realisation of - greater European integration. The COE was first developed in 1949 and presently has 47 member states and features a strong emphasis on issues relating to human rights, democratic development and cultural co-operation. To this end, the work of the COE is intended to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress. The history of the European Union dates back to 1957 when the Treaty of Rome brought together six Western European countries to establish European Economic Community (EEC). The European Union in its present format was formally established with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 by 12 mainly Western European countries, including all six former EEC countries, and has more recently expanded to include a further 15 (mainly central and eastern European) member states. The EU is a political and economic union with a strong focus on increasing the market competitiveness of nationally integrated economies. The EU comprises the largest single economic area globally, although there are some marked variations in the wealth of its member states, between the historically embedded free market economies of Western Europe and the developing economies of post communist Eastern Europe. The political governance of the EU is administered by its executive body, the European Commission (EC). The EC has responsibility for the guardianship and implementation of EU treaties, including the Lisbon treaty which was ratified by all EU member states in 2009. The Lisbon Treaty gives legal effect to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which list fifty-five articles pertaining to the social, political and economic rights of EU citizens (see section 3.2.1 for further information).

### **2.2 The demographic and cultural context of Europe**

Population estimates for Europe vary according to political and geographical boundary definitions. According to the United Nations (UN Population Division 2004, 2006) the total population of Europe

is presently around 830 million: around 13% of the world population. Of this total population, around 500 million are resident in 27 EU countries of which more than one half (270 million) are situated in just four countries (Germany, France, United Kingdom and Italy). A further 90 million people are resident in 18 non EU countries situated in Europe in their geographical entirety. In excess of 240 million people are resident in five transcontinental countries bordering the middle-east and central Asia, of which around 120 million are considered as European.

Since the 1950s and 1960s there have been a steady increase and more recent acceleration of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the populations of Europe (Cesarani and Fulbrook 1996, Panayi 1999, Pan and Pfeil 2003, Ali et al 2006, Pichler 2009). Some population estimates suggest that around 30 million people from non-European origin are presently resident in Europe. This includes significant populations drawn from across the continents of Asia and Africa and from Latin America. Non-European in-migration trajectories have been most prevalent in those Western European countries with strong colonial histories. For example, in the post world war two period, the UK has attracted significant South Asian and African Caribbean populations. Similarly, France, Portugal and the Netherlands have experienced significant in-migration and settlement from a range of sub-Saharan and North African populations. Whilst the influx of economic migrants from former colonial territories has slowed over time, processes of family re-union and the higher fertility rates of many families of non-European backgrounds has meant that there is now a firmly established cohort of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation 'settled' minority populations in many Western European countries. Since the 1990s, non-European in-migration trajectories to countries such as the UK, France, Netherlands and Sweden have been more strongly linked to the growth in asylum seekers and refugees fleeing political persecution and armed conflicts in places such as Iraq and Somalia (Bloch and Levy 1999, Bell et al 2004, Pillai et al 2006).

Since the 1990s, the continent has also experienced significant population movements across national borders amongst cohorts drawn from European origin. Following the incorporation of the Schengen agreement into European Union law in 1997 and the expansion of EU member states from the mid 2000s onwards, there has been significant migration from former eastern bloc countries to wealthier nations in Western Europe. For example, a large number of Poles and Lithuanians have settled in the UK and Ireland. Similarly, Spain and Italy has increasingly become host to large numbers of Romanians seeking employment and an improved standard of living. Germany has a long history of attracting 'guest workers' from Turkey and a range of other central and eastern European countries. The concentric spread of refugee populations fleeing the war torn Balkans region in the 1990s has also impacted on the diversity of populations in surrounding countries in mainland Europe, including Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Greece. There are also noticeable migration trends of older more affluent populations from the UK and Germany to the Iberian Peninsula of Spain and Portugal.

The push and pull factors of European and non European origin migration trajectories has led to an increased ethnic and cultural diversity within the national populations of many Western European countries. Conversely, many post communist countries in central and Eastern Europe appear relatively culturally homogeneous entities with few 'visible' ethnic minorities. However, the presence of national and religious minorities in Europe arguably cuts across east-west regional divides and the political construction of nation state boundaries. For example, Catalonians in Spain, Basque nationalists in Spain and France, Bretons and Corsican nationalists in France, Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland, and Russian speaking populations of newly independent states such as Latvia. Similarly, significant religious minorities are present within many countries in Europe, including, Muslim communities from South Asia, North Africa and the Middle East in the UK, France, and the Netherlands, and Jewish communities across mainland Europe. Other minorities include indigenous groups such as Basques in Spain and France, and Sami in Northern Scandinavia, as well as Nomadic 'landless' populations such as Roma and other traveller groups. On this latter score, around four million Roma are presently resident across a range of mainly southern and central and eastern European countries, including, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain.



In the context of this report, the term 'minority' is used as a broad descriptive marker to refer to ethnically, culturally, religiously and sub-nationally distinct populations resident within nation state boundaries. This broad conceptualisation of 'minorities' includes both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generational 'settled' minority communities and more recent economic migrants and asylum and refugee groups drawn from a range of European and non-European backgrounds who presently reside in countries in which they make up a numerical minority. This broad definition of 'minorities' is premised on the recognition that minority status is both objectively ascribed (by the dominant society) and subjectively applied (by minority groups) as a means marking out ethnic, cultural, religious and sub-national difference. These differences can be applied both negatively as a basis for hostility and discrimination and/or positively in terms of cultural identity, group solidarity and collective resistance to racisms.

### 3. Minorities

#### 3.1 Minority representation and discrimination

There is a small but steadily growing body of research which has highlighted the significant under-representation of minority populations in key decision making positions in social, cultural, economic and political institutions at the national level across Europe. Whilst much of the research undertaken in this area has differed in its focus, scope and content, there has been a broad consensus in terms of analysis and explanation which equates patterns of minority under-representation with processes and practices of structural discrimination at the individual, societal and organisational level (Coussey 2002, Armstrong et al, 2005, Bulmer and Solomos, 2004, 2008, COE/ECRI 2006a, 2010, EC 2008, Berman and Paradies 2010)

In the first instance, explanations of this kind suggest that minority populations experience disproportionate levels of overt and more institutional discriminations in comparison to that which is experienced by majority populations. The impact of these discriminations has limited the potential for equality of opportunities and equality of outcomes for minority populations across a range of societal spheres. For example, research by the ILO (1998) in the UK, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands indicates that minority populations are more likely to experience higher levels of unemployment or to hold low status occupations and to be positioned towards the lower end of the socio-economic strata than majority populations. In addition to these structural discriminations there are also a number of other cultural factors contributing to general under-representation of minority populations. For example, the socio-historical specificities of in-migration trajectories, the cultural and religious distinctiveness of minority populations, and the limited educational and language skills amongst many first generation migrants (Niesson 2000, Anthias 2001, Miles 2003, Modood 2005, ECMI 2006). Nonetheless, even in countries which feature a range of more 'settled' and relatively integrated 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation minority populations, there is evidenced examples of structural discriminations and consequent sustained socio-economic disadvantage which suggest some shared experiences of social exclusion and marginalisation to this end.

The continent of Europe is also a site in which minority populations continue to experience a range of overt and more institutional forms of discriminations, such as racism, ethno-centrism, xenophobia and religious intolerance. Perhaps, most prevalent in the context of this report is the concept of racism and concomitant processes of racial discrimination. Broadly speaking, racism refers to an ideology, structure and process in which inequalities inherent in the wider social structure are related in a deterministic way to biological and cultural factors attributed to those who are seen as a different 'race' or ethnic group. Referring to racisms in the plural recognises the increasing complexity and diversity of racisms and their often contradictory character. This allows for an enhanced conceptual understanding of the ways in which different minorities experience different forms of racisms in different ways across a range of social, economic and cultural indices and across specific geographical and national contexts (Gilroy 2000, Miles 2003, Bulmer and Solomos 2008).

Racisms are often expressed directly through overt attitudes, behaviour, verbal and/or physical abuse or harassment with the explicit intention, perception and/or result that a person treats another less favourably than he/she would treat some-one else on the basis of their minority background. In its most recent annual report the Council of Europe European Commission against Racism and Intolerance stated that Europe was '*witnessing a rise in xenophobic and intolerant attitudes generally, including virulent verbal attacks and violent incidents and an increasing perception of migration flows as impacting negatively on the countries concerned*' (COE/ECRI 2010a). Whilst these trends have been exacerbated by the recent global economic crisis and the inevitable competition for scarce resources, they are also underpinned by strongly embedded

forms of cultural racisms across nation state boundaries within Europe. These cultural racisms are based on essentialist notions of cultural and religious difference and perceived incompatibility between and within White European groups and groups of non-European origin.

Cultural racisms of this kind can be identified through processes of negative cultural stereotyping which falsely construct and prioritise perceived differences between dominant and minority groups rather than highlighting shared social, economic and cultural similarities and experiences between groups (Modood and Werbner 1997). For example, much of the recent political (and populist media) debate in Western Europe around the perceived lack of potential for greater assimilation and integration has been underscored by negative perceptions and socially constructed falsehoods regarding the apparent cultural and religious separatism of Muslim communities and some asylum seeker and refugee populations (Allen and Niesson 2002, Schuster 2003, Abbas 2004, Greenslade 2005, Weller 2006, Modood 2009, Pitcher 2009, Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010)

The United Nations Convention on all forms of Racial Discrimination (2001) provides a useful overarching definition of racial discrimination which alludes to the myriad processes, cumulative impact and negative outcomes of discriminations of this kind on minority populations:

*'The term racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on 'race', colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other fields of public life'.*

Processes of minority discriminations may also be unconscious and unintentional rather than overt and deliberate. They can be seen in the everyday practices of rules, norms, routines, and patterns of attitudes and behaviour in institutions and societal structures that represent obstacles to minorities in achieving the same rights and opportunities that are available to majority populations. The concept of institutional racism as defined in the UK's Macpherson report (1999) provides a useful outline of the way in which these largely unconscious processes of minority discriminations can be enacted at the organisational level. Institutional racism is:

*'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate service to people because of the colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority groups'.*

Despite the growing awareness and understanding of – and implementation of measures to address – the myriad processes of minority discrimination referred to above, minority populations continue to experience disproportionate levels of under-representation in key areas of social, economic and political life throughout Europe. Recent academic explanations for the apparent slow pace of societal change in this respect have sought to broaden debates to include analysis of the ways in which dominant groups perceive their own social advantages and economic achievements as the cultural norm (Crenshaw et al 1995, Frankenburg 1999, Gilroy 2000, Delgado and Stegancic 1997, 2001, Essed and Goldberg 2002, Bonilla Silva 2006, Bonnet 2008, Rothenburg 2008). Ascribing normative status to the cultural norms of dominant groups in this way precludes any recognition of the beneficial membership of dominant social and cultural networks and the profits of mutual acquaintance. Further, it affords opportunities to define social problems such as racial discrimination from a culturally hegemonic position of power and dominance and to offer solutions which negate any sense of 'inward gaze' or critical reflection. From this empowered position, ongoing minority under-representation is invariably perceived as resulting from wider societal exclusions or as being informed by the negatively perceived cultural properties of minority groups, rather than as being shaped by processes and practices of organisations and institutions within

which dominant groups have prospered. For minority groups with limited material and symbolic resources, opportunities to accrue the relevant social, economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) through which to challenge the status quo of societal relations and to contest racial discrimination in all its forms remain limited.

### **3.2 Measures to increase minority representation and tackle discrimination**

#### **3.2.1 European level measures**

At the present time, more than 170 countries globally have signed up to the United Convention on the elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. The convention obliges parties to *'not practice racial discrimination in public institutions, to not sponsor, defend, or support racial discrimination, and to review, amend, or revoke those that cause or perpetuate racial discrimination'* (UN 2001). The convention also encourages parties to prohibit by all appropriate means, including legislation, racial discrimination within their jurisdictions. These dictates have chimed positively with the organisational development of the European Union and the Council of Europe and their intentions towards the promotion of equality and tolerance and stated vision of enabling a modern and progressive political and economic union.

Efforts to realise these aims and objectives are evidenced in the work of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance: an independent human rights body specialising in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-semitism and other forms of religious intolerance. The ECRI produces periodic reports and general policy recommendations to combat racial discrimination across a range of national contexts (COE/ECRI 1996, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2010). The work of the Council of Europe to establish the *'framework convention for the protection of national minorities'* (COE 1995) can also be seen as part of this wider anti-discriminatory purpose. At the present time, 43 member states have signed up to the stated aims of this latter convention to preserve and develop the culture, identity and languages of national minorities and to combat discrimination, promote equality and guarantee national minority freedoms.

All 27 member states of the European Union have also signed up in principle to the Charter for Fundamental Rights (EP/EC/EC 2007). The charter sets out in a single text, for the first time in the European Union's history, the whole range of civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons resident in the European Union. The extent to which the charter can impact on national legislation remains a moot point, since in principle its powers are limited to the implementation of EU legislation only. Further, two EU member states, the UK and Poland, have been granted political *'opt-outs'* regarding the enforceability of the provisions of the charter over established domestic law. Nonetheless, despite these political and legal complexities, the charter outlines a set of stated rights which are broken down into six key sections: dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizen's rights and justice. The equality section of the charter features article 21 pertaining to non-discrimination, which states the following:

*'Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited'.*

Article 22 of the charter also states that *'the union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity'*. In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty gave full legal effect to the charter. The Lisbon treaty was signed by all EU member states in 2007 and entered into force following ratification in 2009 (Treaty of Lisbon 2007/C306/01). Responsibility for the guardianship and implementation of the Lisbon Treaty is held with the European Commission which is the executive body of the European Union. This broader treaty focus is also intended to complement the prior and ongoing work of the Council

of the European Union Racial Equality Directive which was established in 2000 with a remit to implement the principle of equal treatment between people irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. More specifically, the Racial Equality Directive provides for the establishment in each member state of an organisation to support the enactment of provisions to prevent direct and indirect racial discrimination in employment and training, education, social protection, workers organisations and access to good and services including housing.

### **3.2.2 National level measures**

National level approaches to increase minority representation and tackle minority discrimination have thus far been markedly mixed in terms of their focus, scope and content. Whilst several countries, such as the UK, Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain operate a complex mixture of legal, civil and constitutional provisions to combat minority discrimination, a number of other countries have much less developed legislative procedures in this respect (Coussey 2002). Further, even where nation states enshrine anti-discriminatory practice in legislation, the application of appropriate enforcement mechanisms remains a challenging and difficult process.

The varied legislative approach to increase minority representation and tackle minority discrimination is to some extent reflective of differing national approaches to issues of 'identity' and 'citizenship' across Europe. Whilst the concept of citizenship in its broadest form alludes to the relationship between citizens and a particular social, political or national community, it has in Europe become most closely identified with being a member of a particular nation (Cesarani and Fulbrook 1996, Bloch and Levy 1999, Rex and Singh 2003, Amara et al 2004b). Whilst nation states are to some extent premised on the belief of an entitlement to engender, protect and preserve their own unique (and perceptually unified) culture and history, it is also the case that one might discern multiple (and often conflicting) traditions of thought around national identity and citizenship within most nation states. Nonetheless, the adoption of - and adherence to - different models of national identity and citizenship have informed the different policy approaches to dealing with the increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of populations within many nation states. These national policy approaches can be broadly categorised into four types: non intervention, assimilation, integration and multiculturalism.

Non interventionist approaches to dealing with minority discrimination are most commonly evident in post communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland, Latvia and Slovakia, where in-migration flows have been minimal and where there exists relatively culturally homogeneous populations. Whilst these and other post communist countries are presently experiencing an 'evolving' political process of democratisation and nation building, the lack of co-ordinated measures to tackle minority discrimination are arguably reflective of relatively 'closed' and rigid models of national identity and citizenship.

Similarly, national policy approaches premised on assimilation place a strong emphasis on the absorption of minority populations into the culture and practices of the 'host' society. Assimilation thus implies both 'acculturation' in terms of the adoption of mainstream cultural norms, and 'deculturation' in terms of the gradual loss of the cultural distinctiveness of minority populations. These approaches have traditionally chimed most strongly with advocates of the French republican and German ethno-nationalist models of national identity and citizenship. The French republican model is premised on the willingness of a range of culturally distinct groups to forego open displays of linguistic, cultural or religious difference in favour of a unified secular political project purporting to universal rights for all. Conversely, the German ethno-nationalist model views political nationalism as the outcome (rather than the starting point) of shared culture, language and ethos. However, in both cases, cultural difference is expected to be assimilated rather than accommodated into national mainstream culture. Whilst there is a strong adherence to the notion of assimilation within much mainstream political debate within Europe, the rhetoric of assimilation has also been appropriated by right wing nationalist political parties as a reaction to the perceived

'threat' of multiculturalism. In countries where proponents of such views have achieved significant electoral success, there is a marked defensiveness and general de-prioritisation of policy interventions designed to address minority discrimination, in favour of more generalist approaches to remedying broader issues around social exclusion and economic marginalisation.

The concept of multiculturalism is most closely associated with the Anglo Saxon liberal individualist model of national identity and citizenship, and has been traditionally exemplified in the 'managed diversity' approaches of such countries as the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden. This notion of citizenship is focused less on hereditary membership of a particular group or voluntary political adherence to the nation, but, rather, by reference to national territorial residence within a nation state or with regard to colonial territories. Broadly speaking, multiculturalism can be defined as the acceptance, promotion and celebration of cultural pluralism and extending equitable status to distinct ethnic, cultural and religious groups without promoting any dominant or non-dominant values as central. Advocates of this approach purport to notions of mutual tolerance and the recognition of the importance of key social, cultural and religious institutions in providing moral, psychological and political support for minority populations. Critiques of multiculturalism have increased in Europe in the post 9/11 and global economic downturn period of recent history. For some commentators, the 'multicultural ideal' of benignly co-existing cultures living 'parallel lives' is unsustainable, paradoxical and undesirable in modern nation states. For example, in the UK, a number of social commentators have expressed concerns over the apparent cultural segregation in housing and education and resultant violent conflicts between whites and South Asians. In the Netherlands, there is a growing sense of 'democratic impatience' at the perceived lack of integration of Turkish and Moroccan populations. In both countries, these recent events have contributed to a political shift in thinking away from multiculturalism towards the rhetoric and policy of integration (Parekh 2006, Kymlicka 2010, Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010).

The concept of integration refers to processes whereby minority groups are encouraged adapt to the social, economic and cultural mores of the majority society, whilst maintaining their culturally diverse traditions and heritage. Like multiculturalism, integrationist approaches accord equal value to different cultures and seek to promote equality of opportunities and the levelling of barriers of association. However, they also place a much stronger ideological and policy emphasis on intercultural exchange and the promotion of new, diverse, and more dynamic cultural identities, which can be utilised as a key social, economic and political resource. Critiques of proponents of integration suggest on the one hand that such approaches underplay social divisions between majority and minority populations and overplay the potential for meaningful (rather than virtual) integration. On the other hand, some commentators have argued that the policies of both multiculturalism and integration contribute to the erosion of the historically embedded distinct cultures of 'host' nations (see Modood and Werbner 1997, Wiervorka 1998, Hewitt 2005)

Nonetheless, efforts to tackle minority discrimination and increase levels of minority representation in key areas of social, economic and political life are most closely associated with those countries in Europe which have subscribed to multicultural and integrative models of thought. This has included the implementation of a range of measures to ensure equality of opportunities in terms of accessing education, welfare, housing and employment. For example, on this latter score, the civil service in the UK, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands has each implemented measures targeting the increased recruitment and professional development of minority populations in the administration of local and national government and has engaged workers in programmes of racial equality and cultural diversity training schemes. These policy measures allude to the perceived benefits of developing pluralist and multicultural organisations, as a means through which to successfully deliver services in both the public (state) sector and the private (commercial) sector. From these perspectives, cultural diversity is seen as a positive resource which should be recognised, developed and utilised to the benefits of individuals and which can contribute to the added value of organisations and their capacities to connect with more diverse audiences in the national and global marketplace.

A key component of establishing pluralist and multicultural organisations has been through the implementation of practices of 'positive action'. This approach attempts to address the apparent disjuncture between equality of opportunities and (in)equality of outcomes experienced by minority populations. In doing so, 'positive action' approaches seek to move beyond those 'colour blind' neutral criteria approaches to recruitment which are perceived to contribute to, rather than sufficiently redress, patterns of minority under-representation. Positive action approaches recognise and attempt to counter a series of historically embedded processes of minority discrimination and challenge a series of hegemonic power relations which contribute to the status quo of inequitable social relations. These practices of positive action have become relatively commonplace in recent years, especially in a number of Northern European countries. For example, targeted efforts to recruit equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant police officers in Northern Ireland can also be seen as an example of positive action and has been used as a means of eliminating bias and increasing the public confidence in the service amongst the nations divided political and religious communities. Conversely, in countries where dominant political paradigms are informed by concepts of assimilation and non-intervention, practices of positive action are largely absent from organisational and societal relations. This is the case in countries with very different cultural histories, such as France and Slovakia, where practices of positive action on the basis of ethnic and cultural background are constitutionally illegal. However, it is important to note, that in France, especially, there is growing pressure from within the political and business sphere to incorporate ethnicity as a category within the next national census and to implement measures to address social, economic and educational exclusion of populations in deprived locales, many of whom are drawn from minority communities. Nonetheless, some critics have suggested that positive actions benefit only the most socio-economically advantaged (middle class) sections of minority populations. Others have argued that such approaches reduce incentives, encourage social selectivity and unfairness, and increase racial tensions at the local and national level. The extent to which these critiques are rooted in empirical evaluation or are reflective of the political persuasion of some commentators is a moot point. What is a little more clear is that in the absence of practical measures to address minority discrimination including 'positive action', levels of minority representation in all spheres of social, economic and political life remain especially low.

### **3.3 Levels of minority representation in men's football in Europe**

#### **3.3.1 Playing**

Broader research examining levels of minority participation in recreational sports across a range of national contexts in Europe have commonly alluded to the generally lower levels of participation amongst minorities in comparison to majority populations. For example, research studies referencing Denmark and the Netherlands indicate lower levels of sports club membership amongst minority groups (Elling et al 2001, Krouwel et al 2006, Agergaard and Sorenson 2009). Research referencing Ireland has indicated that 'non EU migrant populations' were less than half as likely as indigenous Irish communities to be taking part in recreational sport (Amara et al 2004a). In the UK, a study commissioned by Sport England suggested 'there is no evidence to suggest that sport has widened its participation base to include more people from ethnic minorities' (Rowe and Champion 2000).

In some cases, studies of this kind have sought to ascertain levels of minority recreational sports participation in lieu of intersections of ethnic background, religion and gender. For example, research in the UK, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have all identified especially low levels of participation amongst Muslim females (Taylor and Toohey 2002, Taylor 2003, Walseth and Fasting 2004, Elling and Knoppers 2005, Kay 2006, Pfister 2010). Similarly, studies undertaken in the UK have identified broadly comparable levels of recreational sports participation between White and Black Caribbean populations and generally lower levels of participation amongst a range of

culturally and religiously diverse South Asian populations (Fleming 1994, 1995, Rowe and Champion 2000, Collins and Kay 2003, Collins 2004). The importance of research of this kind has been to shift debates beyond tendencies towards 'false universalism' and the homogenisation of minority groups to enable a more subtle, nuanced approach to examining the relationship between the ethnic and cultural background of minorities and their participation levels in sports.

These latter approaches have become increasingly common in research focusing on minority participation in organised men's amateur football settings and have provided a useful insight into mixed levels of representation amongst different minority groups at the amateur level of the game. For example, studies conducted in the UK have identified a general over-representation of players from Black Caribbean backgrounds and a general under-representation of South Asian players in comparison to their presence within local residential populations (Long et al 2001, Bradbury et al 2006). Similarly, research in the Netherlands has suggested a much stronger presence of players of Surinamese heritage within amateur football club infrastructures, in contrast to other minority groups, including more recently 'settled' Turkish and Moroccan populations (Van Sterkenburg et al 2005, Bandyopadhyay 2009, Kassimeris 2009b). Interviewees in France also suggested patterns of over-representation of North African and West African minorities at amateur football clubs in the region. In contrast, some research studies and interviewee narratives alluded to the more general under-representation of Roma in formalised amateur football provision in many Central and Eastern European countries. In almost all of the above examples, there was also evidence to suggest the limited distributional spread and strong numerical concentration of minority players at 'minority football clubs' which were situated for the most part in deprived urban locales in which minority populations were disproportionately resident (Bradbury 2010b).

Over the past twenty years the higher echelons of the men's professional game in Europe has become characterised by the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of players at clubs competing in national league competitions. This has been informed by the tendency of elite professional clubs to have broadened player recruitment processes to include new global markets and has led to the resultant increase of global migration flows of 'foreign' or 'expatriate migrant' footballers (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, Poli 2006, Darby 2007, Darby et al 2007). The work of the Professional Football Players Observatory's (PFPO) 'demographic study of footballers in Europe' provides a useful statistical outline of the flow of professional footballers to each of the highest leagues in 37 different countries in Europe (Besson et al 2010). The most recent annual study has indicated that during the 2008-2009 football season, 32.7% of players at clubs in these 'premier' leagues were 'expatriate migrant' players. Expatriate migrant players were most numerous in England (58.6%), Portugal (52.8%), Greece (51.9%), and Belgium (50.5%). Research studies and interviewee narratives further referenced the breadth and pace of change of the diversity of players in some national leagues in Europe. For example, research undertaken in the Netherlands indicated a threefold increase in the numbers of expatriate migrant players in Dutch league teams between the mid 1990s and the mid 2000s (Kassimeris 2009b, Van Sterkenburg et al 2005). One interviewee referred to unpublished figures which indicated the number of expatriate players in Belgium had doubled since 1995. Another interviewee indicated that the English Premier League presently featured players drawn from fifty different nationalities.

The PFPO report indicates that the top five countries of departure for expatriate migrant players in Europe were Brazil (502), France (239), Argentina (238) Serbia (201) and Portugal (129). Four African countries also featured in the top twenty countries of departure of players: Nigeria (113), Cameroon (84), Ivory Coast (61) and Senegal (57). The PFPO study also indicates some marked differences in the migratory flows to and from specific regions and countries. For example, non-European players from South America featured strongly (in comparison to other expatriate migrant players) in France, Spain and Italy. Non-European players from Africa experienced a more even distributional spread across a range of national leagues of varying playing standards throughout Europe. On this latter score, African players were also markedly younger at the point of departure from their countries of origin than is the case for expatriate migrant players from European



backgrounds. European player migration flows also seemed much more regionalised. For example, as evidenced in the strong representation of Scottish, Irish and French players in England, the complementary flows of players between Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands, and between countries in the Balkans region. On this latter score, there were also some strongly evidenced flows of players from the Balkans region (especially Serbia and Croatia) towards Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and other Central European countries. Whilst the global migratory flows of players referred to above has undoubtedly contributed to increasing cultural mix of players in the top domestic leagues in Europe, their presence in the game presents a skewed picture of events and is not a valid indicator of the representation of players drawn more 'settled' minority populations across a range of national contexts in Europe.

In section 1.2 of this report we alluded to the lack of any existing or standardised data collection procedures pertaining to the representation of 'settled' minorities as players in the men's professional game in Europe. Nonetheless, research studies and interviewee narratives indicated some mixed levels of representation amongst different minority groups in the professional game across a range of national contexts.

A number of research studies undertaken in the UK have alluded to the consistently low levels of South Asian players at men's professional club youth academies and as adult professional players (Bains 1996, 2005; Burdsey 2004a, Burdsey 2007). Similar research studies in the Netherlands and Denmark also reference low levels of representation at professional clubs amongst Moroccan and Somali heritage youth and adult populations respectively (Van Sterkenburg et al 2005, Agergaard and Sorenson 2009). In all of the above cases, research studies contrasted low levels of representation with the significant presence of these specific minority populations within wider national populations and in contrast to their strong levels of active participation within the organised amateur game. In other cases, the incidence of minority under-representation in the men's professional game was felt to be relational to - and reflective of - the general lower levels of participation in organised amateur football. This was especially the case amongst Roma populations in Central and Eastern Europe.

In contrast, some research studies and interviewee narratives indicated the relatively strong representation of players from 'settled' minority populations at men's professional clubs. This was especially the case with reference to players drawn from sub Saharan Black Caribbean and Black African backgrounds at clubs in Western European countries with former colonial histories, such as the UK, France, Netherlands and Portugal. The high domestic visibility of black players was also reflected in terms of national team representation in many cases. At a domestic level, research conducted in England has estimated that around 13% of all players at professional clubs are 'English born' black players (Bradbury 2001). Similarly, research in the Netherlands has suggested that black Surinamese players have since the 1990s accounted for around 15% of the make-up of professional players in the top division (Hermes 2005). Interviewee narratives also suggested a growing (albeit, highly localised) over-representation of, mainly, black, minorities at professional club youth academies in some Western European countries. One interviewee comments further in this respect:

*'In France, for example, we see an increasing dominance of minorities in football academies, really overwhelming. North African, West African. It's the same in Belgium, same in Luxembourg and Holland. In Germany you have an over representation of Turkish in football academies. So you see all these young Turkish players playing for Germany and for Turkey, but training in Germany. So football is perceived as a ticket for upward social mobility'*

It is, of course, the case that the increasing visibility of, especially, black, players in the men's professional game, is in part reflective of the gradual sporting and societal integration of some specific minority populations in many culturally diverse countries in Western Europe. It is also a

commonly held perception, especially amongst commentators at national football associations, that football (and sport more broadly) is a site of meritocracy free from wider social, economic, cultural, and organisational limits and pressures. From this functionalist perspective, football offers opportunities for personal advancement and social mobility for minority (especially black) players in ways which might be denied in other areas of social life. This 'way out of the ghetto' thesis is often validated by media narratives and by high profile minority players themselves and is utilised as means of increasing motivations towards participation in the game amongst otherwise marginalised communities. The interviewees below offer strong support for these assertions in terms of the perceived open-ness of player recruitment strategies at professional clubs:

*'I think the professional clubs they are happy to recruit any good player, they don't care where they come from. I think the clubs are extremely happy to have a very good player if they come from a national or an ethnic minority. I don't think it is a problem at all'*

*'I think in fairness to most clubs, I think they are looking for the best. I think there are few clubs now who may be thinking along stereotypical lines, "Well, we're not going to put much more investment into a particular minority group because they've got no history of making it." I think if they see a potential talent, they'll want to run with it, which is not to say that all bias is excluded, but I think most clubs would want that'*

A related orthodoxy also posits the notion that football is natural integrator. This latter view is strongly embedded in the focus of some academics and cultural policy makers which purport to the positive function of football and its capacity to contribute to a range of diverse policy agendas, including social inclusion and community cohesion (Porter 2001, COE 1999, 2000, EC 2004, EU 2007, Coalter 2007). Central to these latter perspectives is an emphasis on the potential of the game to promote intercultural dialogue and facilitate the social integration of minorities. This 'integration through football' thesis views the game as a powerful instrument through which to engender social interaction and increased mutual understanding between different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. It also intimates that football participation can increase the sense of belonging to 'host' societies amongst minority, especially, newer, migrant, populations.

A little more critically, a number of academics and social commentators have offered alternative accounts to these more functionalist notions of men's football as a site of unfettered meritocracy and harmonious 'race relations'. From these perspectives, football encounters and the organisation of the sport do not take place in some kind of social, cultural or political vacuum, but, rather, can be understood to be reflective of - and reflect back upon - the societies in which they take place. To this end, sports such as football are perceived to be able to achieve little in the way of societal integration on their own, without the wider social and political transformation of the ethnically, culturally and religiously divided societies in which these sporting encounters often take place (Bairner 1996, 2004, Bairner and Darby 1999, Sugden and Bairner 1993). These more critical perspectives also suggest that the focus on the over-representation, social notoriety and professional prestige of high profile minority football players tends to overlook the extent to which inherent inequalities of access to social, economic and cultural resources impact disproportionately on minority populations more broadly (Carrington and MacDonald 2001). Further, the idealisation of the meritocratic and inclusive potential of football can significantly underplay the extent to which old biological and new cultural racisms and other forms of minority discriminations are generated by - and impinge upon - the professional game (Back et al 1998, 2001). One interviewee articulates these themes further in reference to the experiences of African players in Poland:

*'Clearly if you look at the numbers, you could talk about an over-representation of Africans in Polish professional football, compared to their numerical presence in Poland more generally. But this is not to say they are not discriminated against, they are, very*

*much so. We hear it more and more because those stories reach us more and more. They're overrepresented but the discrimination is there'*

To this end, the relationship between levels of minority representation as players and processes of minority discrimination is both dialectical and complex, and subject to range of individual and structural practices at the local, national and European level.

### **3.3.2 Coaching**

Relatively few national sports federations, sports policy bodies or academic studies have focused on examining the levels of representation of minorities in coaching positions in sports, including football. Where data of this kind has been generated it has tended to focus on the organised amateur tiers of sports and has generally alluded to the low levels of representation of minorities as coaches to this end. For example, research conducted in the UK indicates that minority coaches are generally under-represented within regional and national sports organisations, have fewer coaching qualifications and are less likely to be employed as full time coaches in comparison to their white counterparts (Long et al 2009). Interviewee narratives suggested some comparability between these UK based findings and other sporting contexts across Europe. Studies focusing more specifically on men's amateur football in England have also indicated a general under-representation of qualified minority football coaches and highlighted their strongly distributional concentration at a relatively small number of 'minority football clubs' (Bradbury et al 2006, Bradbury 2011). Interviewee narratives noted similar patterns of the limited distributional spread of minority football coaches and their more general under-representation within the amateur tiers of the game in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Poland and Hungary.

The increasing global migration flow of 'expatriate migrant' players in the men's professional game has also been mirrored to a more limited extent in terms of coaching and team management at the domestic and national level. However, the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of these coaching and managerial 'imports' seems much more culturally narrow than that of 'expatriate migrant' players. For example, 'foreign' coaches tend to be drawn from the major football nations of Western Europe and are almost exclusively White. There are, of course, some notable exceptions. Most notably, from countries such as France and the Netherlands where the success of men's national teams in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s coincided with the influx of high profile talented black players such as Jean Tigana, Ruud Gullit and Frank Rikaard. Interviewee narratives indicate these small breakthroughs have also occurred in other countries in Western Europe, especially where there is a strong societal representation of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation 'settled' minority populations with a longstanding connection to the game as players.

Nonetheless, even in these latter countries, there remains a minimal throughput of minority players into coaching and team management positions at men's professional clubs. For example, there have been only a handful of black coaches and managers at professional clubs in England and at the time of writing only one of the 92 professional club managers in England is black. Further, few minority coaches are employed in 'behind the scenes' coaching infrastructures at professional clubs. For example, research in England has indicated that more than two-thirds of professional clubs do not employ minority coaches or minority talent scouts as part of their wider youth development and recruitment framework. Further, where minority coaches are employed, they tend to be largely focused on 'school and community' coaching activities in racially mixed areas in London and the Midlands of England (Bradbury 2001). These latter findings were echoed by interviewees in France and the Netherlands who referenced a 'glass ceiling' effect of limited occupational advancement for minority coaches employed on the lower rungs of the coaching ladder at professional clubs.

### **3.3.3 Leadership**

Relatively few national sports federations, sports policy bodies or academic studies have focused on examining the levels of minority representation in leadership positions in sports, including football. Research studies and interviewee narratives indicate a broad consensus of opinion which suggests that male and female minorities were notable by their absence in senior administration positions or at the senior level of governance in sports across a range of national contexts (Long et al 2009, Carrington 2010, EU/FRA 2010). Whilst these accounts suggest this is especially (and, perhaps, understandably) apparent in a number of 'national cultural sports' in Europe, it is also the case in a range of nationally governed 'global sports' in which minority players feature strongly.

The under-representation of male and female minorities in leadership positions seems especially marked amongst the senior administrative tiers and executive committee level of national football associations. For example, research studies in the UK indicate that less than 1% of senior officials at the national and regional football associations are from minority backgrounds (Bradbury 2001, CRE 2004, Lusted 2009). Interviewee narratives referencing France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Poland, and the Netherlands all intimated that figures for minority representation in the senior administrative and governance tiers of national associations were unlikely to exceed 1% in these countries. Interviewee narratives also suggested that the demographic make-up of representatives on the executive committees and expert panels at UEFA were also predominantly drawn from majority populations within their respective countries. This is, perhaps, unsurprising given the pyramidal structure of Europe's football governing body and the organisational processes of patronage, nomination and selection for UEFA representation which is enacted at demographically 'closed' national associations.

Research studies and interviewee narratives indicated that figures for male and female minority representation in leadership positions at professional clubs in Europe varied between 0% and 3% (EU/FRA 2010). These figures seem especially low given the cultural diversity of many national populations, especially in Western Europe. This is especially the case in England where research studies have indicated that less than one-third of professional clubs employ any 'white collar' staff from minority backgrounds and where only 1% of all administrative staff are drawn from minority populations (Football Task Force 1998, Bradbury 2001, CRE 2004). Despite the limited availability of data of this kind across other countries in Europe, there is a more general consensus within the broader literature on 'race' and football and from the comments of interviewees across a range of national contexts which allude to the 'open secret' of minority under-representation in key decision making positions in the sport.

## **3.4 Socio-economic and cultural barriers**

### **3.4.1 Playing**

In Section 3.1 of this report we referred to the findings from public policy research and academic studies which referred to the disproportionate incidence of unemployment, low status occupations and levels of socio-economic deprivation amongst minority populations across a range of national contexts in Europe. These residual patterns of disadvantage have had important consequential effects in shaping the incidence and scope of male and female minority participation in amateur and professional sports in Europe, including football. A number of research studies have highlighted how the cost of club membership, enrolment fees, and purchasing appropriate equipment, as well as the lack of access to transport have impacted negatively minority participation in organised amateur sport (Amara et al 2004a, 2004b). Research undertaken in Denmark and the Netherlands reference the lack of affordable sports and football provision in deprived urban areas in which minorities are disproportionately resident (Elling et al 2001, Elling and Knoppers 2005, Krouwel et al 2006). Similarly, studies in Central and Eastern Europe have also referenced the territorial isolation

of Roma in largely under developed rural regions with poor social, sporting and football infrastructure (Amara et al 2004a)

Research focusing on minority youth participation in men's amateur football in Denmark and Germany suggest that socio-economic factors can act as key 'structural filters' between recreational participation in 'street football' and more structured participation within organised amateur football clubs (Halm 2005, Agergaard and Sorenson 2009). These findings were echoed by our interviewees in Austria and the Netherlands with regard to explaining low levels of youth participation in men's organised football settings amongst Roma and Turkish and Moroccan minorities respectively:

*'If we talk about Roma, then there are social class issues. Roma people are basically excluded socially and economically from many aspects of society, from sports, and from football. Football is just one of those components of society where they are also not integrated.'*

*'What we do know is that they [Turkish and Moroccan minorities] do play football a lot, in the streets, on the parks, wherever they can, and so on. Only they don't join the football clubs'*

Conversely, a number of our interviewees offered alternative narratives on this score, with particular reference to the apparent strong representation of young minority players from deprived backgrounds at professional youth academy systems in France, Belgium and Germany.

Research studies also suggest that the socio-economic obligations of newer migrants and more 'settled' 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation minority populations has had a significant impact on curtailing leisure time opportunities and consequently limited minority adult participation in organised sport and football at the amateur level (Amara et al 2004a, Bell et al 2004). This is especially the case amongst minorities engaged in unsociable evening and weekend service sector economies and for those involved in working long hours as part of small scale family businesses. Whilst there is likely to be significant comparability on this score across a range national context in Europe, the interviewee below alludes more specifically to the lack of participation in men's organised football provision amongst ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland:

*'I think one of the difficulties is the working hours in those particular industries that ethnic minorities find themselves working in. It can preclude a lot of people from ethnic backgrounds in being able to play football when we [the majority population] play football, because they're working at that time'*

A small number of research studies have offered more cultural explanations for the low levels of minority participation in organised amateur and professional football club settings. For example, Amara et al have argued that many refugees and asylum seekers are drawn from countries where notions of leisure time, as it is understood and commodified in western countries, seem less applicable than is the case for majority populations (Amara 2004a). To this end, participation in organised amateur football is viewed by new migrants as a luxury or as accessible only to the citizens of 'host' societies. Other authors have alluded to specific cultural, religious and familial constraints which limit the 'agency' of minority youth populations and persuade them away from football and towards more 'culturally traditional' sporting and leisure pursuits (Werbner 1996, Bairner 2001, 2005). Similarly, research studies focusing on sectarianism and sport have suggested that patterns of residential segregation and the establishment of a parallel faith based education system in Northern Ireland has differentially shaped participation trajectories towards 'Gaelic' sports or 'British' sports amongst men from both nationalist and unionist communities respectively, although in both cases football remains a popular pastime (Bairner 1996, Bairner and Darby 1999, Hassan 2002, 2005). These latter studies allude to the centrality of sport in the construction and

maintenance of wider political narratives around national identity and citizenship (Jarvie 1993, MacClancy 1996, Bairner 1996, 2001, 2004) and illustrate the way in which sporting persuasions and preferences are 'played out' within education systems. Further, our interviewees in Austria, Poland and Hungary all suggested that in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe the state education system remains a central 'focal point' of youth recruitment for men's professional football clubs. To this end, the separation and/or non attendance of Roma from mainstream education establishments and associated sports provision was felt to have contributed consequentially to their apparent absence within professional club youth academies.

In a similar vein, a number of locally focused research studies in the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark have examined the specific participation trajectories into men's football at the organised amateur level of the game amongst minority youth populations (Westwood 1990, 1991, Williams 1994, Burdsey 2006, 2009, Agergaard and Sorenson 2009, Bradbury 2010b, 2011, Campbell 2011). In doing so, these studies have illustrated the social and cultural significance of minority football clubs as sites which offer opportunities for minority sports participation within culturally distinct and discursively constructed 'minority spaces'. From these perspectives, minority football clubs are positioned as a key cultural resource for minority populations which enable the construction and expression of specific ethnic, cultural, religious and neighbourhood identities and increased community empowerment. Whilst some commentators have suggested that such clubs represent sites of cultural separatism, conversely, others have argued that clubs of this kind offer opportunities for increased racial integration at the local level through participation in mixed competition frameworks. In both cases, commentators are in more general agreement that 'minority football clubs' provide sites which encourage increased football participation and engender increased 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital amongst minority populations. The extent to which increasing minority youth participation in 'minority football clubs' has enhanced or limited their transition into the professional tiers of the game is a moot point and one which has thus far received little academic attention. What is a little clearer is that processes of youth recruitment at many professional clubs across Europe have traditionally revolved around an established network of relations between parents, schools, physical education teachers, amateur club coaches and professional club scouts. Research undertaken in the UK and in Denmark has suggested that the lack of a social circle of family, friends or professional contacts with insider knowledge of football networks of this kind has disadvantageously positioned minority youth populations and limited their potential pathways into the professional game. From these perspectives, it is the lack of existing social and cultural capital on the part of minority populations, rather than any conscious cultural rejection of participation in professional football that explains the limited through-put of young minority players into the professional game.

### **3.4.2 Coaching**

In the above section, we allude to a range of socio-economic factors which has limited initial access to organised sport and football at the men's amateur and professional level for minority players. These included material issues relating to cost, transport, and the lack facility and resource provision in deprived locales in which minority populations were disproportionately resident. The extent to which there are strong causal linkages between these initial socio-economic factors and the under-representation of minority coaches within organised amateur and professional football club settings is largely absent from existing research analysis. However, research undertaken in the UK has suggested that the significant financial cost of undertaking nationally accredited football coaching qualifications is a key factor in limiting the numbers of minority coaches (and other potential coaches from poorer communities undertaking qualifications of this kind, especially at the higher level of coaching awards (Bradbury et al 2006, Bradbury 2011). These cost issues are, of course, much less of an issue for minority professional players with greater financial resources and where practices of professional 'sponsorship' might enhance opportunities to pursue these career pathways.

Many of the cultural explanations referred to above in terms of framing the initial access to football amongst minority populations are also relevant in terms of explaining the under-representation of minority coaches in organised men's amateur and professional football settings. In particular, those cultural, religious and familial constraints and adherence to wider political narratives which act as motivations away from initial football participation can be understood to act as a series of structural barriers which 'filter out' players from minority backgrounds who might later go on to assume coaching positions within amateur or professional club infrastructures. In this respect, the under-representation of minority coaches is informed by a complex mix of prior and cumulative processes of cultural constraints and concomitant sporting preferences.

More promisingly, research in the UK has suggested that many minority football clubs have placed a strong emphasis on encouraging older minority players to undertake coaching qualifications (Bradbury 2011). However, much of the emphasis here has understandably been on the acquisition of coaching qualifications as a means sustaining the development of 'minority football clubs' for the benefit of otherwise marginalised cohorts of local youth and adult minority football communities. Accordingly, there has been little apparent shift in the focus of minority coaches away from these organised amateur football settings towards paid employment within the coaching frameworks of professional clubs. Whilst in a small number of cases, minority coaches at clubs of this kind have acted as 'cultural intermediaries' between professional clubs and talented young minority players, in many more cases minority coaches have exhibited a more general lack of knowledge of – or contacts with – the youth academy frameworks at professional clubs. These findings echo those made in section 3.4.1 with regard to the apparent lack of social and cultural capital within minority populations which, in this case, can be seen to have partially informed the limited career pathways of qualified coaches from minority backgrounds.

These latter issues relating to the limited social and cultural capital of minority populations have also been cited in terms of explaining the continued under-representation of former professional minority players as coaches at professional clubs. This is especially the case where minority professional players are positioned outside of a series of relatively closed networks of patronage and 'sponsored mobility' within the structures of professional football. The extent and ways in which minority professional players have experienced a series of overt and more subtle exclusions which have limited their onward career trajectories from playing into coaching will be examined in more detail in the sections below. In this section, we are a little more concerned to outline the impact of this real and/or perceived 'glass ceiling' effect in terms of lowering the self esteem, confidence and aspirations towards coaching amongst minority professional players. This theme emerged strongly from our interviews with key staff at national associations and amongst a number of NGO's who framed explanations for the limited engagement of minority professional players in coach education courses in these terms. For example, one interviewee at a national football federation comments:

*'With very few role models it's very easy from a black player's perspective to fall into the trap of thinking 'it's not going to happen. Why should I bother to take my qualifications? I'm not going to get a job'. It's about breaking down those barriers and encouraging those former players to step into doing their qualifications'*

There was also some consensus amongst interviewees that qualified minority coaches should exhibit a greater assertiveness in staking their claims for coaching and management positions at professional clubs:

*'Those who have become qualified have been fairly placid in the way in which they've accepted rejection and moved on, or moved away or accept second best. And I think this reflects what was happening 15, and even 10 years ago, where a lot of black players were still not prepared to rock the boat and say, "I'm not going to put up with this".'*

More promisingly, a number of interviewees identified linkages between the accumulation of coaching qualifications and an increased self confidence to actively seek employment in the professional game over time:

*'There are more and more migrants doing coaching courses. It took some time, because these migrant coaches were players twenty years ago. The migrants before, maybe they didn't have the self esteem and the knowledge of the language to do the courses. Maybe now they have more confidence and the language, also the financial resources to make the training courses. They have the empowerment in their playing careers to now take training courses and become coaches'*

*'I think we've just come into that period now where there is a saturation of qualified, black ex-professionals who are beginning to ask the questions more seriously. I think we are just starting to see the beginnings of a decisive group of qualified, black coaches who are saying, "We're not going to accept rejection, we're not going to accept second best, and we're not going to accept just being overlooked'*

The extent to which the efforts and aspirations of qualified minority coaches have been rewarded and are reflected in their increased representation at men's professional football clubs remains a moot point. In sections 3.6.2 and 3.7.2 of this report we offer some explanations as to the ongoing under-representation of minority coaches at the professional level and the likelihood of change in this respect in the future.

### **3.4.3 Leadership**

In section 3.1 of this report we alluded to the some of the discriminatory processes which have impacted disproportionately on minority populations with particular respect to education, employment and socio-economic positioning. We further alluded to the general under-representation of minority populations in key decision making positions in social, cultural, economic and political institutions at the national level across Europe. These wider societal disparities cannot be divorced from discussions of the under-representation of minorities in senior administration and governance positions in the football industry. Rather, they can be seen as part of a wider set of social relations which inform and underpin the apparent low levels of representation in leadership positions in the professional game. The link between limited access to a range of social, economic and educational resources and the consequential lack of social mobility of minority populations was also a strong theme to emerge from our interviewee narratives, and with specific reference to the social and cultural marginalisation of Roma populations.

In a similar vein, in section 2.2 of this report we referred to the numerical differences in the levels of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity within national populations across Europe. We also alluded to the distributional spread of minority populations in key urban and/or rural areas dependent on the socio-historical specificities of in-migration trajectories and the nature of local economies. It is likely that these broader processes of minority residential settlement have also contributed to the low numbers of minority administrative workers employed by some professional football clubs. For example, research undertaken in the UK has suggested that for many clubs based in predominantly 'white' locales, especially more rural clubs at the lower end of the professional spectrum, there may simply be a limited 'diversity pool' of suitably qualified local minority workers available for employment in senior administrative positions (Bradbury 2001).

Cultural explanations for the under-representation of minorities in leadership positions within national and European football governance have also alluded to the intersection between ethnic and cultural background and the generational distribution of occupations within professional football. These explanations suggest that the predominance of older white males in 'off-pitch'



senior administration and governance positions and the strong 'on-pitch' representation of minorities as players are to some extent reflective of ethnicised and generational disparities within the occupational realms of the wider business sector. These perspectives are articulated below by two interviewees involved in the governance of the professional game at the highest level:

*'It's partly the same reason that the members of the government or the members of the boards of PLC's are in the same way generally older and generally white. It's more ethnic minorities slowly, but it still doesn't represent at all society at large. This is not a justification, it's an explanation, that football is simply reflecting society at large'*

*'I think that there's an acceleration of the integration of males from ethnic minorities in society, and in football. This is especially the case in Western Europe. So I would not be surprised if 20 years from now you will see a lot of different cultures in administration, in places like England, France, Germany, who have come from ethnic minorities'*

The extent to which a series of overt and more institutional discriminations might limit a more even ended access to leadership positions within the higher echelons of professional football will be discussed in the sections below. However, as has been argued in terms of transitions from playing to coaching, the present absence of minorities in positions of senior administration and governance is likely to impact negatively on the aspirations and confidence of minority populations to pursue potential career pathways of this kind. This is arguably especially the case in countries in which 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation 'settled' minority populations have engendered an increasing visibility in other echelons of social, economic and political life in comparison to their relative lack of breakthrough into the decision making bodies of football administration. As one interviewee here commented:

*'Now obviously it's even worse in football than in society at large because there are even fewer ethnic minorities in top positions than in business or in politics in general. That suggests that it's even harder for ethnic minorities to succeed in football. Now that may or may not be the case in reality, I think it probably is, but it's the perception that counts'*

### **3.5 Overt racisms and minority abuse**

#### **3.5.1 Playing**

Long et al (2009) have argued that the experiences of minorities in sport are mediated by racisms. These assertions are premised on a wealth of empirical and anecdotal evidence which indicate the relatively commonplace incidence of different kinds of overt and more coded forms of abuse targeting minorities across a range of organised amateur and professional sporting contexts (EU/FRA 2010). These expressions of overt racisms and minority abuse seem especially strong at the recreational level of organised men's amateur football. For example, research studies referencing the UK, Denmark, Germany, France and the Netherlands all allude to the continued expressions of racial and other forms of minority abuse, harassment and inter ethnic tensions during competitive matches involving minority football clubs (Long et al 2001, Bradbury 2002, 2010b, Halm 2005, Van Sterkenburg et al 2005, Burdsey 2007, Kassimeris 2009a). Incidents of the overt racisms and minority abuse are not restricted to adult football venues. Ethnographic studies and anecdotal evidence from the UK, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and Slovakia all reference examples of overt abuse from coaches and spectators targeting children and young players from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious minority background (EU/FRA 2010). These openly expressed racist attitudes and behaviour are a key contributory factor in shaping the low levels of initial engagement and consequent drop-off rate of minority players in the amateur game.

Despite (and, perhaps, because of) the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of 'home grown' and 'imported' players at many professional clubs, the incidence of overt racism and minority abuse remain a commonplace feature of the men's professional game in Europe. Interviewee narratives suggested some distinct regional differences in the frequency and expressions of overt abuse by spectators across a range of national contexts, and drew particular attention to the continuation of behaviour of this kind in Southern and Central and Eastern Europe:

*'There is still a long way to go before we can actually say that spectator racism, open forms of racism, is a thing of the past. They are still there. They still happen quite a lot. Probably much more in Poland and the Ukraine and other countries in the region, than in most Western European countries'*

*'I think there has been a lot of success in combating spectator racism in Northern and Western Europe. In Southern Europe the issue is still there, but the issue is being raised and the federations are beginning to get involved. I would say progress in Eastern Europe is still difficult. But there are societal issues, different histories, and different levels of social and economic development, and different relationships with people of other ethnic groups. The economic crisis has not helped, because you get more social dislocation and because extremist groups get stronger in these circumstances'*

Whilst the above comments importantly equate the continued incidence of spectator racism with wider societal issues affecting particular regions in the south and east of Europe, they probably also overplay the extent to which overt abuse of this kind has been eradicated in professional football in Western Europe. To this end, a number of research studies suggest that incidents of overt racism and minority abuse continue to exhibit some uneven but residual permanence in countries such as England and the Netherlands (Back et al 2001, Van Sterkenburg et al 2005, Kassimeris 2007, 2009b, Bradbury 2010a).

Perhaps the most common forms of overt racism and minority abuse in professional football in Europe are those examples of individualised and orchestrated racial abuse which utilise a series of demeaning epithets to describe and demean black players. For example, research studies in Spain indicate that in 2005 the Spanish Football Federation fined Atlético Madrid and Deportivo La Coruña for the racist conduct of supporters towards the black player Sissoko of Valencia and Roberto Carlos of Real Madrid respectively (Llopis-Giog 2009). In the same year, Barcelona's Cameroonian player Samuel Eto attempted to walk off the pitch following racial abuse by supporters of Real Zaragoza (BBC 2006). These domestic incidents followed the large scale collective racial abuse of English black players at a friendly match between Spain and England at the Santiago Bernabéu stadium in Madrid, where thousands of Spanish supporters including men, women and children began bobbing and singing 'whoever doesn't bounce is fucking black' (Bradbury and Williams 2006). In the English Premier League, high profile black players such as Dwight Yorke, Sol Campbell, Carlton Cole and Jason Euell have all been subject to crude forms of racist abuse from spectators in recent seasons. The racial abuse of black players is also evidenced in more coded forms through the use of banners displaying racist imagery and rhetoric. For example, in 2010, supporters of Locomotiv Moscow displayed banners featuring illustrations of bananas in reference to black Nigerian striker Peter Odemwingie who has since spoken out against the endemic racism amongst spectators in the Russian game (BBC 2010a).

Research studies and interviewee narratives suggest that overt forms of racism targeting black players are also a commonplace, but, little discussed, feature of the interaction between players, coaches and managers in the professional game. For example, in 1996, the black striker Nathan Blake temporarily withdrew from the Welsh national team after alleging that the national team manager Bobby Gould racially abused him during a half time team talk. In 2004, former Manchester United and Atlético Madrid manager Ron Atkinson was caught during a television broadcast making an 'off air' comment in which he referred to French international Marcus Desailly as a 'lazy thick

nigger'. In 2005, England's black players Ashley Cole and Emile Heskey were reportedly racially abused and spat at by opposition players during an international fixture between England and Turkey. Interviewees also referenced the significant frequency of overt abuse of black players by opposition players, coaches and managers at clubs in Central and Eastern Europe. Some interviewees also referenced a series of much more coded cultural oppositions to the inclusion of black, mainly African, players in teams in the region. The comments of one interviewee on this score are included in some detail below. These comments descriptively reference both the conscious mechanisms of exclusion enacted by majority population players and the consequential negative outcomes for the equal inclusion of black players at professional clubs in Poland:

*'There is no doubt, for example, if there were a black captain of the team, there could be much resistance to it, and we have some stories like that. Of people being forced, or being prevented, in fact, from becoming team captain. There is resistance to having black players in the team, because they are seen as hostile competition. There is something called the "Team Council" of players in Polish teams, which is a self government of players, and the African players are excluded. The Players' Council refuse to accept black players in this or that game. And, of course, that translates into payment and is very much related to the economics of the game. So the club environment is very far from being racism free or an equal environment'.*

Professional football in Europe is also a site in which minority players have been openly abused by spectators, coaches and opposition players on the basis of their cultural, religious or national background. Research studies, interviewee narratives and the Football against Racism in Europe (FARE) campaign, all indicate that minority players from Turkish backgrounds in Austria, Belgium and Finland, Albanians in Greece, Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia, and Roma in Hungary and Bulgaria have experienced overt forms of abuse which has drawn on ethno-nationalist, islamophobic, anti-semitic or anti-gypsy sentiment (Van Sterkenburg et al 2005, Kassimeris 2009b, EU/FRA 2010). For example, research in the Netherlands has referenced the increasing tendency of opposition supporters to target Turkish and Moroccan players by imitating bleating goats and sheep and to sing songs which refer to minority players as bag snatchers and thieves. Opposition players have also reportedly utilised phrases such as 'dirty Turk' and 'shit Moroccan' as terms of abuse in professional match play situations. Similarly, the alleged Jewish background of Ajax also recurrently inspires rival supporters to sing anti-semitic chants and to make hissing sounds in reference to the gas chambers. In 2004, the referee abandoned a league match between ADO Den Haag and PSV Eindhoven after eighty minutes because of repeated anti-semitic chanting by the home fans (Kassimeris 2009b). Interviewees in Austria and Hungary also referenced examples of the pejorative use of descriptive markers of cultural and religious identity such as 'fucking Jew', 'Gypsy cunt' and 'backward Muslim immigrant' in matches featuring minority players.

Structural explanations suggest that these forms of overt minority abuse in football are a response to wider societal concerns and 'uncertainties' regarding the recent surge in European and non-European in migration trajectories in specific countries, and can be understood as a form of contestation and an attempt to re-assert a sense of national identity. Interviewee narratives suggest that this is especially the case amongst supporters of national teams of (re)emergent countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans region where strong nationalist divisions and deep social and economic insecurities prevail. For example, most recently, the Ukrainian far right political party Svoboda has actively conjoined football, anti-immigrant sentiment and nationalist ideologies and has been involved in violent confrontation with the civil and football authorities (FARE 2010). Similarly, in October 2010, a hard core of Serbian supporters with far right sympathies were involved in disturbances which led to the abandonment of the international fixture between Italy and Serbia in Genoa (BBC 2010b).

Linkages between far right political parties and the racist activities of some domestic supporter formations have been well documented in academic research, for example, with reference to Ultra

fan networks in Italy and Spain, including the 'irreducible' at Lazio and the Ultra Sur at Real Madrid (Roversi 1994, Spaaij and Vinas 2005, Van Sterkenburg et al 2005). More recently the work of Kassimeris (2009a) has identified the rise of new forms of politically orientated racism, xenophobia and hyper-nationalism at lower league domestic football matches in post-unification Germany. This latter study chimes strongly with research studies in the UK which suggest that many smaller professional clubs remain physically and psychologically rooted in supporter cultures which generate meanings premised on the celebration of homogenously white and racially closed birthplace localisms (Nash 2000, Robson 2000, Back et al 2001). To this end, the continued expression of overt racism and minority abuse represent the defence of prized (white) cultural space against wider social (and multicultural) change.

These latter perspectives have also sought to shift debates beyond the relatively limited but commonly held depiction of spectator racism and other forms of minority abuse as a form of behaviour which is perpetrated by a readily identifiable racist skinhead 'folk devil', who can be positioned outside – as merely parasitical to – mainstream football culture. The construction of the morally degenerate racist fan and a restricted focus on his perceived behaviour ignores the kinds of banal 'respectable' racism expressed by a range of fans across axis of age, gender and social class and provides an unsatisfactory explanatory account of the complex and often inconsistent ways in which expressions of racism become manifest in football spectator culture (Back et al 1999, 2001)

The above accounts also open up the way for an enhanced conceptual understanding of the way in which expressions of overt abuse can be utilised by spectators as part of a framework of intimidating and hostile behaviours designed to offend the personal dignity and 'unsettle' the performance of minority players. These consciously instrumental and distinctly strategic mechanisms are also enacted by opposition players with the intention of 'winding up', and eliciting a negative reaction from minority players and thereby seek to influence the outcome of football competition. Overt forms of abuse targeting minority players can also occur as an immediate effect of 'heat of the moment' verbal and physical exchanges between players from different ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds. These more impulsive, emotional and 'accidental' forms of overt abuse continue to be a relatively commonplace feature of football and other sporting encounters at the professional level (Muller et al 2007).

These impulsive and more instrumental expressions of overt abuse are viewed – and often explained away - in dominant narratives and common sense discourse as inherently non-ideological and therefore without political intent or meaning. From this position it becomes possible for those expressing racism to deny its importance by drawing a distinction between the intention and 'true' values and beliefs of the offender and opens up discursive space from which to claim innocence, but simultaneously engage in sporadic racist behaviour (Muller et al 2007). This partially accounts for the possibility of racist expression towards opposition players without it constituting, for the perpetrators at least, an attack on minority players on their own team. Further, both impulsive and instrumental expressions of overt abuse are likely to be understood by some spectators and players (and within some national football associations) as one element in a wider array of physical feature abuse which is considered to be 'part and parcel' of the game. These latter perspectives allude to a more broadly held set of norms and values within heavily masculinised football arena which premise the acceptability of 'testing' opponents through 'trash talking' and 'banter' (Back et al 2001).

Research studies in the UK and the Netherlands have suggested that these latter practices are common-place within occupational culture of dressing rooms and training pitch interaction and include the widespread use of racist jokes, banter, stereotype and caricature (Moran 2000, Jones 2002, Muller 2007 et al). These research studies suggest that in many cases these racialised discourses were not recognised or conceptualised as having racist intent and took place in the context of friendly and joking interactions. Further, these interactions differed markedly in their scope and content and the way in which they were perceived positively or negatively by players

from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. For example, in some cases, in player networks characterised by greater equanimity, these intercultural exchanges opened up the potential for black players to either adopt or reject caricature related to the hyper-sexual male. In contrast, in less democratic player networks which featured strongly hierarchical racialised power relationships between players, the use of 'play' and 'humour' to mark out apparent cultural difference, inferiority and incompatibility of players drawn from specific minority populations was markedly increased. On this latter score, the work of King (2004a, 2004b) offers a particularly useful analysis of the complex and contradictory ways in which identity is negotiated and acted out within occupational culture of professional football. King argues that professional football culture is a place in which processes of interaction, dialogue and non-verbal communication inform the rituals and performances upon which racialised boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are constructed. To this end, he suggests that the normative presence of white, working class, masculine identity formations underpin and inform a series of specific cultural arrangements at professional clubs. Within these culturally homogenous settings, black and other minority players are forced to 'play the white man' in order to attain 'cultural passports' that will aid their progression as professional players (see also Back et al 2001)

This analysis chimes strongly with suggestions that refutations of the incidence and frequency of overt and more coded forms of abuse in professional football contribute to sustaining an environment where speaking out against racism is discouraged. For example, minority players who have complained about overt abuse have invariably been accused of 'making a fuss', being 'emotionally weak', 'troublesome' or as 'playing the race card' (Moran 2000). These inferences refer to a wider set of unwritten codes of conduct and behavioural practices within the heavily masculinised culture of professional football and have limited the parameters in which overt and more subtle manifestations of abuse can be challenged and redressed. From these culturally hegemonic positions, the only viable response of minority players is to 'ignore' and then 'silence' the perpetrators of racism through improved physical performance and increased team effort.

The general lack of recognition of – and action against - the kinds of overt racisms and more subtly coded forms of minority abuse referred to above has positioned many minority players in disadvantageous positions in comparison to majority population players. The lack of commitment or willingness on the part of many professional football clubs and national associations to address these issues and to impart a 'blame culture' on minority oppositions to racism amounts to a form of unequal and discriminatory treatment. To this end, many minority players, especially those playing professionally in relatively 'closed' cultural environments, arguably experience a series of additional pressures and expectations which can impact on their social, psychological, emotional and, in some cases, their financial well-being (Vasili 2000, Jones 2002, Poli 2006, Burdsey 2007, King 2011). Interviewee narratives suggested that this is especially the case for black, mainly, African, players, at professional clubs in Central and Eastern Europe:

*'They were very much disappointed in their expectations, and okay, on the one hand, you could always say their expectations were unrealistic. They thought they are coming to Europe to play professional football and they are, but it's not very nice, and they are not necessarily making much headway. So maybe the expectations are unrealistic, but on the other hand, there is no doubt there is discrimination against them in terms of payment. It is common knowledge, for us, talking to those people on a daily basis, there is no doubt they are paid less compared to their fellow players on their teams'*

It is probably also the case that the aforementioned processes of discriminatory treatment are likely to impact negatively on the career sustainability of some minority players and consequently limit their potential transition from playing into coaching and management positions.

### **3.5.2 Coaching**

There is little available empirical evidence identifying the incidence of overt racism and minority abuse being targeted at minority coaches and team managers by spectators and players. These findings reflect for the most part the apparent absence of minority coaches and team managers within the men's professional game and the lack of any open discussion pertaining to issues of this kind. This is not to suggest that overt abuse of minority coaches and team managers does not exist. It is likely that many of the facets of overt abuse referred to in the previous section with regard to minority players also have some relevance here. In particular, the kinds of individual and orchestrated abuse expressed by spectator formations which negatively reference the ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds of players and the more general cultural oppositions to the inclusion of minorities in the game across a range of national (and nationalistic) contexts. It is probably less likely that these expressions will take the form of the kinds of impulsive 'heat of the moment' physical encounters in match-play situations or in terms of the 'occupational banter' referred to in the section above. However, opportunities for spectators to enact a series of strategic mechanisms designed to 'unsettle' and offend minority players are likely to be extended to minority coaches and team managers, especially in countries in which these more instrumental forms of abuse are a relatively commonplace feature of the men's domestic and national game.

As is the case with players, the more general lack of recognition of – and commitment to act against – these kinds of overt abuse on the part of some national football associations and at professional clubs is likely to encourage a culture of 'ignoring' and 'silencing' rather than one in which racist expression is openly challenged. This is arguably a much more prescient issue for potential and existing minority coaches than it is for minority players, given the limited numerical and cultural opportunities for 'entry tickets' into the coaching and team management profession for minorities. To this end, the extent to which potential and existing minority coaches are forced to consciously negotiate a series of 'cultural passports' in order to gain access to - and progress within the realms of – coaching and team management positions seems especially marked within these tiers of the professional football industry. It is also likely that potential minority coaches who have historically adopted more assimilationist cultural identities and have offered little vocal opposition to overt abuse during their playing careers will be viewed by club owners as less threatening and controversial. In contrast, minority players who are perceived as having more oppositional cultural identities and who have openly resisted overt abuse during their playing careers are by proxy less likely to be considered for posts of this kind. The extent to which these kinds of decisions reflect some wider societal and sporting narratives around the cultural suitability of minority coaches or more organisationally embedded processes and practices of institutional discrimination will be addressed in section 3.6.2 and 3.7.2 of this report.

### **3.5.3 Leadership**

As is the case with coaching and team management positions, there is little empirical evidence identifying the incidence of overt racism and other more coded forms of minority abuse within the senior administration and governance levels of professional football. It is, of course, the case that expressions of overt abuse are much less likely to take place within 'white collar' occupational positions more broadly, and where such incidents do take place they are much more readily identifiable and subject to much stronger codes of legislative action than is the case in other areas of social and economic life. This is not to suggest that there are not strong cultural oppositions to the inclusion of minorities in the senior administrative and governance levels of football amongst some individuals within national associations and at professional clubs. However, such views are likely to be expressed privately rather than publicly and to consequently have little identifiable impact on the levels of minority representation in leadership positions in the sport. It is much more likely that the marked under-representation of minorities in leadership positions in football can be explained by a complex configuration of socio-economic and cultural factors (see section 3.3.3) the cumulative impact of experiences of overt abuse in other tiers of the game (see section 3.4.1 and

3.4.2), some general perceptions suggesting the cultural incompatibility of minorities in the football 'workplace' (see section 3.6.3 ) and through a series of more organisationally embedded processes and practices of indirect institutional discrimination (section 3.7.3).

### **3.6 Physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions**

#### **3.6.1 Playing**

In seeking to explain evidenced patterns of under-representation (and, in some cases, over-representation) of minority players in men's professional football in Europe, it is important to reference the wider body of academic research into 'race', sport and football which has focused on the practice of physical and cultural stereotyping of minority sports performers. Whilst these processes of physical and cultural stereotypification are also apparent within wider societal discourse, Hoberman (1997) has argued that 'the world of sport has become an image factory that disseminates and intensifies or racial pre-occupations. In a similar vein, Back et al has suggested that 'sport is a site in which 'the history of racial thinking is being piled up in the present' (2001:5). These suppositions allude to the fact that despite the scientific discrediting of 'race' as a scientific category, there continues to be an enduring fascination in sports, and especially in football, with racial physiology and the perceived cultural appropriateness of minority participation.

Research studies conducted in UK and the Netherlands have suggested that physical stereotypes in sport are commonly constructed, maintained and normalised through mediated discourse (O'Donnell 1994, Sabo and Janssen 1994, Hermes 1995, Knoppers and Elling 2001, Knoppers and Anthonissen 2001, MCarthy and Jones 1997, McCarthy et al 2003, Van Sterkenburg and Knoppers 2004, St Louis 2004). Other research studies have also indicated that processes of physical stereotyping have a common currency amongst physical education teachers at schools and amongst club coaches at the amateur and elite level of football (Cashmore 1982, Fleming 1994, 2001, Long et al 2001, Bradbury 2002, Burdsey 2007). Most typically, these popular narratives describe black footballers in terms of possessing innate, instinctive, natural sporting prowess and inherent physical superiority over their white counterparts. For example, research studies in Denmark reveal tendencies amongst white club coaches to collectively categorise black, African heritage, young players as possessing speed, power and individuality. The same study also suggests that coaches felt that black players lacked the relevant intelligence and tactical understanding to succeed in the professional game (Agergaard and Sorenson 2009). Other authors have suggested such views have a common currency within the football industry and premise the physical performance abilities of black players in contrast to their apparent lack of analytical, motivational or organisational skills (McCarthy and Jones 2003). These views are also evident in the comments of former professional club managers in the UK and in the Netherlands who have openly questioned the aptitude and 'mental reliability' of black players (Carrington and MacDonald 2001, Kassimeris 2009b, EU/FRA 2010).

Some authors have suggested there is a significant degree of complicity with societal and sporting representations of the masculine 'physical self' and a 'social pathological addiction' to sports amongst black populations (Hoberman 1997, Entine 2000). The adoption of sporting identities which premise physical strength and performance can, of course, be alluring as a distinct expression of masculinity to young males from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In the case of football, it has been suggested that some young black males consciously 'play up' to these stereotypes of 'performance physicality' as a means of better enabling initial access to the professional tiers of sport (Jones 2002). This form of 'strategic essentialism' is especially apparent in circumstances where black males face disproportionate levels of wider societal discrimination and where opportunities for personal advancement in other areas of social, economic and intellectual life may remain limited. To this end, the negotiation of these socially constructed representations

of black physicality might go some way to explaining the over-representation of black players in sports such as football in which specific physical characteristics are deemed appropriate.

In contrast, other minority populations, including South Asians in the UK have experienced mediated and populist projections of physical stereotypes of 'otherness' to do with 'frailty', 'weakness', and 'lack of co-ordination', 'effeminacy' and 'poor diet'. Research studies in the UK focusing on perceptions of South Asian young footballers suggest a common adherence to these and other physical stereotypes amongst physical education teachers and amateur and professional football club coaches (Fleming 1994, 2001, Bains 1996 and 2005, McGuire and Collins 1998, McGuire et al 2001, Burdsey 2007). These studies suggest further that the construction and reaffirmation of these physical misconceptions across a range of educational and sporting contexts has acted as a key discriminatory factor in enabling pathways into professional football amongst specific minority populations. Further, these physical conceptualisations of minority populations are often realised in opposition to socially constructed perceptions pertaining to the presumed abilities of white players. For example, in football especially, mediated and popular discourse around 'whiteness' has subtly alluded to the perceived qualities of white players in terms of their hard work, perseverance, analytical, motivational, organisational, and cognitive abilities.

A number of research studies have suggested that the enactment of these physical stereotypes is evidenced in the process of 'stacking' and 'centrality' in team sports (Maguire 1988, Melnick 1988, Long and Spracklen 1996). In men's football in particular, the presumed cerebral and organisational skills of white players has traditionally resulted in them being deployed in more central positions and as team captains. In contrast, the presumed individualist skills of black players has resulted in them occupying peripheral team positions which demand perceived 'natural' attributes of speed and athleticism. To this end, some authors have suggested that the racially informed positioning of players in football is seen to reflect and perpetuate a prevailing hegemonic social order in society in which (white) intellectual qualities are valued above (black) physical qualities. Further, where such processes of 'stacking' and 'centrality' seem especially strong, the inference is that longer term playing opportunities will be markedly more limited for 'physical' black players than is the case for 'intellectual' white players who are perceived to possess the cognitive capacities to adapt their style of play accordingly over time.

In section 3.1 of this report we alluded to the ways in which processes of negative cultural stereotyping falsely construct and prioritise perceived differences between dominant groups and minority populations across a range of societal contexts. These processes are also evident within the football industry. For example, a significant body of research in the UK has referenced tendencies amongst scouting and coaching staff at professional clubs to stereotype young South Asians as having little interest in football and to overplay the extent to which perceived cultural, religious and familial factors limit their football preferences (Bains 1996, 2005, Football Task Force 1998, Burdsey 2007). These findings were echoed by the comments of one English interviewee below:

*'I think there are problems with the stereotypes, particularly if one looks at why there are no successful professional Asian players. If there are none, people will assume that, "Oh, they're not interested in playing football", or, "There are cultural factors that stop them making the breakthrough", which might contribute to the lack of enthusiasm to push them towards becoming successful'*

Burdsey has argued that such perceptions are premised on a series of cultural misconceptions which portray South Asian cultures as static, monolithic and falsely homogeneous. More specifically, Burdsey argues that the identities, lifestyles and leisure pursuits of young South Asian men in the UK are increasingly articulated in relation to the sensibilities of urban 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain, rather than the generational and cultural mores of their parents and ancestral homelands (2004b, 2007). Nonetheless, these practical applications of processes of cultural stereotyping



have placed South Asians outside of the 'cultural market place' of talent identification processes and they consequently remain under-represented within the youth academies of men's professional clubs. These findings are likely to have significant comparability across a range of national contexts in Europe and with specific reference to dominant mediated and populist perceptions of Muslim communities.

A series of wider societal and sporting narratives which equate black masculinity with notions of the dangerous, animalistic, criminal 'other' have also been utilised in a more diluted form in key football contexts. For example, research focusing on men's amateur and professional football in the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands have referenced tendencies amongst club coaches to perceive young black players as 'unstable' and more 'likely to lose their temper more easily' than their white counterparts (Long et al 2001, Bradbury 2002, Hermes 2005, Agergaard and Sorenson 2009). These studies suggest that stereotypes regarding the perceived 'attitude' and 'lack of social etiquette' of young black players feature strongly in the culturally coded discourse of coaches at youth academies at professional clubs.

These negative perceptions and socially constructed falsehoods regarding cultural difference and incompatibility also feature strongly in the adult tiers of the professional game, and include reference to other (white) national and religious minorities. For example, our interviewees in Germany and Austria both referred separately to processes of cultural stereotyping of football migrants from the Balkans region:

*'In Austria, many of the minority players are from white rather than black backgrounds. For example, from countries in the former Yugoslavia. This means that there is less open racism targeting players, but there are still cultural stereotypes and certain club cultures which make it harder for these players to achieve their goals. There are lots of stereotypes about the Balkans players and a more general sense of superiority in Austria compared to other central European countries'*

*'There is the general atmosphere at clubs and the cultural stereotypes, which, I think, is stronger than the racist abuse from fans or from other players. You know, if you are from the former Yugoslavia, for example, then you might be perceived to have 'that attitude' and because of that you don't 'fit into our team'. That thinking and those stereotypes are still very strong and can make life difficult for migrant players'*

Taken together, the aforementioned studies and interviewee narratives strongly suggest that processes of cultural stereotyping are likely to limit both the initial access pathways and the potential career sustainability of minority players, by defining them as 'difficult', 'troublesome', 'labour intensive' and 'not willing to fit in' to the dominant norms, values and social etiquette of professional clubs.

### **3.6.2 Coaching**

The process of physical and cultural stereotyping and consequent practices of 'stacking' and 'centrality' has arguably had very real consequences in negatively shaping the post playing careers and potential transition into coaching and team management positions for minority footballers. Research studies and interviewee narratives suggest that most professional football coaches tend to be recruited from performers who have had on field defensive and central midfield game organisational roles and/or have been team captains during their playing careers. These are roles in which players from majority populations have traditionally dominated in football due in part to the discriminatory allocation of team positions and responsibilities referred to in the above section. From these perspectives, the potential upwardly mobile post playing career trajectories of black and other minority players are limited by their prior peripheral positioning in teams and their

resultant over-reliance on physical performance based abilities. These assertions are referenced further by two interviewees below:

*'This is all to do with the cultural stereotype thing. They might play, but they are instinctive players, they don't breathe the game and are not educated in tactics and so on. These are old stereotyping prejudices'*

*'If coaches and managers and club owners have specific perceptions of black players and treat them differentially as players, then of course, the potential for those players to progress onto coaches and managers is limited'*

The above quotes also allude directly to processes of racialised assessments of potential minority coaches enacted by key decision makers within professional clubs which pre-suppose the limited analytical, motivational and organisational capacities required to coach and manage teams. The inference here is that the practical application of these commonly held stereotypes are a key contributory factor in maintaining the disproportionately low levels of minority coaches from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds in professional football in Europe. One Austrian interviewee articulates further in this respect:

*'It's about the perceptions and expectations of club officials and that old boys' network. In the case of Roma, there are a lot of stereotypes about the way they are and how they can't be good coaches. It's quite open in many central European countries they way that Roma are openly denied coaching positions'*

### **3.6.3 Leadership**

There is a marked absence of research focusing on the extent to which processes of physical and cultural stereotyping evident within the playing and coaching spheres of professional football are also apparent in shaping the career trajectories of minorities into senior administration and key governance positions in professional football. Nonetheless, it is likely that a combination of wider societal discriminations based on notions of 'physicality over intellect' and the perceived cultural incompatibility of minorities also has some resonance here. More specifically, the practical application of these stereotypes within the football industry has had a cumulative impact in 'filtering out' the potential for increased minority representation in the leadership of the sport. This is arguably most likely to be the case in countries in which mediated and popular narratives which position minority populations as 'outside' of the dominant norms and values of 'host' societies remain largely unchallenged, and where there is little civil and constitutional legislation designed to address these attitudes, behaviours and actions and their consequences. However, the continued under-representation of minorities in the higher echelons of football administration and governance in countries in which minority players have long held an established foothold in the game as players, might also suggest that the processes and outcomes of physical and cultural stereotyping might be a little more embedded than is generally recognised or realised. As Back et al have argued 'the assimilation of black people within the national imagination as sports heroes need not in any way be incongruent with access to the centres of decision making and institutional power' (2001:4).

## **3.7 Organisational provision and institutional discrimination**

### **3.7.1 Playing**

There is an increasing emphasis in more recent academic research towards explanations of the under-representation of minorities as players which focus on the shape, scope and content of the organisational provision of sports at the amateur and professional level. This is especially the case

with regard to men's football. For example, research studies in the UK have illustrated the ways in which institutionally embedded and subtly enacted patterns of racial closure have limited the initial participation of young minority players in pre-existing amateur football clubs (Williams 1994, Burdsey 2004, 2009, Bradbury 2010, 2011). These findings were echoed by interviewees in Central and Eastern Europe with reference to barriers to access to the amateur game for Roma populations. Research studies focusing on regional football federations in countries including Austria, Germany and Finland have also reported unfair or unequal treatment in the allocation of training and match-day facilities for minority participants (EU/FRA 2010). Similarly, research studies in the UK have identified the significant resistance to the implementation of national racial equality initiatives and a lack of meaningful engagement with 'minority football clubs' amongst regional branches of the English FA (Lusted 2009, 2011). In a similar vein, research studies in Luxembourg have alluded to strongly organisational and cultural oppositions to the greater integration of Portuguese heritage 'minority football teams' into the national competition structures of the Luxembourg football federation. Further, in some countries such as Denmark and Italy, national football federations have operated a series of restrictive legislative approaches which have impacted on the integrative inclusion of minorities in organised amateur football and in regional and national representative teams (EU/FRA 2010). Research undertaken in the UK and the Netherlands has equated the under-representation of specific minority groups in organised amateur football with the failure of clubs to adapt to the social and cultural mores of multi-ethnic and multi-religious local clienteles (Elling and Knoppers 2001, Burdsey 2007). Similarly, interviewees across a range of national contexts suggested that the tendency of some national football associations to focus new and existing capital facility and coaching projects in more affluent areas, in contrast to 'minority heavy' socio-economically deprived locales, further limited the opportunities for structured participation in the game amongst some minorities.

In section 3.3.1 of this report we alluded to the increasing global recruitment focus of men's professional football clubs and the resultant increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of players within the professional game across a range of national contexts in Europe. However, despite the broadened focus of adult player recruitment, research studies and interviewee narratives have suggested that many professional football clubs continue to exhibit a series of relatively 'closed' operational approaches to the recruitment of local young players. This is especially evident in those 'traditional' approaches to youth talent identification which have historically failed to incorporate a range of sites and local settings in which young minority players are present. For example, research in the UK has suggested that few professional clubs had engendered meaningful links with local minority football clubs or had scouted leagues and tournaments at which high levels of young minority players are present (Football Task Force 1998, IFC 2003, CRE 2004, Bradbury et al 2006). These findings were strongly echoed by interviewees across a range of national contexts who suggested that many coaches at professional clubs viewed 'minority football clubs' as 'culturally separatist rather than culturally integrative' and perceive that minorities such as Roma have little interest or to lack any 'cultural traditions' of involvement in football. These racialised assessments of the relationship between minorities and football were referred to in some detail in section 3.4.1 of this report. The inference here is that these often ill conceived assessments underpin (and offer some self justification for) a series of limited operational practices of youth recruitment, including a lack of communication with 'cultural intermediaries' from minority football communities. To this end, the lack of social and cultural capital of minority populations can be understood as a direct consequence of the limited occupational practices of professional football network insiders. These practices have contributed to the ongoing under-representation of young players from specific minority populations and have contributed to maintaining the relatively mono-cultural throughput of young players into professional club youth academies in many cases. The comments below from interviewees in England, Northern Ireland and Austria articulate these processes and outcomes further:

*'There is certainly more work to do with our talent scouts, in recognising that they develop grooves and patterns where they go and look for talent and what they perceive*

*as talent. Far more of that needs to happen just to make it the norm that kids are breaking through from those communities, and that coaches are expecting kids to break through from those communities and scouts are going and looking in those communities'*

*'One of the difficulties the clubs have had is recognising that people from ethnic backgrounds coming to Northern Ireland are coming from much stronger football nations than ourselves. It's about them actually recognising that the talent could be there and not just in playing but coaching, and that's an area that we have been very slow to pick up'*

*'Most of the recruitment of professional clubs goes through the amateur level. So that you play with an amateur club and then you are invited to a training day at a professional club, and then you become a member of the professional club. But if you are not playing at the amateur clubs which the professional clubs have the links with, which tend to be the clubs they have always worked with, and this, I think, is the same everywhere, then it is more difficult to be a part of that process'*

Whilst there has been little empirical research focusing on the experiences of young minority 'academy' players, a number of interviewee narratives referenced concerns regarding the limited 'conditions of equality' in these settings. In the first instance, interviewees in England and Hungary both referenced the absence of minority youth coaches and the potential for such coaches to act as 'positive role models' for young players from minority backgrounds. Similarly, interviewees in England and France referenced the limited cultural awareness of majority population youth academy coaches and some issues in recognising and understanding the specific cultural and religious needs of some young minority players. Research undertaken in Denmark has also questioned the willingness and capacity of youth academy coaches to relate to - and offer additional mentoring support for - young minority players from socio-economically deprived backgrounds and with little wider familial support (Agergaard and Sorenson 2009). It is arguably the case here that within the highly competitive framework of youth academies there is a much greater emphasis on the abilities of coaches to convey technical skills and much less value placed on 'soft' skills to do with mentoring and the pastoral care of socially vulnerable players. Relatedly, interviewees in Poland and Hungary referenced the everyday practices at some professional club youth academies which seemed premised on rigid assimilationist perceptions of group bonding and identity. In such circumstances, it was felt that young minority players had to exercise much greater adaptation to the social and cultural mores of dominant majority populations and to have to 'leave their cultural identity at the door' in order to succeed in this environment. These latter perspectives chime strongly with those themes alluded to in section 3.6.1 of this report with regard to the hegemonic power relations embedded within the occupational culture of football institutions and the consequent negotiation of 'cultural passports' by minority players (Back et al 2001, King 2004a, 2004b).

The organisational processes and operational practices referred to above are strongly reflective of the concept of institutional discrimination referred to in section 3.1 of this report. This is especially evident in the everyday practices, rules, norms, routines, attitudes and behaviour within professional football club youth recruitment and development. These latter assertions are in accordance with the concept of indirect discrimination as defined by the European Commission Council Directive on Racial Equality, which states:

*'[Indirect discrimination is] an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice that puts persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons'*

The inference here is that the adoption of – and adherence to – the policies and practices of ‘neutral criteria’ within professional football have limited the realisation of ‘equality of opportunities’ and impacted negatively on the ‘equality of outcomes’ in many cases. This is especially the case with respect to occupational practices which have inhibited the initial access and limited the throughput into the professional game amongst young players from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation ‘settled’ minority populations.

### 3.7.2 Coaching

In section 3.3.2 of this report we alluded to the markedly low levels of representation of minority coaches and team managers at professional football clubs throughout Europe. In the subsequent sections we have alluded to a number of explanations to this end. These have included; the apparent lack of aspirations and a limited ‘diversity pool’ of suitably qualified minority applicants for professional coaching positions, and the continuation of overt and more coded oppositions to the recruitment of minority coaches amongst players, spectators and owners at professional clubs. We have also asserted that the processes of physical and cultural stereotyping and ensuing negative racialised assessments of the abilities of minority former players has strongly impacted on their lack of numerical transition into coaching and team management positions at professional clubs.

These latter explanations arguably underpin and inform a series of relatively ‘closed’ operational practices enacted by professional clubs in terms coaching and managerial recruitment. For example, a number of social commentators in the UK has suggested that the wider social, cultural and physical stereotypes of minority, mainly, black, players have become internalised by club owners and led them to negatively question the human resource and management capacities required to aid their transition into employment as professional coaches. These wider discourses equate minority managers with ‘uncertainty’ and ‘risk’ and are contrasted with the perceived safer options of employing coaches and managers from majority populations. These assertions were strongly supported in our interviewee narratives, with specific reference to Central and Eastern Europe. One interviewee articulates further:

*‘I don’t think they want to employ minorities as managers because they are worried that they will not be accepted by the squad, and by the other coaching staff. In terms of black managers, it just wouldn’t happen, they just wouldn’t be accepted by the players or by the spectators, especially in central and Eastern Europe’*

In section 3.1 of this report we alluded to the beneficial membership of dominant social and cultural networks and the profits of mutual acquaintance for dominant majority populations. This is especially the case within professional football where a set of historically inscribed power relations and hegemonic white spaces within the decision making structures of professional football clubs has created and sustained a ‘glass ceiling’ effect for coaches from minority backgrounds. This is evidenced in the tendency of club owners to recruit club coaches and team managers from a demographically limited pool of already experienced (mostly white) applicants embedded within the social and cultural ‘boys club’ of professional football networks. These approaches favour individuals drawn from the same kinds of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and consequent shared norms, values and behaviours of club owners and senior officials with responsibility for club operations and team management liaison. One interviewee comments further in this respect:

*‘What we’ve got used to is seeing white managers coming through and therefore white managers proportionately have had virtually all the opportunity to get some experience and visibility. And so it is not in their [club owners] consciousness to think of a former black player who might be doing their coaching awards and have the possibility of becoming their next manager’.*

These largely unintentional processes and practices accord strongly with the concept of institutional discrimination outlined in section 3.1 of this report and are a key contributory factor in sustaining the under-representation of minorities in coaching and team management positions within the game. The interviewees below outline ways in which more subtle shifts in thinking and outlook might better 'open up' the presently 'closed' framework of coach recruitment to the benefit of talented applicants from minority (and majority) populations and for professional football clubs:

*'We need to have proper processes that become inclusive and offer opportunities. This would also widen the opportunity base for a lot of white managers who are excluded automatically because 'Chairmen' have their favourites, they know who they want and everyone else need not apply. It starts to open the door and inevitably it creates more competition. But we say the competition's good because it's about getting the best, not just your favourite'*

*'I think that it's getting that breakthrough of the outlook. That has to come from those who are prepared to bring about change because they see the value of that. Not because anyone's saying, "You must appoint black coaches", but because it makes good business sense. It's about how you get the best for your club'*

### **3.7.3 Leadership**

In section 3.1 of this report we referred to definitions of institutional discrimination as a series of unconscious and unintentional processes and practices at the individual, organisational and societal level which serve to disadvantage minority populations and contribute to their under-representation in all spheres of social, economic and political life. In this section we suggest that the concept of institutional discrimination has some significant applicability in evaluating the 'open secret' of the under-representation of minorities in key decision making positions at the domestic, national and European level of professional football.

This is especially the case in terms of explaining the marked absence of minorities within paid senior administration positions at professional football clubs and at national football associations. On this score, a number of research studies have referred to some relatively 'closed' organisational processes and operational practices at professional clubs with regard to the way in which they recruit senior members of staff. For example, research studies in the UK have suggested that only 36% of professional football clubs always publicly advertise for senior administration positions and that where such positions are advertised they are done so by using relatively limited mainstream mechanisms (Bradbury 2001). Other UK based research has suggested that 79% of professional clubs still recruit senior administrators through relatively informal mechanisms such as personal recommendation and through 'word of mouth' networks (CRE 2004). These UK based empirical findings were felt by interviewees to have some significant comparability across a range of national contexts in Europe. Interviewees in England and Germany articulate further in this respect:

*'Why are we not seeing ethnic minorities coming into administration? I'm sure again the recruitment processes are limited, in terms of the way that people actually get jobs. Are jobs advertised in what you would expect to be an open and transparent way? Not always, probably'*

*'The reason is simple. How can minorities get these jobs, or even apply for these jobs, if they don't even know that they exist, or that there is not a proper process for them to go through to even be considered for these jobs'*

The findings referred to above suggest some significant parity between the processes of recruitment of senior administrators and the recruitment of team managers, coaches and players at

professional clubs, in so much as they are targeted from a pre-existing (albeit demographically limited) 'knowledge bank' of potential candidates. However, the broader inference here is that these mechanisms of 'white collar' recruitment gravitate against the inclusion of potential applicants drawn from minority populations who are outside of the dominant social and cultural networks of mutual acquaintance which typify the football industry. Further, despite the broadly rhetorical support of professional clubs for wider anti-discrimination campaigns, there is much less evidence to suggest the practical implementation of equal opportunities programmes within the organisational tiers of club infrastructures. For example, research undertaken in the UK has indicated that few clubs have adhered to or have fully operationalised the stated commitments of equal and fair treatment enshrined in official equal opportunities policies, where such policy documents exist in any real sense at all (Bradbury and Williams 2006, Bradbury 2010).

Similar patterns of racial closure are evidenced in the hierarchical pyramid structures of football associations tasked with the regional, national and European governance of the amateur and professional game. Initial access to executive decision making committees at federation level are often premised on the sponsored mobility, patronage and personal recommendation of more senior figures within these governing bodies. These 'promotions' are commonly perceived as a reward for individuals who have exhibited long standing paid and/or voluntary services to football in their regions or at a national level. Given the historically inscribed power relations and limited existing demographic of older, white, males, within football governance infrastructures, it is hardly unsurprising that minority populations continue to be marginalised from the benefits and profits of these networks of mutual acquaintance. These assertions are strongly echoed in the interviewee narratives below which explicitly reference the link between processes of institutional discrimination and the continued under-representation of minorities within football governance:

*'If it were based on people being appointed for their skills, you would see a lot more minorities. But with the pyramid or democratic way in which those instances are designated, there's no chance'*

*'The structural and organisational culture of something like the English FA in terms of our constitution and processes, that's a real blocker, because our participation base has been traditionally white and male and that's not really changing in the governance aspect of the game'*

*'One of the reasons for the under-representation of minorities is it is a first past the post system for getting on in organisations like football associations and so on. You can have ten or twenty people and the one who's more likely to get the position as president or chairman or the secretary or whatever it is, is the one who is like the median of the group. So if they're all the same in terms of competence and quality then it's more likely to be one who is more like the other ones on average, which, in most cases, is likely to be an older white male'*

Building on the work of social theorists referred to in section 3.1 of this report we might argue that the residual permanence of patterns of institutional discrimination and minority under-representation referred to above, are underpinned by the socially constructed norms, values and patterns of hegemonic privilege embedded within the core structures and decision making bodies of football governance. From these more critical perspectives, the 'invisible centred-ness of whiteness' and the occlusion of any sense of inward gaze on the part of key stakeholders involved in the governance of the game is a key contributory factor in maintaining the status quo of racialised social relations to this end (Hylton 2009, 2010). Whilst these processes of institutional discrimination might be unconscious, unintentional and 'embodied', they can nevertheless be evidenced in the processes and outcomes of selection which favour individuals drawn from recognisable backgrounds and with similar cultural norms, values and behaviours. This theme is strongly echoed in the interviewee narratives below:

*'Well, they are the same group as the one which recruit's new members. They recruit each other. It's really the old boys' network, the old men's network. When they look for new members, they make the list with criteria and they always make the criteria which they fit themselves, so that's the way it works. They think that it's good, because they all look alike and they all think alike and therefore most of the time they agree with each other very quickly'*

*'I think it's 'like for like' people. People do that because they think they're going to recruit someone who will help them achieve their objectives more'*

Whilst the comments above indicate the unconscious and indirect nature of institutional discrimination, in other cases, and a little more critically, a number of other research studies and interviewee narratives have suggested some deeply embedded 'cultures of resistance' to more equitable change amongst the key stakeholders within the governance of the game (Long 2000, 2007, Long and Hylton 2002, Long et al 2005, Long and Spracklen 2011, Bradbury and Williams 2006, Lusted 2009, 2011). This resistance to structural and cultural change is to some extent reflective of the dominant political paradigms in certain nation states, in which relatively closed models of national identity and citizenship underpin limited policy approaches to dealing with minorities premised on assimilation or non intervention (Amara et al 2004b). Resistance might also indicate a more general lack of 'problem awareness' or non-acknowledgement of the concept and practices of institutional discrimination and represent a reactionary response to perceived personal criticisms on this score (EU/FRA 2010). It is of course also likely that in some cases this resistance is more reflective of a general reluctance to surrender accrued rewards and decision making powers at the personal level. Interviewees below comment further on the shape of resistance to a more general 'opening up' the structures of football governance at the regional, national and European level:

*'We've seen a lot of resistance by a lot of football administrators. They don't like to talk about the issue. They don't like people to examine the problem. Because they understand that if the issue comes to the fore, then it may have to be addressed and a lot of them don't want that'*

*The fact is, I'm sure you'll find that in every business group, if you have power, why should you welcome other individuals. It's an old boys club. There is that basic solidarity that we stay amongst ourselves, it's much more comfortable. I don't know many groups that open up in this spontaneous way. Unless they feel that they will get something out of it. And certainly that's not the feeling right now'*

In section 3.2.2 of this report we alluded to more multicultural and integrative national approaches to addressing minority discrimination and increasing minority representation in all areas of social, economic and political life. These perspectives view cultural diversity as a positive resource which should be recognised, developed and utilised to the benefit of individuals and organisations. More specifically they suggest that cultural diversity can contribute to the added value of organisations and increase their capacities to connect with the increasingly ethnic, cultural and religious heterogeneity of the societies in which they are situated. These assertions were strongly reflected in our interview narratives. To this end, the interviewees below draw positive messages from diversity practices enacted within some sections of the corporate and business sector:

*'It's about recognising people from diverse backgrounds, there's a fair possibility that a lot of them have a lot of really good skills. In addition they may have insights and knowledge of how things could be improved, so it's a valuable source that we should be tapping into'*



*‘Well, the only way that I think you’re going to address these issues is the business model. It’s the aspects of, “How do you run a football club efficiently, as a business, if you don’t do it in the context of enabling yourself to access the best of people from all backgrounds?”*

*‘I think there are many extremely good examples in the corporate world where diversity of the workforce generates excellent results. It is there and it is performance based. I am convinced that diversity is a value’.*

In section 3.2.2 of this report we indicated that a key component of establishing multicultural and pluralist organisations has been through the implementation of practices of ‘positive action’. We suggested that positive action approaches recognise and attempt to counter a series of historically embedded processes of minority discrimination and challenge the dominant hegemonic power relations which contribute to the status quo of inequitable social relations. To this end, these positive action approaches might have a particular resonance as mechanism by which to address the residual patterns of institutional discrimination and continued under-representation of minorities within the highest echelons of football governance. The implementation of such positive actions might add significant practical and cultural value to the functioning and legitimacy of national football federations and at UEFA. The final words on this score are left with one interviewee who articulates these themes further and outlines a more inclusionary vision of the game than has been the case in the past:

*‘The more that we can have people being brave in positions of leadership and power and influence, actually opening up these opportunities, then the more the conversations will take place. Then below that, obviously that’s at that kind of level which is a bit visionary and inspirational, but you’ve got to have positive actions in place, haven’t you? You’ve got to actually do something that makes a difference so that we’re not in ten years’ time having that same conversation. You can’t do that unless you get all the parties round the table and working collaboratively on it’*

## 4. Women

### 4.1 Women's representation and discrimination

There is a significant body of research which has highlighted the under-representation of women in key decision making positions in social, cultural, economic and political institutions at the national level across Europe (Eurostat 2008, EC 2006, 2010). For example, the Council of Europe has stated that women are still seriously under-represented in political and public decision making bodies and continue to face difficulties in becoming involved in equitable numbers in the political process (COE 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) Whilst much of the research undertaken in this area has differed in its focus, scope and content, there has been a broad consensus in terms of analysis and explanation which equates patterns of women's under-representation with processes and practices of structural discrimination at the individual, societal and organisational level.

In the first instance, explanations of this kind suggest that women experience disproportionate levels of overt and institutionalised discriminations in comparison to that which is experienced by men. The impact of these discriminations has limited the potential for – and realisation of – equality of opportunities and equality of outcomes for women across a range of societal spheres (Eurostat 2001, 2002a, 2002b). To this end, the Council of Europe has stated that women are still marginalised in political and public life, paid less for work of equal value and find themselves victims of poverty and unemployment more often than males (COE 2010c). In terms of employment, research has suggested that despite their increasing numerical presence across a broader spectrum of professions than has been the case in the past, the pace of women's career advancement continues to be relatively slow in comparison to men with similar or fewer educational qualifications. This is especially the case with regard to leadership and decision making positions where an apparent 'glass ceiling' effect has limited female progress to this end (COE 2010a, 2010b).

It is probably also the case that there are a number of other structural and cultural factors contributing to the under-representation of women within key areas of social, economic and political life across Europe. Not least of all with respect to a series of historically embedded hierarchical gender relations in the domestic sphere in which women continue to undertake primary responsibility for the majority of domestic chores and child care responsibilities (Eurostat 2002a). Research in the UK and the Netherlands has suggested these gendered disparities are most apparent amongst some specific cultural and religious minority populations, especially those experiencing significant levels of socio-economic deprivation and where the existence of – and adherence to – traditional gender expectations seem especially strong (Alund 1999, Yuval Davies 1999, 2006, Afshar et al 2005). Whilst this latter research alludes importantly to the complex interplay of gender, culture and social class, it remains the case that unequal domestic relations continue to limit the social, educational and occupational advancement of women across a range of cultural and national contexts in Europe.

In the context of this report, the concept of sexism and concomitant processes of sex discrimination provide a useful mechanism for identifying and explaining the prevalence of gender inequalities experienced by women across a range of societal and sporting arena in Europe. Broadly speaking, sexism refers to a set of ideas, attitudes and processes in which gendered inequalities in the wider social structure are related in a deterministic way to biological and cultural factors attributed to men and women. Referring to sexism in the plural recognises the increasing complexity and myriad forms of sexism and their often contradictory character. This allows for an enhanced conceptual understanding of the different ways in which women can experience different forms of sexism in different ways across social, economic and cultural intersections and across different geographical and national contexts.

Extreme forms of sexism can include a hatred of women (misogyny) and are often expressed through overt attitudes, behaviour, verbal and/or physical harassment and abuse. More commonly, sexism is construed as a set of beliefs and actions which position women as inferior to, less competent, and less valuable than, their male counterparts. The practical application of sexism of this kind is evident across a range of 'everyday' domestic and workplace interactions and is often described as male chauvinism.

Socio-critical analysis of ongoing gender inequalities suggest that sexist beliefs and actions are strongly underpinned by a set of essentialist notions of gender which largely overplay the fixed biological differences between males and females and underplay the more fluid social construction of gender identities (Glenn 1999). From this latter perspective, gender is not something that we have or we are, but something that we perform or we do. To this end, 'doing gender' is a useful explanatory term for is the construction of gender identities and images and the enactment of gender in social situations, where we always present ourselves and are perceived as male or female (Pfister 2010). These social constructionist perspectives also allow for an enhanced understanding of the way in which gender is constructed over the early life course through processes of parental socialisation, peer group pressures, and in education. In particular, the way in which perceived gender norms and values of masculinity and femininity are encouraged and reinforced through processes of interaction between children, parents and teachers. They also allude to the ways in which gendered stereotypes are constructed and reproduced within populist and mediated narratives which portray males as 'strong, aggressive and competent' and females as 'weak, frail and incompetent' (Van Sterkenburg and Knoppers 2004)

The prevalence and residual embeddedness of socially constructed gender stereotypes of this kind has strongly informed the apparent gender dualism of societal relations and has impacted on limiting opportunities for the more equitable representation of women across a range of occupational spheres. This is especially the case in terms of horizontal occupational sex segregation, a process whereby occupations become 'unproblematically' gendered as masculine or feminine and where the consequent occupational distribution of men and women becomes premised on falsely ascribed characteristics of gendered appropriateness and suitability. This gendered occupational separation can also have negative outcomes in reducing the prestige, value and economic rewards associated with occupations such as teaching, nursing and in the service sector, in which women predominate, and are a key contributory factor in sustaining gendered income inequalities between men and women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Lloyd 2005, COE 2010c).

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides a useful overarching definition of gender discrimination which alludes to the myriad processes, cumulative impact and negative outcomes of discrimination against women. Gender discrimination is:

*'Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field'*

Processes of gender stereotyping and consequent gender discrimination may also be unconscious and unintentional rather than overt and deliberate. They can be seen in the everyday practices of rules, norms, routines and patterns of attitudes and behaviour in institutions and societal structures that represent obstacles to women in achieving the same rights and responsibilities that are available to males. The concept of institutional sexism provides a useful outline of the way in which these largely unconscious processes of gender discrimination can be enacted at the organisational level. In this respect, institutional sexism is concerned with the structures, procedures and practices

of individuals and organisations which have subconsciously or otherwise failed to take into account the particular needs of women and which might result in unfair and unequal treatment on the basis of gender.

Despite the growing awareness and understanding of – and implementation of measures to address – the myriad processes of sex discrimination referred to above, women continue to experience disproportionate levels of under-representation in key areas of social, economic and political life throughout Europe. Recent academic explanations for the apparent slow pace of societal change in this respect have sought to broaden debates to include analysis of the ways in which dominant (male) groups perceive their own social advantages and economic achievements as the cultural norm (Yuval Davies and Stoetzler 2002, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Ascribing normative status to the cultural norms of dominant (male) groups in this way precludes any recognition of the beneficial membership of dominant social and cultural networks and the profits of mutual acquaintance. Further, it affords opportunities to define issues such as gender inequality from a dominant hegemonic position of patriarchal power and to offer solutions which negate any sense of critical self reflection or organisational review. From this empowered position, the under-representation of women in key leadership positions and decision making bodies in sports organisations is perceived as resulting from a series of wider societal gender inequalities or as being informed by the negatively perceived properties of women pertaining to emotional frailty and the lack of relevant competence. Some theorists have argued that males in dominant occupational positions consciously enact discriminatory practices in the sporting workplace as part of a process of ‘backlash’ against the perceived threat of women’s career advancement and as a means of protecting their own male power, privilege, authority and income (Talbot 2002, Shaw and Hoerber 2003, Shaw 2006). A number of other authors have alluded to the tendencies of women to be positioned outside of the dominant networks of male patronage and sponsored mobility and have limited opportunities to accrue the relevant social, economic and cultural capital with which to breakthrough the ‘glass ceiling’ into key leadership and decision making positions, especially in sports organisations (Birrell and Therberge 1994, Birrell 2000, Hargreaves 1994, Claringbould and Knoppers 2008a, 2008b, Knoppers and Anthonissen 2008, Pfister 2010)

## **4.2 Measures to increase women’s representation and tackle discrimination**

### **4.2.1 European level measures**

At the present time, a total of 186 countries globally, including all countries across the continent of Europe, have signed up to the United Nations General Assembly Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. The convention obliges parties to enshrine gender equality into their domestic legislation, repeal all discriminatory provision in their laws, and enact new provisions to guard against discrimination against women. Nation states signing up to the convention are also encouraged to establish public institutions to guarantee women effective protection against discrimination and take steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination practiced against women by individuals, organisations and enterprises. These dictates have chimed positively with the organisational development of the European Union and the Council of Europe and their intentions towards the promotion of gender equality and stated vision of enabling a modern and progressive political and economic union.

Efforts to realise aims and objectives towards gender equality are evidenced in the longstanding work of the Council of Europe. Since 1979 the COE has worked at an intergovernmental level to promote European co-operation to achieve equality between women and men and has commissioned a range of reports and made recommendations to national governments to this end. In 2009, the COE Committee of Ministers and representatives of the 47 COE member states adopted the declaration ‘Making gender equality a reality’ (COE 2009). The declaration urges all member states to commit themselves fully to bridging the gap between equality in fact and law,

with particular respect to '[eliminating] the structural causes of power imbalances between women and men, including in political, public and economic decision-making process at all levels'. The declaration also recommends that national governments 'Integrate a gender equality perspective in governance by ensuring openness, transparency, participation of all relevant stakeholders as well as real accountability in the process of achieving full gender equality'. The 2009 declaration is intended to build on the far reaching 'recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms' which were published by the COE in 2007.

The European Union has also long pursued a policy on equal opportunities for women and men, based originally on article 119 of the EEC treaty and supported by a series of directives on the equal treatment of women and men in the workplace. EU equal opportunities law has also created a series of legally enforceable rights to equal pay and equal treatment in the workplace and has been interpreted expansively by the European Court of Justice (ECJ). To this extent, it is necessary to highlight the ECJ's direct effect doctrine, whereby the European Court recognises that anti-discrimination provisions in the Treaty create direct rights for individuals that should be protected by the courts. Further, since the 1990s, both the EU and the COE have begun to pursue a broader agenda beyond the previous emphasis on equal treatment in the workplace, to embrace new positive action and gender mainstreaming approaches as a means through which to better enable the increased proportion of females in leadership positions (EC 2006, 2010, COE 2009, 2010a).

These shifting approaches are also embodied within the European Union Charter for Fundamental Rights. The charter sets out in a single text, for the first time in the European Unions history, the whole range of civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons resident in the European Union. Whilst article 21 of the charter sets out some broad generic guidelines pertaining to non-discrimination (see section 3.2.2), article 23 offers a more focused statement which alludes to equality between women and men in the workplace and the legitimacy of measures designed to tackle under-representation to this end:

*'Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex'*

In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty gave full legal effect to the charter. The Lisbon Treaty was signed by all EU member states in 2007 and entered into force following ratification in December 2009. Responsibility for the guardianship and implementation of the Lisbon Treaty is held with the European commission which is the executive body of the European Union (see section 3.2.1 for further information on the scope and limitations of the charter).

#### **4.2.2 National level measures**

National level approaches to increase women's representation and tackle gender discrimination have thus far been markedly mixed in terms of their focus, scope and content. Many European nation states operate a complex mixture of legal, civil and constitutional provisions to combat gender discrimination. Further, even where nation states enshrine anti-discriminatory practices in legislation, the application of appropriate enforcement mechanisms remains a difficult and challenging process.

The varied legislative approach to increase women's representation and tackle gender discrimination has been informed by the very different culturally embedded traditions and historically dominant political paradigms with respect to gender relations across a range of nation states in Europe. For example, a number of countries in North Western Europe have exhibited a strong and longstanding record of the successful implementation of a range of policies and mechanisms designed to promote gender equality. This process of effective policy implementation

and evaluation was informed to some significant extent by the initial advent and relatively swift political acceptance of the central tenets of second wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in some Nordic countries. These gender inclusive philosophies have since become more gradually incorporated into the legislative practices across a number of other, mainly, Northern European, countries over time. For example, recent research undertaken by the Council of Europe (COE 2010a) has indicated that Sweden (46%), Finland (41.5%), the Netherlands (41.3%), Belgium (37.3%), Denmark (38%) and Norway (37.9%) have all achieved or are close to achieving the 40% target of women's representation in their respective national parliaments. These examples of increased gender parity in public and political decision making bodies are a little less evidenced across a number of countries in Southern Europe (with the exception of Spain) and across Central and Eastern Europe where a combination of factors, including; the disproportionate impact of the global economic crisis, the strong adherence to more traditional forms of religiosity, and the complex recent political and cultural histories of some countries have all impacted negatively on efforts towards greater gender parity across a range of societal spheres. It is probably also the case that in a number of these latter regions, there is a much stronger ideological linkage between concepts of national identity and masculinity and efforts to introduce gender equity measures at the national level are likely to be afforded lower political priority, lack popular legitimacy and/or meet with greater resistance than has been the case in more 'liberal' nations.

Initial efforts to tackle gender discriminations and increase women's representation in key areas of social, economic and political life across a range of national contexts in Europe have been premised on the notion of equal treatment. At its most basic level, equal treatment implies that no individual should have fewer human rights than any other. This philosophy can be seen to underpin the initial work of the EU and of national governments to adopt a series of equal opportunities directives on gender equality in the workplace. The design and delivery of equal opportunities was also strongly informed by liberal feminism which premises a relatively neutral vision of different gender and asserts the potential for equitable change through processes of political and legal reform. To this end, equal opportunities policy measures premised on liberal feminism share similarities with those premised on multiculturalism and integration, in as much they value diversity as a positive cultural resource which can better position organisations to successfully deliver services in both the public (state) and private (commercial) sector. Critiques of the practical application of equal opportunities policies allude to the apparent disjuncture between intentions and outcomes, and the limited focus of such policies on women as participants in the workplace, which, it is argued, do little to challenge the wider hegemonic masculine norms and values and which underpin ongoing gender inequalities. Critiques of the notion of equal treatment also suggest that treating women and men the same is not the same as treating women and men equally. Rather, and with reference to patriarchal power imbalances embedded within gender relations at the individual, societal and organisational level, some authors have suggested that sometimes women and men have to be treated differently to be treated equally.

Since the 1980s the European Union, the Council of Europe and a number of nation states across Europe have sought to implement a range of gender equality policies based around the notion of 'positive action'. These positive action approaches shift the emphasis from equality of access to creating conditions more likely to result in equality of outcomes, and seek to move beyond 'gender neutral' approaches which are perceived to sustain rather than redress patterns of women's under-representation across a range of spheres of social relations. Positive action approaches have become increasingly commonplace, especially in Nordic countries, and are evidenced in the development of training courses designed to empower women seeking entry to traditionally male dominated occupations and professions and with particular regard to enabling 'entry tickets' to senior management positions. They are also evidenced in processes of target setting and the establishment of quotas designed to engender a more balanced gender representation in employment and political representation (COE 2009, EC 2010). General critiques of positive action approaches suggest that they reduce incentives, encourage selectivity, and benefit only middle class sections of society. More specifically, critiques of gendered positive action approaches suggest

they tend to be 'piecemeal, temporary, and precariously funded' and do little to challenge the structural and cultural sources of gender disadvantage. Nonetheless, in countries characterised by the absence of positive action approaches of this kind, levels of women's representation in key leadership positions in employment and political decision making bodies remain low.

The concept of gender mainstreaming effectively entered the mainstream of international public policy following its formal inclusion in the platform for action of the fourth world conference on women in 1995 in Beijing (UN 1995). Since this time, support for the concept and practical application of gender mainstreaming has gathered pace amongst policy makers at the European Union and the Council of Europe and amongst a number of European nation states, especially in Nordic and Scandinavian countries where such approaches have significant historical precedent at the national and regional level of political governance (COE 2010a, 2010d). The United Nations Economic and Social Council have provided a useful and overarching definition of gender mainstreaming, as follows:

*'Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the processes of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality'*

Central to the idea and practical application of gender mainstreaming is an attempt to shift emphasis beyond the ideology of gender neutrality (as informs equal opportunities policies) and to challenge the idea that gender politics is a women's issue (as informs some positive action approaches). Critiques of gender mainstreaming outline concerns that the advent of such a holistic approach might be used as a pretext by national governments to abolish projects specifically designed to empower women and might also undermine targeted efforts to increase the initial representation of women across a range of spheres of societal relations. This latter analysis also suggests that the benefits of implementing a gender mainstreaming approach will be more greatly maximised in those national contexts in which there is a more historically embedded culture of equal opportunities and evidenced examples of successful positive action approaches to gender equality (Rees 2002, COE 2010a, 2010d)

### **4.3 Levels of women's representation in the women's (and men's) game**

#### **4.3.1 Playing**

Sport and sporting activities are an integral aspect of the culture of every nation across Europe. Whilst participation in sport has traditionally been a largely male domain across the continent, there has since the 1950s been a steady growth in the numbers of females taking part in organised amateur sports over time. This is especially the case in a number of countries in Northern Europe, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, where research has suggested that between one-third and one-half of national female populations report regularly taking part in sport and physical activity and/or are members of sports clubs (Elling and Knoppers 2005). However, despite increased participation in sports and growing sports club membership the general involvement of females in organised amateur sport remains lower than males in all nation states across Europe (Pfister 2010).

These wider patterns of patterns of gendered sports participation are also evident in the traditionally male domain of football in Europe. Secondary analysis of data provided by all national football associations which feature in the official UEFA booklet for the 2009/10 season provide

some insight into the gendered ratio of male and female participation in the game (UEFA 2009). This secondary analysis indicates there are presently 1,025,127 registered female adult and 11,565,528 registered male adult players across 53 UEFA national associations in Europe. This suggests that 8.2% of all adult players are women and 91.8% are men. The analysis also indicates that there are 825,718 registered female youth and 9,330,878 registered male youth players across Europe. This suggests that 8.2% of all youth players are girls and 91.8% are boys. Within the cohort of registered female players, 55.4% are women and 44.6% are girl players. These figures match precisely the split between male adult players (55.4%) and male youth players (44.6%) registered as players with national associations.

Beyond these headline figures, more focused secondary data analysis reveals strongly distributional patterns of female participation across some distinct national and regional contexts. For example, 87.2% of all registered women players were drawn from just five countries in North Western Europe: Germany, Denmark, France, Netherlands and Sweden. Similarly, 76.8% of all registered girl players were drawn from five countries in North Western Europe: Germany, England, Norway, Netherlands and Sweden. With the exception of Spain and Italy in Southern Europe and the Czech Republic and Russia in Central and Eastern Europe, numbers of registered women and girls players across these broader regions remain relatively low, both in relation to national population estimates and in comparison to levels of men's participation in the organised amateur tiers of the game. Overall, 24 (45%) national federations affiliated to UEFA reported greater levels of numerical participation amongst female youth players in comparison to female adult players. Whilst in many cases these different generational rates of participation were statistically marginal, almost three times as many young females as older females were registered as players in England, Scotland, Norway, Finland and Switzerland.

Whilst the figures above offer some empirical support for the popular modern narrative of football as the fastest growing female team sport, they also suggest some significant disparity in the levels and pace of increased female participation in the game across specific regions of Europe and indicate a clear 'North West and the rest' divide to this end. For example, the number of registered female adult players in Sweden reportedly rose from just 728 in 1970 to 26,000 in 1980 and then again to 37,000 in 2002 until the most recent estimate of 49,000 in 2009 (Hjelm and Olafsson 2003, UEFA 2009). Similarly, research undertaken in Norway has identified the rapid increase in female youth football provision from 362 girls teams in 1980 to 3,502 girls teams in 2002 (Fasting 2003, Skogvang 2007). According to the Norwegian FA there are presently around than 85,000 registered female youth players across the country: more than twice as many as are presently registered across 22 other UEFA affiliated non EU countries across the continent combined (UEFA 2009).

These geographically skewed rates of female football participation across Europe have been informed to some significant extent by a number of broader political, societal and sporting factors, including; the culturally embedded traditions and dominant political paradigms of particular nation states, and the resultant policy implementation of measures designed to promote gender equality across a range of societal spheres and with particular regard to encouraging female sports and football participation. For example, a number of authors have drawn clear linkages between the development and acceptance of the central tenets of second wave 'liberal feminism' and the implementation of progressive policy measures designed to tackle gender discriminations across a range of societal and sporting spheres in Nordic countries (Pfister et al 1999, Fasting 2003, Hjelm and Olafsson 2003, Magee et al 2007, Skogvang 2007). More specifically, Skokvang has argued that the establishment of the Norwegian Gender Equality Council in 1972 and the Norwegian Gender Equality Act in 1979 acted as a catalyst for enabling increased access to sport amongst females and led to an acceleration of the infrastructural development of women's football in the region. These linkages between national political approaches to gender equality, sport policy and female football participation were also referenced in other research studies (Bourke 2003, Liston 2006, Weigelt and Kanoh 2006, MacBeth 2007) and by our interviewees, including one interviewee at the English FA:



*'I think certainly the national political approaches to gender equality have had a real impact. There's been a real big push on female participation in sport. So the political approach to releasing funding, both through Sport England and the work of the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, those have been places which governing bodies like ours have been able to draw down funding. So that's been an important one from a political perspective and has helped us to increase the work we do to get more girls involved in playing the game'*

A number of interviewees also referred to the positive cultural impact of these progressive political shifts in emphasis and approach to gender equality. The interviewees below explicitly reference changing attitudes towards and consequent increased participation in sports and football amongst females in Northern European countries.

*'I think in Northern Europe, football has been accepted as an all around sport for males and females. It was seen as a masculine sport and women were not welcomed 20 years ago. I think today, in places like Germany or Scandinavia, if you want to play football, nobody says no. You started with females just playing tennis and doing equestrian. And then they start to play field hockey and volleyball, basketball, handball, and then twenty years later they start to play football and rugby. There seems to be a stronger approach to gender equality in Northern Europe, politically'*

*'There seems to be a more significant increase of women practising football in the Scandinavian countries, as compared to the more Southern European countries. I think it's a cultural factor. People in Scandinavia and people in Northern Europe, they're more active in general, as a population. There is an increase in participation in football, but it literally represents the general active lifestyle'*

In contrast, a number of interviewees suggested that generally lower levels of female participation in sports and football in other countries in Southern and Central and Eastern Europe was to some extent informed by the relatively narrow approaches to gender equality at the national political level and in terms of the limited design and delivery of more equitable sports policies. This is arguably especially the case in countries in which the strong ideological link between national identity, masculinity and football has contributed to maintaining dominant definitions of the game as a distinctly 'masculine space' in which females have limited cultural opportunities to participate as players. These assertions are succinctly summarised by the interviewee below.

*'Football is one of the last resorts of masculine dominance. Football is really an arena for defining masculinity. Questions of masculinity are really central to football in many European countries, especially in the east. This makes change really difficult. It makes the 'opening up' of the game to women very difficult. Especially as this male bias remains unquestioned and is not really challenged by any-one, not from politicians or by any-one in the federations. This is why there are so few women players or women's clubs across this region'*

The relationship between these dominant political, cultural and sporting narratives and the different pace of the infrastructural development of the women's game and impact in shaping levels of female representation as players will be discussed in more detail in section 4.7.1 of this report.

#### **4.3.2 Coaching**

Relatively few national sports federations, sports policy bodies or academic studies have focused on examining the levels of representation of women in coaching positions in all sports. Where data does exist it has tended to focus on the organised amateur tiers of sports and has generally alluded

to the low levels of women as coaches to this end. For example, research undertaken in the UK has estimated that 81% of all qualified sports coaches are male. Further, women coaches remain under-represented within national and regional sports development bodies, have fewer coaching qualifications and are less likely to be employed on a full time or part time basis than their male counterparts. Interviewee narratives suggested some general comparability between these UK based findings and the shape and scope of women's representation as sports coaches across the continent.

The literature review process undertaken as part of this research processes revealed no available empirical data pertaining to levels of women coaches in women's or men's football at the national or European level, and in terms of the amateur or professional game. Nonetheless, interviewee narratives strongly asserted that patterns of under-representation of women coaches in football were comparative to or greater than the disparities between the numbers of men and women coaches in other sports. However, interviewee narratives also alluded to some regional differences in this respect and with reference to football and sport more generally. For example, a number of interviewees suggested higher numbers of women coaches in North Western Europe and lower levels of women coaches in Southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe. It is likely here that these regional differences are informed by some of the national political approaches and cultural nuances around gender equality referred to in section 4.2.2 and with regard to the mixed pace of the infrastructural development of the women's game across different national contexts in Europe (see section 4.7.1).

A small body of research in the UK has also alluded to the shape and scope of women's participation in the game as coaches. For example, regional level research in England indicated that 8% of all qualified football coaches were women and that woman coaches were primarily volunteers focusing on the development of girl's football (Bradbury et al 2006). These latter findings were echoed by interviewees in England, Norway and the Netherlands. National level research in the UK has indicated that 61% of all qualified coaches actively involved in the women's game are men. The numerical dominance of men in the women's game was also referenced by interviewees drawn from a range of national contexts across Europe and with reference to both domestic and national women's teams. Conversely, research and interviewee narratives suggested a steadily growing involvement of women coaches in gender-mixed and boy's football at the amateur level, especially in Nordic countries. However, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that this has translated into greater involvement of women coaches in the male adult tiers of the sport at amateur and professional clubs across Europe. Relatedly, research undertaken in the UK in 2007 indicated that only seven women coaches had achieved the UEFA 'A' license (King 2007). With a few exceptions, most notably, with respect to Germany, Sweden and Norway, interviewee narratives indicated the 'relative paucity' and 'virtual non-existence' of high level qualified women coaches across Europe.

Whilst there is a marked absence of empirical data relating to the numbers of women coaches in the game at the national or the European level, the UEFA booklet for the 2009/10 season does feature figures provided by national football associations pertaining to the gender breakdown of referees. Secondary analysis of this data suggests that there are presently 282,746 qualified referees across Europe of which 274,485 (97.1%) are men and 8,261 (2.9%) are women. In total, 69.5% of all women referees are drawn from the 'big five' European footballing nations: Germany, Italy, Spain, France and England. Further analysis suggests that almost one-third (30.1%) of all women qualified referees in Europe are from Germany. The extent to which these figures for referees are indicative of the breakdown of men and women coaches is a moot point. However, in the absence of any gender specific data relating to the number of women coaches at the European level, they might provide at least some limited sense of a 'shared indicator' of the apparent gendered disparities between men and women in vocational roles in football across the continent.

### 4.3.3 Leadership

In section 4.1 we referred to the general incidence of the under-representation of females across a range of spheres of social, economic and political life across Europe and with particular reference to their ongoing marginalization from professional leadership and decision making processes. In section 4.2.2 of this report we also referred to the increasing awareness of – and implementation of a broad range of policy interventions designed to redress – some longstanding gender inequities at the individual, societal and organizational level. The increasing focus of national and European level policy makers on issues of female under-representation has also been mirrored in the wider sporting arena and with particular respect to the work of the International Olympic Committee. As a response to some deep seated concerns regarding the apparent low levels of female representation at the highest levels of its member organizations, in 1997 the IOC as part of its broader ‘women and sport policy’ established targets for women’s membership of National Olympic Committee Executive Committees. These were for women to hold at least 10% of national executive decision making positions by 2001 rising to at least 20% by 2005. Importantly, the IOC has regularly collected statistics on the numbers of women on NOC Executive Committees and measured progress towards the achievement of these targets. Research undertaken by the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy at Loughborough University in 2004 (ISLP 2004) reported on 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. The IOC Executive Committee which recruits its members largely from an electorate of national committee members 14 women: 12.4% of all IOC Executive Committee members (EWS 2010).

Whilst the above findings alluded to some overall recent gains in the numbers of females in leadership positions in National Olympic Committees (71% of all women at these levels had been appointed since the targets were announced in 1997) the pace of change remains relatively slow (IOC 2008). This is further the case across a range of national sports federations where despite the general increased opportunities for women to participate recreationally and as elite level performers, the increased representation of women in leadership roles and decision making positions has not followed. This is especially the case in countries where strongly embedded cultures of hegemonic masculinity are a key feature of national political life and where the implementation of policies designed to address gender discriminations in broader spheres of social relations have remained a relatively low priority. However, it is also the case that even in countries where issues of gender equality feature high on national political agendas and where female political representation is relatively strong, this broader gender parity has not translated fully to the arena of sports governance. For example, research undertaken in Denmark and Germany in 2003 suggested that whilst 31% of senior officials working above club level in the Danish sports federation were women, just 10% were members of the federation executive committee. Similarly, out of a total of 290 executive positions recorded in the leading committees at the DSB (German Sports Confederation), 233 (80.3%) were occupied by men and 57 (19.7%) by women. To this end, Elling and Knoppers have argued that the higher the positions are, the smaller is the percentage of women who occupy them. Power in sport is still to a high degree in the hands of men (2005).

The relative absence of females in key leadership and decision making positions across a broad sphere of social, economic and political life and in the governance of sports seems further exaggerated within the organizational and administrative tiers of football in Europe. This is especially the case at UEFA where secondary analysis of documentation available from the official UEFA website indicates that presently all members of the UEFA executive committee are male. Further, almost all members of UEFA general committees, expert panels and emergency panels are male, with the exception of the UEFA women’s committee where there is a more balanced gender representation. It is, of course, the case that committee membership of this kind is premised on the recruitment of individuals drawn from the senior levels of national football federations and to this end is reflective of the strongly male dominance within football governance at the national level. For example, secondary analysis of data presented in the UEFA booklet for the 2009/10 season indicates that all Presidents, General Secretary’s and most Press Officers at national football federations across Europe are male. Despite the absence of available empirical data, interviewee narratives indicated that females were for the most part ‘overwhelmingly under-represented’

in governance positions at national federation level, with the notable exception of a small number of Nordic and Scandinavian countries, especially Norway. To this end, the example of England, where there are just four female members within the 120 strong national Football Association council, was considered by many interviewees to be fairly indicative of wider gender disparities across the governance tiers of the sport throughout Europe.

Interview narratives also suggested a more general under-representation of women in paid positions within the senior administrative tiers of the national and European governance of the game. For example, at the present time, all directors and heads of unit at UEFA are male and few national federations employ females in senior administrative positions. Interviewee narratives suggested this was similarly the case within national domestic league organizations and at professional football clubs where only a handful of women have responsibilities for senior administrative matters. However, interviewee narratives also indicated some signs of a breakthrough of females into media, public relations and marketing positions across the football industry. For example, one interviewee in England commented:

*'I think the media involvement in football and the communications and marketing side has always been a good area for seeing more women coming into the game at that level, and that's a good thing. I think that is an area where we are starting to see some changes in the gender make-up at that level'*

Whilst these latter assertions indicate some small, but significant, shift in women's representation in 'middle management' positions within football in some countries, it remains more generally the case that the 'white collar' labour market of football is still broadly partitioned on the basis of gender in that female labour continues to be concentrated in lower positions in the occupational hierarchy.

#### **4.4 Socio-economic and cultural barriers**

##### **4.4.1 Playing**

In section 4.1 of this report we referred to findings from public policy research and academic studies which referenced a series of historically embedded hierarchical gender relations across a range of national contexts throughout Europe. This is especially the case in the domestic sphere in which females continue to undertake primary responsibility for the majority of domestic chores and child care responsibilities, often in addition to their participation in the paid workforce. Whilst this unequal distribution of domestic labour has impacted negatively on the social, educational and occupational advancement of females, it has also limited leisure time opportunities with particular respect to participation in sports and in football.

A number of research studies have indicated that gendered household obligations and consequent limitations on leisure time and sporting activities are most apparent amongst some specific cultural and religious minority populations. This is especially the case with reference to minority populations experiencing significant levels of socio-economic deprivation and where the existence of – and adherence to – dominant gendered expectations around domestic division of labour seem especially strong. For example, Sport England suggests that the major reason for the relative non-participation in sport amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in England were home and family responsibilities (Rowe and Champion 2000). Similarly, Kloeze's study on Turkish families in the Netherlands concludes that patriarchal power relations and familial gender inequalities have led to unequal leisure and sporting opportunities for first and second generation migrant females (Kloeze 1998). Whilst some authors have argued that minority (especially, Muslim) females face double layers of gendered and cultural exclusions from participation in sports and football (Elling and Knoppers 2005), it is also important not to falsely homogenise the experiences of all females from minority backgrounds. On this latter score, Wray (2002), Zaman (2002) and Benn and Ahmed (2006) have explored the particular intersections of gender with 'race' as well as religion in order to

demonstrate how, contrary to popular stereotypes, Muslim females enjoy participating in sport and physical activity as long as it does not disrupt their cultural and religious identity. Further, research focusing more specifically on South Asian females and football in England has alluded to the differing cultural expectations and experiences of participation in the game amongst minority females across axis of cultural and religious background (Scraton et al 2005, Ratna 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2011, Ahmed 2011).

In section 4.3.1 of this report we referred to strong ideological linkages between national identity, masculinity and football which have contributed to maintaining dominant definitions of the game as a distinctly 'masculine space'. The social construction of football as a predominantly masculine phenomenon has to some significant extent been informed by the particularities of the social and historical development of the game as a working class male pastime. The related rhetoric and imagery around the game has been sustained by a series of dominant political, populist and mediated narratives, which have arguably limited the cultural connection to the sport amongst female across a range of national contexts. One interviewee comments further in this respect:

*'The starting point for examining why there are only small numbers of women players is that the sport is defined by gender at the very beginning. So if you want to go right back to the root causes then you have to start there. And you have to start with the fact it's been a male dominated sport for so long'*

The extent to which these dominant perceptions of football have been successfully challenged and contested has depended on a number of factors, including; the wider national political project and cultural impact of the promotion of gender equality, the willingness of national football associations to promote the game in more inclusive ways, and the agency of females to appropriate the sport for their own ends. Interviewee narratives strongly supported these assertions and referenced the 'cultural changes' underpinning the growing interest and participation in football in some Northern European countries. One interviewee in England comments further:

*'Traditionally, it's really a boys' sport. I mean, it wasn't the done thing to play football at a young age for girls. You play hockey or tennis or go horse riding or something, but you don't play football. And I think that's one thing that really, really has changed in the last, well, maybe five to ten years or something. It's been a real cultural change'*

In countries where football has maintained a more strongly masculine emphasis and where females have less obvious cultural connections with the game, it is likely that female sporting preferences and participation are focused towards other, more inclusive, or 'feminine appropriate' sports. It is likely, too, that in some cases, the inherent inability of women to reach the perceived highest levels of the game (i.e., the men's professional game) might also act as a physical and psychological barrier to participation, and, at the very least, to have contributed towards shaping preferences and pathways towards other 'female only' sports. It is probably also the case that in some countries with low levels of females playing the game, there is a distinct lack of high visibility women role models in the sport to attract and develop the interest and aspirations of other, especially, younger, females. Further, the limited translation of initial interest into active physical participation in the game is likely to be informed by the limited knowledge of female football networks in some cases. On this latter score, it is the lack of existing social, cultural and sporting capital on the part of some females, rather than their conscious cultural rejection of the sport, that accounts for their relatively low levels of participation in the game as players.

#### **4.4.2 Coaching**

In the above section, we alluded to a range of social and cultural factors which have contributed to shaping the relatively low levels of females as players in football across a range of national contexts. These included; a series of hierarchical gender relations in the domestic sphere which

have limited opportunities for participation in sport and leisure, especially amongst minority females, the social construction of football as a distinctly masculine 'space' and the limited social, cultural and sporting capital of females and their limited knowledge of female football networks. The extent to which there are strong causal linkages between these obstacles to playing the game and the more general under-representation of women coaches is largely absent from existing research analysis. However, it is likely that the relative absence of a strong foundational base of female players is a key contributory factor in the markedly low levels of women's representation as coaches. Nonetheless, even in countries which have a strong participation base, interviewee narratives suggested a more general limited throughput of women from playing to coaching positions. Explanations offered by interviewees in England and Norway with experience of playing and coaching in the women's game alluded to the ongoing impact of domestic, family and employment obligations as factors preventing a more full engagement with coaching amongst many women. For example:

*'There are all sorts of things that come into play. The women might have family commitments. Those wider gender relations which are unequal in terms of domestic life and child care duties that might restrict the amount of time that can be dedicated to coaching. Coaching is one of those endeavours that requires so much more than the actual time you spend with the team'*

*'Because women's playing careers are undertaken alongside their working careers, they are so exhausted when the playing careers come to an end, it's not the first thing they think of going into an unpaid coaching position. They need to give priority to other things when they stop playing'.*

The above comments suggest a process of 'unfolding' rather than continuing post playing career trajectories. The extent to which these processes are underpinned by the apparent lack of paid coaching opportunities in the women's game will be discussed in more detail in section 4.7.2 of this report.

#### **4.4.3 Leadership**

In Section 4.1 we referred to the general incidence of the under-representation of women in key leadership and decision making positions across a broad sphere of social, economic and political life. In section 4.3.3 we referred to some empirical and anecdotal evidence which suggested that these wider societal levels of women's under-representation were reflected in the governance of sport and seemed especially marked within the organizational and administrative tiers of football across a range of national contexts in Europe. It is, of course, the case that these low levels of women's representation in leadership in football cannot be divorced from wider processes of gender discrimination which have limited opportunities for the social, educational and occupational advancement of females to varying degrees across a range of cultural and national contexts in Europe. There is significant evidence to suggest that many of the social and cultural factors referred to earlier with respect to playing and coaching respectively are also contributory cumulative factors in shaping the low levels of women's representation in leadership positions in the game. This is especially the case with regard to wider hierarchical gender relations and difficulties experienced by women in balancing domestic obligations and familial commitments and the potential demands of high level senior administrative and governance positions (ISLP 2004). To this end, in some cases, these factors can be understood to have limited the 'gender pool' of suitably qualified women available for employment in senior administrative positions at men's professional clubs or for promotions within the elected structures of national and European football governance.

Cultural explanations for the under-representation of women in key leadership and decision making positions in football have also alluded to the intersection between gender and the generational

distribution of occupations within the football industry. These themes emerged strongly from interviewee narratives. For example:

*'The structures tend to reflect an age gap or like a kind of time lag. Where to be on a committee, to be in charge of your [regional] FA you might have to wait 40 years. So if that's the timescale then what was the situation 40 years ago? It was all men. Now, there might be a few more women involved on a local level to start going into the cycle to become part of those processes'*

*'I think in most countries, you don't have a generation of women who are old enough to be in those positions. Most administrators in clubs come in when they're 45 or something. There are not that many women who played 20 years ago. So, I am confident in places like Scandinavia, we're going to see administrators. There are some already coming up through the female ranks. But this will be much later in Eastern Europe or Southern Europe if things stay the same.'*

*It's mostly middle aged or older men in these positions. The women who have got through are experienced, they have been players and so on, but they are much younger than the men'.*

These explanations also suggest that the markedly low levels of women's representation in key leadership and decision making positions in football strongly reflect the gendered and generational disparities within the occupational realms of the wider business sector. These perspectives emerged strongly from interviewee narratives, and are articulated further by two interviewees involved in the governance of the game at the highest level:

*'I think there's no strategy behind it. I think it's a strong link to business. It's still a world of men. If you look at the big football clubs, I couldn't say if there was any woman being a CEO of one of the big clubs, so I think it's a culture'*

*'I think the game is still such a macho orientated business. We've still got that problem in the rest of society too. One looks at the FTSE companies and the board rooms and that's where the power is and they by and large exclude women'*

The extent to which a series of more institutional discriminations might limit a more even ended access to leadership positions within the higher echelons of the game will be discussed in more detail in section 4.7.3 of this report. However, the present absence of women in leadership positions in football and the strongly perceived 'glass ceiling' effect to this end is likely to have impacted negatively on the willingness and aspirations of women to pursue career pathways of this kind. This is arguably especially the case in countries in which women have engendered an increasing visibility in other spheres of social, economic and political life in comparison to their relative lack of breakthrough into leadership positions in football administration and governance. The apparent differences in levels of gender parity between the wider business sector and the football industry are outlined by two interviewees below:

*'Now obviously it's even worse in football than in society at large because there are even fewer women in top positions than in business or in politics in general. The explanation to that additional low representation I would suggest is because football has primarily been a sport enjoyed by men'*

*'The private sector sees the business opportunities and more women are entering the board rooms although they are still a minority. Football has a unique culture of its own'*

## **4.5 Overt sexism and gender abuse**

### **4.5.1 Playing**

In section 4.1 of this report we suggested that sexism can be construed as a set of beliefs and actions which position females as inferior to, less competent, and less valuable than their male counterparts and that extreme versions of sexism are expressed overt attitudes, behaviour, verbal and/or physical harassment and abuse. These latter expressions of overt sexism have been a commonplace feature of daily life for many women across a range of national contexts in Europe in both domestic and workplace settings. They have also been expressed strongly across a range of sporting contexts including within the deeply masculine space of football, with particular regard to players, coaches and especially within spectator cultures. It is of course the case that the commonplace expression of causal sexism and the celebration of hegemonic masculine identities by fan groups has acted as a significant dissuading factor to potential female fans across a range of national contexts and contributed to their low levels of active spectatorship.

In contrast, there is little available empirical data pertaining to the incidence of these more vocalised sexism across a range of female sporting contexts and with particular regard to women's football. This is in stark contrast to the wealth of evidence which has identified and explained the continued incidence of overt racism and minority abuse alluded to in section 3.5.1 of this report with respect to the men's game. This is not to suggest that overt sexism does not exist in women's football in any real sense, but, rather, that it does not manifest itself in the same way or to the same extent than has been comparatively conceptualised in previous sections with regard to the abuse experienced by minorities in the men's game. This is, in part, a direct consequence of the tendency of the women's game to attract relatively low numbers of mainly female spectators in contrast to the much larger crowds, heightened atmosphere and stronger cultural meanings associated with the men's professional game.

A number of authors have suggested that homophobia is a powerful instrument of sexism and that many lesbian players have experienced homophobic abuse from opposition players, coaches and spectators in the women's game. Further, irrespective of their real sexual orientation, other women players have also experienced homophobic abuse through being pejoratively labelled as 'lesbian', especially when their physical appearance is perceived as different to the dominant heterosexual feminine stereotype. These kinds of homophobic abuse can contribute to limiting the initial involvement and longer term sustainability of football participation amongst some straight and lesbian women. In section 4.6.1 we offer a more full account of the ways in which women have experienced sexism in football in a range of more subtle, nuanced and codified forms, including through processes of gender stereotyping and coded homophobia and examine the impact on women's representation as players to this end. Further, in section 4.7.1 we alluded to the impact on women's playing representation of a series of more indirect institutional discriminations embedded within the organisational provision and infrastructural development of the women's game.

### **4.5.2 Coaching**

The lack of available empirical data pertaining incidence of overt sexism experienced by women players is also apparent with reference to women coaches. This mirrors our findings in relation to minority coaches and is similarly informed by the limited number of women coaches within the higher echelons of the women's game. The absence of overt sexism targeting women coaches in the women's game is reflective of the largely female spectatorship at matches featuring women's teams. This is not to suggest that women coaches have not experienced more direct forms of overt sexism and abuse on the basis of their gender or sexuality, but, rather, that if it has occurred it has been under-reported and has not featured as part of existing research or policy analysis or within the interviewee narratives referenced throughout this report. The lack of evidence suggesting overt



sexism targeting women coaches in the men's football is strongly informed by the lack of high profile women coaches in the men's amateur, semi-professional and professional 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 women coaches and dissuade women from pursuing career pathways of this kind. In section 4.6.2 we offer a more full account of the ways in which women coaches have been subject processes of gender stereotyping and the ways in which their talents and abilities have been measured against male norms and values and subsequently devalued and invalidated. In section 4.7.2 we allude to the ways in which these hegemonic constructions of the 'male expert' have become institutionalised within the operational practices of coach education and in terms of recruitment to coaching positions in both the women's and men's game and have contributed to the marginalisation and under-representation of women coaches throughout the football industry.

### **4.5.3 Leadership**

As is the case with playing and coaching there is little empirical evidence identifying the incidence of overt sexism within the senior administration and governance levels of professional football and at regional and national federations across Europe. Whilst findings here are informed by the apparent lack of women in leadership 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 women in pursuing leadership positions in strongly male environments. It is, of course, also the case that expressions of overt sexism are a little less likely to take place within the 'white collar' occupational positions more broadly and where such incidents do take place they are much more readily identifiable and subject to much stronger codes of legislative action than is the case in other areas of social and economic life. This is not to suggest that sexism does not take place in more subtle, nuanced and codified forms and through processes of institutional discrimination. These latter issues are dealt with in much more detail in section 4.6.3 and section 4.7.3 of this report respectively.

## **4.6 Physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions**

### **4.6.1 Playing**

In section 4.1 of this report we suggested that the prevalence and residual embeddedness of gender stereotypes across a range of societal relations has strongly informed patterns of ongoing gender inequalities and low levels of women's representation across a range of spheres of societal relations. In doing so, we alluded to perspectives which articulate the ways in which gender identities are socially constructed over the life course and through a series of populist and mediated narratives which assert falsely ascribed characteristics to males and females. A number of authors have argued that these wider dominant hegemonic constructions of masculinity and femininity are reflected in the meanings attributed to the social and cultural practice of sport and have contributed to the labelling of specific sporting activities as male or female (Birrell and Therberge 1994, Birrell 2000, Hargreaves 1994, 2000, 2004, Scraton and Flintoff 2002, Pfister 2010). These popular hegemonic discourses are often constructed and reproduced in the narrative representations of the male dominated institution of the sports media (Duncan and Messner 1998, Knoppers and Elling 2001, Van Sterkenburg and Knoppers (2004). This is especially the case in terms of football which has historically been framed as a distinctly 'masculine space'. Whilst these narratives are subject to multiple readings and contestation, they continue to perform a powerful role in shaping attitudes towards female participation in football through processes of physical and cultural stereotypification and in the more general under-reporting and de-valuing of female players achievements.

Most popular sports, including football, have been constructed around physical abilities based largely on strength and speed that are perceived as being naturally and unequally distributed between men and women. It is, of course, the case that these perceptions are to some extent premised on inherent biological traits and the different physiological capacities between men and women and that in all but a few sports, elite male athletes are likely to physically out-perform their female counterparts. However, it is arguably the case that the strong association of football with expressions of active, strong and assertive masculinity has acted as a constant and glorified reminder of the physical supremacy of males over females. This strongly embedded link between football and male bodily practices has historically been used to legitimize the exclusion of girls and women from the sport across a range of national contexts through Europe. For example, research undertaken in Norway, Denmark, Germany and England have suggested that historical oppositions to female participation in the game were premised on processes of physical stereotyping, with particular reference to perceptions of the biological body. More specifically, these authors have alluded to the prevalence of pseudo medical arguments pertaining to anatomical anomalies such as 'knock knees', the difficulty of conditioning female muscles and the perceived diminished ability to reproduce amongst females playing football (Skogvang 2000, 2007, Fasting 2003, Brus 2003, Pfister 2003, Williams and Woodhouse 1999, Williams 2003a, 2003b, 2006, 2007). One female interviewee and former player articulates further:

*'It was a struggle for women to be accepted, entering into an arena which was male dominated and which was basically set up for males. Playing football was considered an activity that made women masculine. People had a preconception of this stereotypical woman who was very butch. There was also a lot of struggle against doctors who argued that football was damaging to women's reproductive organs and that it caused injury problems'*

More subtle, nuanced, cultural oppositions to female football participation are evidenced in populist and mediated portrayals which position the women's game as novel, recreational, and less worthy than the men's game. Whilst in some cases, these narrative representations of women's football and its participants have bordered on ridicule and disdain, in many other cases they have subtly shifted attention away from the apparent physical acumen and technical skills of women players and focused instead on 'human interest' stories which consequently trivialise women's football accomplishments. These gender coded narratives (for example, in the pejorative use of the phrase 'play like a girl') allude to the hegemonic masculine culture of football in which men's membership of the football category and its entitlements are 'unproblematically' assumed as the cultural norm. In contrast, women's participation in the game is often subtly portrayed as presenting a challenge to the masculine football ideal and is framed with reference to socially constructed perceptions of gender 'appropriateness' and 'suitability' (Scraton et al 1999, Christopherson et al 2002)

A number of authors have also alluded to the promotion of 'compulsory heterosexuality' within the hegemonic masculine culture of sports practice and especially in football and have referenced the relatively common-place experiences of homophobia amongst women football players irrespective of their real sexual orientation (Elling et al 2003, Menneson and Clement 2003, Caudwell 2004). Homophobia is normally defined as the irrational fear or intolerance of homosexuality in men and women and is a powerful instrument of sexism. To this end, the 'lesbian label' is used to define the boundaries of acceptable female behaviour in a patriarchal culture and is used pejoratively to describe female footballers whose appearance may differ from the traditional 'heterosexual' feminine stereotype (Caudwell 1999). The interviewee below comments further on the historical and contemporary prevalence of homophobia of this kind in reference to female footballers:

*'They were also arguing that women will become more masculine and you were labelled as a lesbian if you played football. Even today, women are still labelled as a lesbian and your heterosexuality is questioned if you are playing football'*

The work of Caudwell in England has illustrated the socio-historical development and significance of lesbian football clubs as sites which enable increased participation in the game for lesbians within distinct and discursively constructed 'queer spaces' (Caudwell 1999, 2004, 2006, 2007). From this perspective, lesbian football clubs provide players with opportunities for homo-social bonding and football participation within a safe and supportive environment. In particular, they are perceived to provide a safe space in which to construct and celebrate lesbian sporting identities beyond the embedded processes of normative heterosexuality apparent within mainstream women's football clubs. To this end, lesbian clubs are also understood to offer a distinct cultural and practical challenge to overtly homophobic attitudes and behaviours and more institutionally embedded patterns of discrimination on the basis of sexuality within the game.

In addition to the aforementioned processes of physical and cultural stereotyping, a number of academic studies have focused on conducting more quantitative content analysis of televised, newspaper and magazine coverage of women's sports. Despite the differing scope and focus of this research, there has been a broad consensus in terms of analysis which has suggested that women's sports and competing sportswomen are regularly marginalized and made invisible by the dominant sports media (Duncan and Messner, 2000; Knoppers and Elling, 2001). For example, a study in 2005 of over 10,000 articles in 36 newspapers from nine countries revealed that only 6% of the articles referred to women's sports. This under-representation is especially marked in terms of women's football, even in countries such as Norway and Sweden where women's national teams have had much greater international competition success than men's national teams. The lack of media visibility of the women's game has had significant knock-on effects for attracting sponsorship, encouraging the more rapid infrastructural development of the game, and enabling more women and girls to take part in the sport as players. Further, men's football not only receives far more daily coverage, but is often presented as more interesting, exciting and of greater value and importance than the women's game. One female interviewee and former player comments further in this respect:

*'If you watch a women's game on television, it's a very different experience to watching a men's game. When you watch a top men's game the camera's are everywhere, so you get all the action, you get the close ups. You watch a women's game and there's probably two cameras which makes it look slightly less professional. It makes for a very different experience'*

#### **4.6.2 Coaching**

The dominant hegemonic constructions of football as a distinctly 'masculine space' and the consequent physical and cultural stereotypes and oppositions referred to in the above section are also key contributory factors in explaining the low levels of women as coaches. In the first instance, it is likely that social constructions of gender difference and related debates around physical suitability and cultural incompatibility in football have limited the foundational base of players from which potential women coaches might be drawn. However, it is also the case that these wider processes have limited the potential throughput of women across the transition from playing the game into more vocational coaching roles. To this end, a number of authors have suggested that within the distinctly masculine culture of football, coaching is consciously and unconsciously perceived as a distinctly gendered occupation in which technical expertise and knowledge of the game have become naturalised as the properties of male ownership (Scruton et al 1999, Skogvang 2000, Fasting and Pfister 2000, Lloyd Fielding and Mean 2007, 2008). From this hegemonic position of power, the definitions of - and qualities associated with - coaching excellence are equated with perceived male norms and values, such as toughness, aggressiveness, competitiveness, determination and forceful autocracy. In contrast, negatively perceived female traits such as frailty, weakness and emotional vulnerability, as well as more positively construed, but, equally stereotypical, capacities for democratic decision making and nurturance, are deemed less

appropriate qualities within the football coaching profession. From this perspective, the perceived attributes of maleness in coaching are perceived as the standard against which women's knowledge and competence is measured, devalued and invalidated (Pfister 2010). These academic assertions were strongly referenced in our interviewee narratives, especially amongst women interviewees with experience of playing and coaching across a range of male and female football environments. Two interviewees comment further in this respect:

*'Even in women's football it is hard for female coaches to become accepted. There's still the idea of the male expert in football.'*

*'There is something in the culture. They don't really think about the fact that women can do this. Even if you do the same fitness test, the same theory test, men are often very surprised when you know something about coaching or refereeing'*

Whilst the above comments allude to the residual embeddedness of the concept of the 'male expert' in football, they also refer to the impact of these socially constructed stereotypes in shaping the general under-representation of women coaches in the women's game. Interviewee narratives also suggested that the hegemonic masculine culture of football and consequent processes of gender stereotyping was even more strongly embedded within the men's game. Two interviewees comment further in this respect:

*'I mean, generally speaking, because the stereotypes are so strong, I don't think men even consider that as a possibility. I don't think it would even, by any stretch of imagination, be considered that a woman could do that job.'*

*'It is really to do with the total male domination and sexist stereotypes and attitudes that go with it in football. We are sooner going to get an openly gay male player than a women coach in men's football. For most people it is totally unthinkable'*

Whilst interviewee narratives also alluded to some regional differences between the 'North West and the rest' in terms of shifting cultural attitudes towards women coaches (in the women's game, at least), there was a more general consensus that the deeply masculine culture of football in all countries across the continent had gravitated against their increased representation to a greater or lesser degree.

#### **4.6.3 Leadership**

In section 4.1 of this report we referred to the general incidence of the under-representation of women in key leadership and decision making positions across a broad sphere of social, economic and political life. We also alluded to socio-critical analysis which has equated women's under representation with process of gender discrimination which draw on and maintain a series of socially constructed stereotypes of gender and which contributes to the limited occupational advancement of women). In the absence of any prior empirical research to this end, the extent to which these wider processes of gender stereotyping have impacted on levels of women's representation in the senior administration and governance tiers of the football industry remains a moot point. However, we have argued throughout this report that issues of representation and discrimination evident in other areas of social, economic and political life cannot be divorced from - and are often reflected in and exaggerated by - the processes and practices of the football industry. Further, the distinctly 'masculine space' of football and the evidenced processes and impact of gender stereotyping of females as players and coaches is likely to be extended into the senior levels of football administration and governance.

These assertions were strongly referenced by interview narratives which drew attention to linkages between the stereotypical thought processes of male senior officials at professional football clubs

and national associations and the implementation of some distinctly discriminatory recruitment practices. More specifically, interviewee narratives suggested that women were often excluded from consideration for senior administration positions because of falsely assumed perceptions regarding difficulties in balancing work and domestic obligations and more general concerns that recruiting women was 'risky' and 'problematic'.

In section 4.6.2 of this report we referred to the social construction of coaching as a distinctly gendered occupation in which technical expertise and knowledge of the game have become naturalised as the properties of male ownership. Interviewee narratives suggested that the notion of the 'male expert' was also strongly embedded within the hegemonic masculine culture of football administration and governance. To this end, it was suggested that stereotypical notions which question the 'competence' and 'suitability' of women to undertake key responsibilities pertaining to the men's game had impacted on their marked absence from key leadership positions within this tier of the football industry.

## **4.7 Organisational provision and institutional discrimination**

### **4.7.1 Playing**

In section 4.3.1 of this report we referenced some linkages between wider national political approaches to gender equality and the cultural impact on increasing (or limiting) playing participation in sports and football amongst women and girls. In this section we examine in a little more detail the relationship between these dominant political, cultural and sporting narratives and the different pace of infrastructural development of the women's game and the consequent impact on levels of female representation as players.

In the first instance, a number of authors have identified a strong historical and cultural engagement with football amongst women in North Western European countries dating back to the early part of the twentieth century. For example, Jean Williams (2003a) has suggested that in 1921 there were an estimated 150 women's teams in England and that in 1922 in France there were two cup competitions catering for the growing numbers of women's teams throughout the nation. Similarly, initial interest in football amongst females gathered pace in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and (West) Germany in the immediate post world war two period and teams drawn from 'factories', 'handball clubs', 'sports widows' and 'girls' teams began to compete recreationally and in 'show matches' (Fasting 2003, Skogvang 2007, Hjelm and Olafsson 2003, Pfister 2003). In section 4.6.1 we alluded to the hegemonic power relations embedded within the distinctly 'masculine space' of football and referenced cultural stereotypes and oppositions to women and girls involvement in the game. These oppositions have also been institutionalised within the operations and dictates of national football federations. For example, the English FA in 1921 and the German Football Federation in 1955 imposed a ban preventing sports clubs from founding women's teams or allowing women's teams to access facilities and resources (Williams 2003a, Prudhomme-Poncet 2007) In other countries in Northern Europe, the women's game continued to develop steadily but with few financial resources and largely independently from their national (male) football associations.

The more rapid upswing in female participation in the game as players has occurred since the 1970s and has been enabled in the first instance by the increasing infrastructural development and improved governance of the women's game at the broader European level. In the first instance, and in response to the growing popularity of the sport amongst women and girls across the continent, at the UEFA annual conference in 1971 the European governing body encouraged all national football associations to take organisational control and assume central responsibilities for the development of the women's game in their respective countries. Since this time, UEFA has provided financial and administrative resource support to national associations and has developed

a vibrant and formalised infrastructure of European level competition for women's domestic clubs and national teams. One interviewee at a national football association comments further:

*'UEFA's recognition of women's football was really the catalyst. Since then, and certainly it is the case now, that there is UEFA funding to draw down in to the national governing bodies for work on women's football. It makes a difference that both UEFA and also the other world bodies are giving more emphasis to the women's game'*

The infrastructural development of the women's game at the European level has both encouraged and reflected the administrative and operational progress of key national football associations in 'opening-up' the game to females in some countries from the 1970s onwards. This is especially the case with reference to Norway, Sweden and Germany where the institutionalisation of the women's game into existing governance infrastructures and the development of organised competition frameworks has been more widely informed by the positive cultural impact of broader progressive national political approaches to gender equality. For example, in (then, West) Germany, between 1971 and 1980, the German football association established the first women's knock-out competition, regional and national league structures, and national cup competition, and has, post political unification, developed a new and successful two-tier national federal league. Similarly, in Norway, and 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 and girls. The interviewee below references the successful infrastructural development and consequent high levels of participation of the women's game in these countries and in Sweden:

*'To date, there are some really well developed countries such as Germany, Norway and Sweden. They've been so successful in competitions for a long time, and in having a really good model of developing their players, coaches and administrators'*

The much more recent rise in the participation of females as players in other countries such as England, Denmark, and the Netherlands is reflective of a much more gradualist approach to the infrastructural development of women's game. For example, whilst the English FA officially recognised women's football in 1972 it wasn't until 1993 that it assumed central responsibility for the organisation of the game and began to provide some financial and administrative support towards its development (Lopez 1997, Williams 2006). Similarly, research undertaken in Denmark and the Netherlands has suggested that the relatively slow infrastructural development of the women's game in the 1970s and 1980s was underpinned by significant levels of resistance to 'female incorporation' from within conservative and male dominated national associations (Brus 2003, Knoppers and Anthonissen 2003). However, since the 1990s, each of the aforementioned national football associations has exercised a renewed emphasis and focus on the women's game, with particular respect to developing girl's football at schools and clubs, organising more robust competitive frameworks and in support of women's national teams. Interviewees from the English FA and the Netherlands FA comment further on this shifting emphasis and the positive outcomes for levels of playing participation amongst women and girls:

*'I think there is a significant shift of girls playing football at school and more of a youth infrastructure building for the girls' game, which certainly didn't exist in the past. What happened was we moved from being a women's game to then beginning to develop the game at youth level, so the girls' game is having nowhere near the infrastructure the boys' game has yet. But it is developing. It is moving pretty fast with an emphasis at all levels really, from schools, to local authorities, as well as the governing body'*

*'Girl's football is now the fastest growing group in football. One of the factors for the last year has been the success and visibility of our national team. The Association paid a lot of attention to the female national team and really tried to put them in the*

*spotlight and they did very well in the last European tournament. That was really helpful for young girls who want to play football and not thinking it's a boys' sport. The second most important aspect of it is that we started a professional competition for women's club teams. So from a marketing perspective, it became easier get more attention to the female football'*

In contrast, and despite some local success stories, there is little evidence to suggest that many national football associations in Central and Eastern Europe and in Southern Europe have focused extensively on the development of female players or have developed in any coherent or sustainable way a comparatively robust infrastructure of women's teams or competition pathways. In some cases, it is likely that the limited financial resources of national football associations have been prioritised towards developing the men's game at a domestic and national level. It is also the case that within the highly politicised and centralised sports system of many former communist countries, there was historically a much greater resource investment towards elite level individual performance sports than there was towards football. It is probably the case here too, that the limited infrastructural development of the game has been informed by the complex interplay between limited national political approaches to gender equality and the strong ideological link between national identity, masculinity and football in some countries. The consequent lack of prioritisation, design and delivery of organisational provision for female players in some countries can be understood as one element of institutional discrimination, since it has subconsciously or otherwise failed to take account of the sporting preferences of women and girls and has resulted in unfair and unequal treatment on the basis of gender. The interviewees below comment further on the limited approaches to the development of the women's game amongst some national football associations and reference the impact on restricting opportunities to play the game across different national contexts:

*'UEFA does provide financial help and other resources, but it gives them to the national associations. Unless they are specific to women's football development, a lot of these resources get spread thinly across other grassroots initiatives. Some countries do a lot with that and some countries do a little. It comes down to the culture and actual genuine motivation of the national association and whether it wants to improve women's football'.*

*'It's a matter of opportunity and a matter of how structured a system you have in each country. Some women choose to play football on a social level, just like many men do. But if you want to pursue a more professional route, then not all of the countries in Europe have these possibilities'*

A number of authors have also suggested that the processes of institutional discrimination which inform the relative inaction of some national football associations are also evident at the local level of sports organisation. These processes can doubly impact on the exclusion of minority females from sports and football activities. For example, the studies of Elling et al (2001), Knoppers and Anthonissen (2001), Steenbergen et al (2001) in the Netherlands and Denmark indicate that the 'European way' of organizing sport might be in conflict with minority women's cultural needs. They suggest that Muslim girls especially have been prohibited from taking part in sport because of the failure of sports clubs to adapt to the social and cultural mores of multi-ethnic and multi-religious local clienteles. Whilst these 'neutral criteria' approaches to the delivery of sports provision are prominent in countries in which non-interventionist and assimilationist approaches to dealing with minorities are the political norm, they also feature strongly in countries where multicultural and integrative political models are commonplace. For example, Elling and Knoppers (2005) have indicated that the initiation of programmes of separate sporting provision for Muslim girls was met with significant resistance by sports clubs in some cities in Norway. Academic studies in the UK and in the Netherlands have strongly argued that centralising the voices of minority women will help sports providers understand how they can change their policies and practices to meet the diverse

needs of these groups in a more effective and meaningfully way (Scraton 2001, Scraton et al 2005, Walseth and Fasting 2004, Ratna 2007a, Farooq and Parker 2009). These latter academic assertions were also referenced by a number of interviewees who suggested that a more thorough examination of the processes of indirect discrimination at the local level might better enable a more full participation in football amongst minority women in the future.

#### **4.7.2 Coaching**

In section 4.7.1 we referenced linkages between wider national political approaches to gender equality, the different pace of the infrastructural development of the women's game and the impact on the levels of representation of females as players across a range of national contexts. In doing so, we identified a small number of progressive national football associations in mainly Nordic countries in North Western Europe, the generally gradualist but recently accelerated approach of other national associations in Northern Europe, and the much more limited infrastructural development of national associations in many Southern and Eastern European countries. These factors have also contributed to shaping the low levels of representation of women as coaches and their limited distributional spread within a small number of countries in North Western Europe.

Interviewee narratives suggested that whilst some national associations, especially in Nordic countries and in Germany, had successfully implemented programmes designed to encourage and enable women to become qualified coaches, there was a much more general lack of strategic focus or any targeted mechanisms to engage women in coach education courses in most other countries across the continent. Further, few national associations had implemented any mentoring or succession programmes designed to encourage the increased throughput of long serving women players into the coaching tiers of the game. Opportunities and aspirations to engage in coach education and to coach teams thereafter were also compounded by the lack of professionalized structure for progression for women who had achieved relevant coaching qualifications. These themes were strongly asserted by interviewees with strong experience and knowledge of the women's game:

*'The opportunities to earn a living out of coaching in women's football are very limited. You would have to do something alongside that. There are capable women who have the right skills and the right qualifications to coach teams. But in football, it is still a matter of whether the opportunity exists or not'*

*'I think one of the problems is that the female game hasn't been that successful, so the transition isn't as logical as if it would be if you had a very professional women's league and a good national team, and then you make the logical step from being a player to becoming a coach'*

*'Women coaching in any big numbers have only really been a real push in the last ten years. So role models, pathways, opportunities were really limited before then and I think the women's game was at the stage where the senior players were just retiring and that was it'*

In section 4.6.2 of this report we referred to the ways in which within the dominant 'masculine space' of football, the role of the football coach has come to be perceived as a distinctly gendered occupation in which technical expertise and knowledge of the game have become naturalised as the properties of male ownership. A number of authors have suggested that these hegemonic constructions of the 'male expert' in coaching have become institutionalised within the practices of coach education. For example, ethnographic research undertaken by Lloyd-Fielding and Mean (2007, 2008) in the UK has suggested that the dominance of male coach educators and male attendees at coach education courses have sustained an overtly masculine environment in which



male norms and values are constructed as the standard against which perceived female traits are measured, devalued and invalidated. These assertions were strongly supported by our interviewee narratives. For example, one interviewee comments further below:

*'It has been so male dominated. All of the experience and history which women have inside football is not really recognised as a competence. It is not recognised in the same way as it is with a man'.*

Other authors have suggested that male coach educators also have little awareness of the complexities of wider gender inequalities, including the potential for intimidation and harassment (Pfister 2010). For example, one interviewee comments further in this respect:

*'Football's macho approach, the banter, doesn't always work for everyone, male or female. And coach educators thrive on banter and creating that humour in courses doesn't always work for all women'*

The lack of recognition of these institutionally discriminatory processes and practices has also allowed coach educators to account for the lack of progression of women coaches in terms of which reference female deficiencies and a lack of confidence amongst women in their own abilities. This blaming of women allows national associations to neglect any investigation of the dominant cultural meanings routinely constructed and embedded within the delivery of coach education and to avoid accountability for the implementation of change in this respect. Conversely, some national associations, including in Norway and England, have sought to address these wider and often unconscious processes of discrimination by developing and delivering women only coach education courses. These women only courses are run in addition to mixed-sex courses which tend to be dominated by males and reflect the strong preferences for single-sex settings amongst some women, especially minority women. For example, in Norway:

*'Some women they want to do the courses together with the men. Other women need women only courses, which we have recognised in the Norwegian FA. So there are two strategies. Women are included and integrated and do exactly the same as together with the men and others have women only courses. So both of these things work out for different women'*

Research studies and interviewee narratives have suggested that women only coach education courses are empowering for women and provide opportunities and resources to take the initial steps to developing coaching abilities and expertise. They also provide women with the opportunity to experience female solidarity in supportive football environment in a manner which men have historically experienced. The interviewees below reference the personal and professional benefits of women only coach education courses and allude to the ways in which they might become more confident and better enabled to take part in mixed-provision thereafter:

*'We still need to encourage the women to undertake coach education. We set up separate courses for women with the same content. This has been quite effective. If you have a former male player who knows everything about football entering the same course, he might be quite arrogant concerning a mother coming in without very much background in the game herself. At the later stages, it then becomes mixed provision'.*

*'I think that it's absolutely right to have women only courses in the first instance. At level one where you're introducing women and sometimes it will be parents who want to get involved and really just do the basics and best for their children. But as you go higher up I think it's actually really important for women to see, and also for the development of men, that those courses are mixed. Females want to be seen as an equal and the way to do that is to be on a course where you are perceived alongside*

*your male colleagues. And there will be a different atmosphere and a completely different environment on a women-only course'.*

Despite these more recent targeted attempts to engage and empower women coaches, the processes of gender stereotyping alluded to in section 4.6.2 of this report with regard to the notion of the 'male expert' have largely become institutionalised into the individual modes of thought and operational practices of women's football clubs. This is especially evidenced in the ongoing recruitment and continued dominance of males in coaching positions at the domestic and national level of the women's game. The interviewees below offer explanations for this apparent gender imbalance which allude to institutionally discriminatory processes of male patronage and sponsored mobility and the impact of stereotypical perceptions which equate men (rather than women) with competence, experience and limited risk:

*'My own view is that some men see the women's game as a stepping stone into the men's game. They will utilise their connections which they have built up over time to get positions coaching women's teams, often over better qualified women'*

*'It evolves in a macho world, that's what happens. In terms of coaches, why do we have men coaching women's team rather than women coaching their own teams? It's just this competition out there where men have more of a past. They think men can make them win because they are bringing more experience than women'*

The production and maintenance of gender stereotypes and oppositions which frame women as having limited competence, capacity and knowledge of the game are arguably much more strongly embedded within the distinctly masculine culture of the men's game. These social constructions of gender and football underpin and inform a series of relatively closed operational practices enacted by men's professional football clubs in terms of coaching and managerial recruitment. To this end, tendency of men's professional clubs to recruit coaches from within dominant social and cultural networks of known applicants has created and sustained a 'glass ceiling' effect for women and positioned them outside of the gendered marketplace of coaching appointments. Two interviewees below comment further on these largely unintentional but equally discriminatory processes and their impact on excluding women from being considered for positions of this kind:

*'My feeling is that it [women coaches in the men's game] wouldn't be accepted too much actually. The football community in the Netherlands is very conservative. I think its most of the time, it's not really negative towards women or stuff like that, but it's more a habit or not being used to the attendance of women. I think it's mostly in the competitive areas where they don't accept women. When it comes to the pitch, it's all male'*

*'Why shouldn't women coach men? But in some clubs the coaching side of things and the masculine dominance has been so strong it's very difficult to enter. There is a glass ceiling, you know, something in the culture, something in the structure, that prevents women getting into these positions'*

### **4.7.3 Leadership**

In section 4.1 of this report we described institutional discrimination as a series of unconscious and unintentional processes and practices at the individual and organisational level which serve to disadvantage women and contribute to their under-representation in all spheres of social, economic and political life. In this section, we suggest that the concept of institutional discrimination has some significant applicability in evaluating the 'open secret' of the under-representation of women in key leadership positions in the distinctly 'masculine space' of football

at the domestic, national and European level. One interviewee below articulates these linkages further:

*'The issue is really about working conditions for women in general and of course it gets even worse if you come to an area like football that is so male dominated. Both men's football and women's football is basically governed and administered by men. It reflects the broader gender gap but it is also worse in football'*

This is especially the case in terms of the low levels of representation of women in paid positions within the senior administrative tiers of men's professional clubs, league organisations, national federations or at UEFA. Research studies suggest that the low visibility of women in this respect is reflective of the tendencies of men's professional clubs and other football bodies to operate a series of relatively 'closed' recruitment practices which forego publicly advertising positions of this kind in favour of allocating positions premised on personal recommendation and 'word of mouth'. The practices of recruiting from a pre-existing 'knowledge bank' of predominantly male applicants gravitates against the inclusion of women who are positioned outside of the dominant male social and cultural networks of the football industry. Interviewee narratives suggested these closed processes of administrative recruitment were a relatively commonplace feature of the game across Europe, and were evidenced even at men's professional clubs which had formalised their rhetorical commitment to equal treatment through the development of equal opportunities policy documents. Whilst these processes of discrimination may be deliberate in some cases, it is probably more likely that they are largely unconscious and unintentional and reflect the institutionalisation of a series of embedded stereotypes which contrast notions of the 'male expert' with the perceived lack of knowledge of the game and limited competence of women. The interviewees below articulate these themes further and reference the negative outcome of these processes for increasing women's representation in leadership positions:

*'Football is a macho world in Hungary. Women's football is a new phenomenon. When we speak about football, without hesitation, almost every-one will think of male football as a matter of fact. So the idea to involve women in football administration or in governance doesn't even come to anybody. It is simply not considered'*

*'If you have the right education, the right experience, I don't think you should discriminate between a man and a woman. For example, when it comes to a marketing or finance job, because on paper, theoretically, they should be considered equally, but they're not'.*

*'There has to be a genuine motivation and genuine belief that women can actually do these jobs and we know from other sports that women can. It just seems as if football has this stigma, the stereotype, and the whole mentality is so sexist. It's a question of changing the mentality and re-educating some of these people to understand that women can do these things just as well as men'*

Similar patterns of institutional closure are evidenced in the hierarchical pyramid structures of football associations tasked with the regional, national and European governance of the women's and men's game. In section 4.3.3 of this report we identified the relative absence of women within executive committee positions at UEFA and suggested that this in part a direct consequence of recruitment of individuals drawn from the male dominated tiers of senior governance positions at national associations. These demographic considerations are not limited to football. The IOC report alluded to in section 4.3.3 of this report has also alluded to these structural challenges to broadening the gender representation of NOC's, given that nominations are drawn from a predominantly male constituency at national sports associations (ISLP 2004). It is, of course, the case that in football (as in other sports) initial access to executive committee membership at national association level are often premised on processes of (male) patronage, sponsored mobility and the personal recommendation of senior

figures within the these governing bodies. These 'promotions' are commonly perceived as a reward for individuals who have exhibited long standing paid and/or voluntary services to football at a regional or national level and are drawn from a demographically limited 'diversity pool' of older males. It is also the case that these selection procedures are likely to favour individuals from recognisable (male) backgrounds with perceived shared norms and values. The interviewees below comments further on these largely unintentional discriminatory processes and their unequal outcomes:

*'In many cases they will make decisions which will keep men in powerful positions. They may or may not do it deliberately, but in a way, that doesn't matter. It's what you end up with that matter. More older men. The way they recruit means they will always get more of the same'.*

*'I think that's been the culture for so long. It's been in the structures for so long. Women's involvement in football as players has changed globally, you know, maybe on the past 10 or 15 years. It has in Northern Ireland. But it hasn't moved on in the governance of the game and you'll even see that within this association that even within the senior management and the board itself, it's all male'*

*It's an old boys club. Because the clubs, the leagues, the national associations, the regional associations, the local associations, are full of older white males. It's a closed system. You elect people who basically, you know, you trust. Who share the same values as you do, who come from the same background'.*

In a number of other cases, interviewees offered a more critical evaluation and suggested some deeply embedded 'cultures of resistance' to more equitable change within football governance infrastructures. In some cases, this resistance is likely to be informed by the dominant political and cultural paradigms around gender equality in some nation states and is likely to be especially strong in countries in which there is a strong link between notions of national identity, masculinity and football. Resistance of this kind might also reflect a more general lack of 'problem awareness' or non acknowledgement of the concept and practices of institutional discrimination and represent a reactionary response to perceived personal criticism on this score. It is in some cases also likely to reflect a more general reluctance to surrender accrued rewards and decision making powers at the personal level. Interviewees below comment further in this respect:

*'They have their own opinions about what women should be doing also, then the kind of the religious background as well. That, you know, a woman's place is in the home and looking after the children and, you know, this is men's work entirely and I think there is a lot of resistance to even being forced to including more women within the organisations.*

*'What you find in football is a very conservative mentality and change is a very big word. People like the status quo. Change is a very difficult thing to implement and forced change is probably more so because it's always going to be resisted at the top, where they feel like they're going to lose something along the way'*

These examples of cultural resistance and unintentional processes of institutional discrimination are probably also informed by s the intersections between the generational distribution of positions within football governance and the strongly embedded perceptions of the 'male expert' referenced in previous sections in this report. These themes emerged strongly from our interviewee narratives and referenced the apparent 'unproblematic' equation of maleness, competence and generational seniority within the distinctly 'masculine space' of football administration and governance. To this end, a number of interviewees felt that women were consequently under-valued and marginalised

from consideration for selection into leadership positions and decision making bodies within the sport. Three interviewees comment further in this respect:

*'Women just don't seem to have been able to break through but I would suggest it's a lot of old men set in their ways. I don't think that they want to involve anybody new into that equation. It is a generational thing because we are talking about older males at that top level'*

*The men want to stay in these positions for so long, they don't want to let younger people in. It's mostly middle aged or older men in these positions. The women who have got through are experienced, they have been players and so on, but they are much younger than the men'*

*'The head of clubs are mostly males. Also, in the governing bodies at a national level and internationally they are mostly males. There is gender discrimination because they don't expect females to know about football. They don't value women's experience or value women's competence inside the game. I think that is very crucial to the situation'*

In section 4.2 of this report, we alluded to the efforts of the Council of Europe, the European Union and some national governments, especially in Northern Europe, to shift the policy emphasis of gender equality beyond notions of equality of access towards creating conditions more likely to result in equality of outcomes for women in social, economic and political life. Central to this shift in emphasis is a general recognition that 'gender neutral' approaches can sustain rather than redress patterns of women's under-representation and that sometimes women and men have to be treated differently to be treated equally. This approach is informed by the philosophy and practice of second wave feminism and shares some common ground with political models of multiculturalism and integration, in that it views diversity as a positive resource which can enhance and add value to organisations. Interviewee narratives suggested these wider issues have direct applicability to the football industry and with particular respect to the practice of 'neutral criteria' approaches which have thus far contributed to maintaining the male dominated environment of football administration and governance: Two interviewees articulate further:

*'We might argue that there are processes of structural discrimination against females in the neutral criteria idea of football governance, which doesn't look beyond people recruiting like themselves. I think you can change this, if you change the recruitment system a little bit. People have to see that you miss some talent which can be very useful for your organisation.'*

*'To treat people equally is not necessarily making them become more equal. Sometimes you have to treat people differently to make them more equal, to create an equal situation for them. This is the case in football at the highest level. Because the women are on a different level at the moment, so you have to have a strategy to get them to the same level as men'*

Since the 1980s, the European Union, the Council of Europe and a number of national governments have sought to implement policies of positive action as a means of countering processes and practices of institutional gender discrimination. Positive action approaches have become increasingly commonplace, especially in Nordic countries, and are evidenced in processes of target setting and the establishment of quotas designed to engender a more balanced gender representation in employment and political representation. In the context of positive action, target setting represents a numerical figure against which a desired level of action is expected and has the merit of providing a simple, understandable, measurable and transparent policy goal. A quota is a set numerical figure against which a required level of action is expected and is an instrument or special measure designed to modify and 'open up' previous rules or policies of 'democratic'

selection criteria at an organisational level. These positive action approaches have some precedent in sport. For example, following the IOC introduction of targets for increasing women's membership of National Olympic Committee Executive Committees, research in 2004 suggests that 64% of NOC's had implemented a range of special measures to encourage higher levels of women's representation (ISLP 2004). These measures included reserving places specifically for women, revising their statutes, encouraging national sports federations to nominate women candidates, and directly approaching suitably qualified women. In football, the Norwegian FA first introduced a 'mild quota' system in 1985 which stated that there should be at least one woman on each of the central committees of the association. Between 1985 and 1989 the numbers of women on committees rose from three to ten and has since the early 1990s featured around 40% female representation, including since 1996, a female vice-president and then General Secretary. One interviewee with strong connections to the game in Norway comments further on these experiences and with particular reference to broader linkages between the cultural impact of progressive national political approaches to gender equality, the infrastructural development of the women's game and the positive impact of special measures designed to increase women's representation in the governance of the game:

*'Because of the gender equality act and the women's movement in general in Norway in the 1970's, and the recognition of women's football at UEFA at this time, the Norwegian FA started very early to build up a system to recruit females into management. There is also an integrated quota regulation which says there should be at least 40% of women on every board or committee. It has been very successful in the regional organisations and at the Norwegian FA because since the 1980s there has always been female representation on the executive board. For some years now we also had women in the top leadership positions at the Norwegian FA and it has become quite common at the top level of the game'*

The Norwegian model was held as an exemplar of good practice by many interviewees and was felt to have particular resonance as a mechanism by which to address the historically embedded patterns of institutional discrimination and continued under-representation of women in leadership positions across other national governing bodies in the sport. The interviewees below strongly make the case for positive action measures of this kind:

*'For things to move forward in a quicker way there needs to be an introduction of things like quotas. They can be creative in how it is introduced, but to implement some sort of measures which ensure that women are at least given the opportunity. If we leave things as they stand, women don't even realise there is an opportunity out there because it has never been presented to them and they were never consulted in the first place'*

*'If you have certain people who have some power, then it's hard to get them to give some of this power to other groups. So basically, I think there will not be a big change unless you have affirmative action in this sense. I do think that it is going to take a measure like that to be put in place. You know, to force the issue and to provide that environment where women can grow and flourish in that environment'*

*'It is predominantly a white male world. It is so much to do with power. I think it is a lack of awareness but not in the sense that if they were made aware of it they would change it. The only thing that can really work is quotas. You have to force open the structures if it is not going to open up on a voluntary basis of its own accord'*

*'It's a very controversial issue and I know there are some women who would say, "No, quotas should not be introduced because women should just be considered on their profile and their skills and there should not be this positive discrimination'. I understand*

*this thought, but the way I see it is, okay, we're now in 2010, this was the way we've been doing things to date and there's not that many women in this position, so clearly something is not working'*

Research studies and interviewee narratives also reference the potential and realised benefits of increasing women's representation in football governance through the adoption of positive action measures such as quotas. These include; the opportunities to harness the previously unused, under-valued and under-developed talents of females as well as increasing the diversity of leadership styles and fresh outlook at senior committee level (Skogvang 2007, Pfister 2010). Research studies focusing on other sports suggest that where quotas have been used to increase women's representation, this has led to increased consideration being given to the circumstances of women's lives and has encouraged the stimulation of specialist provision to engage women in sports (ISLP 2004, Cunningham and Sagas 2008) This latter point alludes to the potential benefits of including women in the planning, policy and decision making processes of football administration and governance and the consequent enhanced profile and delivery of both the women's and men's game.

A number of interviewee felt that UEFA, as the key body charged with the responsibility for administration and governance of the men's and women's game across Europe, should play the lead role in setting the standard for more equitable change in this respect. This was the case with reference to an internal evaluation of organisational practices at UEFA and with regard to a more full engagement with wider policy approaches to gender equality at the European parliamentary level. For example:

*'UEFA need to set the standard. I think national federations themselves need to see women at senior management level at UEFA'*

*'Across Europe, if we look at the European commission, they're putting pressure on governments to have more women in there parliaments, there's the gender equality act, there's all sorts of movements from outside of sports that are impacting on the sport. UEFA and national federations have to be attentive to these developments. This has to change. They cannot be this stagnant'.*

Interviewee narratives also strongly suggested that the implementation of positive actions designed to increase women's representation within leadership positions in football might also add significant practical and cultural value to the functioning and legitimacy of national federations and at UEFA. The final word on this score is left with one interviewee who neatly summarises this latter assertion:

*'No organisation in 2010 can address the society or the political bodies, the parliament or whatever by just organising activities for one sex, it's impossible. You don't have any legitimacy if you don't prove that you are inclusive to both sexes in a good way. It's not possible in our days anymore'*

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

### 5.1 European level measures

In section 3.2 and 4.2 of this report we referenced the development and implementation of a series of European level measures designed to tackle discrimination and increase the representation of minorities and females across a range of spheres of social, economic and political life. Measures designed to tackle discrimination and promote greater equality at all levels of sports and football have to some extent developed in response to these wider efforts and have slowly gathered pace since the 1990s. For example, the Council of Europe's European Sports Charter was adopted in 1992 and features the following clear statement of intent regarding anti-discrimination in sports:

*'Discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status, shall be permitted in the access to sports facilities or sports activities'*

In section 3 and section 4 of this report we alluded to a series of structural barriers impacting on minority and female representation as players, coaches and in leadership positions in football (and in other sports). These included; socio-economic and cultural barriers, overt racisms and sexism, physical and cultural stereotypes, and organisational provision and institutional discrimination. Whilst these categories offered opportunities to identify and explain some shared experiences of structural discrimination and representation between minorities and females in football (and in other sports), there were also some significant differences in the patterns, processes and outcomes of these kinds of discrimination. These areas of convergence and difference have also been reflected in the varied focus, shape and scope of measures designed to address discrimination and promote greater equality with regard to minorities and females in sports and football.

For example, following increasing concerns regarding the apparent increase in racist behaviour at sports events during the 1990s, the concerns of the Council of Europe were documented in the Resolution on Preventing Racism, Xenophobia and Racial Intolerance in Sport (2000) and in a series of subsequent recommendations to ministers of member states to this end (2001). These wider concerns largely emanated from the prevalence of racist expression and behaviour amongst spectators in men's football as identified in the European Commission funded report 'Racism and Xenophobia in European football' (Merkel and Tokarski 1996). Accordingly, initial European level measures to tackle discrimination in football were largely focused on combating racist spectator behaviour in the men's game. This is evidenced in the development and initial aims of the Football against Racism in Europe (FARE) campaign in 1999, the FIFA resolution against racism in football (2001), the development of the UEFA ten point plan of action for professional clubs (2002) and the production of the UEFA guide to good practice 'Unite against racism in European football' document (2003). It is, of course, also the case, that these European level approaches to targeting fan racism had significant historical precedent at the national level, including, most notably, with regard to the Kick It Out campaign in England from 1994 onwards.

In recent years, there has been a more general broadening of scope in football and in other sports with regard to identifying and addressing more institutional forms of discrimination which impact on levels of minority representation across all tiers of the game. For example, the FIFA Buenos Aires Resolution against Racism (2001) requires:

*'All football bodies at all levels to ensure racial equality in the employment, appointment and election of individuals in all areas of activity and to work with ethnic groups to involve them more closely in football activities'*



This broader scope was further developed by UEFA in the 'Tackling racism in club football: a guide for clubs' brochure (2006). This document refers explicitly to the 'lack of equal representation of minorities in the game' and offers a broader definition of racism in the game than has traditionally been the case in the past and which includes reference to the processes and practices of institutional racism referred to throughout this report. It states, that racism in football:

*'Can occur intentionally, or through a lack of understanding and ignorance, it may manifest itself openly or covertly. It occurs at all levels of an industry or organisation. Within football it may range from fans hurling racial abuse or to exclusionary practices by governing bodies at all levels, clubs or other partners of the game'*

The increased concern with processes of institutional discrimination in football is also echoed in the wider sporting world with reference to the recent work of the Council of Europe: European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. In 2008, the ECRI produced a scholarly informed and far reaching guideline document for sports policy makers at the national and European level entitled 'General Policy recommendations on Combating Racial Discrimination in the field of sport' (COE/ECRI 2008) The document explicitly references the link between the largely unintentional processes of racial discrimination in sports and their consequent negative outcomes for minority representation. More specifically, the ECRI have argued that one of the major problems for combating racial discrimination of this kind is the lack of awareness of the existence of these phenomena and their seriousness. The report continues by suggesting that there are only a few countries and a few sports disciplines where issues pertaining to racial discrimination are acknowledged or addressed. The ECRI report states:

*'The ECRI has observed a certain attitude of denial on the part of certain sports federations and clubs as regards the existence of racism and racial discrimination in their particular sports discipline. There are of course, notable exceptions, but the average level of public commitment to combating these phenomena is rather low amongst these key actors in the field of sport'*

European level approaches to tackling gender discrimination and increasing women's representation as players, coaches and in leadership positions in sports largely preceded those referred to above with respect to minorities. For example, the first international conference on women and sport took place in Brighton in England in 1994 and was organised by the British Sports Council and the International Olympic Committee. The conference specifically addressed the issue of how to accelerate the process of change that would redress the imbalances women face in their participation and involvement in sport, with the overriding aim of developing a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport. To this end, the ensuing 'Brighton declaration' included the stated aims to 'increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles' and to 'ensure that the knowledge, experiences and values of women contribute to the development of sport' (IWGWS 1994). In particular, the 'Brighton Declaration' specifically identifies the issue of under-representation of women in leadership positions as key area of campaigning and legislative focus. For example:

*'Women are under-represented in leadership and the decision making of all sport and sport related organisations. This responsible for these areas should develop policies and programmes and design structures which increase the number of women coaches, advisors, decision makers, officials, administrators and sports personnel at all levels with special attention given to recruitment, development and retention'*

Work to challenge institutional discrimination and increase representation of women in sports has since gathered pace through a series declarations, call for actions and discussions across a range of international women and sport conferences. These include; the Windhoek call for action (1998), the Helsinki spirit (2000), the Athens declaration (2001), the Berlin memorandum (2002), the Paris

call for action (2004), the decisions of Vienna (2006) and most recently the declaration of Cyprus (2009). The key themes and endorsements to emerge have included the benefits of strategic partnerships, equal media coverage, equal opportunities policies, target setting and quotas, and gender mainstreaming approaches to encourage the input and influence of women on policy, planning and decision making in sports. These areas of focus can also be seen to be embedded in the approach of the International Olympic Committee women and sport policy (ISLP 2004) and in some national football association in mainly Nordic countries. It is also the case that they have significant applicability in terms of increasing women's representation as players, coaches and in leadership positions in football across Europe and in addressing the processes of structural discriminations evidenced throughout this report.

Of further relevance to issues of addressing discrimination and increasing representation of minorities and females in sports (including football) is the work of the European Commission's Sports Unit which since 1997 has assumed responsibility for co-ordinating the Commission's approach to sport and sport policy. In 2007, the European Commission published the White Paper on Sport which was welcomed by the Member States and the European Parliament. The White paper represents an overarching strategic approach to the development of sport in Europe and features a significant emphasis on the societal role of sport and the promotion of equality measures designed in part to address the under-representation of minorities and females in sports. Whilst European Commission policy initiatives in the field of anti-discrimination in society and in sport have traditionally tended towards a 'soft law' approach premised on awareness raising, networking and establishing voluntary agreements involving member states, there have been some recent changes in this respect. In particular, the recent introduction of an article on sport in the Treaty of Lisbon (Article 165 TFEU) enables the EU to develop a policy on sport. At the time of writing, the European Commission is preparing a communication to outline its priorities in the development of the new EU sports policy, but issues of discrimination in sport and social integration in and through sport are likely to feature strongly. Indeed, the 2009 and 2010 preparatory actions funded by the Commission have established the promotion of gender and racial equality as priority areas. However, any policy developed under Article 165 TFEU is unlikely to harmonise national legislations or to have direct regulatory powers (e.g., directive) regarding discrimination in sport (García 2009a, 2009b)

Perhaps one possibility to tackle discrimination in sports, especially for players and coaches, is through the EU Social Dialogue. The social dialogue is an instrument under EU legislation whereby employers and employees negotiate in a 'social dialogue committee' supervised (but not directed) by the European Commission. This would amount to an EU wide collective bargaining process which could be established on a sector by sector basis. Negotiations between employers and employees in the social dialogue are legally binding and issues of discrimination in the workplace could certainly be included. For the social dialogue to yield results it would be largely dependent on the willingness of employers and employees to engage in this process. The European Commission and EU law can provide the framework, but they cannot force any negotiation other than by indirect means. Promisingly, there is already an active 'social dialogue committee' in the professional football sector and there is presently an application to set up another in professional cycling. At the time of writing, the Association of European Elite Athletes and the Association of European Sports Employers are also presently studying the possibility of applying to set up a social dialogue committee with a wider remit for the elite sports sector.

## 6. Models of good practice

### 6.1 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 (Bell and Wilson 2009). 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.

## 6.2 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.

### 6.3 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 (2007) 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.

#### **6.4 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 (ISLP 2004) 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.

## 6.5 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.

## **7. Final Recommendations**

### **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.

### **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.

### **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

### **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.

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