



FREE

Football Research in
an Enlarged Europe

NEWSLETTER

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www.free-project.eu

Kicking it off in Angers !

Report on the Kick-Off Conference at ESSCA, April 2012

It cannot be denied that with a project related to football research the term 'kick-off meeting' – which is very generally used to refer to launch meetings of FP7 projects – has a particular flavour. As a matter of fact, the FREE project, officially launched on 1 April 2012, organised even two 'kick-offs': an academic conference and a general consortium assembly, which took place on Friday 20 and Saturday 21 April 2012 respectively.

The conference on the first day was open to the public. Its objective was to provide stimulating input and theoretical background from different disciplines to the research that will be conducted over the next three years. Indeed, it should not be forgotten that with all its multidisciplinary approaches and methodology, FREE answered a call on 'The Anthropology of European Integration'. It was therefore only logical that the day started off with presentations from scholars from the two fields of anthropology and European studies.



Bringing people back in

First, **Marion Demossier** from the University of Southampton looked at '*What the Anthropology of European Integration can bring to the Study of Identity*'. In her previous works, notably on the wine drinking culture in France (another topic, like football, within the field of popular culture), she had looked at the tension between globalisation and the local, at specific social groups involved in the fight against globalisation and at the strategies they have used to do so: including, but not limited to the re-definition of identities, national (France) and local (the 'terroirs'). In her presentations she insisted on the fact that

it was time for 'Anthropology in Europe' (rather than 'the Anthropology of Europe') to 'bring people back in', to see things from the actor's point of view. For Marion Demossier, 'at the time of an intense European legitimacy crisis, more knowledge has to be gained from people's perceptions'. Which is precisely what FREE intends to do.

Good anthropological work asks 'large questions in small places' and, by focusing on processes and

issues of change, ‘reveal the increasing diversity of societies’. Marion Demossier also called for more engagement by anthropologists with other disciplines, such as political science(s), sociology, or cultural studies – a request that echoes the FREE project’s profession of faith in interdisciplinary col-



laboration.

Russian dolls & marble cakes

This keynote was followed by a second one on the (numerous) *‘Pitfalls of Research on European Identity’*. **Sophie Duchesne**, director of studies at the CNRS and professor at the Université Paris-X-Nanterre, frankly admitted that after twenty years of research on European identity, she was somewhat ‘fed up with it’. Identity research has produced nice metaphors for describing the multidimensionality of co-existing identities like ‘Russian dolls’ or ‘marble cakes’, but it was unclear to what extent such images were able to provide meaningful insights to get a better understanding of that elusive phenomenon: European identity.

A major criticism she addressed to identity research was the fact that in this field, it was rather common to ‘obtain opposite results according to the methods used’. In other words, there is an undeniable risk that the question asked, as well as the research method used, will have a disproportionate impact on the answer (for example, with well-known mechanisms of respondents giving the answer that they think the interviewer is expecting).

Having recently led a comparative research project between Paris, Brussels and Oxford on the parallel evolutions of national identities in France, Belgium and the UK, Sophie Duchesne was adamant that qualitative research methods are needed

to complement the sometimes naïve findings drawn from reading the Eurobarometer (or other quantitative studies), whose questions may not be very well adapted to the purposes of social science research. According to her, the ‘qualitative turn in European studies’ has now reached a stage of ‘maturity’ and will provide interesting findings in the years to come.

Critical questions

The third theoretical paper of the morning session was given by **Hans-Jörg Trenz** from the University of Copenhagen and the ARENA Centre for European Studies in Oslo on *‘The Ethnography of a European Public Sphere: Affirmations of Ordinary Life in the Process of European Integration’*. Hans-Jörg Trenz, who has extensively worked on the emergence of both a European public sphere and a European civil society in different high-level research projects, stressed that there is a history of research in micro-anthropology, an anthropology of ‘banal Europeanism’ and that the study of ordinary life had a contribution to make to the study of European integration.

To Hans-Jörg Trenz, the omnipresence of the identity discourse – and the relevance of research on this discourse – was only natural for democracies: ‘democracies have to make identity explicit in order to constitute the demos’ and make ‘collectively binding decisions’ accepted by all. They are therefore understandably ‘obsessed with identity’. He also asked, however, a series of challenging questions for FREE. To him ‘a public sphere is by definition political’ and he therefore expressed serious doubts on the possibility of the non-political European public sphere FREE is going to explore. He also had doubts about the impact of football on attitudes of ‘strong or weak identification’ on both national and European level.

Football: a relevant object of study

Friday afternoon was devoted to questions more specifically related to football. **Christian Bromberger**, whose seminal work *Le Match de Football* (1995) largely contributed to the academic acceptance of football as a proper object of study (at least in the French-speaking world), offered a communication on *‘Football as a Serious Object of Study. A Return on Experience’*. Through a detailed

review of how he first came to research football and the then lesser-known matters of supporters' involvement with their club, Christian Bromberger offered a perspective on why this object of study had been under-studied and how it can contribute to a better understanding of our Western societies. He recalled how at one point he had to ask himself whether he should let himself 'be guided by the fieldwork' or by current academic dogma, in other words 'by what interests people as opposed to what interests anthropologists'. The obvious answer to this question – which was far from obvious at the time! – underpins the entire FREE project today.

Christian Bromberger insisted on the fact that football now 'has a legitimate place as a subject for anthropological study', even though it was still 'not evident that the subject appeals to anthropologists who refuse to open the discipline to contemporary society'. He concluded that to himself, football rather seemed to be 'a precious gift to anthropologists' and that one could even wonder 'if it was not invented to please them' in the first place!

Unity in diversity (of disciplines, methods and research questions)

Gabriele Klein from Universität Hamburg then presented her 'Critical Reading of the FREE Project'. Having gone in detail through the whole of the Description of Work for the FREE project she made very useful suggestions on ways to improve the quality of research. Fundamentally, her main advice, which was shared by Sophie Duchesne, was to constantly look for, and hopefully never lose track of, the research question that unites the various studies (on history and memory of competitions, identities and gender, governance and public sphere). She repeatedly used the very appropriate metaphor of the 'common roof' under which the project will need to remain if it is to realise fully interdisciplinary research work.

Interdisciplinarity – as both a challenge and a promise – was also the issue addressed by the concluding remarks of project coordinator **Albrecht Sonntag**, in a presentation jointly prepared with **Alex Warleigh-Lack** from the University of Surrey. Interdisciplinarity, he reminded everyone, 'comes at a price'. It requires significantly increased

effort in project design, it forces participants to leave comfortable disciplinary networks and have the courage to expose themselves to different methods and approaches.

The day was finally rounded up with a very original talk given by Financial Times columnist and renowned book author **Simon Kuper**, who offered with humour his journalistic insights on the evolution of football support in Europe.

Getting to work

The Saturday kick-off was entirely dedicated to questions which are internal to the consortium. Broadly speaking, important matters of project management were discussed by scientific project officer

Simon Schunz from the European Commission and project coordinator **Albrecht Sonntag**.

Moreover, the anthropologists within the consortium, **Michał Buchowski** and **Gosia Kowalska** from Adam Mickiewicz University (in Poland), as well as **Alexandra Schwell** and **Nina Szogs** from Universität Wien, offered a first training on anthropological methods (interviews and participant observation) to the other mem-

bers of the consortium in order to foster comparable results for all the case studies in the different countries. This will be completed by a second training session when the consortium next meets in Besançon in September 2012 for the conference on a *History of the Europe of Football*.



Papers from the Kick-Off Conference in Angers are available from the FREE website: www.free-project.eu

Origins & birth of European football

Provisional programme of the September 2012 Besançon conference

On 28 & 29 September 2012, the Université de Franche Comté in Besançon will host the second conference of the FREE Project, on the History of the Europe of Football. Simultaneous interpreting (French-English and English-French) will be provided on Friday.

28 September

Starting at 9 am, the President of the Université de Franche-Comté, the Director of the U-Sports and Director of the Historical Sciences Laboratory will give welcome talks, followed by a presentation of this research strand by its leader, **Paul Dietschy**. The keynote address will then be given by **Tony Mason** (DeMontfort University) talking on *The British and European Football*.

For the rest of the day, the programme will be as follows:

11 am: *From the United Kingdom to Europe: the constitution of a European football space*, panel chaired by **Alfred Wahl** (Université de Metz)

☉ **Geoff Hare** (Newcastle University) on *The first international matches as seen by the English-speakers*.

☉ **Michaël Delépine** (Université Paris-X) on *The Racing-Arsenal games (1930-1962)*

☉ **Gertrud Pfister** (University of Copenhagen): *Birth of a women's Europe of football*

2.30 pm: *Around the creation of the football European Cups*, panel chaired by **Yvan Gastaut** (Université de Nice)

☉ **Xavier Breuil** (Université de Franche-Comté/FREE) and **Constantin Pompiliu-Nicolae** (University of Bucarest): *The Balkan Cup*

☉ **Grégory Quin** (Université de Lausanne): *The International Cup and the Mitropa Cup*

☉ **Stéphane Mourlane** (Université d'Aix-Marseille/École française de Rome): *The Latin Cup*

29 September

9 am: *European football between the nation and transnational culture: European footballers*, panel chaired by **Albrecht Sonntag** (ESSCA School of Management)

☉ **Diethelm Blecking** (University of Freiburg): *An exceptional athlete: Ernst Willimowski (1916-1997) – The history of a transnational European footballer*

☉ **Claude Boli** (Musée national du sport): *Stanley Matthews: a star of European football?*

10.30 am: *The territories of European football*, panel chaired by **Dàvid Ranc**

☉ **Özgehan Şenyuva** (Middle East Technical University, Ankara) and **Sercen Tunc** (University of Boğaziçi): *Turkey and the Europe of Football*

☉ **Alan McDougall** (University of Guelph): *East-Germany & the Europeanisation of football*

☉ **Jean-Christophe Meyer** (Université de Strasbourg et de Fribourg): *The television coverage of European Football Cups in West-Germany and in France (1950-1970)*

Paul Dietschy will present concluding remarks at 12.30pm and the rest of the day will be devoted to the 2nd General Assembly of the FREE project (consortium members only)



Doctoral Research within FREE

FREE – Football Research in an Enlarged Europe
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The launch of FREE was at the same time the kick-off for three new PhD research projects, based in Poznań, Vienna and Copenhagen respectively. They will make an original contribution to the research strands on identities and feminisation (Work Packages 5 & 6). All three PhD students have been working since April on fine-tuning their topic and methodological approaches and things are starting to fall into place.

Football as a promise

Based at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland), **Gosia Kowalska** works with Prof. Michał Buchowski. The proposed title of her dissertation is *'Football as a promise: who wins the game in neoliberal society? An anthropological perspective'*.



Gosia's work is focused on EURO 2012 as a sports mega-event which for the first time took place in Eastern Europe and which is considered an element of great value in the orientation of the nation to European late modern capitalist (neoliberal) society.

In the words of Gosia: *'For the last two months I have been very busy with research on EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine, collecting data on the event. With two students of the university, we managed to gather tens of in-depth interviews, hundreds of press-clippings and photos, and plenty of observation field notes, all of which must now be carefully analysed and interpreted.'*

Gosia's work is mostly concerned with *how* the Euro 2012 has been used as a tool to promote the city and/or the country as well as the social distribution of the supposed benefits of organising the event for the urban/community development within the framework of neoliberalism (it is corporate and entrepreneurial interests, even married to government interests, that dominate the discourse and define 'public good' as well as 'citizenship').

Migrant fans & their identities

Nina Szogs works in Vienna with **Dr Alexandra Schwell**. Her doctoral thesis is tentatively called: *'Migrating Football Fan Identities in Austria'*. It looks at

For more information on members of the consortium, please have a look at: www.free-project.eu/partners

the globalisation of football, through one of its aspects, migration, in the context of a country that has become a land of immigration, and whose culture has changed accordingly.

Nina's work aims to look at football supporters' cultures and see how they may be used both to include and exclude migrants, who may for example keep on following a team for the country they (or their parents) come from, or conversely an Austrian team. In the course of her work, Nina will look at the much-debated notion of primary and secondary fandom.



The main hypothesis of her work is that it is possible to draw conclusions about the integration and socio-cultural recognition of migrants, by looking into processes of secondary identification and the influence of migration on football culture.

Women as football fans?

Svenja-Maria Mintert works with **Pr Gertrud Pfister** in Copenhagen on the feminisation of football: its increasing media presence and the growth of its practice. Her research (provisionally titled *'Women as football fans?'*) will look at how this affects gender discourses, identity constructions and negotiations throughout Europe.



Svenja will research whether female fans adopt or reject the football cultures defined by men, whether they define their own cultures, especially in the case of female fans following female teams. In addition to benefiting from results from the FREE project in other research strands, Svenja will interview two different groups of supporters, until saturation is reached. In her own

words: *'One group will consist of supporters of men's teams in the highest association football league in Denmark (Superligaen). The other group will be women who support teams of the highest-level league for women's football in Denmark (3F Ligaen).'*

European Football & Collective Memory: Transnational Media Events

Call for Papers, Stuttgart, 22/23 February 2013

The Chair of Modern History at the Universität Stuttgart (Germany), **Professor Wolfram Pyta**, organises the second international conference of the FREE project on *'European Football and Collective Memory: Transnational Media Events'* on Friday 22 and Saturday 23 February 2013.

The contribution of popular culture, and especially of football, to collective memory has been under-explored by the social sciences. It is only beginning to raise academic interest, but remains for the time being very much limited to national case studies. This conference tries to overcome this perspective and focuses on the extent to which football may have contributed to build a European collective memory.

Paper proposals from a variety of historical, theoretical, interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives are most welcome. They should consider the nexus of football and the media and the way these contribute (or not) to a collective memory on the European level.

The following questions will be of particular interest:

- ☉ How and to what extent does football contribute to the construction of a 'European collective memory'?
- ☉ How can specific transnational events and their constitution as national or continental 'lieux de mémoire' be best described?

☉ From a cultural historical perspective, what meanings do media producers, journalists and recipients attribute to European football competitions?

☉ Which peculiar role did football play in transcending the pattern of East/West opposition during and after the Cold War?

Proposals are welcome from researchers at all stages of their career and from a variety of disciplines (History, Sports Sciences, Communication Sciences, Political Science, Sociology...).

Each paper proposal should include the authors' name and affiliation and an abstract of no more than 2 pages. The conference language will be English. The deadline for submittal of proposals is 30 September 2012. The authors of the selected papers will be invited to present their contributions at the conference to be held in Stuttgart on 22 and 23 February 2013 (30 minutes for each paper; presentation in English). The conference aims at producing a subsequent publication of selected contributions in a special issue of an academic journal or an edited volume.

Please feel FREE to submit your proposal by 30 September 2012 to:

Wolfram.Pyta@hi.uni-stuttgart.de and
Nils.Havemann@hi.uni-stuttgart.de

Dissemination & social networking

Effective dissemination is essential for the FREE project. Its objective is to reach out not only to researchers from other disciplines, but also to football supporters, other stakeholders and basically any citizen with an interest in the links between football and the European integration process.

One major tool for dissemination is the FREE Blog, on www.free-project.eu/Blog, to which researchers from the consortium and beyond contribute short posts on issues related to football and Europe. In other words: food for thought in a non-academic format. Guest contributors are very wel-

come – if you are interested, please contact albrecht.sonntag@essca.fr, or david.ranc@essca.fr.



Thanks to **Özgehan Şenyuva**, FREE is also present on twitter (handle: @FREE_Project_EU) and has a page on facebook kindly maintained by **Başak Alpan** (search for FREE Football Research in an Enlarged Europe).

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