



FREE

Football Research in
an Enlarged Europe

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Football: still a men's game?

Football was invented by men for men. Women were 'late comers', even though in some European countries they started playing football as early as at the turn of the 20th century. However, women's football was immediately marginalised, sometimes forbidden by football authorities, and often ridiculed by the press.

After the official acceptance of women's football by the football associations in the 1970s, the number of girls & women playing the game rose continuously, leagues and tournaments were established and female football players gained attention and acceptance.

Today the development of European women's football depends on the country and its (football) culture. Within Europe, the Scandinavian countries and Germany are in many ways 'trailblazers', with above 10 % of female members in their football associations. In other countries, football still remains even more of a male domain.

One of the highlights in the history of women's football was the 2011 World Cup in Germany when players & teams made it to the headlines and prime time TV. Spectators in the stadia and in public viewing areas were surprised by the quality of the games and the media coverage was very positive, although, inevitably, the yellow press focused strongly on the appearance and femininity of some of the players.

The World Cup, however, did not produce the anticipated breakthrough of women's football. In the wake of the event, the number of female players did not increase decisively, as neither did the interest of consumers, nor the coverage in the mass media. In Germany, for example, the top teams such as Turbine Potsdam or 1. FFC Frankfurt still attract around 1 000 spectators, while the men's Bundesliga has average attendances of over 40 000.

Is this a problem? It depends on the perspective. Compared with other team sports, such as basketball or volleyball, women's football has a lot of advantages with regard to visibility or revenues. Compared with men's football, how-

ever, female players & teams live a rather shadowy existence. Neither the salaries nor the training conditions of female players meet the standards of men's football.

The main issue is the relative lack of interest in women's football. Why are the matches of female teams perceived as less attractive, both by male & female consumers? Interviews with female fans conducted in the context of the FREE project revealed that a majority of fans regard women's football not as the 'real thing': 'Life is too short for women's football', was the statement of a Danish woman who is an enthusiastic fan of a men's football team.

Very clearly, football has remained a men's game, its followers or supporters are still predominantly boys and men. According to a representative study of the Danish population, nearly 60 % of the men but only around 35 % of the women have at least some interest in following football on TV. Studies on the gender proportion in football stadia show that women only represent between 10 and 30 % of the audience.

Are these disappointing figures for the promoters of women's football? Again, it depends on the perspective. What looks like under-representation of women may also be interpreted as a rather significant increase when compared to some decades ago.

Numbers are, however, only one aspect of the 'Feminisation of Football' work package of the FREE project. The research focuses much more on exploring opportunities and problems of women in the world of football. It seeks to understand the reasons as well as the consequences of the gender order in football, and the manner in which groups & individuals are 'doing gender' in various football contexts.

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(See also conference announcement on page 8)

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Shared memories, open questions

FREE conference: 'European Football & Collective Memory', Stuttgart, 22-3 February 2013

Following up on the first historical FREE conference on 'The origins & birth of a Europe of football' held in Besançon in September 2012 (see FREE Newsletter Issue 2, p. 2-5), the conference in Stuttgart shifted the emphasis to the production of a European collective memory through football as transnational media event, especially from the 1950s onwards.

Bringing together around 40 participants in the excellent conditions offered by the prestigious Senate Hall of the University of Stuttgart, the event was impeccably organised under the responsibility of Wolfram Pyta and Nils Havemann. The objective was to set a theoretical and conceptual framework for this rather innovative research area, and at the same time to submit the underpinning hypotheses to a first test in a series of empirical case studies.

Memorable moments

As **Wolfram Pyta** reminded the audience when opening the conference, collective memory is not a static phenomenon but a dynamic process. 'Communicative short-term memory' differs from 'cultural long-term memory'. It is the latter, which, through institutionalised communication, obtains official & lasting status and represents the shared historical foundation of a community.

Football has the capacity to constantly create memorable moments, to 'worm' itself into our minds and to reactivate itself permanently. Based on this observation the very dense keynote lecture given by **Habbo Knoch** (Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten), stressed the link between football memory and the national dimension of identification and celebration of difference. The period 1950-90 period was marked by particularly strong national myth-building. To characterise this phenomenon, Knoch introduced the concept of 'the Europeanisation of football nationalism', which finds its most visible expression in patterns of antagonism, such as between the Netherlands and Germany (which origins lay in the 1974 World Cup final). Knoch was overall rather sceptical about the prospects of a genuine European memory in football, but he considered that football might well be a means to achieve a 'reflexive memory' i.e. the capacity to take critical

distance to myth, tradition and organised memory.

Memorable football moments have also other functions. They play, for instance, a role in compensating for the inherent tensions of the game, helping to cope with the fundamental ambivalence between competition and fairness, or between violence & civilisation in the sense of Elias.

Since the late 1980s, the commercialisation of football and the emergence of new media actors and channels have significantly accelerated the production of memorable moments. As a result the latter have become devalued, and the cultivation of football memory from previous eras has even become a form of resistance against the commercialised and commodified football of today, a kind of counter-memory as reaction to a loss of authenticity.

How are football events remembered? What precisely



may make an event, a place or a person memorable? This was the starting point of a remarkably detailed analytical paper proposed by **Tobias Werron** (University of Bielefeld). Modern sport, as it emerged between the 1850s & 1890s, is a continuous comparison of events: single contests or competitions are embedded in a continual & universalised communication *about* contests & performances.

Comparison over time is made possible on some essential socio-cultural premises: the standardisation of rules, the system of leagues, the establishment of hierarchies of performance levels, and the identification of 'great' or 'outstanding' events'. At the same time, the technical premises were given by an alliance of telegraph networks and the early sport press which facilitated the organisation and

description of sport events and the comparison of contests.

The increase in the number of sports events created memories whose basic function is to connect past & future. Thus the past exists as a selective knowledge which is translated both into narratives & statistics. Numbers help to tell compelling stories. Stories help to make sense of numbers.



Both help to make sense of past & future games.

The complex architecture of 'idioms of memory' developed by Tobias Werron suggests that football is most likely the richest of sports in terms of multiple combinations of these idioms. This also explains why football memorial culture plays such an important role for collective memory, especially in Europe.

Europeanisation from below

In a joint exploratory paper with **Arne Niemann**, **Alexander Brand** (Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz) considered the possibility of a Europeanisation from below which could be fostered through football competitions. The paper was based on the working hypothesis, very close to the fundamental premises of the FREE project, that football games on a European scale could break up existing stereotypes and give cultural diversity a more positive connotation. But Brand also explained that bland 'Euro-optimism' is not indicated as long as there is a sharp contrast between a 'non-political' European perspective from below and an elite perspective which comprises shared values, ethical self-understandings and political norms.

In a transition from the theoretical perspective to particular case studies **Michael Groll** (Deutsche Sporthochschule Köln) listed the conditions – 'integral ingredients' and 'required add-ons' – needed to develop football competitions into European sites (or realms) of memory in the sense of Pierre Nora's conceptualisation. The formation of collective memory needs admirable icons – famous players and coaches – and catchy *topoi*. Under these conditions narratives capable of stimulating new waves of mediatisation and revealing the long term impact of a sport event on the society may emerge.

The impact of European competitions

Jürgen Mittag (Deutsche Sporthochschule Köln) dealt with the role of UEFA during the long Cold War period, with a particular focus both on UEFA's structures and its development as an institution and on early European club and national competitions.

His assessment of UEFA's contribution to the unity of the continent was mitigated. On the purely institutional side, while UEFA was in its early years clearly dominated by France, Belgium & Italy, it did indeed have a pan-European dimension, representing one of the few permanent meeting places of Western & Eastern Europe, a forum for negotiations and rapprochement. From a memory perspective, however, effects were limited, especially in terms of formation of a European consciousness: the leading actors did not attract much attention, there were not much PR activities and media coverage, there was no European narrative in the making. Jürgen Mittag concluded on a sceptical note by stressing that this topic needed further empirical historical research in order to provide valid results.

Geoff Hare (Newcastle University) looked back to the 1960 European Cup Final in Glasgow between Real Madrid and Eintracht Frankfurt. The first such European match to be broadcast live on national TV in Britain, the final attracted a record crowd of 134 000 spectators, mainly Scots, to Hampden Park, and the media response in Great Britain was overwhelming. Five months after this event *The Times* chief football correspondent called the match 'one of the finest – and certainly most discussed – matches ever played in these islands'. It also had a lasting impact on memory and remains etched on the British popular collective memory more deeply than any other sports event not involving a British team or British competitor.

Geoff Hare concluded with a remarkable evidence for the long-term impact of this match, referring to medical research carried out in Glasgow on Alzheimer patients. As so-called 'directed reminiscence therapy' revealed, the strongest memories of sufferers from dementia and Alzheimer's Disease are memories of football. [More on this therapy and its effects can be found on the FREE Blog](#)

Another facet of Real Madrid's dominance in the early years of the European Cup was studied by **Borja García** (Loughborough University), **Ramón Llopis Goig** (University of Valencia) and **Agustín Martín** (Diario As). They focused on why Real Madrid was so keen on participating in the launch of European cup competitions at a time when the Franco regime in Spain was to some extent politically

isolated. The speakers pointed out that Europeanism had entered the Spanish public opinion by the end of the 1950s, and the elites shared a strong conviction that the connection to the emerging European Community was the only way forward for the country. The directors of Real Madrid were no strangers to this elite and the process of cultural change it promoted. Real's European triumphs thus played an important role in improving the image of the country in the rest of Europe. Football helped Spain to appear as a liberal society, with a very developed professionalism and the will to integrate and grant nationality to refugees from Communist countries like Ferenc Puskás, bringing Spain closer to Europe at a time when the political circumstances still did not allow an institutional rapprochement.

A very recent case study was presented by **Anthony May** (Kingston University). He examined the meanings that English football supporters and the English media attach to the Europa League. These meanings are context-specific: fans of a club which regularly competes in the Champions League tend to engage with the Europa League far less than fans of a club with a lower profile. Fans of the latter embrace the Europa League and spend more time & money following their club and engaging with fans of the clubs that they play against, producing lasting souvenirs. Whether such shared souvenirs have the potential to develop into transnational memory remains an open question.

An event that has entered transnational memory without any doubt is the Heysel stadium disaster (Brussels, May 1985), whose impact was analysed by **Clemens Kech** (University of Stuttgart). 39 people died and almost 600 were injured before the kick-off of the European Cup final between Juventus Turin and Liverpool FC. As Kech pointed out the catastrophe was a strong caesura in European football, precisely because it was a big media event, a transnational, traumatic experience shared by many millions of Europeans, thus revealing once more the huge impact of television for collective memory. The Heysel stadium tragedy is associated with lack of civilisation and barbarism and the name of the stadium has actually become a European metaphor or shortcut for football disaster.

On the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain

How was football memory produced in Central & Eastern Europe during the Cold War period? **Seweryn Dmowski** (University of Warsaw) and **Stefan Zwicker** (Rheinische

Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität Bonn) provided interesting insight in their respective papers.

Focusing on the period between 1945 & 1990, **Dmowski** analysed the phenomenon of '*lieux de mémoire*' in Eastern European football. He classified their symbolic impact into four categories on two different levels. The first level, the integrity of the community (*'Gemeinschaft'*) is divided into categories of 'integration' (internal strengthening of national/social/cultural community) and 'decomposition' (breakdown of the community). The second level, the attitude towards society (*'Gesellschaft'*), i.e. the communist regime, is divided into categories of 'adaptation' (acceptance of the non-democratic regime and subordination) and 'resistance' (as expressed in opposition).

Based on this conceptual tool, each of the numerous case studies commented upon by Dmowski could be put into the overall political context of the period. It is, however, necessary to refrain from constructing causalities in retrospect. Each of these cases also studies a certain tension between solidarity and rivalry within the Eastern European block.

A major transnational event would deserve a case study in its own right when it comes to collective memory: the 1953 legendary 6-3 win of the Hungarian team in Wembley, considered a watershed in modern football well beyond the two nations immediately concerned.

Stefan Zwicker focused on the Czechoslovak football in



the Cold War period. He pointed out that in few European regions sports were of such political & social importance in the 19th & 20th centuries as in the then multi-ethnic historical Bohemian lands. After 1918 sports in Czechoslovakia were used as a means to show the struggle for national emancipation and to present people as an ethnic-national collective. After 1948 sports, including football in a prominent position, were used as a means of propaganda for the 'modern' socialist state. He then focused on the mediatisa-

tion of football in Czechoslovakia before and after World War 2 and the meanings ascribed to famous teams, such as army club Dukla Prag.

Western European memories

Does an event such as the famous ‘Wembley Goal’ of the World Cup final 1966 between England and Germany possess a bi-lateral or a European dimension? **Jean-Christophe Meyer** (Université de Strasbourg/Albert-Ludwig-Universität Freiburg im Breisgau) tried to answer this question by comparing the TV and press coverage of this event in Germany and France. As he found out, the controversial goal scored by Geoff Hurst did not, contrary to Western German media coverage, play a very important



role in French discussions. It only served as another proof for the poor referee performance in general during the World Cup and the ‘scandalous’ general bias in favour of the English team.

Another case study dealt with one of the most famous European football players of the ‘swinging sixties’, the Northern Irish winger George Best who played for Manchester United. As Best was not only known for his talent but also for his charisma and ‘fast track’ lifestyle, **David Ranc** (ESSCA Angers) studied whether Best occupied a place in a shared European football memory. Through a work-intensive quantitative study based on obituaries published at the early death of George Best in November 2005, Ranc found out that Best, despite his global success the player, remained mainly a Northern Irish and English icon. Moreover, it is noticeable that Best is just as much remembered for his life as womaniser and for his well-known alcoholism than for his earlier performances on the football field.

Albrecht Sonntag (ESSCA Angers) tried to assess

whether the 1956 created ‘Ballon d’Or’ had actually played the role of a ‘Cold War bridge between East and West’. From the beginning it included Eastern European football, both in the jury of journalists awarding the prize and among the laureates. It was created and managed by individuals who might be defined as ‘entrepreneurs of European integration’ and it produced European sports heroes in a pan-European space of communication. On the basis of his preliminary findings, however, Sonntag had reasons to remain sceptical about the impact in Eastern Europe.

Conclusion and assessment

Albrecht Sonntag’s prudent findings were to some extent representative for the overall results of this conference.

The vivid, sometimes controversial discussions notwithstanding, almost all participants shared the view that football could indeed create a level on which people of different countries engage in dialogue and exchange. But at the same time football cannot offset decisions and mistakes of politics.

The place of football in collective memory and the scope and depth of the European dimension of this memory are new, innovative fields of research. The recent book on football’s ‘memorial culture’ edited and presented by **Markwart Herzog** (Schwabakademie Irsee) during the conference shows that a lot of research is still needed.

Rather than providing answers to the initial research hypotheses, the conference actually raised more questions requiring detailed and differentiated work. Is there some kind of ‘transgenerational memory’ in European football? Is it correct to highlight a collective memory in football considering the fact that it differs from a large number of individual memories? How did shared memories change during the last decades? Is it possible to speak of certain periods of memory?

Raising, re-reformulating and refining the research questions was precisely the objective of this conference, which was scheduled at a rather early stage of the project, only ten months after the kick-off meeting. Wolfram Pyta and Nils Havemann who are responsible for this work package of the FREE-project will continue their work. The forthcoming online survey targeted at the attentive public of the football community also contains a section on memory and is expected to underpin some of the preliminary findings or assumptions yielded by the conference.

Kick it! The Anthropology of European Football

Call for Papers for the Vienna conference: 25-26 October 2013

Football is one of the most well-loved and most widely shared expressions of popular culture. But why does football have a social role that stretches way beyond the stadium? Organised at the Universität Wien in Austria, the international conference from the FREE project 'Kick It! The Anthropology of European Football' seeks to understand football's impact on everyday lives and identity dynamics in Europe.

Thereby, the football phenomenon is not only perceived as being related to class relations and subculture, but at the same time as a symbolic domain that produces social identities at various levels.

Therefore, the local organisers from the Universität Wien, Alexandra Schwell & Nina Szogs would welcome proposals for papers on any of the following research strands, but by no means confined to these areas:

- 🕒 How are supporter and fan identities created in the everyday practices of football fan culture?
- 🕒 How do globalisation, commercialisation, and migration exert an influence on football fan culture?
- 🕒 What impact do Europeanisation and the increasing mobility of both supporters and players have on the self-perception of football fans?
- 🕒 How is the 'Other' created among fans? How are exclusion and inclusion practices enacted, narrated and reproduced?
- 🕒 What cleavages and loyalties cross-cut European football, such as East vs. West and North vs. South, class, gender or politics?

Keynote lectures: Dr. Cornel Sandvoss (University of Surrey, UK) and Dr. Hani Zubida (The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel).

We invite papers from researchers at all stages of their career. We especially encourage applicants whose research is based on ethnographic fieldwork or those with an anthropological background.

Proposals should include an abstract of 300 words, the author's institutional affiliation, contact details and a short biography (all on one page). The submission



deadline is 10 May 2013. Successful applicants will be notified by the end of June, with registration for the conference being opened after that date. All participating paper-givers will commit to sending a working paper to the organisers within two weeks of the end of the conference, for publication on the FREE website. Furthermore, selected papers will be published as part of a special issue of an academic journal or an edited volume.

The conference is organised within the scope of the anthropological research strand of the FREE project by the Department of European Ethnology at the University of Vienna in collaboration with the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology at the Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań.

Please contact the local conference organisers if you require further information as to this conference, or the research network generally: Alexandra Schwell (alexandra.schwell@univie.ac.at) and Nina Szogs (nina.szogs@univie.ac.at).

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Network News

🕒 **Gertrud Pfister** has co-edited (with **Mari Kristin Sisjord**) a volume on *Gender & Sport* with Waxmann. It covers a wide range of topics, including: a historical perspective on the matter; issues of power (women as leaders and coaches); the presence women in so-called 'men's sports'; health issues (harassment & homophobia vs. empowerment); discourses & practices on gender in physical education

🕒 On 22 March 2013, **Paul Dietschy** was one of the three keynote speakers (with Alain Bairner from Loughborough University & Jean-Loup Chappelet, Université de Lausanne) at a conference called 'The Political Games: The Olympic Agenda' at the Department of Comparative Political Studies of the North-West Institute of Management of St. Petersburg (Russia). This academic institution is a branch of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration of the President of Russia. The aim of these three presentations was to explain the link between Olympic movement and some countries (UK and France) and to analyse the IOC's geopolitics. Despite the importance of sport policy during the Soviet period, sport was not considered as a 'serious' topic in Russian academic society.

🕒 On 5 February, **Albrecht Sonntag** was on the radio to discuss with **Daniel Cohn-Bendit** the possibility of a joint French & German candidacy to the 2024 Olympic Games. Organised by FREE's partner **Sport & Citoyenneté**, the debate was recorded at the European Parliament in Strasbourg & broadcast on Le Café de L'Europe by eur@dionantes. A podcast is available [here](#).

🕒 The FREE blog is still available on: <http://www.free-project.eu/Blog/>. **Özgehan Şenyuva** has also started blogging in Turkish about the FREE project on <http://hayatimfutbol.com/>.

🕒 **Başak Alpan** has co-directed with **Thomas Diez** a special issue of the *Journal of Balkan & Near Eastern Studies* called 'The Devil is in the Domestic?: European Integration Studies and the Limits of

Europeanisation in Turkey'. The issue is forthcoming: Fall 2013, vol.15, issue:3.

🕒 On 24 March, **Özgehan Şenyuva** made a speech on *Football and Europe* & presented the FREE project to the members of the Kadir Has Üniversitesi (Istanbul) Sports research centre programme.

🕒 On 25 March, **Özgehan Şenyuva** was invited by the members of the Hacettepe Üniversitesi (Ankara) international relations club & spoke about the FREE project & Turkey's membership of UEFA.

🕒 A number of FREE members (including **Albrecht Sonntag, Dàvid Ranc, Paul Dietschy, Nils Havemann, Svenja Mintert, Jo Welford and Borja García**) will take part in Football 150, an academic conference to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Football association & jointly organised by the National Football Museum, International Centre for Sports History and Culture (De Montfort University) and the International Football Institute (University of Central Lancashire). It will be held at the National Football Museum, Manchester, UK on 2-4 September 2013.

🕒 **Dàvid Ranc** presented on George Best & the FREE project at the II Jornadas de Comunicação e Desporto of the Universidade de Coimbra (Portugal) on 'the Sports Hero & the Media'.

🕒 **Borja García & the Loughborough team** has been invited by Manchester University's Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change to present the FREE Project's research. This event is part of a workshop on football fans, governance and finance, with several high level speakers, among which Andy Burnham MP, former UK Minister for Sport under Gordon Brown and famous Everton supporter. In April,

🕒 **Gertrud Pfister** was awarded the *Dorothy Ainsworth Award* of the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women.

More information on <http://www.iapesgw.org/>



Women's Football Played, Watched, Talked About

Presentation of the Copenhagen conference: 21-22 June 2013

The FREE research conference on Feminisation, called 'Women's Football – Played, Watched, Talked About' will be held at the Department of Nutrition, Exercise & Sports, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. The conference will take place on Friday 21 & Saturday 22 June 2013.

The aim of the conference is to share information & knowledge about women's football, the games & the players, the male & female fans as well as the media coverage. At the same time, the event will provide the opportunity for networking & promoting international cooperation among researchers on women's football.

The conference will be an opportunity to present results of the work package 'Feminisation of Football in Europe' which is part of the FREE Project – Football Research in an Enlarged Europe funded by the EU's 7th framework programme.

Renowned scholars will deliver keynotes & colleagues working in this field are invited to present papers in parallel sessions.

The conference will cover the following topics:

- 📍 Women's Football – Players, Teams & Organisations
- 📍 Women as Football Consumers & Fans
- 📍 Women's Football in the Focus of the Mass Media



Papers will cover a variety of locations (including Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Turkey, Japan, Australia); a wealth of differing contexts: the Spanish Basque country or Kosovo, for example. The focus will be as much on women as football players & women as football supporters. A wide range of approaches will be used, including public policy mapping as well as Foucauldian analysis.

The programme is now full & abstracts are no longer accepted but anyone wishing to attend the conference may get in touch with the local organisers: Gertrud Pfister (Gpfister@ifi.ku.dk), Rikke S. Jeppesen (rjeppesen@ifi.ku.dk) & Svenja Mintert (sm.mintert@ifi.ku.dk) Deadline for registration is 1 May 2013.

Pictures above & left, courtesy of L'Équipe

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