

Free term paper about racism in world soccer

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Introduction

Racism denotes discrimination and prejudice that are anchored on social apprehensions of biological dissimilarity between people (Newman 1). Racism is orchestrated in the form of social actions or practices or political systems that perceive certain races to be inferior or superior on the account of qualities, abilities, and presumed shared inheritable traits (Newman 1). In addition, racism may prompt the treatment of others differently from the rest. Racism in the world soccer/football has raised eyebrows. Despite FIFA, the world's soccer governing body's policies and penalties, racism on the global stage in soccer has been on the rise. The most affected players are those of black/African descent. While playing for various clubs in Europe, players of African descent have been ridiculed, mocked and discriminated against by European (White) fans. Other instances include abuse of officials, players, or rival fans due to their race, nationality or team affiliation. There is no doubt that racism threatens the success of the world's most popular sport. In this paper, I argue that the current FIFA policies are not effective in addressing the challenge of racism in world soccer and stiffer penalties must be enacted if substantial progress has to be realized.

Overview of the Problem

In this section, I highlight some of the high profile racism incidences in the world soccer. Europe
France
In 2005, in France, in an attempt to fight racism in the French league, Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) players put on all White jerseys and their opponents the RC Lens put on all black jerseys. Unfortunately, the exercise turned sour as PSG fans chanted racist elements

' go whitesgo whites' on the other side, RC Lens fans replied with monkey chants.\n

Croatia

\n\nIn Croatia, in 2011, Henri Belle received racist chants from fans (BBC 1).\n\nBelgium\n\nIn Belgium, Oguchi Onyewu, a Nigerian, was punched as well as shouted at by a fan (BBC 1). In another incident, Zola Matumona was angered by his Club's chairman remarks; Mr. John Vermeersch told Zola to think beyond the trees and bananas.\n

Germany

\nGermany is one of the European countries in which racism has deep roots. In March 2006, a player of Nigerian descent, Adebowale Ogungbure was the subject of racism; a fan spat at him and called him ' nigger' and ' ape' (BBC 1). Other fans produced monkey chants. In another incident, when Chemnitzer FC, a team from Turkey visited Germany for a match with St. Pauli FC, St. Pauli fans chanted racist elements that led to a confrontation between the two groups. In the 2007 season, Borussia Dortmund's R. Weidenfeller was accused of calling Asamouh a black pig. T. Ziegler was suspended from five matches following his racist behavior towards a Nigerian player, K. Onuegbu (BBC 1).\n

Italy

\nThis year, Atlanta fans through bananas at N. de Gong and Kevin constant; the club was fined 40000 euros. Mario Balotelli has also been on the receiving end; he was racially abused by Juventus fans in 2009; again, by Spanish fans during the 2012 Euro Championship (BBC 1).\n

Spain

\n\nIn the just concluded La Liga season of 2013/14, a Villarreal fan through a banana at Barcelona FC's defender Dani Alves (BBC 1). Dani Alves, in retaliation, peeled the banana and ate it; other players, in support of Dani also took pictures of themselves eating a banana and posted them on social media. The fan in question was arrested, and his club fined 12, 000 euros. In 2005, during a match between FC Barcelona and Real Zaragoza, Zaragoza fans chanted monkey sounds every time Samuel Eto'o touched the ball. Eto'o was frustrated by those chants and threatened to leave the pitch. His teammate Ronaldinho threatened to leave the pitch in support of Eto'o.\n

Russia

\n\nIn 2013, Yaya Toure was on the receiving end; he was racially abused by CSK Moscow fans (BBC 1). In fact, Yaya has warned that if racism against African players is not checked, some African players might avoid the 2018 FIFA world cup. In an earlier incident, Brazilian star Roberto Carlos, while playing for Anzhi Makhachkala against Zenith St. Petersburg, was racially abused by Zenith fans. A fan through a banana at Roberto Carlos and he quit playing that game in frustration.\n

England

\n\nIn the 2011/12 season, a match between QPR and Chelsea FC was at glance; QPR's Anton Ferdinand lamented that John Terry had racially abused him (The University of Leicester 1). Anton alleged that Terry had called him a 'fucking black cunt'. After a series of investigations by the Metropolitan Police, the Chelsea captain was acquitted of all charges following testimonies

from his teammate Ashley Cole of African origin. However, the English Football Association (FA) conducted its own investigations and found John Terry guilty; he was fined 220000 euros (The University of Leicester 1). In retaliation, Anton's brother, Rio Ferdinand tweeted calling Cole choc ice insinuating that Cole, a black, was only black on the outside, but white inside following his testimony that led to the acquittal of J. Terry.\n

Asia

\nLast year, a match between Philippine and Hong Kong national teams was marked by racial slurs; Hong Kong fans were the perpetrators. Philippine national team won the match and in retaliation, Hong King fans through debris at Philippine fans (BBC 1).\n

FIFA Policies on Racism

\nIn May 2013, FIFA updated its anti-racism laws. According to the new laws, major cases of racism could see teams lose points, expelled or relegated (BBC 1). For minor incidences, teams could be forced to play in empty stadia or culprits banned from attending 5 matches in a row. FIFA's anti-racism task force Webb Jeffrey said that the new laws are a defining moment for the football fraternity (BBC 1). Webb noted that at the moment, only 1 percent of racism activities in soccer are reported, and he has called for cooperation from all participants in order to bring to book all the perpetrators (BBC 1).\n

Scholarly Views

\nCleland and Cashmore begin by providing a historical view of the FA (1). At its infancy, football in Britain was played solely by white players, but things started to change in the wake of industrialization and globalization. By

1980s, English-born players of Africa descent had started featuring in the FA premier league. At this stage, only a few fans had accepted the inclusion of blacks in English soccer. Following the establishment of British league in 1992, the FA enacted measures to curb instances of racism. By this stage, players from other parts of the world including black players began moving to England to play professional football. Since the FA premier league had become inclusive, and having noted instances of racism in the past, the FA launched a campaign to kick racism out of English soccer. The FA enacted codes of conduct that fans had to adhere to while attending football matches in the UK. Cleland and Cashmore contend that soccer remains a White-led sport. Starting from FIFA officials, match officials, club owners and directors, the majority are white people (1578).

In order to attain a racially accumulative world soccer family, Burdsey and Radhawa (101) contend that all races must be incorporated in the leadership of the world and regional FIFA bodies. In other words, racism in soccer, according to these scholars, is structural and institutional. In order to eradicate racism from world soccer, Cleland and Cashmore are calling for more strategic, robust, and clearer directives from FIFA, regional and local football bodies (16). Structures must be put in place to track, report and punish incidences of racism in soccer.

In addition, Survillan et al. posit that FIFA and FA have made tremendous steps in the fight against racism in football. However, in their study Survillan et al. argue that referees need to be empowered more in order to take charge of matches and stem out racism (27). On the other hand, Cleland argues that social media such as twitter, Facebook and YouTube have made the fight against racism even more challenging (1).

While the FA and FIFA might have

made significant steps to curb racism in the stands and on the pitch, no policies are available to curb racism that is orchestrated via social media. Although it is easy to track racial slurs propagated by players and officials on social media, the ability to track racism propagated by fans is still low. At times, some fans masquerade as anonymous or operate under fictitious names and thus cannot be tracked down by the authorities.

Emotional Motivation

As indicated in the examples above, there have been a host of cases where racism stirred bitter emotions. Let us look at the most recent high profile cases. In the first case, Dani Alves shamed the devil by eating the banana that was thrown at him by a fan. His incident was supported by his colleagues across the globe and other sportspersons. This action shows how emotions can be used for the common good; to trigger activism for a better change.

In another incidence, Roberto Carlos walked from the pitch after being racially abused by Zenith St. Petersburg fans in 2011. He did not receive support as anti-racism policies in football are poorly developed in Russia. In the third incident, Eto'o threatened to leave the after being racially abused by rival fans. His teammate, Ronaldinho, supported Eto'o's move and said that should Eto'o have left the pitch, he would have joined him. In Italy this year, Prince Boateng walked out the stadium after being racially abused by fans of his own club. In fact, he has since moved to Germany in frustration.

As indicated earlier, after being racially abused by CSK Mosco fans, Yaya Toure has warned that some African players are likely to abstain from the FIFA world cup to be staged in Russian in 2018. Emotions can be recruited for the betterment of a phenomena. Lilian Thuram, a football

legend, has challenged White soccer players to support their Black counterparts in the fight against racism.

In summary, this paper has noted that racism instances in world soccer continue to raise eyebrows. FIFA and other regional /local football bodies need to up their game if any substantial success in the fight against racism in soccer has to be realized. Currently, racism in world football has been institutionalized and structuralized. In order to eliminate racism in soccer, it is paramount to include all races in the governance of FIFA. In order to eradicate racism from world soccer, Cleland and Cashmore are calling for more strategic, robust, and clearer directives from FIFA, regional and local football bodies. Structures must be put in place to track, report and punish incidences of racism in soccer.

Furthermore, emotions can be used to initiate an activism for the betterment of soccer across the globe. In line with this, soccer players from all race, team officials and bodies and FIFA must work together in the initiation of activism to drive racism out of soccer completely. While some regional bodies such as the FA have made significant steps, other local bodies across the globe have not put in order their anti-racism laws. They should borrow a leaf from FA and enact solid and ant-racism laws. Moreover, it is evident that curbing football racism in the social media is challenging owing to the permissiveness and anonymity of social media. However, FIFA and local football authorities need to cooperate with other stakeholders such as social media owners in order to enact ways of curbing football racism that is aired through mass media.

In conclusion, FIFA has made tremendous steps in containing football racism, but more needs to be done if any tangible change has to be realized. In other words, the newly enacted laws must be executed as soon as possible. The

relegation or suspension of teams or deduction of points and suspension of fans from attending matches must be executed immediately. Fans will begin realize that their actions are costly to their teams and will avoid instances of racism at all cost.\n

Works Cited

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