

'Killing Me Softly' with his song: Exploring racism in football chants

Media Literacy Module and Journalism Training Unit

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MARS – Media Against Racism in Sport
European Media Work Exchange

Title: **'Killing Me Softly' with his song: Exploring racism in football chants and cheers**

Target Audience:

- Journalism schools (secondary and post secondary education about Journalism)
- Faculties of Physical Education , Sociology of sports / Sports psychology departments
- Media Literacy websites that provide in-service training and online materials for public distribution
- Anti-racism organizations such as "Show racism the red card"

Overall aims of the Unit:

- Use the best practices of Media literacy in exploring complex issues related to the question of racism
- Promote future media professionals to take seriously the need to deal with systemic issues of regional and ethnic hate in European football, and not just issues related "skin colour".
- Provide examples of actual news stories and ways to deal with racism in football with an emphasis on regional tensions
- Encourage journalism students to explore these issues seriously with the aim to improve the enjoyment of the sport, and to reflect upon their role in eradicating ethnic hatred and violence in European football.

Abstract:

The problem of reporting and discussing issues related to racism in professional European football are numerous. UEFA has had a lot of success in promoting antiracism within stadiums and between teams and players on both local and international scales. However, racism on a regional scale continues to be largely overlooked, and can be, given the complexity of the European community, considered one of the most serious problems facing the game today.

In this Media literacy and Journalism unit we look at the Racism in football in Spain (e.g. Basque, Catalanian issues) and Scotland (Glasgow with its rich Irish migrant community), with a special emphasis on the regional tensions that exist in these geographical and culturally distinct areas.

The module we develop involves several case studies of football racism and how the press handled the issues related to ethnic hatred among fans, especially in stadiums, through the use of chants and slogans by a large number of team supporters. This media unit is organized using current media literacy techniques for reading and thinking critically and concludes with a comprehensive activity that asks the students to conduct their own case study from other parts of Europe.

Time:

The unit contains material to cover at least 10-15 (60 minute) sessions.

Whole Unit:

Activity 1: Defining and Policing Racism in European Football

Activity 2: Case Study: The *Billy Boys Song* & *The Famine Song*.

Activity 3: Case Study: Spanish anthem & anti-nationalism in Football

Activity 4: Group Activity: Racism and ethnic intolerance in European Stadiums

Tips to trainers on the overall unit:

Education about racism and ethnic hatred is not an easy task, neither for the teacher/trainer nor for the students and or groups participating in the learning. We see that as an interesting challenge. That challenge extends back into the decisions the authors had to make, at some concrete moment, about materials and examples to include, definitions to follow, and on electing a “best approach” in terms of sequence and pedagogic practices. Suffice to say we did not construct this unit as a fixed step by step anti-racism curriculum to be followed in lock step fashion. What we hope we have achieved in our description and organization are suggested ways to enter a group of learners into this topic, to ensure that they engage with relevant and interesting, and most important, challenging examples, such that it would be impossible to imagine any two groups coming to the same conclusions. It is our design intention that these activities **not** provide answers, but rather to engage learners so that the engagement itself with the issues provides the basis for the learning and construction of knowledge around such a complex subject, but without resulting in relativist explanations of racism and ethnic issues. To this end we are asking the trainers to use this unit as a guide, and to use their professional experience to best decide how to orient the materials in such a way as to ensure their students get the most out of its contents.

In this unit we offer trainers a variety of materials for each activity, but with the idea that, depending on the resources and style of teaching of the trainer, that the students, either individually or in small groups could in fact conduct their own internet searches for similar materials. We feel this is especially important for the topic of racism, because the local contexts can often influence what participants see as the essential characteristics, and consequently, definitions of racism, xenophobia, etc. to be applied.

Generally speaking feel free to have the students working on the resources we have included, or those referenced in the extensive bibliography included in this module. Consider, based on time and interest, at the end of some of the activities having them do synthesis activities by conducting web searches for issues and information we might have not taken into consideration but which they feel are important or relevant to the following activities.

In terms of organization, we have constructed almost all of the activities to be paired and small group activities. In keeping with our theory of learner as socially constituted during the learning process, we believe it is vital that learners negotiate both the organization of their work and conduct the analysis and interpretation and significance of their findings in peer social grouping. The complexity of issues in working in educational settings with topics like anti-racism and discrimination essentially obliges us to recognize that comprehension will improve only if the students are given opportunities to discuss the issues they are interacting with amongst each other. We want to avoid, at all costs, the typical situation whereby the student feels his/her work is entirely about finding the “right answers” in order to impress or

provide them for an “all knowing” teacher. For this reason we have selected activities that essentially work best in groups of 2-8. A teacher might create fixed groups as he/she moves through each of the activities, or feel free to use jigsaw methods or other group dynamics based on experience and skills of the learners.

In cases where this unit is to be used specifically in the context of **Journalism training**, we leave open to the trainer to decide where to integrate or change the activity from one that is generally research/reporting back in nature to an activity that would have them, for example, compose an article, OP ED piece, set of strategic interview questions, summary report, etc.

Teachers working in **media education or media literacy** courses or modules can easily adapt the question sequences and activities to fit the context of their actual teaching situation, the level of their students and expectations in terms of work habits.

That said, we maintain a strong conviction that the skills and curricular demands in Journalism training and Media Education have something in common, and we have endeavoured to keep that common ground the basis of the organization and decisions about activities to be found in this unit.

Activity 1: Defining and Policing Racism in European Football

Specific objectives:

1. To understand the various forms in which racism and discrimination can be expressed implicitly and explicitly
2. To understand our personal understanding of and different ideas about how serious racism is, and what we can do to eliminate it.
3. To understand that tackling racism requires a real effort on the part of many levels of society and its institutions, from the personal to the political.
4. To understand that there are many levels of racism and discrimination, and that these levels are often extremely complex and difficult to detect on the surface.

Time:

- 1: 45-70 minutes (should be conducted as a single class activity in one time slot)
- 2: 50-70 minutes for the research (the research can be independent study with time given for groups to collaborate and organize their findings)
- 3: 50-60 minutes reporting and full class discussion
- 4: 45-70 minutes for research and class discussion

Resources:

- 1: A full class activity so requires some kind of visual display (Blackboard, whiteboard, Smart board) on which to keep a record of the opening discussion
- 2: Requires students have access to internet to work individually or in pairs
- 3: Small group work (around tables)
- 4: Requires access to internet for searching.

Teachers might invite their students to conduct original research on definitions, or are invited to select from among those that are included in this unit.

Practical Arrangements:

- We recommend creating small groups (6-8) and then have these groups further divide into 2-3 'expert teams' in order to increase the potential for discussion among members.

Grouping: Paired work | Group work | Whole group

Instructions / Worksheets:

1: What is Racism? (Whole group discussion)

- Begin with a whole group discussion drawing from definitions from students and soliciting examples. In this first stage we are not specifically interested in exclusively the issue of racism in football, but rather everything they have internalized about the subject, their assertions as much as their doubts. Some questions to spurn on this discussion if needed can be:
 - Are racism and discrimination always about power?
 - Can minority groups be racists?
 - Are there degrees of racism? Are some of these degrees “more acceptable” than others? Which ones, why?
 - How do we feel about humour and racism? What are the limits? Is it okay for a Black, Polish, Jewish or Catholic person to make jokes about their own group? Why or why not? Are there limits?
- Try to capture as much of this discussion (the definitions – keywords) in a brainstorming session and have it located on a whiteboard or blackboard for referring to later.

2: Finding Definitions of racism:

- Have the class working in their groups looking at some of the resources on defining racism provided here OR better, have them google, collect and evaluate definitions from the internet. If you want to use “expert groups” you can ask them to broaden their research into diverse sources of definitions:
 - Technical definitions such as wikis or online dictionaries
 - Definitions published within human rights or large state authorities (State Ministries, Ombudsman offices, OECD, United Nations)
 - Web pages from minority and Advocacy groups (STOP Racism, Heartsandminds.org, Say NO to racism, university anti-racism groups etc.)
- At this stage you might also ask them to find material that challenges, supports, or complicates some of the definitions or discussion that was held in large group (for example an explanation about why Racist jokes are not “acceptable”)
- Have each group work together in trying to make sense of all the material they have found. They can devise their own system for ranking / categorizing / interpreting their findings. They should then prepare for a formal presentation: “Our best definition of racism”, and explain how and why they came to that conclusion. In addition they can briefly report interesting findings from their research.

3: Reporting back definitions of racism: (Whole group activity and discussion)

- Groups report back on their research and a follow-up discussion is held examining the contents of their research in relation with what was developed in the first part.

- What are the differences between what we think we know, and what other sources of information are telling us on this subject?
- Were the categories and definitions that we 'carry around in our heads' sufficiently developed to be able to talk about racism as experts?
- Are the differences between what we think we know, and what the experts are telling us sufficiently far apart to make us think about the responsibility of journalists to be more officially informed about racism and discrimination in society?
- What might be some of the dangers of being a journalist without a fully formed definition and understanding of racism and discrimination?

4: Policing Racism in European Football

- Students get back into their groups in order to turn to the main theme of this unit: looking at racism in the context of European football. The first activity is to find out what football associations, clubs, players organizations, UEFA, FIFA, etc. have to say about Racism in this sport. So we want to have a look at their definitions of racism against what has been discussed so far.
- Working alone or in pairs:
 - Think of a case of racism (or google to find one) that interests you
 - Find a news journalism item about that event from any public online newspaper website.
 - Find an official document that defines Racism and/or Discrimination that is publicly available on any Football organization website that is in the geographic region, or within the league organization of the occurrence of racism you have chosen
 - Prepare a verbal report on:
 - Your assessment of the definition of racism (is it adequate?)
 - Is the event you chose to report on a CLEAR CUT CASE of racism? Explain how the event you chose is racist based on the definition given by the governing organization. What language is clear, what is left unclear?
 - Your assessment of how the issue of racism was handled by the media you chose. (What has the journalist done well, what has s/he missed? Does he/she appear to understand the importance of racism? Is there an attempt to underplay or overplay the event? What could be done to improve the article? What would you not include if you were the author of the piece?)
- As a group follow-up have as many of the students talk about what they researched, what they discovered, and their assessments of the efficacy of the definitions to assist journalists in being clear that racism has in fact occurred.

- Conduct an open discussion of the various roles and responsibilities that might enter into *managing and policing* racism:
 - Organisations like UEFA / FIFA
 - Clubs and owners / representatives of clubs and their websites
 - The players themselves, their social network (Facebook, Google, twitter) pages
 - Fans (inside and outside the stadiums) and fan websites
 - Police forces, inside and outside the stadiums
 - The media, in particular, sports media and news journalism

Tips to trainers:

As we indicated elsewhere, there are no “right” answers here. There are no “best definitions”, perhaps some are “better” than others, but this too depends on context. The results of this activity cannot be anticipated or managed because they emerge from the lived experiences of those participating in them, and not from a template of pre-determined correct answers. This should not stop us, however, from getting our students *to begin to look at the possibilities*. We want to avoid the relativist argument that no one can “agree” on what is racism, so “whatever I think is just as good as anyone else”, or worse, that a partially formed self-definition will suffice. The activity attempts to push students through the stages of Bloom’s taxonomy (revised) in which we start with **Remembering** (What we think we know about something) upwards through the more complex cognitive strategies of **Understanding** (explaining what we think we know), **Applying, Analysing**, and **Evaluating** (activating and organizing our knowledge) and finally **Synthesizing** or **Creating** new knowledge in new or less familiar contexts.

We invite teachers to also view the materials included in the bibliographic section of this unit that offer ideas and support in managing discussions around racism and discrimination, and in the importance of moving students through activities that require the higher cognitive skills.

There are many excellent resources on applying Bloom’s Taxonomy to teaching situations including the following:

http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Bloom%27s_Taxonomy

Activity 2: Case Studies: The Billy Boys Song & The Famine Song.

Specific objectives:

- To apply previously learned definitions of racism to actual historical cases
- To be able to detect, evaluate and argue a position with respect to racism
- To be able to evaluate, assess and synthesize information from diverse sources in order to take a personal position with respect to a debate.
- To be able to distinguish between emotional and practical arguments

Time:

- 1: 45-60 minutes
- 2: 75 - 120 minutes (Depending on discussion and amount of work assigned out of class)
- 3: 45-60 minutes

Resources:

- PDF (or online) versions of a series of articles following the “*Famine Song* controversy”
- You tube documentaries following the reactions and perspectives of racism within Rangers Football Club, (Glasgow, Scotland)
- Online access to conduct further research

Specific Materials:

Wikipedia:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Boys
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famine_Song#cite_note-Lyrics-2

BBC news articles: Famine Song

- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/glasgow_and_west/7617518.stm
(Concerns over ‘*Famine Song*’)
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/teams/c/celtic/7640921.stm>
(Celtic’s Reid condemns ‘*Famine Song*’)
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/scot_prem/7619406.stm
(Martin Bain responds to ‘*Famine Song*’)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/606/A41053051>
(Reader comments on Bain Article)
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/glasgow_and_west/8109359.stm
(Judges brand ‘*Famine Song*’ racist)

Phil Mac Giolla Bhain: Writing for the Irish Times:

- <http://www.philmacgiollabhain.com/wp-content/themes/original/ip031008.pdf>
- <http://www.philmacgiollabhain.com/wp-content/themes/original/ip081108.pdf>
- <http://www.philmacgiollabhain.com/pdf/ip150111a.pdf>

Daily Record articles: James Traynor

- <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/sport/football/isnt-there-enough-to-worry-about-without-beating-991268> (J. Traynor writing against those criticizing 'The Famine song')

You Tube videos:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APVthfIMVbw> (The *Billy Boys* song full version)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2GaFIYT9dE> (*The Famine Song*, full version)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r27l1kWWbwY> (Rangers singing *Billy Boys* song)
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86m_pkj5lig (Rangers fans claim they are victims)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cggTbCcbcNA&> (Most Dangerous Rivalry)

Podcast: Phil Mac Giolla Bhain radio interview on the 'Famine Song'

- <http://www.philmacgiollabhain.ie/radio-interview-about-the-famine-song/>

Practical Arrangements:

This second activity is a case study. There is a lot of information to cover in this topic, so the plan is to let the students do personal searches on the topic. It might help to remind them to find information about all the potential responsible (see activity 1) groups: League officials, UEFA, FIFA, Teams, team owners, established or mainstream media, local media, independent media, fan pages and blogs. Also to research the story from a multimedia perspective would be possible: Newspapers, You tube videos, podcasts, blogs, forums, and Flickr all contain material relevant to this discussion.

Depending on how the course is structured, most of the included material can be assigned as out of class work. The questions and activities can thus be handled either in small groups or as a whole class.

Grouping: Paired work | Group work | Whole group

Instructions / Worksheets:

1: Importance of Chants, and hymns as identification within a community

Class discussion:

- **What are some of the ways that fans self identify with a football club?**
- **Can some of these practices lead to disturbing or problematic behaviours?**
- Have students read the article on social identity in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Our specific interest is in parts 1-3 and the conclusions. Teachers can either reduce the content or use, as an introduction to this activity, the following excerpts:

From: Soldiers, sashes and shamrocks: Football and social identity in Scotland and Northern Ireland, Daniel Burdsey and Robert Chappell

(Full version: http://physed.otago.ac.nz/sosol/v6i1/v6i1_1.html)

The most effective way for many football supporters to articulate the elements of their identity is through their behaviour at a match. This is due to the fact that not only are similar individuals brought together in the same setting, but the Other (i.e. opposition supporters) are also present in close proximity. This provides both groups of supporters with a relatively safe environment in which they can express elements of their identity and behave in a manner that may not be socially acceptable elsewhere. As Bradley (1994, p. 23) states, “for Rangers and Celtic fans in particular, games are often viewed as opportunities for para-political expression. Rivalry between the fans of both clubs corresponds in a sense to the much larger religious and colonial rivalries that are centuries old”.

The expression of social identity requires reference to both the group(s) to which an individual belongs and to those he/she does not. A consequence of this is the construction of ingroup-outgroup consciousness. When this characteristic is present within a figuration consisting of distinct majority and minority groups, such as those in Northern Ireland and west central Scotland, an inevitable consequence is discrimination, or in particular, sectarianism. As a major element of working-class popular culture it is unsurprising that football remains a site for the articulation of such sentiments and the importance of football stadia for the expression of social identity cannot be overstated. Despite increasing attempts to decrease levels of racist abuse in professional football, many football grounds still remain arenas in which individuals can express their prejudices in a relatively safe environment and in a manner which is likely to be deemed unacceptable in most other social situations.

A consequence of Celtic’s Irish-Catholic identity is that a strong anti-Irish/Catholic dimension has become evident amongst the supporters of a number of other Scottish clubs (Bradley, 1994). For example, in 1988 Motherwell supporters chanted “SAS 1, 2, 3/bang, bang, bang...” during a match against Celtic, in reference to the three IRA members who had recently been killed by the SAS in Gibraltar (Bradley, 1995a). A significant number of Rangers, Hearts and Motherwell supporters have also been prone to make Nazi salutes during matches against Celtic, for the gesture has “come to

represent a particular manifestation of *Britishness* (which often aligns itself with Scottish identity), which views an important feature of British national identity as being against Catholicism and demonstrations of *Irishness* in Scotland” (Bradley, 1998, p. 206) [10].

One can draw parallels here with Italy, where according to De Biasi, “symbols of political extremism and parapolitical slogans have filtered into the culture of the curva [11] fans, and have been adapted (or ‘recodified’), and a notion that Goffman refers to as “reframing” or “keying” (De Biasi, 1996, p. 119). However, it is important to locate such behaviour within a wider context. Since the first Irish settlers arrived in Scotland in the nineteenth century, Irish-Scots have been subject to pressure to privatize aspects of their identity and to some extent an anti-Irish hysteria is still evident today (Bradley 1995a). Irish people are still subject to considerable stereotyping, whereas there is a strong perceived association between Ireland and violence, a notion that operates interdependently with the sensationalist media reporting of Republican paramilitary activities. For example, Finn (1991, p. 394) states that “Ireland and things Irish still induce a strong, almost visceral anti-Irish sentiment in many Scots and a desire that Irish associations be “eliminated”, whilst those who support the nationalist cause are marginalized and demonized in Scottish society.

An important influence on the maintenance of the respective identities of Celtic and Rangers has been the alleged sectarian recruitment policy employed by the latter. Whilst Celtic’s most successful manager, Jock Stein, was a Protestant and the club have often fielded Protestant players (e.g. Danny McGrain, Kenny Dalglish), Rangers have always had an unofficial/ undeclared “no Catholic” policy. Journalist Ian Archer argues that “Rangers were pursuing a sectarian employment policy. You did not play for Rangers unless you were a Protestant. Now that was a fact” (BBC TV, 1999a). Indeed it was a policy that appeared to operate throughout the whole club. For example, in 1973, with David Hope [12] set to be appointed as new chairman, the board suddenly reversed its decision. Despite official confirmation, it was believed to be due to the fact that Hope had, forty-three years previously, married a Catholic which, according to journalist Jack Webster was “a situation regarded as untenable by a section of those who follow the long blue trail to Ibrox” (Finn, 1994, p. 100).

This background on the Celtic-Rangers intercity rivalry is essential to understanding how the Rangers Fans consolidates these socio-political-religious-class notions into the creation of their songs and chants which they use in all their home, derby, and away games, regardless of the character of the opposing team.

- How much pressure is there inside a fan base to conform to the existing practices of fans and to participate in their identity rituals like singing established songs, regardless of their meaning or message?
- What options do young fans coming into these environments have NOT to go along with them and learn them, and reproduce them?

2: The Songs...

The Billy Boys and *The Famine Song*: These Ranger fans songs are of particular interest because both have been adapted by Rangers fans and sung in local, regional and European stadiums. Both songs have been rejected as inappropriate, and labeled Racist, by UEFA and Scottish Legal system.

- Have students examine the texts of the songs (printed versions or You tube)
- Discuss with them the racist languages and offensive phrases in the song or have them read reactions to the racist aspects of the song.
- Do the definitions of racism dealt with in Activity 1 make clear that these are racist songs? Why? Why not?

Policing the songs: Scottish, Irish and European reactions to the Billy Boys and Famine songs

- At this point we want the students to obtain a richer understanding of how the key players have entered into this debate, and more importantly, how their presence has been reported in the news media. We have included two perspectives in this unit (BBC and Irish Times articles above), but there are others and certainly this part of the unit can be further enriched by examining as many different representations of the topic as possible, including, as indicated earlier, having the students conduct their own thorough research on news, blogs, you tubes, radio podcasts, forum discussions, etc. of the singing of 'The *Billy Boys*' and 'The *Famine Song*' by Rangers Football club fans both before and after the European ruling and Scottish court decisions that they are racist acts punishable by law.

Some interesting points to consider for class or small group discussion:

- What are the major differences in approach to the issue between the BBC and Irish Post
- How are these differences played out in various articles?
- Which arguments and/or articles do you think best convince you as a reader that the '*Famine Song*' issue is a serious issue about racism? What specific techniques are employed by the journalist to achieve that?
- Which arguments and/or articles are least convincing for you as a reader? Why?
- Having read through all these arguments (and possibly others) what impression are you left with about 'The *Famine Song*' issue.

What the Rangers fans think:

This you tube video provides further excellent material revealing how the entire culture of these two teams is intimately woven into complex identity issues around Irish and Scottish nationalisms, and especially, how one group takes the dominant position (Rangers) over the other (Irish immigrants / first generation Scottish immigrants) treating them as "second class citizens, or worse, as foreigners, even though they are themselves Scottish. What is of particular interest is how a Rangers fan responds to the issue: Banter or Crossing the line?

(Note, at this point in time the songs have already been banned from Scottish football stadiums).

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cggTbCcbcNA&> Minute: 24:13-26:45)

- A discussion ought to be held at this point about the how the fan is rationalizing his and his friend's behavior. Can we leave it up to the fans to draw their own lines? Does this fan exhibit evidence that he has an adequately formed understanding of the issues of racism? Does he seem to care? Is the reporter undermining a court decision by questioning the seriousness of the issues?

Now let's have a look at another news article challenging the legitimacy of the Scottish court decision to label the singing of '*The Famine Song*' illegal in football stadia:

Have students read this article written by a journalist (Daily Record articles: James Traynor)

- <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/sport/football/isnt-there-enough-to-worry-about-without-beating-991268> (J. Traynor writing against those criticizing '*The Famine song*')
 - Is this responsible journalism? What techniques has Traynor used to try to convince us that the singing of the *Famine Song* is not a serious issue for us to consider? Based on the article, does it appear that Traynor has an adequately developed concept of what can be classified as racist? Do you think Traynor has done a professional job in defining the issue and addressing it? If you had the opportunity to write a rebuttal to this article, what might you include in your statement?
 - The author of the piece was Head of Sport for the Daily Record when he penned this article. Does that add or detract from his credibility in writing this article? Would that influence his reading public?
 - Have these two responses about '*The Famine Song*' issue forced you to rethink your original position? Why or why not?

3. Pulling it together...

This final follow-up for Activity 3 is a chance to review and revisit how complex issues can sometimes prevent us from focusing on the main point: Eliminating racism in European Football. What we have attempted to do with this activity is to get journalism students to see that there are many key players involved, that there are strong emotional ties that might (and probably) interfere with the ability to see, or acknowledge that offense might be taken when we do not consider the views of others. And in football, this lack of empathy, this construction of the other is both part of the systematic consolidation of our identity with one side, and our denial of the other. Football stadia, as we have indicated above, become the sites of identity building and chanting and learning team songs and chants is one of the most prevalent mechanisms for participating in this ritual of membership. Messages of hate, racism, offence, become much easier to occur, and certainly less easy to police when they are being sung not by an isolated group, but rather, by thousands of fans.

- What do you think of the different approaches the key players have taken in order to eradicate racist chanting and singing by Rangers fans in football stadiums?
- What specific forms of policing do you think work best, would work better if used?
- What is the role of journalism in a) helping to eradicate racism in football, and b) what must journalists do to ensure they do not end up part of the problem?
- One of the greatest debates in sport has always been about policing what goes on inside versus outside the stadium. At what point should issues like racism and discrimination be handled by clubs? By federations and organizations? When should they become police issues? Sporting events have always seemed to enjoy some leeway when it comes to behavior and crimes that in regular society would not be tolerated (hockey violence, athletes doping, and discriminatory practices in team selections). Is this healthy? Is it inevitable? Should we adopt, more often, a stance of zero tolerance for serious issues?

Tips to trainers:

This case study on the singing of the ‘*Billy Boys*’ and ‘*The Famine Song*’ by Rangers Football Club fans (both at home and away games, including Champions League and Europe League games) was chosen because it is a rich source of interest for those who wish to study the implications of Racism and hate crime at a level so entrenched in a single team that it becomes the ‘identifying characteristic’ of that club – certainly by its fans, if not by many of those in the back office, and, as we show here, the range of media that support the Rangers Football club. This case provides a full representation of how all key players could have a say in dealing with football songs that are racist and sung by not just an isolated few, but massive numbers of supporters. Some of the materials we present in this unit illuminate a wide perspective on these issues, some, as can be expected, challenging the idea of racism in songs, some intending to separate chants from racism, issues of reciprocal chanting. This material is essential for journalism students to view, discuss, and to understand. *What is clear, is that the songs in question are racist*, and have been declared so by law: our interest is in understanding how media support these decisions, or actively work against them by contributing to the usual forms of misdirection, reversal of who is the victim, introduction of red herring, relativist arguments, down-playing the seriousness of racist acts, or vague attempts at re-interpreting what are clear messages so that the whole issue lapses into misunderstandings.

Activity 3: Case Study: Spanish Anthem & Anti-nationalism in Football

Specific objectives:

- Research a law or a bill and describe specific ways a person can try to get it passed, changed or enforced
- Discuss a controversial current event in a respectful way, expressing strong opinions without personally attacking those who differ
- Understand how to take a position on a complex or controversial topic and defend that through a variety of acceptable arguments

Time:

- 1: 60 minutes
- 2: 60 – 90 minutes
- 3: 60 – 90 minutes

Resources:

(Resources have been embedded in the activities that follow)

Practical Arrangements:

Up to this point the focus has been on racism in football stadia in which qualified courts and governing organizations like UEFA have already ruled on whether singing particular songs is to be tolerated (or deemed illegal) or not, and as we have seen, specific sanctions have been applied. But sometimes there are questions about whether or not certain fan behavior is or is not “racist”, is or is not “hateful”, is or is not “free expression”. Most European countries have clearly defined laws to protect its citizens from all forms of racism. Some have also created what are now called “anti-hate” laws, a controversial subject in many countries because it is believed to infringe upon the rights of free expression of its citizens. In this activity, we do not pretend to answer this controversy, but rather, make our students aware of the issues, the laws, when and how to apply them, and of course, when not to.

Grouping: Individual | Paired work | Group work | Whole group

Instructions / Worksheets:

1. Racism vs. Hate-crime

It would be useful at this point for trainers to have their students conduct research on **hate-crime** to complement what they already know about racism:

- What is it?
- Which countries have specific laws against it?
- How is it worded? (Like racism, there are many ways of defining it, and as a class activity it would be useful to have working definitions against which we can later refer when discussing the material to follow)
- How are hate-crimes enforced? What potential dangers exist in their application?

2. Suggested Warm-up activity:

- Not all songs which have been deemed as “Racist” end up on the banned list of songs. Have students read the article “Bigotry Bill: Fans told the songs they can't sing”
- In the section of this article “Jury’s out” are 3 songs which are ‘undecided’
- Working in groups (2-3) have students pick one of the 3 (or ensure all three are covered) and find out more about that song, its history, its lyrics, its use in Scottish football stadia. (An alternative is a moot court session: groups of students present a case for a song to be banned to a group of peers who will apply the ruling based on the legal definition of racism or recommend a better written law (hate-crime) be created to cover cases like these)
- Each group should write a brief explaining
 - Their decision to ban or not the song.
 - Their reasons for doing so referring to the precise language in their definition of racism
 - Whether the definition of racism is adequately worded to include these songs, or if there is a need to further elaboration of what is included/not included in the law (i.e. A separate Hate-crime law) OR If this song merits defense in terms of public expression.
- Have the groups present their findings and discuss them.

In whole group session: Display (or project) the image of Rangers fans using a “Nazi-salute” in a game against Tel Aviv:



- Discuss with the students, what is going on here. What are their thoughts on whether this should be allowed to happen in a European stadium?
- How this played out:

- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/teams/r/rangers/6383691.stm>
- <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/european/rangers-in-clear-despite-fans-onearm-salutes-in-israel-437299.html>
- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-437640/UEFA-drop-probe-Rangers-salutes.html#axzz2KgNtL0Kx>

Examples of Blogs:

- <http://www.thecelticwiki.com/page/Rangers+-+Nazi+salute+origins>
- <http://sluggerotoole.com/2007/02/21/rangers-could-be-in-serious-trouble-over-one-hand-salutes-in-israel/>

- Do these publications raise any doubts about the initial reactions to the image? How do the students “read” those interpretations about the ‘Red Hand Salute’? Are they sufficiently convincing? Are they tactics? Does it matter if there is a ‘Red Hand Salute’? A general class discussion should be held in order to get all points of view, before moving onto the next case study.

3. The Spanish *King’s Cup* and the Spanish National Anthem.

Background:

Just as we have seen that Rangers and Celtic have a long history and rivalry that is deeply embedded in their fans behaviours, we must acknowledge that in Spain, the rivalry between the two powerhouse teams Real Madrid and Barcelona, although while not sharing the same city, have nonetheless a past that surpasses just plain old football rivalry between two clubs. It is very difficult to this day to trace the true origins of the somewhat unhealthy hateful environment when these two teams meet. Some point to back to Dictator Franco’s preference for Real Madrid and alleged influence in the outcomes of games and leagues. On the other side, even today we hear shouts of “Villarato” referencing the influence that the president of Spanish league is a Barcelona supporter and fixes matches for them (selection of schedules, hours for games, picking and giving specific instructions to referees, etc.)

Add to this the “Catalonia question”. The strong anti-centralist / pro independent position within Catalonia and especially Football Club Barcelona adds an additional ingredient through which Madrid fans and supporters can find difference, and make use of that difference, against FCB. In this way FCB takes on a somewhat similar role as Celtic Glasgow – whereas the Rangers fans chant for them (Celtic fans) to “go home” (even though they are, by and by, Scottish), in Madrid, their nationality is questioned by taunting FCB fans with Spanish flags, and chants that they are not “real” Spanish (that they don’t really want to be, or consider themselves to be). This of course changes during European and World Cups, when Barcelona (Catalan) players are suddenly heroic Spanish players. But unlike the Scottish example, whereby some Scottish born Irish descendents can opt to play for Ireland, Spain currently does not have this situation – although there is a Catalan National Football team. Nonetheless the rivalry is deeply emotional, involves some harsh social-political-economic-ethnic tones, and, during games between these two cities, some nasty behavior on the part of fans from both sides.

Add to this mix, Athletic Bilbao. There are two dominant teams in the Basque country: Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad. The former has a policy of only signing players who are from the Basque country (and speak Basque). Real Sociedad does not have use this practice and signs players international equally as players from any part of Spain. Thus Athletic Bilbao shares with Barcelona, a strong interest in “independent nationalism”.

For a good introduction to the “Catalonia Question” and its relationship to FCB, see Sid Lowe’s report:

More than a club: FC Barcelona and Catalonia's road to independence – video

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/video/2012/nov/22/fc-barcelona-catalonia-independence-video>

The King’s Cup final 2012

Our 3rd activity is embedded in this context of Madrid-Barcelona / Madrid-Athletic Bilbao historical and political tension: The King’s Cup Final 2012 between FC Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao. Prior to the match, Spain went through round one debate over where to play the game, with Real Madrid (the stadium preferred by both finalists) claiming that the stadium was not available.

- Have students read the details in Sid Lowe’s piece in Sports Illustrated on this story: http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2012/writers/sid_lowe/02/15/copa.del.rey.final/index.html#
- What are the issues involved here? Are the key players acting responsibly? Are their arguments convincing? Are there clear victims here? What position do you think Sid Lowe has on this issue? Has he done a good job in keeping a balanced view on all the perspectives?
- Do you think the motives behind refusing access to the stadium contribute to the already unhealthy rivalry between the two clubs / two cities?

“Others have insisted that Real Madrid does not wish to see Athletic and Barcelona fans -- Basques and Catalans, respectively -- come to the final and whistle the Spanish national anthem or boo the King of Spain, the patron of the competition, as happened at Mestalla in 2009. (And as is likely to happen, no matter which stadium hosts the final: the argument that it is somehow more offensive to Madrid fans is a curious and revealing one. No one has asked fans in Valencia or Seville how they would feel if the national anthem was booed in their stadiums).”

- Is this refusal to allow access to the stadium fear disrespect to the King of Spain, the Spanish Flag, the Spanish Anthem a valid and convincing argument?

Have students read as some background on the controversy that later emerged once it was decided to play the Cup final in Madrid, although in the stadium of Athletic Madrid (Vincent Calderon Stadium):

- Madrid’s President demands playing the Cup Final without an audience to avoid supporters booing Spanish anthem

<http://www.catalannewsagency.com/news/politics/madrid%E2%80%99s-president-demands-playing-cup-final-without-audience-avoid-supporters-booing->

- Madrid premier wants soccer final suspended if national anthem jeered
http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/05/23/inenglish/1337773240_904355.html
- Uproar over call for closed-door cup final
<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Sports/Football/2012/May-24/174431-uproar-over-call-for-closed-door-cup-final.ashx#axzz2KggylE7P>
- (Background on the Sarkozy reference to ban games if the national anthem if there is booing of the national anthem):
<http://www.dw.de/angry-sarkozy-takes-on-anti-anthem-soccer-rowdies/a-3718448>

BLOG:

- Copa del Rey protests distract from the game:
<http://theballisflat.net/2012/05/copa-del-rey-protests-distract-from-the-game.html>

Discussion:

- What are Esperanza Aguirre's arguments? Are they valid?
- What are the arguments of Catalan supporters? Are they valid?
- Is booing the King a "hate-crime"? Is whistling the National Anthem a hate crime? Why not? Should it be?

Tips to trainers:

We have selected here only materials from English language media. A significant amount of richer content can be used from Spanish speaking media sources, including radio, television, blogs and press in Spain. This requires that the students be fluent in Spanish. However we feel that the materials provided are adequate in providing the essential tensions between the parties concerned. It would be useful to ensure that the students understand the Spanish context for this activity.

Some background has been provided in the context of the 3rd step of this activity. However, trainers can probably find better documents (or have their students read blogs) about the rivalry between Real Madrid and Football Club Barcelona and how it influences politics and culture, and society.

Activity 4: Racism, hate-crime, and ethnic intolerance in European Football Stadiums

Specific objectives:

1. To develop skills in research, selection, and prioritizing of materials necessary before creating a journalistic piece of work
2. To learn how to translate concepts from previous learning into new contexts in order to demonstrate synthesis and evaluation.
3. To put into practice the language, protocols, and arguments against racism and other forms of discrimination into journalistic discourse
4. To develop skills in explaining and justifying ones decisions among many in determining the final product (what was said, and what was not said)

Time:

In class time: 20 – 45 minutes in preparation and explanation

Research time: 90 – 120 minutes working in small groups

Presentations: Depending on class size, 20 – 30 minutes per group.

Resources:

- Protocols and definitions of racism and hate-crime from Task 1 and Task 3.
- Internet connections, ideally with multimedia capabilities
- Materials and resources for the type of product the teacher is asking the students to produce (Digital cameras or news articles, blogs, desktop publishing software etc.)

Practical Arrangements:

This activity could also be used as an independent study unit following the in-class work during tasks 1-3.

- Students form project groups (6-8 each)
- The groups can further divide into sub (“expert”) pairs cooperatively dealing with individual research tasks
- In the end, the project group shares responsibility in presenting, elaborating and defending their final product to the whole class

Grouping: Paired work | Group work | Whole group

Instructions / Worksheets:

Trainers might begin with this short video report on FIFA closing several stadia

“Bulgaria and Hungary have recently been ordered by Fifa to play their next World Cup qualifier behind closed doors and pay fines after their fans directed racist chants at opposition players and fans, respectively. Bulgaria were punished after a group of supporters racially abused Denmark substitute Patrick Mtiliga after he came on as a second-half substitute, while Hungarian fans were found to have directed anti-Semitic chants at Israeli fans during a World Cup qualifier in August. Fans spoken to by Reuters in both countries believe the punishment is harsh as the chants come from minority groups, although some in Hungary see the punishment as fair”

- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/video/2013/jan/09/racism-fans-bulgarian-hungarian-video>

Group activity: Find out about Ethnic based Racism in Football in other European countries.

1. Find resources (Newspapers, blogs, fan pages, YouTube video/news stories and amateur videos of chants or images displaying ethnic racism in football stadiums)
2. What are the culture tensions involved?
3. How explosive is the issue? Is the issue being taken seriously?
4. How is it being policed? Internally through the clubs, or directly with police / legal avenues? How are fans trying to help eliminate the problem? What are the best or most convincing texts in your opinion? Why do you think that?
5. In what ways is this case similar to the one we studied about Glasgow Rangers? What new aspects does this case reveal in terms of racism and ethnic issues in Football?

Trainers might ask students at this point to write (or work in video) either individually (a blog) in pairs (point counterpoint articles) or in groups (a series of exposes or collection of articles around several issues) a proper news story for each group’s findings.

These creative projects should be presented to all the groups, with the members providing background, how they conducted their research, fact checking points, and how their work reflects suggestions and strategies discovered in Task 1 (protocols and definitions of racism and ethnic hate).

Tips to trainers:

The actual time necessary for the groups to conduct their research, work in discussion, draw conclusions, and produce the final product will vary depending on the level of experience of the learners, the resources available in the institution, and where the learners are in terms of education about creating journalism articles. Trainers should adapt the final requirement based on specific needs.

Additional suggested WWW References and Materials

Activity 1: Racism and discrimination: Definitions and European perspectives:

- <http://www.srtrc.org/> (Show Racism the Red Card website)
- <http://www.legal-project.org/issues/european-hate-speech-laws>
(European Hate Speech Laws)
- http://ru.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/uefa/UEFAMedia/258797_DOWNLOAD.pdf
(Unite against Racism – a guide to good practices: UEFA)
- <http://www.uefa.com/newsfiles/459063.pdf> (Tackling racism, a guide for clubs)
- <http://www.uefa.com/newsfiles/404203.pdf> (EU Parliament: Official declaration on tackling racism in Football).

Activity 2: *Billy Boys Song* and *The Famine song*:

- <http://community.tes.co.uk/forums/p/488561/6732471.aspx>
- <http://www.deadlinenews.co.uk/2010/02/21/13822-2668/>
- <http://forum.rangersmedia.co.uk/index.php?showtopic=83408>
- http://www.kickitout.org/news.php/news_id/4693
- <http://www.scotzine.com/2011/05/self-policing-rangers-fans-we-have-heard-it-all-before/>
- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/greenslade/2011/mar/01/rangers-thetimes>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZBT8CjbhY>

Activity 3: Racism and discrimination in Spanish Football

- http://www.as.com/english/articulo/athletic-and-barcelona-fans-whistle/20120525dasdenspo_9/Tes
- <http://www.catalansabroad.com/wordpress/2012/05/>
- http://zeenews.india.com/sports/football/tensions-rise-in-madrid-ahead-of-copa-del-rey-final_742755.html

Activity 4: Racism, hate-crime, and ethnic intolerance in European Football Stadiums

- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/video/2013/jan/09/racism-fans-bulgarian-hungarian-video>