

****Racism in Russian football fandom****

Article. Arnold, R. & Veth. K.M. (2018). Racism and Russian Football Supporters' Culture. Problems of Post-Communism, 65, 88-100.

Link: [racism and russian fans.pdf](#)

Aim. Russian football has a persistent problem with racism and xenophobia, extending beyond isolated incidents to become a deeply embedded feature of its fan culture. This article shows this isn't a recent development, but has historical roots stemming from a combination of factors.

Method. The research relies on analyzing existing reports from monitoring organizations, news articles, and academic studies.

Key findings. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian football fan culture was weak and lacked strong traditions, creating an opening for the adoption of violent and extremist ideologies from Europe. Far-right groups actively exploited this vulnerability, gaining influence within supporter groups and using football as a platform to promote racist views and organize activities. This problem gets fueled by several underlying issues within Russian society, including a history of limited engagement with diverse cultures, Soviet-era ideas about ethnicity, and the impact of conflicts that have hardened nationalist sentiments. Targets of this racism include players and fans of African and Asian descent, as well as individuals from countries formerly part of the Soviet Union. Manifestations range from racist chants and displays of far-right symbols to physical violence and attempts to influence club transfer policies.

While authorities have occasionally taken steps to address the issue – such as launching anti-racism campaigns and imposing sanctions – these efforts have often been criticized as superficial or inconsistent. There's evidence that some individuals tasked with combating racism have themselves held controversial views. The 2018 World Cup in Russia brought international attention to the problem, but lasting change has been slow. The findings highlight the need for sustained and meaningful efforts to address the deep-rooted societal issues that contribute to racism in Russian football and promote a more inclusive sporting environment.

Limitations. The research primarily focuses on overt racism – visible acts like chants and violence – and doesn't fully explore more subtle forms of discrimination. Despite these limitations.