University of Reading

Pro-equality initiatives increase expressed sexism among men but may improve trust among women football fans

Article

Published Version

Creative Commons: Attribution 4.0 (CC-BY)

pro-equality-initiatives-increase-expressed-sexism-among-men-but-may-improve-trust-among-women-football-fans.pdf

Araújo Silva, V. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5392-5646 and A.C. Gatto, M. (2025) Pro-equality initiatives increase expressed sexism among men but may improve trust among women football fans. Journal of Experimental Political Science. ISSN 2052-2630 doi: 10.1017/XPS.2025.10009 Available at https://reading-pure-test.eprints-hosting.org/123923/

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See Guidance on citing.

To link to this article DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the End User Agreement.

University of Reading

www.reading.ac.uk/centaur

CentAUR

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online

Journal of Experimental Political Science (2025), 1–13
doi:10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Pro-equality initiatives increase expressed sexism among men but may improve trust among women football fans

Victor Araújo[1] and Malu A.C. Gatto[2]

[1]University of Reading, Reading, UK and [2]University College London, London, UK
Corresponding author: Malu A.C. Gatto; Email: m.gatto@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract
Globally, prejudicial attitudes toward women persist. By taking anti-discriminatory stances, value-oriented organizations – e.g., political parties and religious denominations – can tap into group identities to shape their members' attitudes. We know much less about the role of organizations that are not inherently value-oriented – such as sports teams – in accomplishing the same. Yet, as various campaigns by sports teams worldwide indicate, this is precisely what non-value-oriented organizations increasingly attempt to do. Can football team fandom be leveraged to promote gender-egalitarian attitudes? We address this question with data from a national survey in Brazil and a survey experiment conducted in partnership with a major Brazilian football club. We find that while football team identity is salient and may be leveraged to change displayed social attitudes, the Club's anti-sexism campaign inadvertently increased men's expressed prejudice toward women in football – although it may have also improved institutional trust among women.

Keywords: Sexism; group identity; backlash; survey experiment; football

Introduction

Globally, discriminatory attitudes toward women persist. As prior studies reveal, various factors shape attitudes toward women and other marginalized groups. Amidst this extensive scholarship, studies focusing on group identity and belonging as sources of moral values stand out (Rutland, Killen and Abrams, 2010; Chalik and Rhodes, 2020).

Value-oriented collective enterprises – i.e., such as political parties, religious denominations, and social movements, which have at their core established guiding principles about "right, wrong, morality, and immorality" (Skitka and Wisneski, 2011, p.328) – are sources of social group identities (e.g., Greene, 1999; Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman, 2010; Polletta and Jasper, 2001). Critically, such collectives

Article updated on August 19th, 2025.

© The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of American Political Science Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

not only attract individuals with similar values but may also signal moral preferences and, consequently, prompt attitudinal change among their members.

For example, by taking explicit positions on the issue, party elites may reduce expressed anti-foreigner sentiments among their party members (Sønderskov and Thomsen, 2015); through public declarations that signal their stance, religious leaders may similarly increase declared support for immigrants' rights among their followers (Nteta and Wallsten, 2012). In turn, prejudicial position-taking may have the opposite effect: for example, political leaders' patriarchal statements may reduce gender-egalitarian attitudes, particularly among partisans (Bulut and Yildirim, 2023).

While the impact of value-oriented collectives on expressed socio-political attitudes is well documented, less is known about whether non-value-oriented collective identities – such as those tied to leisure activities (Bačovský, 2024) – can achieve similar effects. Yet, as demonstrated by Arsenal FC's "Arsenal for Everyone," FC Bayern Munich's "Reds Against Racism," and Juventus FC's "Differences Make the Difference," sports teams from across the world increasingly attempt to do just that.

Given the global strength of football fandom (Nielsen Sports, 2018), examining its potential to address prejudicial attitudes is crucial, especially amidst ongoing discriminatory practices in sports (Gentile, Boca and Giammusso, 2018). In this paper, we ask: can football team fandom be leveraged to promote gender-egalitarian attitudes?

We answer this question in two steps. First, we analyze original data from a national survey in Brazil ($N = 2{,}015$) to assess the salience of football fandom. Second, partnering with Bahia Football Club – which has one of Brazil's largest fan bases – we conduct a novel survey experiment ($N = 2{,}143$) to estimate whether Club fandom can be leveraged to change expressed misogynistic attitudes.

Our findings indicate that, in Brazil, football fandom competes with other documented sources of group membership – such as partisanship or identification with social movements – and is thus a plausible driver of change in attitudinal expression. Analyses from our survey experiment reinforce this: fans are more responsive to campaigns sponsored by their Club than initiatives carried out by another sports organization. Thus, football team fandom *can* be leveraged to affect social attitudes. But not necessarily for the better.

On the one hand, we find that exposure to their Club's anti-sexism campaign *increases* declared prejudice toward women in football among men. Additionally, male fans exposed to the gender equality campaign display reduced support for their Club's involvement in other social issues, such as racial equality. Increased displayed misogyny may reflect male fans' efforts to protect their space, aligning with literature on backlash and status threat (e.g., Mansbridge and Shames, 2008; Coffe et al., 2023). On the other hand, our exploratory analyses suggest that women exposed to the campaign evaluate the Club as more responsive to fans, suggesting the initiative may have improved women's institutional trust and sense of belonging.

Is football team fandom a salient identity?

In political science, membership in political parties (Greene, 1999), social movements (Polletta and Jasper, 2001), and religious denominations (Ysseldyk,

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

Matheson and Anisman, 2010) has been widely established as a source of collective social identity influencing individuals' attitudes and behaviors. In other disciplines, sports teams have also been identified as a critical source of collective identity (e.g., Dietz-Uhler and Lanter, 2008). As this literature shows, similarly to other collective identities, sports fandom can shape attitudes and behaviors, such as fans' willingness to donate to charity (Platow et al., 1999) and perceptions of self-worth (Branscombe and Wann, 1991).

Political science now increasingly investigates how identification with leisure activities, particularly sports (Bačovský, 2024), affects socio-political attitudes (Mousa, 2020; Rubenson and Dawes, 2022). As Thorson and Serazio (2018) show, sports fandom is linked to various preferences, including support for the military; the outcome of games may also influence attitudes, such as presidential approval (Busby and Druckman, 2018). Notably, examining the role of football team fandoms more directly, Alrababa'h et al. (2021)'s study shows that Liverpool fans' exposure to Mohammed Salah fostered positive feelings toward Muslims and reduced hate crimes near the stadium.

This emerging literature indicates that examining sports team identity may be a valuable research avenue in political science. Before exploring whether football team identity can help reduce prejudicial attitudes toward women in sports, we assess the relevance of this identity.

Data

We employ data from a national survey of Brazilian respondents to conduct this assessment. The sample of 2,015 respondents was recruited by Opinion Box between 22 September and 04 October 2022[1] and mirrors the Brazilian adult population in terms of gender, age, region, and socioeconomic status.

We employ two sets of questions to compare the salience of football team identity with those of other established collective identities. The first set asks respondents whether they identify with any 1) political party, 2) social movement, 3) religion, and 4) football team. These questions yield four binary variables in which 0 indicates no identification, and 1 indicates identification with the above collective enterprises.

Those who declared identification with any of the four types of collective enterprise were subsequently asked to rate the importance of that political party, social movement, religion, and/or football team to their life. From these questions, we create four binary variables, for which 0 corresponds to "Not at all important" and 1 corresponds to "Somewhat or very important".

Results

Given that, at this stage, we are concerned with how the salience of football team identity compares with others, we report descriptive statistics of the share of respondents who identify with each of the four types of collective enterprises and their respective importance in respondents' lives.[2]

[1]This study was reviewed and approved (10731/002) by University College London's ethics committee.
[2]The replication materials for this article can be accessed at Araújo and Gatto (2025).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

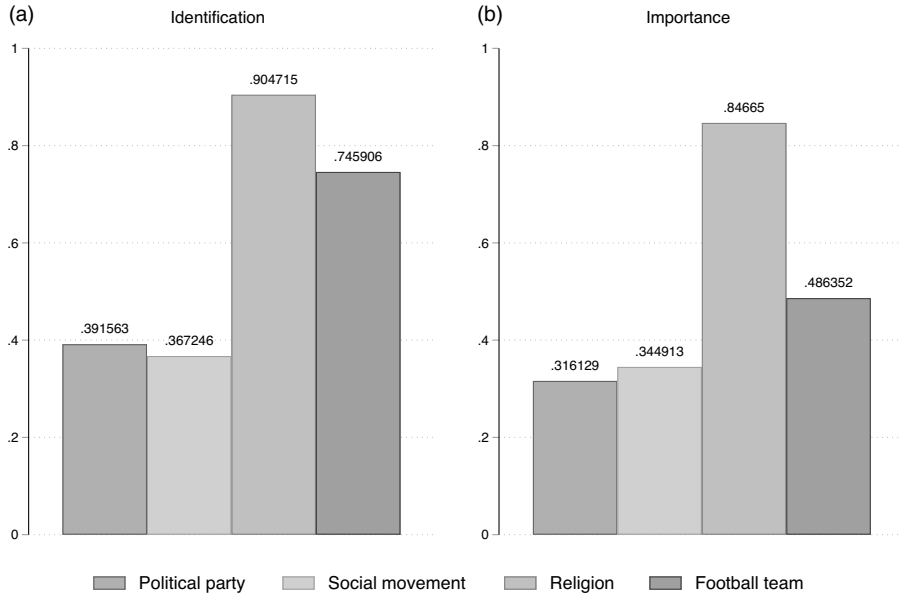

Figure 1. The share of respondents who identify with a football team and consider it important in their life compared to other types of established identities (a) Identification (b) Importance.
Note: The unit of analysis is the respondent ($N = 2{,}015$).

As Figure 1 (panel A) indicates, 74.6% of respondents declare identification with a football team. In other words, a substantially larger share of the Brazilian population identifies with a football team than with a political party or social movement. Of the four sources of identity we examine, the share of people who identify with a football team is only lower than those who identify with a religion.

Perhaps more critically, football teams also seem central to people's lives. As shown in Figure 1 (panel B), 48.6% of respondents consider their football team important; this may seem low when compared to the 84.7% of those who deem their religion important, but it is considerably higher than the share of respondents who consider their social movements (34.5% or political parties (31.6%) important.

These analyses suggest that identification with a football team – largely non-value-oriented organizations[3] – may be a relevant (and overlooked) source of collective identity. Next, we examine whether this identity can also be leveraged for changing expressed attitudes.

Can football team fandom be leveraged to promote gender-egalitarian attitudes?

Competing as part of or supporting a team can create a sense of group belonging and unite individuals despite their differences in other dimensions; membership in a

[3]As shown in Appendix A, in Brazil, major football teams do not emphasize any particular political ideology, with fans stemming from across the left-right ideological spectrum.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

football team may therefore be a source of collective identity (e.g., Dietz-Uhler and Lanter, 2008). Developing a sense of belonging is restricted to individuals supporting or playing for the same team (i.e., not all fans of the same sport). For example, Manchester City and Manchester United fans are all football fans, but Manchester City fans are unlikely to feel like part of Manchester United (and vice versa).

As specified in our pre-analysis plan,[4] to examine whether football team identity can be leveraged for reducing expressed prejudice, we hypothesize that *campaigns carried out by their club will be more successful in reducing respondents' display of sexist attitudes than campaigns carried out by sports organizations of which they are not members*. Critically, we also deem that the impact of the campaign may be heterogeneous: since, at baseline, men are more likely to display sexist attitudes than women, we expect *the club's campaign will have a greater impact in suppressing the expression of sexist attitudes among men respondents*.[5]

Experimental setting

We test our expectations using data from an original online survey experiment conducted in collaboration with Bahia Football Club (*Esporte Clube Bahia*, ECB).[6] Among the social initiatives, the Club has promoted since 2018 is a campaign against sexism in football – an issue that remains prevalent in Brazil and beyond (Gentile, Boca and Giammusso, 2018). Our survey aimed to evaluate the impact of this campaign.[7] See Appendix Q for information about the correspondence between the manuscript and the pre-registration document.

Based in the northeastern state of Bahia, ECB competes in Brazil's top football league and has a supporter base of approximately 2 million fans (Murito and Zarko, 2023). As shown in Appendix A, ECB fans, like those of other Brazilian football teams, stem from across the left-right ideological spectrum and are plausibly similarly responsive to the campaign.

Fielded online from November 14 to 30, 2020, we recruited participants via the Club's mailing list of about 40,000 members and its official Twitter profile, which had 1.4 million followers. Our sample includes 2,143 valid responses. In line with the general profile of Brazilian football fans (Appendix J), the sample is 90.5% male. Appendix D includes further information on sample characteristics.

Our main objective was to determine whether identifying with the campaign's sponsor (the Club) made individuals more receptive to its message, thereby testing if football team identity can be leveraged to change expressed socio-political attitudes. To this end, the experimental design varied the campaign's *sponsor* while keeping its content constant. Specifically, participants were randomly assigned to initiatives

[4]The preanalysis plan is available at https://osf.io/dvw8f.

[5]As specified in our pre-analysis plan, this heterogeneous hypothesis is exploratory.

[6]This study was reviewed and approved by the Club's leadership and the ethics committees of the authors' respec- tive universities. See Appendix B for details.

[7]As outlined in our pre-analysis plan, we also fielded an experiment to evaluate the impact of the Club's anti-racism campaign. We discuss these results in a separate study.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

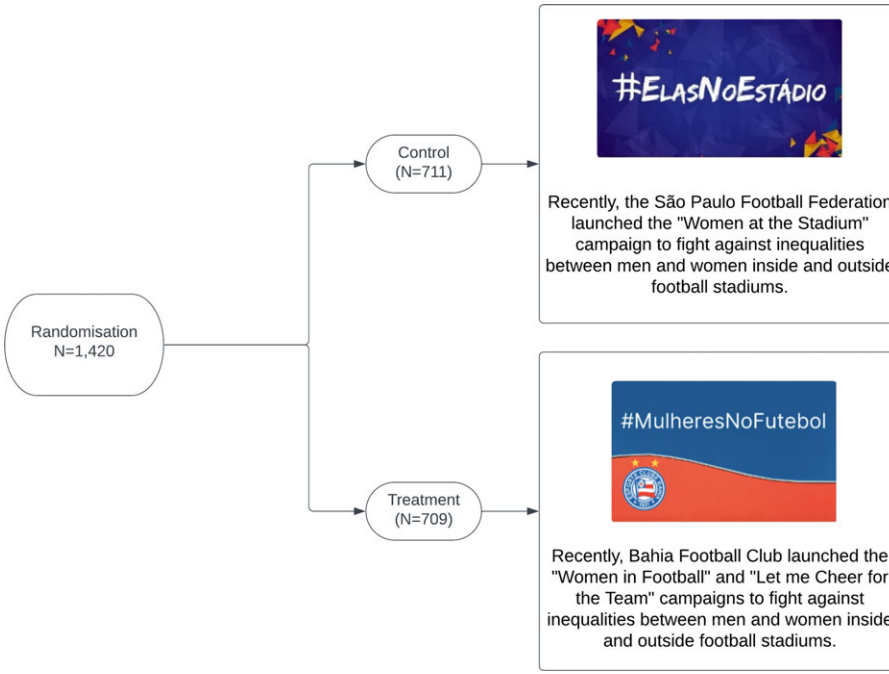

Figure 2. Randomization set-up condition does not produce substantively meaningful effects in any of our outcome variables.

from either a non-membership-based organization, the São Paulo Football Federation, our control group, or their own club, the ECB, our treatment group.[8]

To ensure realism and ethics, we based our campaign primes on real initiatives. To design comparable primes, we highlighted common aspects of these real campaigns. To increase attention, primes also included campaign images. Figure 2 depicts the randomization set-up and the text and images employed. As balance tests reported in Appendix E indicate, there is no evidence of randomization failure.

Outcome variables

As specified in our pre-analysis plan, our main goal is to examine whether the Club's campaign can effectively reduce fans' display of misogynistic attitudes. To measure attitudes toward women in football, our primary outcome of interest, we employ a summative index based on respondents' agreement with six statements about the abilities of women players, coaches, and referees. The scale of agreement with each

[8]For exploratory purposes, we also included a condition where the campaign was sponsored by ECB in collab- oration with its main rival, Vitória Football Club. About one-third of participants ($N = 723$) were assigned to this exploratory condition (Appendix C). Thus, for our main estimates $N = 1{,}420$. As shown in Appendix P, this exploratory.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

statement ranges from 1 to 7, where 1 corresponds to "strongly disagree" and 7 to "strongly agree". Adding the six items, we derive an index that ranges from 6 to 42 and has a mean of 16.592. In all statements, men players/coaches/referees are portrayed as superior to their women counterparts. As such, higher values of the index indicate *more sexist* attitudes.

> In addition to the anti-sexism campaign, the ECB also promoted other social issues. We explore whether the Club's sponsorship of an anti-sexism campaign influences broader attitudes by measuring respondents' support for the Club's involvement in six areas – racial inequality, gender inequality, sexual harassment, LGBT-phobia, social inclusion, and environmental protection – using a similar 7-point scale.

Albeit not the main goal of our study, we also conduct exploratory analyses of the campaign's effect on respondents' perceptions of the initiative and the Club's responsiveness to fans – which we interpret as proxies for institutional trust and belonging. We measure the first of these variables with a summative index composed of respondents' answers to two questions: 1) "How do you evaluate this campaign promoted by the São Paulo Football Federation/the ECB?" 2) "Through this initiative, the São Paulo Football Federation/the ECB made a public commitment against gender discrimination. What do you think about the São Paulo Football Federation/the ECB making a public commitment to this issue?" The variable ranges from 2 to 10 and has a high mean of 9.510.

Finally, we measure perceptions of the Club's responsiveness with a summative index of respondents' agreement with three statements, such as "The ECB board is interested in what fans think". Adding the three items, we derive an index that ranges from 3 to 21 and has a mean of 16.026. Appendix D provides descriptive statistics for all our outcome variables for the whole sample, as well as for each treatment condition.

Our discussion focuses on the heterogeneous treatment effects of the assigned prime, specifically examining how the effects differ between female and male respondents in the treatment and control groups. These effects are captured using ordinary least squares regression models, with and without pretreatment controls. We report average treatment effects in Appendices F, K, and M.

Results

We begin by examining the impact of the Club's campaign on fans' sexist attitudes. Our results suggest that football identity can be leveraged to change prejudicial attitudinal expression, albeit not necessarily in the hypothesized direction. As shown in Figure 3, exposure to their Club's campaign indeed moves the expressed preferences of some respondents. However, contrary to our expectations, the displayed preferences of women primed to their Club's anti-gender discrimination campaign remain unchanged, while the expressed preferences of men are *more* sexist than those in

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

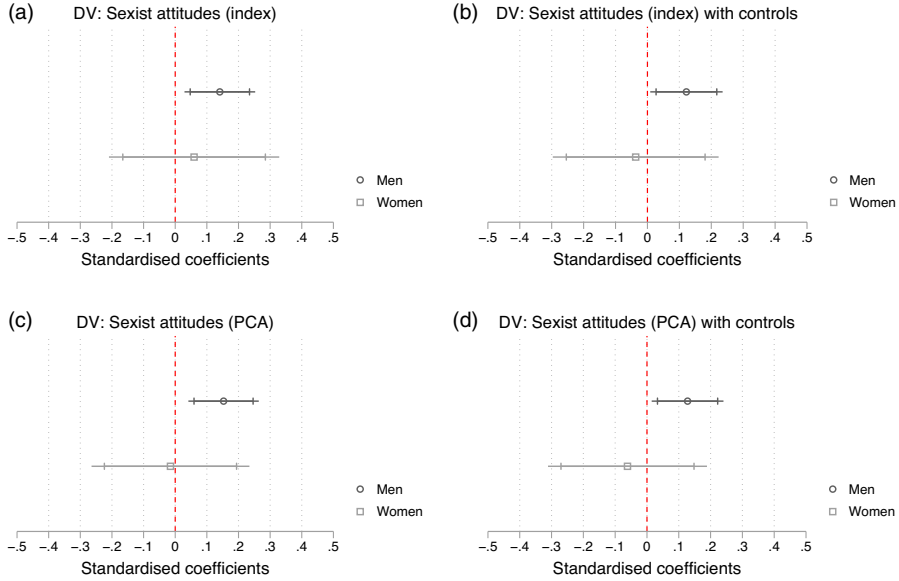

Figure 3. The effect of ECB's campaign on fans' sexist attitudes (a) DV: Sexist attitudes (index) (b) DV: Sexist attitudes (index) with controls (c) DV: Sexist attitudes (PCA) (d) DV: Sexist attitudes (PCA) with controls.

Note: The unit of analysis is the respondent ($N = 1{,}420$). We run OLS models with robust standard errors and report confidence intervals at the 90% and 95% levels. The X-axis is expressed in standard deviations. Across panels (A–D), higher values of our outcome variables indicate attitudes that are more sexist. We interpret our results in terms of their deviation from the mean (i.e., zero). For example, a coefficient of 0.1 means the treatment has increased sexist attitudes by 0.1 of the standard deviation. Appendix I reports tables of results with raw coefficients.

the control group (panel A: coefficient = 0.141, p-value = 0.013)[9]. These results are robust to the inclusion of pretreatment controls (panel B).[10]

Since the six items that compose our index are likely correlated, we employ a principal component analysis (PCA) to produce a factor resuming the common variation in the dimensions used to derive the original index (Appendix H). We use this as an alternative outcome variable. As reported in panels C and D, our results remain robust, regardless of whether or not we include pretreatment controls. We interpret backlash to their Club's anti-gender discrimination campaign as men's effort to protect their space.

Male respondents' attitudes toward their Club's social role in other areas further reinforce our interpretation. Figure 4 displays estimates from our analyses of the impact of our treatment on female and male respondents' levels of support for their Club carrying out social campaigns in six areas. In addition to displaying reduced

[9]This effect is driven by the treatment's impact on men's agreement with three of the six items of the index, which establish that men are better team managers, men should have higher salaries, and men referees make fewer mistakes (Appendix G).

[10]Namely, sex, age, race/ethnicity, religion, income, recipient of government benefits, marital status, Club member- ship, membership of registered fanclub, evaluation of Club's administration, frequency in Club matches, and survey recruitment source.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

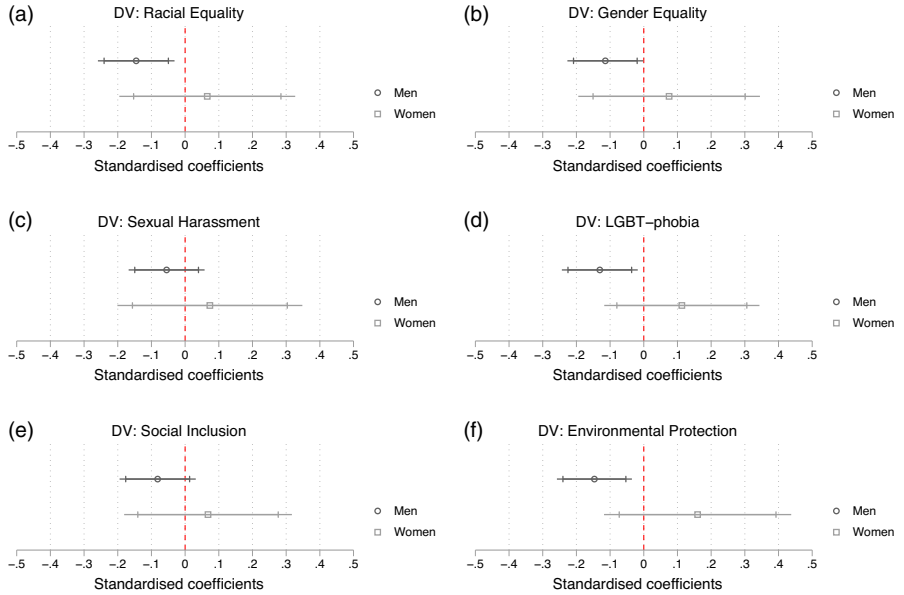

Figure 4. The effect of ECB's anti-sexism campaign on fans' support for the Club's social role (a) DV: Racial Equality (b) DV: Gender Equality (c) DV: Sexual Harassment (d) DV: LGBT-phobia (e) DV: Social Inclusion (f) DV: Environmental Protection.

Note: The unit of analysis is the respondent (N = 1,420). We run OLS models with robust standard errors and report confidence intervals at the 90% and 95% levels. The X-axis is expressed in standard deviations. Across panels (A–F), higher values of our outcome variables indicate greater support for the Club's social role. We interpret our results in terms of their deviation from the mean (i.e., zero). For example, a coefficient of -0.1 means the treatment has decreased support for the Club's social role by 0.1 of the standard deviation. Appendix L reports tables of results with raw coefficients.

support for future initiatives to tackle gender inequality (coefficient = −0.114, p-value = 0.047), men primed to their Club's anti-sexism campaign are also less supportive of their Club's involvement in other areas, namely racial discrimination (coefficient = −0.145, p-value = 0.012), LGBT rights (coefficient = −0.131, p-value = 0.023), and environmental protection (coefficient = −0.147, p-value = 0.010).

These analyses corroborate our interpretation that male fans' reprisal of their Club's anti-sexism campaign is an effort to maintain the status quo and protect their space within their Club. While anti-sexism campaigns sponsored by football associations (as in the case of our baseline group) would be reasonably unlikely to promote change within any particular club, male fans could perceive the ECB's efforts to bolster women in football as a credible threat to their status within the Club, such as their experiences in the stadium. These results are also consistent with the wider context of football fan demographics: data from our national sample of Brazilian respondents indicate that women are significantly less likely to have a football team and to consider the sport important (Appendix J); our results suggest

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

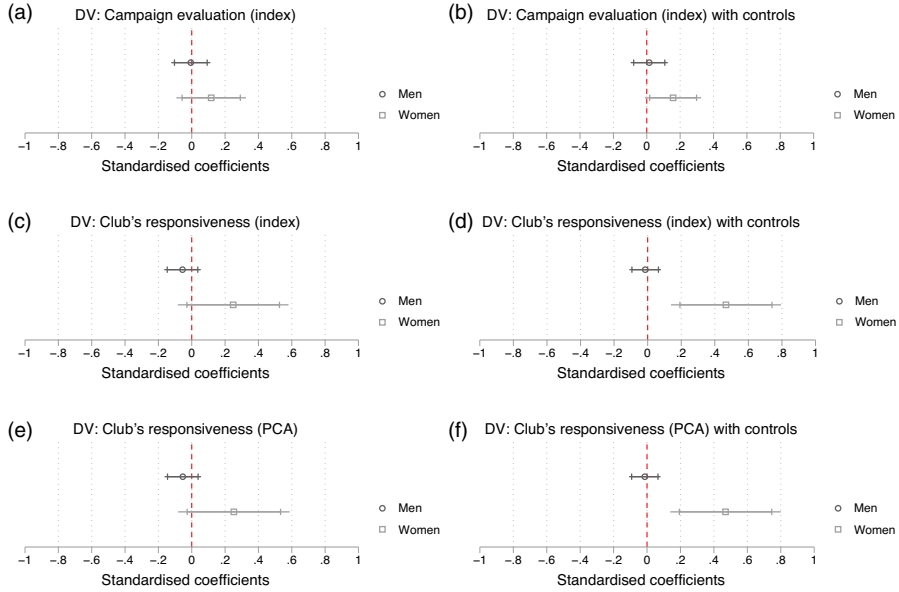

Figure 5. The effect of ECB's campaign on fans' campaign evaluations and perceptions of the Club's responsiveness (a) DV: Campaign evaluation (index) (b) DV: Campaign evaluation (index) with controls (c) DV: Club's responsiveness (index) (d) DV: Club's responsiveness (index) with controls (e) DV: Club's responsiveness (PCA) (f) DV: Club's responsiveness (PCA) with controls.

Note: The unit of analysis is the respondent ($N = 1{,}420$). We run OLS models with robust standard errors and report confidence intervals at the 90% and 95% levels. The *X*-axis is expressed in standard deviations. Higher values of our outcome variables indicate attitudes more positive evaluations of the campaign (panels A–B) and higher satisfaction with the Club's responsiveness (C–F). We interpret our results in terms of their deviation from the mean (i.e., zero). For example, a coefficient of 0.4 means the treatment has increased satisfaction with the Club's responsiveness by 0.4 of the standard deviation. Appendix *N* reports tables of results with raw coefficients.

that the overwhelmingly male group of Club fans seeks to maintain it this way. Since our survey was conducted in partnership with ECB and disseminated by the Club, male fans may have used the survey to express their discontentment with the Club's plan to make the stadium more gender inclusive.

This is consistent with the literature on backlash, which considers it a form of "dynamic resistance" employed by dominant groups as a strategy to reverse or delegitimize policy advances when their status is under threat (Mansbridge and Shames, 2008). As a large scholarship shows, men's resistance to efforts to challenge gendered hierarchies span various areas, from the enforcement of property rights (Brulé, 2020), to gender quotas (Gatto, 2025; Kim and Kweon, 2022), women's participation in politics and public service (Gottlieb, 2016; Krook, 2017; Mansell et al., 2022), and women's empowerment in society (Coffe et al., 2023). Our findings are also consistent with studies that reveal football fans' explicit efforts to protect their teams from outsiders (Nobis et al., 2022) and men's concerns about football becoming "over-feminized" (Cleland, Pope and Williams, 2020).

The effects of the campaign are not all be negative, however. As shown in Figure 5, while the treatment does not affect men's attitudes in this dimension, our

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

exploratory analyses suggest women exposed to their club's campaign better evaluate the anti-sexism initiative (panel B, coefficient = 0.158, p-value = 0.065) and, critically, are more likely to view the Club as responsive to fans' preferences (panel D, coefficient = 0.466, p-value = 0.006). Unsurprisingly, models with more precision that include controls tend to reach higher levels of statistical significance. These findings align with scholarship suggesting that positive institutional recognition of marginalized groups may foster trust and group belonging (e.g., Allen et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Our study indicates that football fandom can influence attitudes, with fans being more responsive to campaigns by their club than other football organizations. Although the Club's anti-sexism campaign prompted men to display greater levels of prejudice toward women in football and reduced support for the club's involvement in other social issues, it also improved women's perception of the club's responsiveness to fans, which is suggestive of their greater levels of institutional trust and belonging. These mixed results suggest that football can be a powerful tool for social change, but that how campaigns impact social change deserves further examination.

Supplementary material. To view supplementary material for this article, please visit https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

Data availability. The data, code, and any additional materials required to replicate all analyses in this article are available at the *Journal of Experimental Political Science* Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/OS4PSG.

Acknowledgments. We thank Bahia Football Club for the collaboration that has allowed us to estimate the impact of the Club's anti-prejudice campaigns. For comments and suggestions on prior drafts, we thank seminar participants at the London School of Economics, King's College London, Durham University, the 2023 meeting of the European Political Science Association, and the gender and politics workshop organized by Jennifer Piscopo.

Competing interests. The authors declare none.

Ethics statement. The observational study was reviewed by the Ethics Board of University CollegeLondon (approval number: 10731/002). The experimental study was reviewed by the Ethics Boards of University College London (approval number: 18877/003) and the University of Zurich (approval number: 20.12.1).

References

Allen, K.-A., M.L. Kern, C.S. Rozek, D.M. McInerney and G.M. Slavich. 2021. "Belonging: A review of conceptual issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research." *Australian Journal of Psychology 73*:87–102.

Alrababa'h, A., W. Marble, S. Mousa and A.A. Siegel. 2021. "Can Exposure to Celebrities Reduce Prejudice? The Effect of Mohamed Salah on Islamophobic Behaviors and Attitudes." *American Political Science Review 115*:1111–1128.

Araújo, V., and M.A.C. Gatto. 2025. "Replication Data for: Pro-equality initiatives increase expressed sexism among men but may improve trust among women football fans." *Harvard Dataverse*.

Bačovský, P. 2024. "Level Up! Priming Hobbyist Political Identity Using Survey Experiment."*Journal of Experimental Political Science* 1–17.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

Branscombe, N.R., and D.L. Wann. 1991. "The positive social and self concept consequences of sports team identification." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues 15*:115–127.

Brulé, R.E. 2020. "Reform, representation, and resistance: The politics of property rights' enforcement." *The Journal of Politics 82*:1390–1405.

Bulut, A.T. and T.M. Yildirim. 2023. "Elite influence on attitudes about gender egalitarianism: Evidence from a population-based survey experiment." *Political Behavior 45*:659–678.

Busby, E.C., and J.N. Druckman. 2018. "Football and public opinion: a partial replication and extension." *Journal of Experimental Political Science 5*:4–10.

Chalik, L., and M. Rhodes. 2020. "Groups as moral boundaries: A developmental perspective."*Advances in Child Development and Behavior 58*:63–93.

Cleland, J., S. Pope, and J. Williams. 2020. "I Do Worry That Football Will Become Over-Feminized": Ambiguities in Fan Reflections on the Gender Order in Men's Professional Football in the United Kingdom." *Sociology of Sport Journal 37*(4):366–375.

Coffe, H., A.A. Marta Fraile, J. Fortin-Rittberger, and S. Banducci. 2023. "Mind the Backlash: Gender Discrimination and Sexism in Contemporary Societies." *Frontiers in Political Science 5*:1–3.

Dietz-Uhler, B., and J.R. Lanter. 2008. "The consequences of sports fan identification." In *Sports mania: Essays on fandom and the media in the 21st century*, ed. North Carolina (NC), United States: McFarland Jefferson. pp. 103–113.

Gatto, M.A. 2025. *Resistance to Gender Quotas in Latin America*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Gentile, A., S. Boca, and I. Giammusso. 2018. "'You play like a Woman!' Effects of gender stereotype threat on Women's performance in physical and sport activities: A meta-analysis." *Psychology of Sport and Exercise 39*:95–103.

Gottlieb, J. 2016. "Why might information exacerbate the gender gap in civic participation?Evidence from Mali." *World Development 86*:95–110.

Greene, S. 1999. "Understanding party identification: A social identity approach." *Political Psychology 20*:393–403.

Kim, J.H., and Y. Kweon. 2022. "Why do young men oppose gender quotas? Group threat and backlash to legislative gender quotas." *Legislative Studies Quarterly 47*:991–1021.

Krook, M.L. 2017. "Violence against women in politics." *Journal of Democracy 28*:74–88.

Mansbridge, J., and S.L. Shames. 2008. "Toward a theory of backlash: Dynamic resistance and the central role of power." *Politics & Gender 4*:623–634.

Mansell, J., A. Harell, M. Thomas and T. Gosselin. 2022. "Competitive loss, gendered backlash and sexism in politics." *Political Behavior 44*:455–476.

Mousa, S. 2020. "Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq." *Science 369*(:866–870.

Murito, B., and R. Zarko. 2023. "Maiores Torcidas do Brasil: Pesquisa Atlas Mostra Flamengo, Corinthians e São Paulo no top 3." *Globo Esporte*. URL: https://ge.globo.com/futebol/noticia/2023/04/25/maiores-torcidas-do-brasil-pesquisa-atlas-mostra-flamengo-corinthians-e-sao-paulo-no-top-3.ghtml

Nilsen Sports. 2018. "World Football Report 2018."URL: https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2018/fan-favorite-the-global-popularity-of-football-is-rising/

Nobis, T., C. Gomez-Gonzalez, C. Nesseler and H. Dietl. 2022. "(Not) being granted the right to belong—Amateur football clubs in Germany." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport 57*:1157–1174.

Nteta, T.M., and K.J. Wallsten. 2012. "Preaching to the choir? Religious leaders and American opinion on immigration reform." *Social Science Quarterly 93*:891–910.

Platow, M.J., M. Durante, N. Williams, M. Garrett, J. Walshe, S. Cincotta, G. Lianos, and A. Barutchu. 1999. "The contribution of sport fan social identity to the production of prosocial behavior." *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice 3*:161.

Polletta, F., and J.M. Jasper. 2001. "Collective identity and social movements." *Annual Review of Sociology 27*:283–305.

Rubenson, D., and C.T. Dawes. 2022. "Subtle primes of in-group and out-group affiliation change votes in a large scale field experiment." *Nature: Scientific Reports 12*:22526.

Rutland, A., M. Killen, and D. Abrams. 2010. "A new social-cognitive developmental perspective on prejudice: The interplay between morality and group identity." *Perspectives on Psychological Science 5*:279–291.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

Skitka, L.J., and D.C. Wisneski. 2011. "Moral conviction and emotion." *Emotion Review 3*:328–330.
Sønderskov, K.M., and J.P. Frølund Thomsen. 2015. "Contextualizing intergroup contact: do political party cues enhance contact effects?" *Social Psychology Quarterly 78*:49–76.
Thorson, E.A., and M. Serazio. 2018. "Sports fandom and political attitudes." *Public Opinion Quarterly 82*:391–403.
Ysseldyk, R., K. Matheson and H. Anisman. 2010. "Religiosity as identity: Toward an understanding of religion from a social identity perspective." *Personality and Social Psychology Review 14*:60–71.

Cite this article: Araújo V and Gatto MAC (2025). Pro-equality initiatives increase expressed sexism among men but may improve trust among women football fans. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 109.109.190.209, on 21 Aug 2025 at 09:23:49, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2025.10009