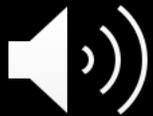


# Racism in Football & Digital Media Amplification

A CRITICAL MEDIA ANALYSIS



# Why This Issue Matters

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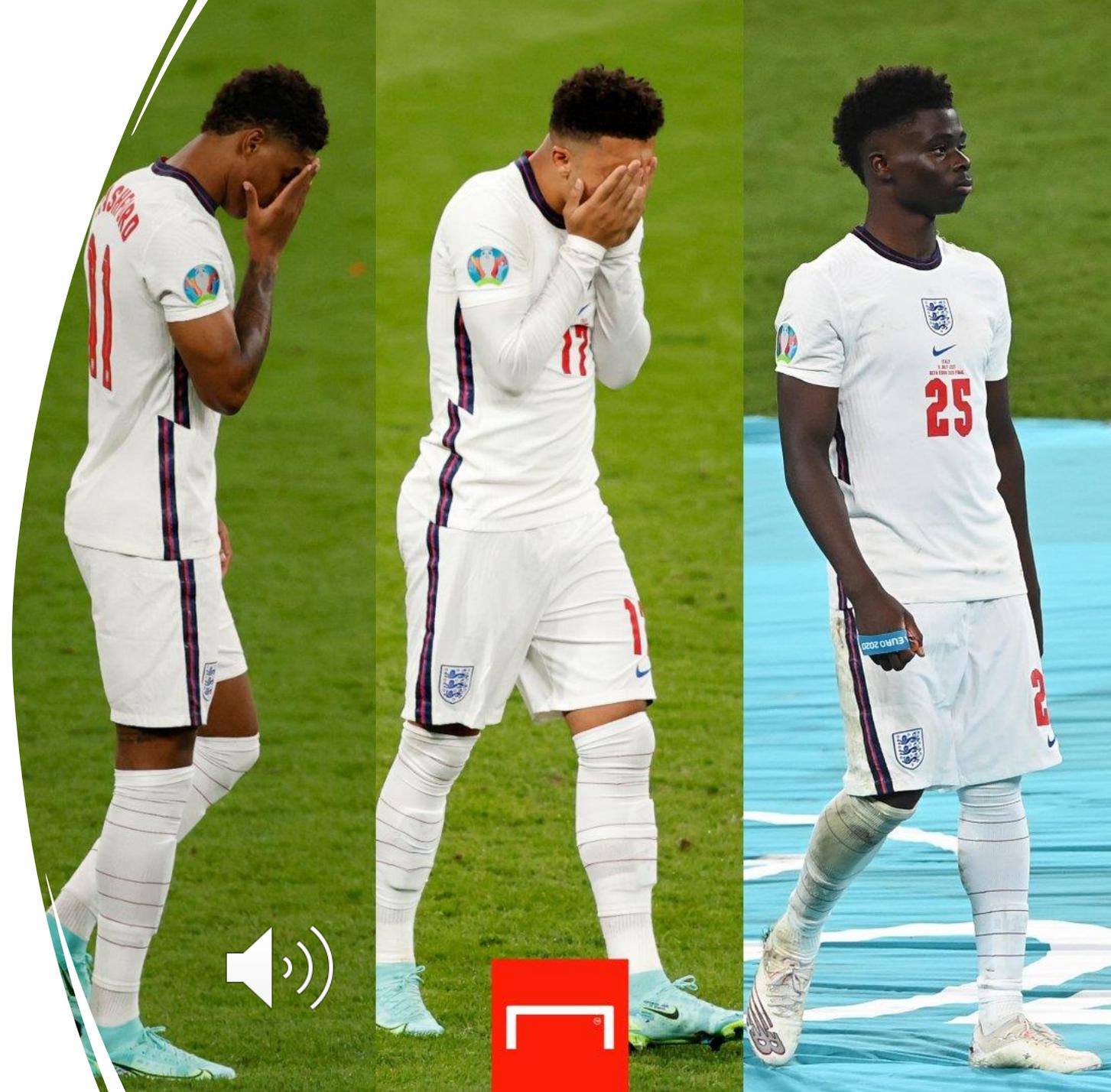
- Football is a global cultural system shaped by identity and community
- Social media amplifies racist incidents in seconds
- Digital racism reflects deeper cultural narratives
- Harari: fan “tribes” form around shared stories, as a result, online conflict intensifies
- Understanding racism requires examining digital culture, not just sport



# Case Study: Saka, Sancho & Rashford (EURO 2020)

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- Thousands of racist posts appeared within minutes of the final's conclusion
- Abuse included slurs, monkey emojis, and edited images
- Platforms failed to remove most hateful content quickly
- Triggered national debate on racism, football culture, and platform accountability
- Players responded publicly, using their platforms to reclaim the narrative



# Case Study: Vinícius Júnior

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- Faces repeated racist chants in stadiums and targeted online as well.
- Racist memes and edited videos spread widely on Twitter/X and TikTok
- Incident forced La Liga, FIFA, and governments to respond
- Hashtag campaigns showed both global solidarity and persistent hostility
- Demonstrates the merging of on-field racism with digital amplification





# Spreadability (Jenkins)

- Racism circulates because users share, react, and comment
- Algorithms prioritize emotional or controversial content boosts hate
- “Spreadable media” explains how messages travel through networks, not broadcasters
- Outrage posts generate engagement, platforms unintentionally reward them
- Racist content becomes part of the wider conversation, not isolated incidents



**Troll Football**  
@JustTrollFooty

...

Why does Chelsea's €1 billion worth squad comprise a bunch of Travis Scotts? 🤔



# Participatory Culture

Fans actively create content: memes, edits, commentary, hashtags

Participation can mobilize support or encourage harassment

Digital fandom blurs line between joking, banter, and hate

Online micro-communities normalize racist stereotypes as “banter”

Shows how participation is both empowering and dangerous

# Digital Citizenship & Social Justice (Costanza-Chock)



Digital spaces require active, responsible participation

Costanza-Chock: platforms are not neutral → inequality is built into design

Marginalized groups (e.g., Black footballers) face disproportionate harm

Fans' actions contribute to digital cultures of justice or harm

Digital citizenship = accountability, responsible sharing, anti-racist engagement

# Individuals, Citizens, Consumers

## Individuals:

- Players face psychological harm, threats, and global scrutiny

## Citizens:

- Online racism sparks political debates about race, identity, and justice
- Hashtags function as digital activism (#NoRoomForRacism)

## Consumers:

- Fans pressure clubs, sponsors, and leagues to respond
- Public backlash affects corporate reputation and brand loyalty



# Implications for Media & Communication Practice



- Platforms must improve moderation and accountability systems
- Journalists must avoid framing players with racist stereotypes
- Clubs need transparent anti-racism policies + public responses
- Social media managers must monitor abusive trends in real time
- Highlights need for ethical digital citizenship among fans



## Conclusion

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- **Racism spreads through tribal identity + digital circulation**
- **Harari: tribal behavior + myth-making drive conflict**
- **Jenkins: spreadability accelerates harmful and helpful narratives**
- **Costanza-Chock: digital citizenship + platform design shape justice**
- **Combating racism requires cultural, technological, and structural action**





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