Can We Fight EU-Racism in Football?
A Cross-Cultural Study

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims to examine the phenomenon of racism in football. The researchers collected data from people of all ages in the countries of Italy, Romania, Greece, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, and a number of experts from other countries as well. Data were analysed and studied through the use of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The findings suggest that racist incidences in football are very frequent. Furthermore, it was observed that social-demographic variables seem to affect people's propensity to racism, and usually, the respondents believe that racist acts are performed mainly due to lack of education, out of fear, and due to general social unrest. Finally, a thorough discussion and conclusions are given for the improvement of regulations at a European level to tackle the incidents of racism abuse in the sphere of soccer.

KEYWORDS

Demographics, EU, Racism Abuse, Racism in Football, Racist Incidences

1 INTRODUCTION

Speaking about racism in football, many researchers argue that it has a vital role in creating a peaceful and inclusive society as it offers the unique opportunity to bring together millions of people, regardless of their sex, colour, gender, age, nationality or religion (Back et al., 2001; Bradbury, 2011; Hylton, 2010; Ruddock, 2005). However, nowadays there is a growing consensus that the problem of racism in football is particularly widespread in society, in general. For example, racism incidents happen to players and fans on a daily basis. Based on that, numerous organizations in the football arena work against racism in football and encourage actively people to report cases of discrimination. Similarly, whilst there have been a growing number of anti-racism campaigns in the field of football, the majority of them seem to fail significantly to address the societal causes of this behaviour. In order to achieve the objective of a successful anti-racism project, a comprehensive approach was followed. As part of this approach, a questionnaire was created and disseminated among various countries with the

purpose of investigating what are the people's beliefs with regards to the phenomenon. Therefore, this paper aims at presenting the results and will try to fill in the lacuna identified in the previous paragraphs, by trying to investigate what is the current status of the beliefs towards the phenomenon of racism in football.

2 THE CONTEXT

According to a report from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in the field of racism and exclusion on different sports, it was found that there currently exists a limited scientific research that can assess positively the values of diversity and social inclusion that arise from descriptive data in the EU context of the specific field (Kjaerum, 2010; Tarnanidis et al., 2020). For example, Roberson (2006) argued that diversity and inclusion create a competitive advantage for businesses. Alike, Shore et al. (2011) noted that inclusive workgroups create high-quality employee relationships, enhance creativity, and strengthen pride in one's tasks. Similarly, it was found that social pressures from external stakeholders can also compel an organization to have strong morals (Johnston & Malina, 2008). Therefore, all of these examples positively represent diversity and inclusion engagement practices. Whilst towards that direction a number of relevant measures have been implemented by relevant stakeholders (like legal monitoring systems and awareness raising campaigns) at the European level in order to prevent the spreading of racist acts and unethical behaviors that occur on a daily basis to all kind of sports, this issue remains a pervasive challenge as it is too difficult to overcome the existing barriers and to provide a unified critical assessment, which will encourage all the participating bodies, such as athletes, players, officials and fans to build a shield against the growth of racism.

As for its manifestation, racism can take a diverse range of forms. There are cases where people are disadvantaged (consciously or not) due to their ethnicity. This is what can be referred to as everyday subconscious or indirect racism (Long, et al., 2000) and it can originate from frustration, insecurity, lack of knowledge or understanding. It can derive from the existence of a perception of endangerment of the indigenous/national identity (Llopis-Goig, 2013) due to the presence of "others". Moreover, the problem of racism has sharpened at a time when players have become more mobile than ever, not only between countries but between continents. Nonetheless, the trend also coincides with a deeply worrying increase in extreme right-wing activities outside the football stadium (FIFA, 2006; Iganski, 2011; Holland, 1996) In general racism can be defined as negative beliefs and attitudes which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form (Macpherson, 1999; Chu et al., 2014; King, 2004; Carrington, 2002; Garland and Rowe, 2001).

Additionally, the major focus of research and campaigning in the past was on fan behaviour. Recently, attention has shifted towards institutional racism, which simply refers to the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people (Macpherson, 1999;Feagin, 2006). Inherently, institutional racism has its roots in society; it was used by employers who were reluctant to recruit immigrants upon their arrival to Britain during the 1950s and 60s. However, there is still little evidence to suggest that significant advances have occurred against forms of racism (Solomos & Back, 1996; Tarnanidis et al., 2020). Based on the literature, we can see that racism behaviours are influenced by many factors, like personal characteristics, cultural and situational factors. Therefore, in this research, we will try to provide insights regarding the phenomenon of racism in the area of football in different study environments.

3 METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

A survey was implemented through a well-designed, printed and online, questionnaire that resulted both from literature review and with relevant discussions with experts in the specified field. In that spirit, anonymous surveys were designed and developed in each participated country, and distributed in seven different languages to football fans and officials, with the purpose of analysing trends in their opinions and experiences. The primary survey was conducted on different country specific samples to more than 650 respondents. It should be mentioned that among others, we were also interested in assessing the differences or the similarities that exist among the participated countries against racism in football. Keeping the above in mind, we collected data from people who were willing to show an insurmountable zeal and a willingness to help us with this effort.

The data analysis was implemented through the use of descriptive statistics, and the method of Pearson's correlation (Hair et al., 1998; 2006). The method of Pearson's correlation was selected, in order to measure the level and the strength of the relationships between the variables that examine the importance of racism in football. Pearson's correlation identifies the strength of the linear relationship between variables (Proctor, 2005; Brace et al., 2003; Chisnall, 1997; Bryman and Bell, 2007).

The conductors provided the interviewees all the necessary explanation information prior to the completion of the questionnaire. For example, it was deemed appropriate to inform participants about the purposes of that study and their rights. Clear instructions and guidance on how to proceed on each part of the questionnaire were given.

In order to ensure that the study tapped a wide range of respondents the data was collected from a purposive or a judgmental sample (Churchill, 1995). The technique of non-probability judgmental sampling was used to ensure, firstly, that the sample included people who go to football matches, they play football, or in different ways and with varying degrees of involvement they are occupied in the specific field. And secondly, judgment was used to ensure that the sample included a wide range of different aged groups. Therefore, based on these arguments, we selected to employ the specific methodology, in order to best describe the situation of racism in football.

Figure 1 illustrates the exact number of the questionnaires collected from each country, both printed and online questionnaires. Specifically, we manage to collect 672 responses from six countries (i.e., Italy, Romania, Greece, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria).

Figure 1. *Graphical distribution of the collected data*
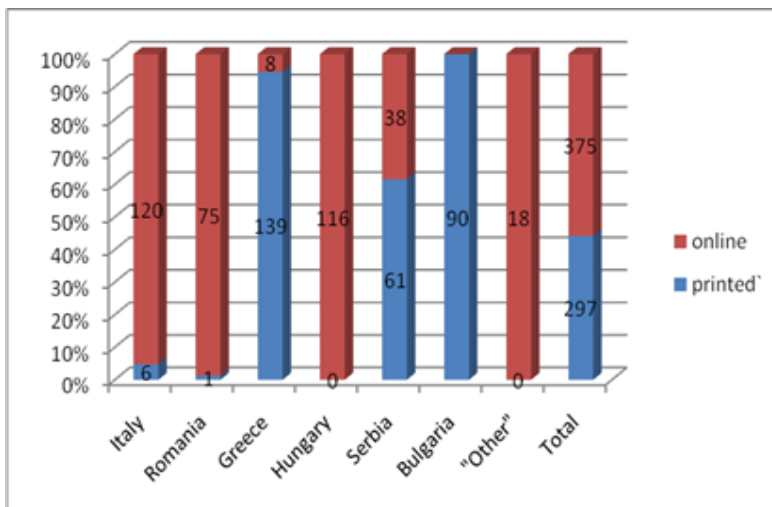
It can be seen that the majority of the questionnaires were collected online (56%). This result was evident, due to the fact that the data were taken from different EU countries. Additionally, the study sample comprised of 71.7% male, 25.4% female, and a small percentage of people who did not wish to identify a gender (1.5%) or answer the question (1.3%). It should be mentioned that an equal distribution exists in the category of the marital status; 42.3% were single and 41.8% were married. The respondents were mainly under the age of 24 (44.4%) and only 6.7% were above the age of 55. Their educational background was split equally among different classification of levels, where the majority of them have finished high school (32.0%) and have a bachelor degree (20.2%). For their employment status, it can be seen that most are working as employees (31.4%) and are simple football fans (meaning not professionally employed in any way in football, 26.3%).

The frequency distribution of the most common manifestation of racism abuse across the different countries participated in this study is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2. Graphical distribution of the most common manifestation of racism
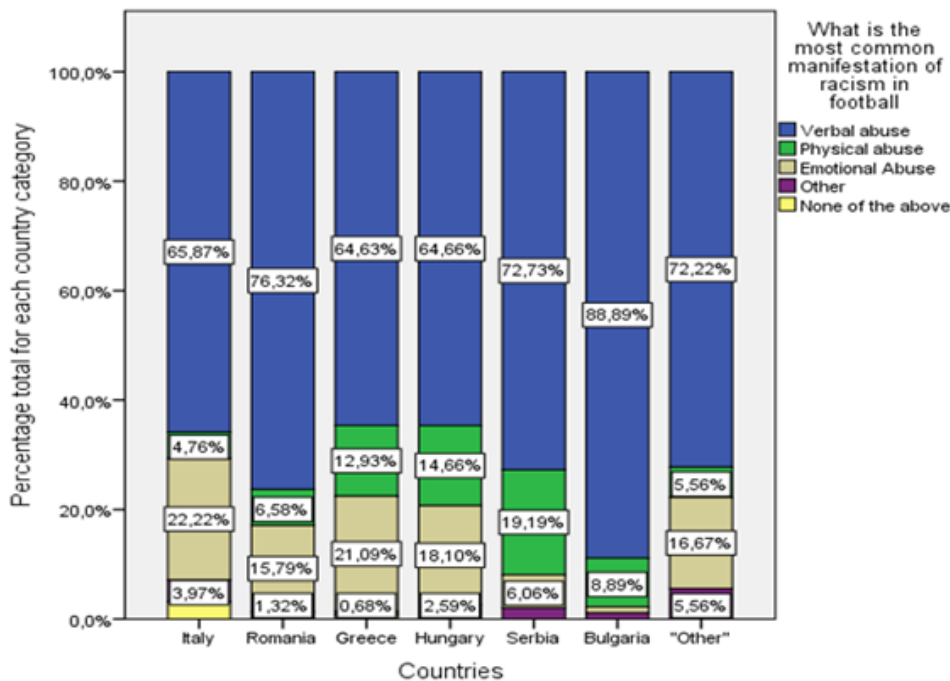
It can be observed that verbal abuse is believed to be the most frequent type of racism in football (highlighted in blue colour). Speaking about country specific results, we can see that physical abuse seems to have high scores only in the contexts of Greece (12.9%), Hungary (14.7%) and Serbia (19.2%). Additionally, looking at the frequency distribution for the racism type of emotional abuse, we can see that it has scores above 20 percent in the countries of Italy (22.2%) and Greece (21.1%).

When respondents were asked to indicate what are the most common types of racism in football (not limited inside the stadiums and during games) we found that the three most common types of racism are the "*colour of skin*", the "*ethnic origin*" and the "*religion*"). However, it should be stated that racism in football based on the religion type is being expressed only in the countries of Greece and Serbia. This may provide evidence for policy makers to provide awareness measures and marketing

campaigns that protect religion diversity. Also, we observed that the manifestation of racism in football is moderately important for the country of Hungary (46.6%). And it is slightly relevant to the country of Romania (34.2%) and Hungary (29.3%). As a whole from the current analysis, we can conclude that the perception of people who participated in this study believe that racism in football is a societal problem, and thus additional regulations need to be crafted by Governmental authorities.

Additionally, we found that the racism incidents increased greatly in Greece and Hungary and for the other countries they remained the same with a minor increase. What is more, the most common victims or racist abuse is believed to be players and fans being submitted to verbal and physical abuse not only on the pitch, but outside the football arena as well. Also, it should be mentioned that police, referees and press have also suffered racist abuse, as they were ranked with a high score. Hence, we can draw sufficient conclusions about the trends of the most common victims of racism abuse in the field of football.

According to respondent perceptions of each country group the most important campaigns to tackle racism are the "Say no to racism", "Respect" campaigns and the "UNITE" against racism campaign is more familiar to people in Romania. Furthermore the majority of respondents prefer not to participate previously in an anti-racism/ discrimination campaign. Therefore, this is one of the hallmarks, and also is an important finding for all the participating countries as it portrays that in complex decision-making tasks, like the participation in anti-racism campaigns, people select sometimes not to engage in social activities. Therefore, they seem to lose their interest and their enjoyment. Such demanding tasks need to be assessed based on the promotion of intrinsic values, so that participants can fully understand the impact of their engagement in the fight against racism phenomena. This will minimize the disaffection result along with learning activities included in anti-racism campaigns.

When examining the causes of racism acts across countries it is found that people who perform racist behaviours are not well educated and mainly are influenced through the uses of social media communication tools. However, it should be stated that the specific finding is relevant to the existing literature review, as it was found that many football fans and supporters in EU football tend to post daily in their online discussions racist thoughts. For example, the study carried out by Cleland (2013) in English football, ascertains that social media sites, like fan message boards, have allowed racist thoughts to flourish online, in particular by rejecting multiculturalism and Islam through the presentation of whiteness and national belonging and an outright hostility towards the 'other'. Based on that, it can be concluded that most of the respondents from each country group mentioned that racist comments in social media occur very frequently for all the studied countries involved. Specifically, in the country of Hungary, a great percentage of people indicated that racism comments are rare in social media. The specific results show clearly that people inside the internet express more easily their racist behaviours, and thus policy makers or Governments need to create common policies and regulations for the fight of racist comments in different social media.

In an attempt to proceed further the analysis, we performed correlations between the variables that examine the frequency of racist acts and the effects of the socio-demographic variables on each participating country (see table below).

Table 1. Analytic correlation scores between the frequency of racist incidents and demographics, (age, education and gender variables)

Countries			Frequency of racism incidences	Age	Education	Gender
Italy	Frequency of racism incidences in football	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	-.050	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.578			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	-.144	-.124	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.108	.165		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	.124	.062	-.036	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.165	.488	.691	
Romania	Frequency of racism incidences in football	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	-.163	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.159			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	**-.315****	**.523****	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.000		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.003	**.325****	**.442****	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.977	.004	.000	
Greece	Frequency of racism incidences in football	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	.085	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.304			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	.029	.047	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.729	.574		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.100	-.031	**.169***	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.226	.707	.040	
Hungary	Frequency of racism incidences in football	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	**.332****	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	.148	**.694****	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.113	.000		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	**.245****	**.376****	**.338****	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000	.000	

Table 1 continued

Countries			Frequency of racism incidences	Age	Education	Gender
Serbia	Frequency of racism incidences in football	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	.036	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.721			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	.154	**.203***	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.129	.044		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	.026	.091	.116	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.799	.368	.254	
Bulgaria	Frequency of racism incidences in football	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	**.234***	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.026			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	-.103	.195	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.333	.066		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	.077	-.064	.148	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.472	.551	.164	
"Other"	Frequency of racism incidences in football	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	-.316	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.202			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	**-.484***	.082	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.746		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.047	-.232	.172	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.854	.355	.496	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

The current table shows the correlations between the frequency of racist incidents per country and demographics. The correlation coefficients highlighted in bold express strong influence between the specific variables. Clearly, we can observe that in the case of:

- **Italy**: There exists a non-significant correlation (NS)
- **Romania**: There exists a significant negative correlation with education (r= -. 315**, sigh. =0.06)
- **Greece**: There exists a non-significant correlation (NS)
- **Hungary**: There exists a positive significant correlation of observation of racist abuse with age (r= **.332**, sig.=** .000) and gender (r= **.245**, sig.=** .008)
- **Serbia**: There exists a non-significant correlation (NS)

- **Bulgaria**: There exists a positive significant correlation of observation of racist abuse with age (r= . **.234*, sig.=** .026)
- **Other**: There exists negative significant correlation of observation of racist abuse and gender (r= **-.484*, sig.=** .042)

The non-significant correlations (NS) observed in the above countries means that a change in the dependent variable (i.e., frequency of racist incidents) cannot influence the value of the independent variable (i.e., demographics).

Table 2. Analytic correlation scores of racism importance and demographics (age, education and gender variables)

Countries			Racism importance	Age	Education	Gender
Italy	Racism importance	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	-.026	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.774			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	-.146	-.124	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.102	.165		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	.019	.062	-.036	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.830	.488	.691	
Romania	Racism importance	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	-.062	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.595			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	**-.347****	**.523****	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	**-.236***	**.325****	**.442****	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.004	.000	
Greece	Racism importance	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	-.139	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.092			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	-.006	.047	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.941	.574		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.006	-.031	**.169***	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.943	.707	.040	

Table 2 continued

Countries			Racism importance	Age	Education	Gender
Hungary	Racism importance	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	**.256****	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.006			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	**.231***	**.694****	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.000		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	**.351****	**.376****	**.338****	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
Serbia	Racism importance	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	.002	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.981			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	.163	**.203***	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.107	.044		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	.128	.091	.116	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.207	.368	.254	
Bulgaria	Racism importance	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	.005	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.960			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	.121	.195	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.254	.066		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	.065	-.064	.148	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.545	.551	.164	
"Other"	Racism importance	Pearson Correlation	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Age	Pearson Correlation	-.002	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.993			
	Education	Pearson Correlation	-.399	.082	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.101	.746		
	Gender	Pearson Correlation	.121	-.232	.172	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.632	.355	.496	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

The specific table determines the correlation between the importance of racism and the most influent demographic variables, like the distribution of age, education level and gender for each of the participated countries. The correlation scores that are highlighted in bold represent the level of significance at the levels of 0.01 and 0.05 (2-tailed). In other words, these variables are inter-correlated significant. The asterisks in the Pearson correlation numbers represent a strong relationship between the examined variables. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that for large samples, a weak correlation can be classified as significant (Hair et al., 1998). By interpreting the results of the correlation analysis between the variables of racism importance, age, education, and gender, we can draw the following conclusions for each country:

- **Italy**: There exists a negative non-significant correlation between the racism importance and age (r= -.026). The same was found in the variable of education (-.146). On the other hand, the manifestation of football racism is correlated positively, but non-significantly, with the gender variable (r=.019). Hence, we can draw the conclusion that as the variables of age and educational level increase, the manifestation of football racism in Italy decreases. On the contrary, as the age variable increases, the manifestation of racism in football follows the same direction.
- **Romania**: The age variable has a small negative correlation which is not significant (r= -.062). Hence the ageing of people in Romania doesn't influence the importance of football racism. Similarly, there exist a significant negative correlation between racism importance and the demographic variables of education (r= **-.347****) and gender (**-.236***). For example an increase in these two demographic variables affects in the opposite direction the variable of racism importance in football. Additionally, the variable of gender has a significant positive correlation with the age (**.325****) and education level (**.442****).
- **Greece**: The variable of racism importance has a negative non-significant correlation between the demographic variables of age (-.139), education (-.006) and gender (-.006). In other words, an increase in the age of the people, and an increase in the education level seems to have a minor negative effect on the manifestation of racism importance. Furthermore, the gender variable has a strong positive correlation with the education level (**.169***).
- **Hungary**: The variable of racism importance has a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels (2-tailed) with the demographic variables of age (**.256****), education (**.231***), and the gender (**.351****). Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that as the manifestation of racism increases, it affects positively and in the same direction the demographic variables. Also, the demographic variables inter-correlated positively with each other.
- **Serbia:** The variable of racism importance has a positive, non-significant correlation with the examined demographic variables. Analytically, we can say that a small increase in the importance of racism affects positively these variables. Furthermore, the variable of age exerts high and positive influence to the education level of the study sample.
- **Bulgaria:** There exists a weak positive correlation between the manifestation of racism in football and demographics.
- **Other countries**: Because the sample of people who participated from other countries is insignificant and small, we cannot exert reliable results. However, we can add here that the manifestation of football racism seems to have a small negative correlation with the variables of age and education, and a small positive correlation with the variable of gender.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our study examined the phenomenon of racism in football in six countries, on a sample of 672 people. To this end we investigated through a survey the impact that it has on a number of socio-demographic variables. Our findings suggest that the most common manifestation of racism, according to the responses, is verbal and emotional abuse for the majority of countries participated in the specific

study. The specific form of racism was previously reported notoriously in many published reports, also this trends were analyzed in the literature review section. Therefore, by finding the same results it means that the problem still exists inside the EU territory and needs to be assessed more carefully by the relevant football decision-makers, in order to eliminate it in the near future. For example, many complaints about discriminatory behavior were observed by the people when attending a football match. This issue occurs continuously to those who belong to ethnic minorities and have different colour of skin and ethnic origin. The specific incidents have been observed towards the category of players, fans, referees, and police. Also, racist behaviors towards the staff have been observed in the countries of Romania and Greece. Additionally, the case of referees was scored higher in the countries of Italy, Romania and Greece. Also, based on the current finding, during the first decades of the anti-racism movements in professional football, fans were considered the main instigators of racist behavior. Thus, the efforts were targeted towards penalizing them. However, it can be observed that the responders of the questionnaire still believe that fans are the main source of racist behavior in football. This is different from the opinion of scholars, who believe that racism is more prevalent in the institutional level. As a result, there exists the need of a possible new framing of the problem of racism; one where the sole source of racism is not fans or football players but also the institutions that govern it.

Racism in social media occurs in a daily bases and we could argue that this communication tool becomes a catalyst for spreading racism in football. On the other hand, many of the people who participated in this study believe that the social media can help in the fight of racism. This could be achieved by the raising of awareness of the impact of racism on those who experience and witness it. Such events may include promoting anti-racism videos and poster campaigns, or a pilot training program for changing citizens' behaviour. Racist incidences in football are very frequent in all countries. It should be stated that during the last year racism phenomena were perceived to remain the same. However, they show an increase in the countries of Greece and Hungary. As far is regarding the people who witnessed a racist incident, selected to report it directly to the referees, staff members, the press and the police. Additionally, the most important instigators of racism for all countries are players, fans, players and police. The same three categories are also victims of racist abuse. Hence, there is a contradiction to the responses (observed in all countries of the sample); people believe that institutions are not responsible for the perseverance of racism (magnified by the answer that the responders trust highly the institutions of football), however they choose not to report racist acts in the official institutional bodies. This contradiction reveals that there might be a mistrust towards them, which however is not recognized officially. Thus, football policy makers need to focus on promoting intrinsic motivational values through the use of behavioural change marketing techniques, i.e., to develop learning environments that are intrinsically rewarding.

Speaking about the anti-racism campaigns in football, we could argue that the most known campaigns for all were the "Say no to racism" and the "Respect" and their impact was assessed as quite successful and moderately successful. Despite the fact that most of the people who participated trust the International institutions in football (like the organizations of FARE, UEFA, etc.), they indicated that they haven't participated in an anti-racism campaign. Hence, clearest messages need to be embraced in the development of these campaigns, in order to attract the participation of the people, by providing to them messages that increase public awareness and discrimination in football, as the specific issue is a social problem and affects every citizen. Specifically, we found that racism in society contributes to racism in football and vice versa. For example, we found that racist acts performed by people mainly due to the lack of education, out of fear and due to general social unrest. Hence, a feedback loop is formed that -depending on the circumstances- can act either as an opportunity for a policy focused, or could have escalated negative effects.

Related to that BAME people (black, Asian, and minority ethnic) have less opportunities as opposed to white, in terms of work. However, responders from different countries do not agree in their answers towards opportunities for the BAME part of the population. Cultural and ethnic identities

may shape what the responders perceive as racism and what as equal opportunities. Therefore, the creation of common policies for all EU countries against the racism in football is imperative, while taking into account the multi-faceted culture of the European countries.

Different policy makers and future incumbents should be guided by examining further the impacts of the correlations that we found on the variables that measure the phenomena of racism in football and the most important demographic variables for each of the countries involved, as important variations and differences were found. One of the more interesting results is that there is a high correlation between gender and the observance of racist acts; women seem to notice more easily when an act of racism has occurred. This could be explained by the continuous struggle of women for equality and the continuous struggle against that (that is still observed), which might make them more sensitive to nuanced and overt forms of racism. However, this offers another opportunity for successful policies, since diversity when designing anti-racism policies could result in a more comprehensive and ultimately more successful reform. Moreover, there has been considerable improvement in regulations, particularly on a European level, to combat the incidents of racism in the sphere of football, some EU countries can do far more on a national level to strengthen regulations.

There remains a pressing need for training programs for police, sports officials and referees. Fan groups that combat racism have become an important factor in putting the issue on the public agenda. Marketing campaigns and media coverage create pressure on soccer associations and clubs to take action, in order to maintain the necessary positive public image for club profitability. Finally, we found that the socio-demographic variables have an impact in the propensity of racist behaviour to all participated countries. Hence, it is clear from the present study that racism is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon as there is the need for continuous research, there is also the need for continuing education and awareness, as our findings provide only a snapshot of the peoples' propensity towards the phenomenon of racism in football. Hence, future studies should be implemented in different countries in the EU context by trying to analyse the influence of cognitive and individual traits of racism in general.

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