
“NO ONE LIKES US, WE DON’T CARE”

Research on the motives behind online discrimination amongst Feyenoord supporters

Abstract

In this qualitative research the question “*What motives do supporters of Feyenoord Rotterdam give for engaging in online discrimination and how do these motives relate to their ideology?*” is answered. To answer this question, in-depth interviews have been held with thirteen carefully selected Feyenoord supporters about their online behavior, what meaning they give to this behavior and what motivates them to participate. The results showed three discourses can be distinguished; a first one which argues their behavior cannot be described as discrimination, the second that does describe their behavior as discrimination, but still choose to participate and lastly, a third discourse that chooses consciously not to participate, because they agree it is discrimination. The discourses had various motives in common, such as emotion, humor, the impersonal and anonymous aspect of social media, mocking and insulting, but a few motives were specific for certain discourses. There were two things the respondents had in common over-all; how their motives to discriminate do not lie within an ideological belief and the misunderstanding they feel people have about them as football supporters. For follow-up research, it may be interesting to research other contexts where the motives to discriminate do not lie within an ideological belief.

Keywords: discrimination, football, motivations, online, ideology

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Name: Donna Klapwijk

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Supervisor: Willem de Koster

Second reader: Jeroen van der Waal

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The Erasmus University logo, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

Introduction

Last December, Feyenoord Rotterdam played the first home game against Celtic FC since the Europe Cup Final in 1970 (Smit, 2023). Even though Feyenoord won that final, a friendship between the supporters of the clubs was born. Both groups recognized their own characteristics in the opponent: a club founded by the working class combined with an unconditional love and support for their club; no matter if they win, lose or tie. Since then, supporters of both groups have regularly visited each other's games and supported each other's teams. However, last December something had changed. Before the game, messages and pictures surfaced on the internet insinuating a hatred against Celtic. An example was a picture of the Celtic logo on a rainbow background crossed through, with the text: "fuck Celtic" written around it. Celtic FC is known for their progressive stance on subjects like Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+ and the refugee crisis, but part of a new generation of Feyenoord supporters does not want to be associated with these political stances (NOS, 2023). Where the previous generation of Feyenoord supporters mainly consisted of a left-wing working-class, the new generation is increasingly right-wing.

Pictures and messages like the one mentioned before, are not unique to be posted by supporters of Feyenoord. On social media platforms like Twitter (X) and Telegram, Feyenoord supporters are not hesitant to negatively address the LGBTQ+ community and people of color. The question is what motivates supporters to post these messages and does their political stance relate to their discriminatory behavior? In the literature a number of explanations are found for the emergence of online discrimination amongst football supporters. Reasons like the COVID-19 crisis, stronger measures on discrimination inside the stadium, echo chambers and anonymity were frequently used to explain the increase in discrimination on various social media platforms by football supporters (Cable, Kilvington & Mottershead, 2022; Cleland, 2014; Glynn & Brown, 2023; Miranda et al, 2023; Seijbel, van Sterkenburg & Spaaij, 2023).

However, most of the existing literature does not focus on whether online discriminatory behavior from supporters arises from actual racist, homophobic, and antisemitic ideologies, while taking the perspective and motives of the supporters themselves into account (Cable et al., 2022; Cleland, 2014; Seijbel, van Sterkenburg & Oonk, 2022). Much of the research is quantitative and examines messages posted on social media. Only a few researchers use qualitative data like interviews, but it is mostly aimed at investigating the motives behind racism, not discrimination in the broad sense (Glynn & Brown, 2023; Müller, Van Zoonen & de Roode, 2017). Here, supporters argue that their racist behavior arises as a result of peer-

pressure, protecting an image, a sense of humor, blurring of moral boundaries or provocative behavior. Nevertheless, the various motives and perspectives expressed by the supporters themselves are seen as discriminatory expressions. The focus of the existing literature is not on the meaning-making of discrimination and ideology of the supporters, whereas this research is. Hence, the central question in this research is:

“What motives do supporters of Feyenoord Rotterdam give for engaging in online discrimination and how do these motives relate to their ideology?”

Discrimination has always been a major subject of research. However, online discrimination is an upcoming form since social media usage increased. Specifically online discrimination by supporters is interesting, regarding their anonymous identity online through which they have the opportunity to express themselves even more freely than, for example, inside a stadium. In existing research about (online) discrimination amongst football supporters, various motives are investigated. However, the meaning-making regarding discrimination by supporters themselves, and how their behavior relates to their ideology, remains underexposed. The aim of this research is to explore a broader sense of motives behind discriminatory behavior amongst football supporters and see what meaning supporters give to their behavior. Additionally, it is researched whether the motives and meanings can be related to the supporters' ideology.

Besides discrimination being relevant in research, it is also of societal value. Addressing the various motives supporters have for engaging in online discrimination could develop insight into a much debated, but not well understood social phenomenon with big implications. This could contribute to the well-being of the supporters themselves, in the sense that they often feel misunderstood. The information provided in this research could create a better representation of their perspective, something that is missing in the current literature. Altogether, this research could contribute to the bridging between the supporters engaging in discriminatory behavior and the academic world trying to understand this issue.

In the next section the central concepts of this research are discussed and defined, followed by a chapter on the research methods that will be used to answer the central research question. In the section after that, the results will be discussed followed by the conclusion.

Theoretical framework

In this section the concepts of online and offline discrimination amongst football supporters will be discussed and defined, supplemented by the various explanations for these concepts found in the existing literature. These will serve as sensitizing concepts during the process of data collection and analysis.

Discrimination amongst football supporters

The definition of discrimination is hard to grasp due to it being a sensitive matter as well as a subjective concept. Glynn & Brown (2023) use the concept of ‘othering’ to define discrimination: *“a problematic distinction is thus created between groups of people in what is considered an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ narrative”* (Glynn & Brown, 2023, p.1434). Othering entails creating a division based on conformity and nonconformity. Anyone who does not conform to the standards and characteristics of a certain group, is not welcome in that group (Doidge, 2013). While othering is not always considered to be negative, discrimination is always seen as negative and is even described as hostile (Glynn & Brown, 2023). Discrimination involves feelings of superiority and distrusting ‘the other’ which leads to a difference in treatment based on various characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity (Doidge, 2013; Glynn & Brown, 2023).

Not only does discrimination emerge amongst and between a variety of groups based on various characteristics, but also in different contexts. One of these contexts is sports; specifically football is targeted in this research. In the literature, a football stadium is described as *“the arena in which people’s racial dispositions with interest in sport are revealed.”* (Kilvington et al., 2022, p.851). Here, the link between ideology and behavior is immediately made, by assuming people express their stances on racial issues in the stadium through their behavior. It is argued that football culture is used to express discriminatory ideologies, which can normalize discrimination in football contexts, but also in other contexts (Carrington, 2011; Müller et al., 2007). Thus, the cultural context of discrimination is essential for conceptualizing it and for determining whether discriminatory behavior can be separated from or ascribed to ideologies. Discrimination in a football context can be aimed at the players, the supporters, or the staff of either or both teams. This mostly involves racism and homophobia, but antisemitism is, especially amongst Feyenoord supporters, also of frequent occurrence.

Antisemitism is described as discrimination and hatred aimed at Jewish people (Seijbel et al., 2023). The arch-rival of Feyenoord is Ajax, a club from Amsterdam, whose players and

supporters carry the nickname 'Jews'. While there is a discussion on whether Ajax started calling themselves 'Jews' or if it were the opponents that gave them that name, it got adopted as a badge of honor by the Ajax supporters. This contradiction to antisemitism is called philosemitism, which entails a positive identification and sense of community with Jewish people (Seijbel et al., 2023). Still, the name is also used by opponents to insult the Ajax supporters, and many chants and songs have emerged over the years wishing diseases and death upon the 'Jews'. These often involve references to the Second World War. This form of discrimination is mostly aimed at supporters and players.

Besides antisemitism, racism is often mentioned as the most frequent form of discrimination amongst football supporters. Racism is conceptualized as discrimination based on ethnicity and it has mostly been aimed at players themselves (Kilvington et al., 2022). For instance, if a player performs badly, and they happen to be of color, this is used to insult the player and blame it on their ethnicity (Cable et al., 2022; Cleland, 2014; Doidge, 2013). Kilvington et al. (2022) make a distinction between impulsive or casual racism, and instrumental racism. Casual racism emerges out of emotion, such as frustration regarding the game, insecurity, lack of knowledge or empathy. On the other hand, instrumental racism is meant to intimidate. Müller et al. (2017) also use the term soccer racism, which includes both casual and instrumental racism. This form of racism is often ascribed to the hooligans of a club, but also emerges amongst other groups in the stadium. This makes it normalized and part of football culture. It is argued that all forms of racism emerge in football contexts, but the question remains what motivates supporters to discriminate and to what extent their discriminatory behavior is linked to their ideological beliefs.

Online discrimination amongst football supporters

Next to discriminatory behavior emerging in or around the stadium and matches, it increasingly takes place online (Cleland, 2013; Glynn & Brown, 2023). Whilst the same forms of discrimination described above take place online as well as offline, the online context adds various other interesting aspects to discrimination amongst football supporters.

The first one is the different reasons why discrimination increasingly takes place online. Due to measures being taken against discrimination inside the stadium, offline discrimination has decreased in various countries, including the Netherlands (Glynn & Brown, 2023; Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid, 2023). Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporters were forced to support their club online (Cleland, 2013). These two reasons caused discriminatory behavior of football supporters to continue online. Besides that, fandoms have

increasingly become more internationalized, since the internet makes it possible for supporters to support clubs in different countries and continents (Glynn & Brown, 2023). Additionally, social media platforms have enhanced technology-wise and increased in quantity. This makes it easier for supporters to express their support online, but also to discriminate online. The use of online communities and echo chambers reinforces this development (Cable et al., 2022; Glynn & Brown, 2023; Miranda et al., 2023). Echo chambers involve social media users belonging to an online environment or community where majority shares the same opinion. This makes the threshold lower to express their opinion, even if it may be controversial or discriminatory. The beliefs Feyenoord supporters hold are reinforced through online supporter communities and echo chambers.

Secondly, sanctioning discrimination in an online context is more difficult to execute (Cable et al., 2022). This is connected to the last aspect of online discrimination, namely people that engage in online communication can create an alternative and anonymous identity. It gives them power to voice their opinion even though this can be considered offensive by other groups, without being sanctioned (Glynn & Brown, 2023). It can also cause a shift in morality and thereby creates an online alter-ego, which is different from their offline personality, and norms and values (Kilvington et al., 2022). The motives discussed in the following paragraph are applicable to online as well as offline discrimination. However, due to the aspects discussed such as anonymity, more extreme forms of discrimination tend to be found online (Cleland, 2013).

Various motives and perspectives

Multiple motives and perspectives explaining discrimination can be observed in the literature. However, it remains unclear whether these motives can be seen as an expression of ideology. Carrington (2011) theorizes that a correlation between ideology and behavior is not required. Here, the term ‘accidental racism’ occurs, which argues that people are not ‘real’ racists if it was not their intention (Carrington, 2011; Müller et al., 2007). However, since the group affected by the discriminatory behavior is negatively affected it causes a potential for discrimination to be openly expressed and normalized. In this research it is investigated what motives supporters engaging in discrimination themselves have, and if these motives are embedded within the ideology of the respondents.

The first potential motive is that there is a shift in what is considered morally acceptable; supporters do what they can to support their team. Especially when engaging in online discrimination, the freedom of not having to comply with the ordinary moral constraints causes

people to be more active and willing to discriminate (Cable et al., 2022). However, offline discrimination inside a stadium also involves other moral boundaries. People execute different behavior than they would at home: drinking, smoking, using drugs, yelling, whistling, singing, fighting and lighting fireworks are all more or less tolerated during matches (Buford, 1991; Scholz, 2016; Van Gageldonk, 1996). Even though some of these deeds are illegal by law, people are less likely to get told off on stadium grounds. This could also be applicable to discriminatory behavior.

Secondly, discrimination is used to provoke and shock not only the opponent, but also the non-supporter. Llopis-Goig (2009) described how supporters of the Spanish national team use racist chants towards players to make them insecure, which is also applicable to Feyenoord supporters. They are in particular known for their hostile support. The phrase ‘no one likes us, we don’t care’ is proudly used by the supporters themselves (Buford, 1991; Van Gageldonk, 1996). This also applies to the term ‘*Kuipvrees*’, which is described by Feyenoord supporters as the atmosphere and loyalty of the supporters that causes opponents to fear (‘*vrees*’) playing on their grounds (‘*de Kuip*’ is the nickname of the Feyenoord stadium) (FRFC, 2018). The supporters enjoy their opponents and non-supporters, such as the media, fearing them and framing them as hostile and aggressive.

The third possible motive, which is connected to the second motive, is that the image that they are not liked, and even feared, is carefully protected by the supporters. Additionally, it can even be a motive to discriminate (Van Gageldonk, 1996). If supporters are welcoming towards people outside their group, this affects their image of being hostile and unfriendly, which is why they choose to not be welcoming (Doidge, 2013).

The fourth potential motive is the use of humor. Lazio-coach Maurizio Sarri called the Feyenoord-stadium a ‘psychiatric institution’ after the supporters threw a catheter filled with urine on the field during a Europe League match (NOS, 2023). This phrase is often repeated, and even used to create merchandise: a fake catheter that can be used to store liquor (FRFC, 2024). The same way humor is used to explain ‘psychiatric’ behavior, it could also be used to motivate discriminatory behavior (Müller et al., 2017). Glynn & Brown (2023) find that supporters justify their discriminatory behavior by labeling it as humor. Here, it is noticed that supporters downplay the impact of discriminatory behavior or hold a different definition of what discrimination entails than majority of society (Kilvington et al., 2022).

The fifth possible motive is emotions and feelings of rivalry. Supporters argue that their discriminatory behavior is the result of extreme feelings of competition, where emotions take over and result in discriminating comments, chants, or posts (Llopis-Goig, 2009; Müller et al.,

2017). It is therefore not their intention to harm the group addressed by the discriminatory behavior, but to address their rivals (Seibel et al., 2022). This is, in the case of discrimination based on race, described as casual or accidental racism. Here, discrimination emerges from feelings of frustration (Carrington, 2011; Kilvington et al., 2022; Müller et al., 2017).

The last motive overlaps with this one, which is peer pressure combined with a sense of community. Llopis-Goig (2009) describes how expressing discriminatory feelings is more comfortable in a group instead of as an individual, and enforces the lack of control of emotions:

“The feeling of dissolution of one’s personal identity – in terms of moral control – and the creation of an emotional inertia of a collective nature produce a sensation of tacit agreement that reduces the activity of the inhibitory mechanisms and acts as a framework for legitimizing racist and xenophobic behaviors that would probably never be exhibited on an individual level. Thus, there is a lessening of the moral self-control of the fans, accompanied by an emotional contagion that, at times, can lead to violent or racist behaviors.” (Llopis-Goig, 2009, p.35, 36)

Concluding, the motive to discriminate could be combined with other motives, and they could overlap. Even though the motives are discussed in existing research, they are not analyzed in relation to the ideology of the supporters, specifically Feyenoord supporters. It is not discussed whether people are actually racist or homophobic, but it is noted how they make racist or homophobic statements. In this research, the motives of football supporters are investigated with the use of the sensitizing concepts described above. Sensitizing concepts can give some guidance with answering the research question and can therefore help structure the interviews which will be conducted later (Blumer, 1954). Additionally, this improves the reliability of the research, by making sure the same definitions are persisted throughout the research.

Research design

To answer the research question: *“What motives do supporters of Feyenoord Rotterdam give for engaging in online discrimination and how do these motives relate to their ideology?”* qualitative data was collected. Through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with thirteen Feyenoord supporters, their motives and meanings behind online discrimination were attempted to be understood. The use of semi-structured interviews made it possible to elaborate more on certain topics besides the topic-list and gain more insight about various perspectives and information gained during the interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). This made it possible to really delve into the motives and perspectives of the supporters themselves. For this research, it was important that the respondents consisted mostly of supporters actually engaging in online discrimination. My personal contact with the supporters made it easier to gather a group who participate in online discriminatory behavior, but still had its challenges. Not everyone I interviewed engaged in online discrimination; however, the majority did. Having a few respondents who did not participate, added a new dimension to this research, namely motives for why not to engage in online discrimination.

Access was acquired through a gatekeeper who has contact with a wide range of supporters with different characteristics and backgrounds. In consultation with this person, the purpose of the study was already made clear, and they were willing to help me select respondents through purposeful sampling and maximum variation. Purposeful sampling was used to thoughtfully select a range of supporters to answer the research question as accurately as possible, by selecting a maximum variation of supporters in different age cohorts and different links to Feyenoord (Babbie, 2014). Eventually I interviewed thirteen participants, ranging from eighteen years old to sixty-five years old. Only one of them was a woman, which is an accurate representation of the gender ratio amongst supporters. Most of the supporters were season ticket holders, and some also had jobs linked to Feyenoord. Their personal characteristics are displayed in appendix three. However, to ensure the privacy of the respondents, not much information is available. Only their pseudonym, gender and age cohort are given.

To gain their trust, anonymity was granted beforehand. Additionally, beforehand, during and after the interview, permission was asked to record the interview and analyze the data. The respondents had the possibility to quit the interview at any time they wanted to. The informed consent document enclosed in appendix five and six was signed by the respondent and by me. This document was also discussed before starting the interview, to emphasize the rights of the

respondent and what was done with the information gathered during the interview. Beforehand, the goal of the research was repeated, namely an understanding of their personal motives and meaning making regarding online discrimination. Therefore, during the interview, the respondents were asked to describe the meaning they give to discrimination, to get a better understanding of their personal meaning making and motives. Moreover, examples of online posts were asked and given, after which the respondents gave their opinion on this and elaborated on whether they would mark this as discrimination. These examples were well-known recent events which were described by the media as discrimination. Additionally, the sensitizing concepts elaborated in the theoretical framework were used to guide the interview indirectly (Blumer, 1954). The topic-list was used as the basis of the interview and is enclosed in appendix one. Some subjects on there were more relevant to some respondents while others focused on different topics, which is why it was approached as a non-binding guideline for the interview.

It should be noted how multiple respondents were hesitant to talk about their participation in discriminatory behavior and tended to give socially desirable answers. Here, my social position in the field was of use. Due to my personal interest in Feyenoord and a certain understanding of the experiences of the supporters, I already gained their trust. After reassuring the goal of the interviews and remaining open-minded throughout the interview, I created a safe space to express their motives and opinions. Additionally, a place comfortable to the respondents was picked by themselves, to ensure a comfortable environment. After reassuring them of my non-judgmental position, multiple respondents talked about their experiences with engagement in discrimination after a while. This is also why I chose to present the results of this research in discourses rather than groups, which will be elaborated in the results section. The respondents constantly said how relieving it was for them to be able to talk freely about their experiences with engaging in online discrimination, with someone who had a certain understanding about their world. Consequently, we had a mutual understanding of one another, and I was able to gain sensitive information.

However, my bias and position also caused some limitations. Because of my prior knowledge, I had some expectations and preconceptions about the motives, and my view on supporters, discrimination and football was therefore sometimes limited. By being conscious of this bias and remaining open minded and understanding of the respondents this was aimed to overcome, insofar possible. Besides that, to ensure safety regarding my position in the stadium and amongst the supporters after conducting this research, I had to take the sensitivity of the topic into account. Therefore, my focus during the interview was on making sure my

questions did not hint any of my own bias on this topic, by only asking open-ended questions. This was also done to prevent the field researched from being changed or influenced extremely.

The interviews all took place offline due to the sensitivity of the topic, which is, according to personal experience, more comfortable to discuss face-to-face. The interviews lasted ranging from an hour to three hours, which combined lasted approximately twenty hours. They were recorded and transcribed afterwards. Here, anonymity was granted by the use of pseudonyms. Additionally, the interviews were held in Dutch, since the respondents are mostly Dutch, so the quotes used were translated afterwards. I tried to translate these quotations as accurately as possible, to give an accurate image of the perception of the supporters. This also meant I kept the swear words in the quotations, to precisely display the perspective of the respondents. Subsequently, with the use of the qualitative coding-program ATLAS.ti, the transcripts were coded. First, they were openly coded, to remain an open overview of the information provided in the interviews, while creating categories (Babbie, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2022). After that, the open codes were grouped into seventeen axial codes and positioned in a theoretical model to create a more closed overview. Finally, four selective codes were made by creating an interconnection of these categories (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). This resulted in a categorization of motives and meaning-making that helped answer the research question. The code tree created in this analysis is enclosed in appendix two.

Results

While collecting data to answer the question: “*What motives do supporters of Feyenoord Rotterdam give for engaging in online discrimination and to what extent are these attributed to their ideology?*” a distinction could be made between three different discourses. These different discourses represent different ways respondents talk about, and therefore give meaning to online discrimination. Respondents cannot be classified to one discourse, due to different manners of speaking about online discrimination. First, there is a discourse that argues their (online) behavior cannot be described as discrimination. A second discourse agrees their behavior is discriminatory, nevertheless they still participate. Lastly, a discourse exists which chooses consciously not to participate, due to the fact they see it as discrimination. However, there were two things these discourses had in common, which will be discussed first. These consists of their behavior not being related to their ideology and the misunderstanding they feel exists about them as supporters.

No deep-rooted ideology

At first it must be noted that one of the things all respondents had in common was their argumentation that their discriminatory behavior, or the discrimination other supporters engage in, does not arise from a deeply rooted ideology, in addition to the existing literature (Kilvington et al., 2022; Müller et al., 2007). Many different motives were given, which could be divided in personal motives and environmental factors. These will be elaborated in the remains of this chapter. However, they have in common that a deep-rooted ideology of actual hatred against minorities could not be found. There were many other motives, but these do not relate to the ideology of the supporters. This complements the existing knowledge about casual and instrumental racism (Kilvington et al., 2022). Both forms were argued to emerge from various motives but were not yet linked to the ideological belief of football supporters, and specifically Feyenoord supporters. Even though Müller et al. (2007) argue that accidental racists deny any racist intentions and convictions, which is confirmed in this research, they focus on the impact of this statement on the group that is discriminated. While that is an interesting take, this research continues to focus on the meanings and perspectives of the ‘accidental racists’, while researching other forms of discrimination they engage in.

Additionally, an interesting aspect is the argumentation about the behavior of other supporters. Many respondents talk about how the discriminatory behavior of other supporters may be a result of their ideology: “*I think the ones holding the banner [banner Feyenoord Zero*

Tolerance], that they do have an actual hatred against these groups, that they don't accept the people it's about." (Joep). By making this distinction between a group which does express this behavior out of actual hatred and themselves, it becomes evident they do not ascribe themselves to this group and therefore their behavior seems to not arise out of a deep-rooted ideology. This is at odds with the existing literature about discrimination in a football context. It is argued that discriminatory behavior is part of football culture and cannot be ascribed to a deviant group of racists or hooligans (Müller et al., 2007). However, respondents in this research emphasize they see this group as a minority: *"Of course there is minority who may be in favor of racism, without a doubt. But I'm not saying this is typical Feyenoord."* (Frank), hereby distancing themselves from this group. It also highlights that participants feel this behavior is not characteristic for Feyenoord supporters, while having the idea that outsiders do see this as typical behavior of supporters of Feyenoord.

Misunderstanding by outsiders

Respondents shared this feeling that a misunderstanding exists about them as Feyenoord supporters specifically, or about football supporters in general. It erupts from the one-sided focus in existing research discussed beforehand (Cable et al., 2022; Cleland, 2013; Seijbel et al., 2022). Some respondents argue there is a general misunderstanding about football supporters, which is the result of outsiders not being part of the football culture: *"They are not in that world, so they have no idea what it's like."* (Mike). They also feel there is a general hatred towards football culture, which creates a negative prejudice about supporters: *"Many football supporters are dismissed as people that are worth less."* (Joep). Laura feels this hate is specific for Feyenoord supporters: *"I do have the feeling we are screwed more often."*, which is supported by multiple other respondents. The participants feel like they are more often criminalized by the media than other clubs, and the punishments by the KNVB and the police are more severe than the penalties supporters from other football clubs get.

These misunderstandings result in stereotypes, wrong measures being taken against (online) discrimination, and even discrimination towards supporters themselves, according to some respondents. Stereotypes about football supporters consist for example of the belief that all supporters are stupid or dumb. Mike tells how people react when he tells them he is a fanatic Feyenoord supporter: *"Some people think I'm very retarded. and they immediately see me as a moron"*. Another stereotype is that all supporters love violence and vandalism, and lighting fireworks. In contrast to the literature that argued supporters enjoy outsiders fearing them and framing them as hostile and aggressive, respondents do not enjoy this at all (Doidge, 2013; Van

Gageldonk, 1996). Joris even argues this prejudice is why he stopped telling he is a Feyenoord supporter in work atmospheres or even in other contexts, which is shared by Bart: *“That association with, for example, throwing stones is made so quickly that I often don't mention it, especially in work environments.”*

The measures against discrimination are mostly taken during the matches. As an example, a football match can now be stopped if discriminatory or offensive chants are heard. However, respondents label this as a violation of their freedom of speech. Mike: *“If you would say, I hate the ‘Roze Kameraden’, that’s just an opinion. And I understand that opinion.”*. Many respondents do not understand why it is not allowed for them to share that opinion, even if it would have a discriminatory tone. Bart argues that if he wasn’t a supporter: *“everyone would think these rules are scandalous. You almost get used to the fact that football supporters can be treated this way.”*. This is also why a number of supporters described these measures as discrimination towards football supporters themselves or a preferential treatment towards the group discriminated:

“Why would you treat one group differently than the other? That it is also just a form of discrimination. And then they always say yes, it is positive discrimination. Yeah, that doesn't matter. Discrimination is discrimination. Because what is positive for one person is negative for another. Yin yang. You want one thing; you don't want the other.” (Patrick)

Every respondent argues that treating people like animals, makes them behave like animals. If police violence often occurs towards supporters, they are more likely to develop feelings of hatred towards the police and feel the need to act out against them. Additionally, a self-fulfilling prophecy comes true: supporters are expected to behave a certain way and therefore do not feel the need to behave another way, since they also do not get the chance to. Laura adds to this: *“everything you give attention to, grows”*. If attention is given to the negative aspects of football, it will gradually gain a more negative image. However, if it is the opposite, football will regain its positive purpose of connecting people. The respondents: *“see Feyenoord as a collective.”* (Frank). As long as people are there for the same goal, nothing else matters. Once football is mixed with political issues, friction arises. Respondents agreed football should not be the place to address political issues like discrimination: *“I personally think that you should actually leave politics out of the stadium. You just come there for Feyenoord.”* (Daan). Because football serves as an outlet for many supporters, they want to forget about *“their home situation, or work, or discrimination or racism, social problems like that. That’s actually the beauty of*

football, that you are there for your club.” (Richard). If the focus in the stadium is on social issues like the ones Richard describes, football will no longer serve as an outlet and would lose its positive purpose.

Additionally, many respondents feel that football related discrimination is part of a much bigger societal problem, and therefore a stadium is not the place to reduce it. *“If it even is a problem, it is a broader social problem.”* (Frank). The problem erupts in other atmospheres, according to the respondents, and should therefore also be addressed in other atmospheres. Respondents argue that the increasing polarization of society is the cause of discrimination, and it is therefore a societal problem instead of a football problem. Peter argues: *“It is always said that with many social problems that this is a Feyenoord problem, but that is simply a social problem. And this is reflected within a football club.”* This shows the respondents feel like discrimination is framed as a specific Feyenoord or football problem, and therefore measures are taken against it in the stadium. However, by addressing discrimination inside the stadium, this would actually arise aversion to the topic:

“I think then you get a kind of counterproductive effect, even with people who are liberal and open to the subject and open to change and acceptance, that it just becomes annoying at a certain point as a kind of force-feeding of you must, you must, you must. And how it works for me: when someone tells me that I have to do something... even if that is something I was actually already planning to do... well then, I tend to say no, I have to do completely nothing. Yes, I just find it annoying.” (Frank).

Thus, a vicious cycle is created. The feeling of a general misunderstanding about football culture results in in-effective measures, according to the respondents. This again reinforces an aversion against these measures and the feeling of a need to act against them, which results in more misbehavior and more measures. Eventually, this enforces the mutual misunderstanding between supporters and outsiders.

In the description of the discourses in the next sections, the perspective of supporters themselves on football culture is elaborated upon. Additionally, their perspective on online discrimination and the meaning they give to it are described.

Discourse 1: “I simply don’t see discrimination or racism in football”

The first discourse argues that the behavior of supporters, online as well as in the stadium, cannot be described as discrimination. Therefore, they also are not hesitant to participate.

Patrick argues that he does not see discrimination or racism in football: *“You get insulted a lot in football, but discrimination? No.”* He categorizes every form of online discrimination as insults, since he argues that people cannot be excluded from anything online. He elaborates on this: *“Discrimination is not when you feel insulted, discrimination is when you are denied something. Sure, an insult can have racist undertones, but that doesn't mean something is racist. It's just nasty, a very nasty insult.”* Respondents using this discourse describe discrimination as exclusion based on various characteristics such as race, sexuality, and gender. However, they do not feel like words count as exclusion: discrimination is always a deed, often combined with violence. That is also where most of the respondents draw the line: *“With fighting I think that's not necessary.”* (Noa).

The way respondents describe their behavior is mocking, joking or insulting. They indicate they do not really think about it and there is not *“something deep behind it”* (Daan). A lot of respondents argue there is no goal for the way they behave, and it is not something they thought of beforehand, which is described as casual or accidental racism for racist forms of discrimination in the literature (Carrington, 2011; Kilvington et al., 2022). Mike describes a moment where he posted a message calling Ayase Ueda, attacker of Feyenoord, a *“shit Chinese”*. He posted this after Ueda made a bad move during one of the matches. He describes this as a joke: *“Ueda is Japanese of course. Japan and China are not far apart. Just for fun, if I call Ueda a shit Chinese it's more of a joke.”* Other respondents also used humor as an explanation for calling someone a slur, which is in line with the literature (Glynn & Brown, 2023; Kilvington et al., 2022; Müller et al., 2017). One of the respondents even describes this as ‘supportershumor’: *“That's a kind of mutual humor, that doesn't make sense at all. It's so absurd that people find it funny.”* (Richard). This humor is always pushing a certain limit, according to the supporters. Moreover, when something provokes a certain reaction, they feel this makes it more rewarding and more fun to do. These motives can be described as personal motives. These consists of motives specific for an individual, like humor, mocking, joking and insulting for this discourse.

The reason respondents give for mentioning features like skin-color in their posts, is because these are notable features of a person and are therefore the most obvious to use in an insult. *“You see something, you take it, you use it. You're gay? ‘Shut up you, fagot’. It's very insulting because it is a characteristic element of you as an individual.”* (Patrick). Additionally, because social media is described as an impersonal space, this makes it easier to spread insults like these. This could be seen as an environmental factor which contributes to the motive to discriminate. Because social media consists of distant platforms, it takes away the humanitarian

aspect. Laura explains this: *“The further you are apart from each other, the easier it is to destroy someone with words. But the closer you get, then you are suddenly also human.”* Therefore, Daan argues: *“I think if you really have a one-on-one conversation with someone, they really won't say things like that.”* This is reinforced by the anonymity aspect of social media. It offers an even lower threshold to post discriminatory messages. *“You are anonymous, and you can express what you want. So, you can throw all the craziest things on it, and no one will say: oh, that's not allowed.”* (Jeroen). The respondents make it clear that on top of the impersonal and anonymous aspect of social media, another thing that makes it an attractive place to discriminate is the lack of consequences it has when you post messages anonymously. This was also discussed by Glynn & Brown (2023), who argue that in combination with the lack of sanctioning online, people are more eager to post opinions online which can be described as offensive by other groups. Jan describes the internet as the Wild West: *“There is no social control, it is a kind of like the Wild West. You can do your thing freely.”*

Other respondents also provided anecdotes about posting messages as a reaction to the match. Here, emotions play a big role. Emotions cause comments with discriminatory tones, because it takes over common sense and therefore blurs boundaries of what can and cannot be said, which was also mentioned in the literature (Llopis-Goig, 2009; Müller et al., 2017). Bart describes this: *“It's not going well; things are happening on the pitch. It just happens, in your emotion. In the emotion of sports. That's what you react to.”* Various emotions emerge during the matches, or even before a match. *“It is also the competitive tension that brings things out in you. Nice things, but sometimes also less nice things.”* (Joris). Besides tension, the most frequently mentioned emotions were anger, frustration, disappointment and excitement. These emotions sometimes erupt in hate, not against minorities, but against the opponent. Patrick describes this hate when he encounters the largest opponent Ajax: *“When it's the day of Feyenoord-Ajax, and that bus passes by, you just think there they are again, those cancer Jews.”* This shows that the name ‘Jews’ is not used to address Jewish people, but it is used as a nickname for Ajax and their supporters, something that was widely shared among the respondents and in the literature (Seijbel et al., 2023). In contrast with the existing literature, however, is how the respondents did not describe the comments about ‘Jews’ as antisemitism.

Discourse 2: “You go along with the crowd”

The second discourse describes discrimination as purposely insulting or mocking people based on the same characteristics described in the first discourse. Thus, in contrast to the first one, this discourse also views words as a form of discrimination, and not just actions. However,

respondents admitted to also participating in this kind of behavior in the stadium and online, even though they labelled it as discrimination. I purposely use the word ‘admitted’ for this discourse, since majority of the respondents were hesitant at first to talk about their personal experiences and messages. Some posted messages or participated in chants during matches when they were younger, such as Jeroen: *“I must say, when I was younger, I used to jump and sing along with ‘who doesn’t jump, is a Jew’.”* Their motivations to previously singing along are mostly the same as described in the first discourse; however, what is different is the extra environmental factor of group pressure. This mostly applies to the discrimination in the stadium: *“when everyone starts singing that, you go along with the crowd, with what is being sung.”* (Joep). Because the behavior takes place within a group context, it makes the threshold lower for people to participate. This is also what motivated some respondents to not engage in online messaging, but to do join in on chants in the stadium. The participants argued that it is easier to sing or chant along with a group, then to say something individually, offline as well as online, which is supported by Llopis-Goig (2009).

Another motivation that ties in with the peer pressure motive in this discourse, is the acceptance of discrimination being something that lies within the masculine nature. Bart states: *“I’m sure when I was 16, I sang along to look tough. Boys will be boys, right?”*. The ‘looking tough’ drives people to participate in (online) discrimination as well, according to the respondents. Laura analyses it from her female perspective: *“there’s some sort of fight for the position of top dog amongst men in the stands.”*. Connected to this, is the belief that football culture is masculine, which was supported by Müller et al. (2007). Many respondents argue men like football more, and that they are also better qualified to play it. This results in the culture being more manly: *“It’s man-to-man, football is a male bastion.”* (Richard), and therefore leads to discriminatory behavior being less often expressed by women, according to Mike: *“women are classier, they don’t do that. I think it’s more of a guy thing.”*

Discourse 3: “I consciously stay off of it”

The last discourse was mentioned less than the other discourses, but was also remarkable. Some respondents used to participate in discriminatory behavior, but now very consciously choose not to and some have always chosen not to participate. The choice to not participate (anymore) lays mostly in gaining awareness. Joep is more conscious of what he sings about Jews, due to the Palestine-Israel conflict. He argues this is the reason he thinks twice before he speaks, and what causes him to sing along or post less: *“I am Christian myself, so I always get mixed feelings when I say something like that.”* (Joep). He became more aware of the impact of his

posts on social media and his participation in chants in the media since antisemitism is erupting in society, because of the war between Palestine and Israel. Laura shares this experience, however she has never participated, due to the impact it has on people experiencing discrimination: *“I can think something is not discrimination, but I don’t know how someone else experiences it, so it’s always good to hear someone else’s story about why someone feels discriminated against so that I can take that into account.”*. She argues that even if it is not someone’s intention to discriminate, and to have other motives, such as making a joke, it can still be hurtful for the people addressed. Therefore, she chooses not to participate in anything with a discriminatory tone, online as well as offline. Frank formulates this in a less subtle way: *“I think it’s bullshit, if you have any historical awareness, or if you have read a book or visited one of the concentration camps, you would never even think about doing this.”*. He argues that if supporters gained awareness about the impact of their behavior, they would not participate at all.

Other respondents argue their principles are a motivation to not participate, like Joris: *“I don’t do it out of principle. If it’s up to me, we wouldn’t call Ajax Jews.”*. His principles do not allow him to use discriminatory language, and he argues: *“I like rivalry, but in a healthy way. Even though I’m a fanatic supporter, I keep it civil.”* (Joris). He, like many other respondents, prefer other ways to express their support for Feyenoord. They argue that instead of expressing it in a negative way, and thereby focusing on the opponent for example, supporters should focus on Feyenoord itself. This would contribute to a positive atmosphere and eventually creates a safer space:

“That’s just what the players benefit from the most. And it is also the best for the atmosphere in the stadium. I think more people will participate, because there are also a lot of people in the stadium who do not participate in those negative speeches anyway. The positive songs are more known, I think. And more suitable for children.” (Joep).

Besides that, age was often used as an explanation for not participating at all or not participating anymore. Respondents explain that some behavior can be characteristic for certain generations. Patrick explained that a lot of discriminatory chants were made up during the 90s when: *“times were different.”*. The new generations, such as gen Z, seem to be more aware of their impact on other people, and therefore choose consciously not to participate in discriminatory behavior. Joris sees a difference between previous generations, which his parents belong to, and his generation. He argues that they are less conscious about for example the language they use:

“They would say more easily about Kokcii: that Turkish guy. They give him a different name than they would give Hancko. It is, to put it bluntly, ingrained in people, in the culture.” (Joris). However, other generations also become aware of discrimination, and therefore have recently chosen not to participate anymore: *“I also get older; it doesn’t make any sense anymore.”* (Richard). By gaining consciousness about discrimination over time, participating in discriminatory behavior became irrational for respondents.

The choice not to participate (anymore) also lies within the environment of the respondents. Bart argues: *“When my son comes along, then I start to look at it differently.”*, which was supported by Jeroen, who also is more conscious of what he does and does not say during a match when his son is present. Environmental factors cause a shift in what is morally acceptable, which is shown here the other way around, because respondents normally would participate, but do not under certain environmental circumstances (Cable et al., 2022). A few participants also feel like social media platforms like Twitter are not suitable for expressing anything politics related. Peter states: *“I stopped posting political things online. There’s just black and white on Twitter, and it’s also very extreme. At one point, I also unfollowed everything that tends to racism. That helps.”*. Laura has never even posted anything or had a Twitter account: *“I consciously stay off of Twitter, I don’t even want to know what happens there.”*

Conclusion

In this research various motives are found for participating in online discrimination amongst Feyenoord supporters. It was necessary to research these motives to gain a better understanding of them, and gain insight on the perspective and meaning making of the people participating in discriminatory behavior. Existing research noted various motives for discriminatory expressions made by supporters (Cable et al., 2022; Glynn & Brown, 2023; Kilvington et al., 2022; Llopis-Goig, 2009; Müller et al., 2017; Seibel et al., 2022). However, these do not investigate whether people discriminating based on race, for example, are actually racist. This lack of focus on the ideological perspective results in a mutual misunderstanding between football supporters and the academic world researching them. The aim of this research was to investigate the meaning Feyenoord supporters give to discrimination, explore a broader sense of motives behind online discrimination amongst Feyenoord supporters, and to research whether these motives are embedded within the supporters' ideology.

Through interviews with thirteen Feyenoord supporters, this research shows that three discourses can be distinguished. First, there is a discourse which argues their behavior cannot be described as discrimination, and therefore gives a different meaning to it. The second one does describe their behavior as discrimination, but they still choose to participate. Lastly, there is a discourse that chooses very consciously not to participate, because they agree it is discrimination. The discourses had various motives in common, which could be divided in personal motives and environmental factors. However, a few motives were specific for certain discourses, like thoughtlessness for the first discourse; group pressure for the second discourse; and for the third discourse an awareness of the impact of discriminatory behavior as a motivation not to discriminate. Two things that the discourses had in common besides some motives, were how their motives are not related to their ideology, and how there is a general feeling of misunderstanding by outsiders about supporters and football culture amongst respondents.

The different motives overlapped with the ones found in the literature, however some were less present in the data collected in this research, and others had additional dimensions to them. Motives like emotions, feelings of rivalry and humor were all found and in line with the existing literature (Miranda et al., 2023; Müller et al., 2007). However, discrimination erupting from a need to protect an image could not be found (Doidge, 2013; Van Gageldonk, 1996). On the contrary, respondents do not feel this image is representative of Feyenoord supporters at all, and therefore do not enjoy the fear and framing by outsiders. They feel there is a general

misunderstanding about football supporters and football culture, which results in the general idea that discriminatory behavior in football could erupt from a deep-rooted ideology (Cable et al., 2022; Cleland, 2013; Seijbel et al., 2022). This contributes to a distorted view of supporters, which has resulted in ineffective measures against (online) discrimination, which was also mentioned by the respondents. In this research, it was made clear that this engagement in discrimination does not erupt from ideological beliefs. This was shown by how the respondents described a group within Feyenoord supporters that do discriminate as a result of their ideology, but do not ascribe themselves to this group. By emphatically distancing themselves from this group, they distance themselves from having a deep-rooted ideology of discriminating and hatred against minorities. This again is not in line with the existing literature. Müller et al. (2007) see discrimination as general behavior in a football context, and therefore argue that it is not accurate to ascribe it to a small, deviant group.

However, in this research, none of the motives given contained an ideological motive of actual hatred against minorities. Kilvington et al. (2022) described casual and instrumental racism, in the case of discrimination based on ethnicity. Müller et al. (2007) describe this as soccer racism or accidental racism. They argue that supporters avoid the consequences and downplay the impact of racism, by giving other motives like emotion or frustration. In this research, my social position in the field and my perspective as a supporter was used to research discrimination. By approaching the supporters from a different perspective and with a different goal, a new aspect in the research of online discrimination amongst football supporters was shown in this research. By addressing the meaning supporters give to discrimination and highlighting their perspective instead of the perspective of the ones discriminated against, it was clear that the motives of the respondents could not be linked to their ideology.

There are however also some limitations to this research. Even though it is now clear the motives of supporters to discriminate do not arise from a deep-rooted ideology, it must still be noted the behavior can be insulting and harmful to the groups addressed. It is however different from online political discussions, where discrimination is applied to express ideological beliefs. For the online football-related discussions, discrimination erupts as a form of accessible insult towards supporters from other teams for example. For future research it could be interesting to investigate whether this form of discrimination occurs in other contexts beside football, where discrimination does not arise from a deep-rooted ideology, and what circumstances determine whether people discriminate on the grounds of ideology or not. Another limitation consists of the insider perspective this research was conducted from. Even though this guaranteed access to the field, it could also have distorted results. For future

research, it could be of value to make a comparison as to what this difference between insider and outsider perspective on discrimination in football culture would mean to the results of this field of research. This would require an investigation of the difference between the self-perception of supporters and what is considered socially acceptable.

Overall, this research shows it is of interest to build a bridge between supporters and the academic world. This way, the motives and perspectives of supporters behind online discrimination are addressed instead of ignored. This research contributes to the understanding of online discrimination of football supporters by providing inside in the perspective and meaning making of the supporters engaging in discriminatory behavior. It showed that through a mutual misunderstanding they feel exists between them and outsiders, the idea erupted that their behavior arises from a deep-rooted discriminating belief and hatred against minorities. The various motives they gave for engaging in this behavior and the feeling of misunderstanding proved that for the respondents their participation does not relate to their ideology. Listening to the perspectives of supporters themselves is important, because even though supporters' state: "no one likes us, we don't care", they actually do care.

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Appendix 1: Topic-list

Intro:

- Introduce myself + the subject
- Goal of the interview
- Anonymity, confidentiality + the possibility to stop
- Is the participant still willing to participate?
- Does the participant have any additional questions?
- Introduce themselves

Feyenoord:

- Respondent's link to Feyenoord
- How long and how many times does the respondent go to matches?
- What extra activities does the participant engage in? (e.g., away games, supporters' association, forums/social media)

Discrimination:

- Example offline discrimination in the stadium: chant "hamas, hamas, Joden aan het gas", throwing bananas on the pitch
- Opinion: does the respondent view this as discrimination, why/why not?
- What meaning does the participant give to discrimination?
- Can the participant give an example of discrimination related to football?
- Experiences with offline discrimination in the stadium?
- Engagement in offline discrimination in the stadium?

Online discrimination:

- Can the participant give an example of online discrimination related to football?
- Example online discrimination: the "fuck Celtic" image described in the introduction
- Opinion: does the respondent view this as discrimination, why/why not?
- Experiences with online discrimination?
- Engagement in online discrimination?

Ideology

- Engagement in discrimination non-football related?
- Experiences with minorities outside of football?
- Description of the respondent's ideology: voting behavior, norms, values etc.
- Opinion on Netherlands as a multicultural society

Closing:

- Are there any additions to or questions about this interview?
- Thanking for participating and taking the time
- Stop the recording

Appendix 2: code tree

Meaning

Antisemitism

- Ajax no Jews
- Ajax calls themselves Jews
- Cultural appropriation
- No antisemitism
- Directed towards Ajax
- Nickname
- Hatred towards Ajax
- Not directed towards Jews
- Offline antisemitism
- Reversed antisemitism

Discrimination

- Meaning
- No participation
- Line at violence
- Line at threat
- Line at intention
- Line at war
- Line at exclusion
- Hypocritical
- Cause discrimination

Homophobia

- General swear-word
- Meaning
- No separate groups
- No environment for homosexuals
- Hatred Roze Kameraden
- Homosexuals no problem
- Maintain it themselves
- Provoke it themselves
- Reversed homophobia
- One love band
- Propaganda
- Pushy
- Too much focus
- Counter reaction

Racism

- Netherlands too full
- Reverse racism
- Too many foreigners
- Bothered by foreigners
- Meaning

Sexism

- Meaning
- Aggression masculine
- Discrimination masculine
- Dangerous for women
- No women allowed
- Men better at football
- Men intimidating
- Men among men
- Men better at supporting
- Swearing masculine
- Football masculine
- Women more sense

Motives

Personal motives

- Anger
- Frustration
- Self-control
- Hatred
- In the game
- Releasing
- Excitement
- Tension
- Disappointment
- Big match
- Provoke
- Match more fun
- Arouse fear
- Automatism
- Insulting
- Protecting
- No goal
- No thoughts
- Humor
- Intimidating
- Not serious
- Causing commotion
- Bullying
- Cursing
- To shock
- Outlet

Offline motives

- Group context
- Personal
- Polarization

Environmental motives

- Alcohol
- Different laws
- Different language
- Drugs
- Generation
- Group feeling
- Large crowd
- Intelligence
- Age
- Normalization
- Education level
- Atmosphere
- Tradition
- Friends
- Family

Online motives

- Occur differently
- Judging the match
- Echo chambers
- No consequences
- Internet hooligans
- Phrased differently
- Anonymous
- Individual
- Intimidation
- Easy
- Impersonal
- Popular
- Whining

Misunderstanding

Treatment football supporters

- Criminalization
- Discrimination
- Framing
- Lack of context
- Hatred
- Negative treatment
- Unfair image
- Generalization
- Police violence
- Creating a problem
- Away games
- Stigmatization
- Mutual misunderstanding

Image Feyenoord

- Anarchists
- Special
- Passion
- Shared goal
- Rough edge
- Fighter groups
- Prejudice

Measures

- Aimed at groups
- Not effective
- Harsh
- Measure after measure
- No sense
- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Too many
- Wrong

Outsiders

- No nuance
- Awareness
- Interpretation
- Societal problem
- Made negative
- Not specific for football
- Misunderstanding
- Tone
- Preferential treatment

Football culture

- Tolerated
- Violence
- Habituation
- Negative creativity
- Part of it
- Conservative
- Football is war
- Unique

Woke

- Counterreaction
- Too far
- Emphasized
- Too pushy

Ideology

Ideology

- Ideology
- No ideology
- Other people
- Minority

Politics

- Anti-antifa
- No protests
- Not politically engaged
- Politics football separated
- Symbol politics
- Politics egocentric

Appendix 3: respondent list

Respondent	Name	Gender	Age cohort
1	Jeroen	Male	45-55
2	Daan	Male	18-25
3	Laura	Female	35-45
4	Patrick	Male	35-45
5	Bart	Male	35-45
6	Joep	Male	18-25
7	Noa	Male	18-25
8	Jan	Male	55-65
9	Mike	Male	18-25
10	Joris	Male	18-25
11	Peter	Male	35-45
12	Richard	Male	45-55
13	Frank	Male	45-55

APPENDIX 4: CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: **"No one likes us, we don't care"**

Name, email of student: **Donna Klapwijk, 579420dk@eur.nl**

Name, email of supervisor: **Willem de Koster, dekoster@essb.eur.nl**

Start date and duration: **12-02-2024 – 23-06-2024**

Is the research study conducted within DPAS YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?

(e.g., internship organization)

The study will be conducted within DPAS, but I'm also following an internship at Mulier Instituut Utrecht.

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. **YES - NO**

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? **YES - NO**
Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO) must first be submitted to an accredited medical research ethics committee or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. **YES - NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). **YES - NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? **YES - NO**
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? **YES - NO**
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? **YES - NO**
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? **YES - NO**
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g., purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? **YES - NO**
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g., racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? **YES - NO**
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? **YES - NO**
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? **YES - NO**
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? **YES - NO**
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? **YES - NO**

If you have answered ‘YES’ to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

The subject of the interviews is online discrimination, which is a sensitive topic. This could cause emotional stress.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Before the interview, the goal of the research will be elaborated. Additionally, the respondents sign the informed consent form enclosed in appendix 2, and the Dutch version in appendix 3. Their anonymity and their right to quit anytime are emphasized again before the interview. During the interview, questions regarding discrimination will be asked, which can be a sensitive topic and cause some stress or negative emotions, however the respondents can take some time off during the interview to process these emotions and can also stop at any moment they wish to.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

During the interview, questions regarding discrimination will be asked, which can be a sensitive topic and cause some stress or negative emotions.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

The data will be collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, of which the audio will be recorded and transcribed. Afterwards, these will be coded in ATLAS.ti.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

Between 10-15 participants

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

An unidentified number of Feyenoord supporters engaging in online discrimination

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The data will be stored on the hard drive of my laptop, which is password protected.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I am responsible.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Every week.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

The names of the respondents will be pseudonymised.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: **Donna Klapwijk**

Name (EUR) supervisor: **Willem de Koster**

Date: **13/03/2024**

Date: **13/03/2024**



APPENDIX 5: Informed Consent Form English

Information sheet for thesis research “No one likes us, we don’t care”

Under the supervision of Willem de Koster from Erasmus University Rotterdam, Donna Klapwijk is examining online discrimination on football forums and social media. Additionally, the research is being conducted in collaboration with the Mulier Instituut in Utrecht. This research can be realized with the help of your participation. Donna is curious about your opinion on the motive behind online discrimination. There are no right or wrong answers.

- Why this research?** With this research, Donna wants to investigate what online discrimination means to Feyenoord supporters and what their motives are to engage in it or not. This research is being conducted for a master’s thesis at the Erasmus University Rotterdam and for an internship at Mulier Instituut Utrecht.
- Process** You will participate in a study in which Donna will gather information through:
- Interviewing you and recording your answers via audio recording. A transcript of the interview will be made.
- Confidentiality** We will do everything we can to protect your privacy as well as possible. In addition to Donna, only the supervisor of the student from Erasmus and the supervisor from Mulier will have access to the information you provide.
- No confidential information or personal data from or about you will be released so that someone will be able to identify you.
- In the research you are referred to by a made-up name (pseudonym).
- Voluntary participation** You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. Your participation is voluntary, and you can stop whenever you want.
- If, during the research, you decide to terminate your participation, the information that you have already provided will be used until the moment that consent is withdrawn.
- Do you want to stop participating in this research? Then contact Donna via 579420dk@eur.nl.
- Data storage** Anonymous data or pseudonyms will be used in the thesis. The audio recordings, forms and/or other documents that are created or collected in the context of this thesis will be stored securely.
- The research data is stored for a period of ten years. Data will be deleted or made anonymous so that they can no longer be traced to a person at the end of this period, at the latest.
- Submitting a question or complaint** If you have specific questions about how your personal data is handled, you can direct your question to Donna via 579420dk@eur.nl. You can also submit a complaint to the Dutch Data Protection Authority if you suspect that your data has been processed incorrectly.

By signing this consent form I acknowledge the following [include the categories which are applicable]:

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 I am sufficiently informed about the research. I have read the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions. These questions have been answered sufficiently and I have had sufficient time to decide on my participation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 I volunteer to participate in this study. It is clear to me that I can terminate participation in the study at any time, without providing a reason. I don't have to answer a question if I do not want to. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In order to participate in the study, it is also necessary that you give specific permission for various elements. | | |
| 3 I give permission to process the data collected about me during this research as explained in the attached information sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 I give permission for audio recordings to be made during discussions and a transcript of my answers to be produced. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 I give permission for use my answers as quotes in the student's thesis. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 I give permission to store the data collected from me and to use it in a pseudonymized form for all further research where it can be used at a later date. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name participant:

Name student:

Donna Klapwijk

Signature:

Signature:



Date:

Date:

24/03/2024

Appendix 6: Informed consent form Nederlands

Informatieblad voor onderzoek “No one likes us, we don’t care”

Onder begeleiding van Willem de Koster onderzoekt Donna Klapwijk online discriminatie op voetbalforums en voetbal sociale media. Dit onderzoek wordt gebruikt voor het afronden van de sociologie master Politics and Society aan de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam en voor een stage bij het Mulier Instituut Utrecht. Met behulp van uw deelname kan dit onderzoek worden gerealiseerd.

Waarom dit onderzoek?	Met dit onderzoek wil Donna nagaan wat online discriminatie betekent voor Feyenoordsupporters en wat de motieven zijn om er wel of niet aan mee te doen. Het doel is begrip creëren over de verschillende motieven en ideologieën van supporters.
Verloop	U neemt deel aan een onderzoek waarbij we informatie zullen vergaren door: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- U te interviewen en het gesprek op te nemen via audio-opname. Er wordt een transcript uitgewerkt van het interview.
Vertrouwelijkheid	<p>Wij doen er alles aan uw privacy zo goed mogelijk te beschermen. Naast de student zal alleen de tutor en de stagebegeleider toegang krijgen tot alle door u verstrekte gegevens.</p> <p>Er wordt op geen enkele wijze vertrouwelijke informatie of persoonsgegevens van of over u naar buiten gebracht, waardoor iemand u zal kunnen herkennen.</p> <p>In het onderzoek wordt u aangeduid met een verzonden naam of nummer (pseudoniem).</p>
Vrijwilligheid	<p>U hoeft geen vragen te beantwoorden die u niet wilt beantwoorden. Uw deelname is vrijwillig en u kunt stoppen wanneer u wilt.</p> <p>Als u tijdens het onderzoek besluit om uw medewerking te staken, zullen de gegevens die u reeds hebt verstrekt tot het moment van intrekking van de toestemming in het onderzoek gebruikt worden.</p> <p>Wilt u stoppen met dit onderzoek? Neem dan contact op met Donna Klapwijk via 579420dk@eur.nl.</p>
Dataopslag	<p>In het onderzoek zullen anonieme gegevens of pseudoniemen worden gebruikt. De verzamelde data worden beveiligd opgeslagen.</p> <p>De onderzoeksgegevens worden bewaard voor een periode van maximaal 10 jaar. Uiterlijk na het verstrijken van deze termijn zullen de gegevens worden verwijderd.</p>
Indienen van een vraag of klacht	Indien u specifieke vragen heeft over hoe er met uw persoonsgegevens wordt omgegaan, kunt u deze stellen aan Donna Klapwijk (579420dk@eur.nl). U kunt daarnaast een klacht indienen bij de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens indien u vermoedt dat uw gegevens verkeerd zijn verwerkt.

Door dit toestemmingsformulier te ondertekenen erken ik het volgende [includeer alleen de categorieën die van toepassing zijn]

- | | JA | NEE |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Ik ben voldoende geïnformeerd over het onderzoek. Ik heb het informatieblad gelezen en heb daarna de mogelijkheid gehad vragen te kunnen stellen. Deze vragen zijn voldoende beantwoord en ik heb voldoende tijd gehad om over mijn deelname te beslissen. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Ik neem vrijwillig deel aan dit onderzoek. Het is mij duidelijk dat ik deelname aan het onderzoek op elk moment, zonder opgave van reden, kan beëindigen. Ik hoef een vraag niet te beantwoorden als ik dat niet wil. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Voor deelname aan het onderzoek is het bovendien nodig dat u voor verschillende onderdelen specifiek toestemming geeft.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 Ik geef toestemming om de gegevens die tijdens dit onderzoek over mij worden verzameld te verwerken zoals is uitgelegd in het bijgevoegde informatieblad. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Ik geef toestemming om tijdens het gesprek geluid-opnames te maken en mijn antwoorden uit te werken in een transcript. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Ik geef toestemming om mijn antwoorden te gebruiken voor gepseudonimiseerde quotes in de verslaglegging van het onderzoek. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Naam deelnemer:

Naam student:
Donna Klapwijk

Handtekening:

Handtekening:



Datum:

Datum:
24/03/2024