REVENUE INEQUALITY IN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BALKAN CLUBS

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the financial disparities between elite and smaller-market football clubs in Europe, with a focus on the Balkan region's challenges. The study aims to quantify revenue gaps, identify key drivers of financial inequality, and propose sustainable solutions for underperforming leagues. Using a mixed-methodology approach, we analyze financial data (2018-2023) from UEFA reports and Transfermarkt for 20 countries, categorized into top-tier leagues (e.g., England, Germany) and Balkan markets (e.g., Bulgaria, Serbia). Statistical methods include variance analysis to compare revenue streams and correlation analysis to evaluate relationships between financial health and sporting performance. Results reveal extreme disparities: top leagues average €2.08 billion annually, with 63% coming from commercial sources (TV rights, sponsorships), while Balkan clubs generate just 7.4% of this amount (€153.5 million), relying disproportionately on UEFA solidarity payments (14% of revenue). Bulgaria's clubs operate at just 3% of top-league revenue levels (€64 million). The study concludes that current financial structures perpetuate competitive imbalance. We propose three interventions: (1) UEFA-mandated redistribution mechanisms for broadcasting revenues, (2) regional partnerships to pool commercial resources, and (3) FIFA-funded youth development programs targeting Balkan nations. These measures could reduce revenue dependence on player sales (currently 43% of Balkan club income) while improving long-term competitiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

Football has long transcended its roots as a local pastime to emerge as one of the world's most powerful commercial industries. Described as "the world's game," it now influences global entertainment, media, economics, and branding. As Pifer et al. (2019) note, the sport is "spurred forward at its highest professional ranks by bankrolling owners and lucrative media rights deals". The phenomenon is further underscored by the transformation of clubs into international entertainment companies, each acting like high-growth business entities engaged in aggressive commercial strategies (Doles & Soderman, 2005). These shifts reflect a broader industrial rationalization within football: clubs regularly engage in multi-million-euro player trading, merchandising, and global sponsorship deals, while elite leagues negotiate massive broadcast contracts spanning billions of euros annually. This evolution has fundamentally reshaped the football landscape, creating an environment where sporting success is closely tied to financial muscle. European football has evolved into a high-stakes, multibillion-euro industry, driven by commercialization, broadcasting rights, and global sponsorship deals. However, this prosperity is exceptionally uneven: the elite "Big 5" leagues (England, Spain, Germany, France, and Italy) generate over 70% of total continental revenues, while smaller and Balkan leagues share a minimal portion of this financial influx (Yiapanas, 2025). This imbalance creates systemic disparities in competitiveness. According to Özaydın and Donduran (2019), revenue concentration among top-tier clubs reduces competitive balance, suppresses outcome uncertainty, and diminishes long-term fan engagement. Analytical models using Lorenz curves and variation coefficients illustrate the growing financial polarization across leagues. Efforts by UEFA—such as Financial Fair Play (FFP) and the newer Financial Sustainability Regulations—seek to contain reckless spending. However, studies suggest that these mechanisms often reinforce the dominance of already wealthy clubs and limit the upward mobility of emerging ones (Abd, 2023). Balkan

clubs are particularly vulnerable. The lack of diversified income, low broadcasting rights, and irregular participation in European competitions contribute to structural underperformance. Regional macroeconomic disparity exacerbates this: Western Balkan countries produce only about 38% of the EU's average GDP per capita, echoing the funding limitations faced by football institutions in these regions (OECD, 2024). This paper aims to systematically quantify financial inequality across European football, comparing revenue streams and competitive capacity between clubs in major Western European leagues and their counterparts in Balkan countries. It further investigates how revenue inequality manifests in sporting performance measured by UEFA coefficients and national rankings. By integrating macro-level revenue data with performance indicators and applying variance and correlation analyses, this study sheds light on the economic mechanisms reinforcing inequality and proposes targeted policy recommendations to support Balkan clubs. Of financial inequality across Europe by comparing revenue patterns and investment models in the top 10 leagues and 10 Balkan countries. By doing so, it provides empirical insights into the mechanisms through which financial disparities influence sporting outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Sources

A total of 20 European countries were selected and categorized into two groups: *Top 10 football nations*: England, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Russia, and Switzerland — representing the most economically and sportingly developed football leagues.

Balkan countries: Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, Greece, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Turkey — selected as the primary focus of the study due to their regional and structural characteristics.

The analysis was based on verified data collected from the following sources: UEFA financial reports (2018–2023), Transfermarkt.com database (club revenue and market values), FIFA national team rankings (2023/2024), and UEFA country coefficients (2023/2024).

Procedures

The study integrated quantitative data analysis with theoretical literature in a mixed-methods approach. We investigated the following economic and performance indicators for all 20 countries: *Financial indicators*: Total revenues (all club income generated within a season), Matchday revenue (ticket sales), Broadcasting rights (domestic league TV deals), UEFA earnings (prize money, solidarity payments), Sponsorship income (advertising, branding, donations), Other revenue streams (marketing, merchandising, club-owned stores), Transfer income (players sold), and Transfer expenditure (players purchased). *Sporting performance indicators*: National team market value (2023/2024 season), FIFA world ranking (2023/2024), and UEFA national club coefficient.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical processing was conducted using descriptive statistics and variation analysis to assess revenue distribution and volatility, as well as Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of relationships between financial input and sporting outcomes. This comprehensive approach enabled a clear and comparative view of the financial positioning of Balkan nations in relation to top-tier European leagues.

Software

All statistical analyses and visualizations were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 27.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) and Microsoft Excel 2021 (Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA, USA), MacOS Sequola 15.6.1.

RESULTS

To establish a foundational understanding of economic disparities across European football markets, an initial statistical examination of total revenue distribution and variability was conducted across the sampled countries. Financial indicators in this section refer to aggregated and averaged data from the 2018–2023 period, while UEFA coefficients, FIFA rankings, and squad market values correspond to the 2023/2024 season.

Table 1. *Financial And Performance Indicators By Country*

Country	Total Revenue	Matchday Revenue	TV Rights	UEFA Revenue	Sponsor-ship	Other Revenue	Transfer Income	Transfer Spending	FIFA Rank	UEFA Coef	Squad Value
Bulgaria	€64 M	€3.4 M	€32 M	€12 M	€24 M	€21 M	€33 M	€12 M	82	27	€34 M
Turkey	€533 M	€54 M	€142 M	€49 M	€254 M	€34 M	€165 M	€176 M	28	8	€303 M
Greece	€1.59 B	€170 M	€290 M	€29 M	€70 M	€14 M	€440 M	€450 M	39	15	€208 M
North Macedonia	€85 M	€1 M	€2 M	€3 M	€12 M	€2 M	€3.2 M	€3.4 M	67	7	€34 M
Serbia	€950 M	€45 M	€43 M	€33 M	€170 M	€16 M	€72 M	€94 M	32	19	€249 M
Romania	€820 M	€39 M	€38 M	€24 M	€24 M	€2 M	€105 M	€132 M	38	14	€143 M
Albania	€48 M	€1 M	€8 M	€4 M	€2 M	€2 M	€28.7 M	€0.6 M	47	47	€8.9 M
Bosnia & Herzegovina	€170 M	€8 M	€45 M	€31 M	€12 M	€3 M	€242 M	€0.7 M	74	39	€9.3 M
Kosovo	€60 M	€1 M	€5 M	€9 M	€2 M	€1 M	€9 M	€1.3 M	69	36	€9.5 M
Montenegro	€48 M	€2 M	€2 M	€2 M	€2 M	€2 M	€13 M	€3.6 M	73	30	€3.6 M
Croatia	€1.69 B	€52 M	€240 M	€50 M	€320 M	€9 M	€67 M	€93 M	28	28	€383 M
England	€6.45 B	€849 M	€3.29 B	€500 M	€1.95 B	€780 M	€1.25 B	€2.92 B	4	2	€9.51 B
Spain	€4.23 B	€432 M	€1.46 B	€400 M	€642 M	€246 M	€540 M	€570 M	3	3	€7.3 B
Germany	€4.92 B	€645 M	€2.00 B	€370 M	€1.26 B	€260 M	€1.09 B	€1.80 B	2	1	€7.81 B
Belgium	€2.49 B	€131 M	€490 M	€190 M	€590 M	€39 M	€188 M	€189 M	10	5	€731 M
France	€2.00 B	€435 M	€1.96 B	€390 M	€1.05 B	€105 M	€150 M	€1.05 B	5	2	€8.03 B
Italy	€2.35 B	€955 M	€1.02 B	€257 M	€625 M	€220 M	€292 M	€2.92 B	8	7	€7.81 B
Netherlands	€2.02 B	€171 M	€1.11 B	€179 M	€231 M	€73 M	€392 M	€392 M	6	7	€835 M
Portugal	€5.97 B	€177 M	€1.77 B	€422 M	€1.13 B	€244 M	€244 M	€770 M	7	7	€8.35 B
Russia	€1.45 B	€59 M	€1.44 B	€91 M	€617 M	€260 M	€135 M	€1.06 B	34	12	€1.34 B
Switzerland	€2.48 B	€68 M	€21 M	€130 M	€76 M	€71 M	€139 M	€5 M	20	14	€1.73 B

Note: Financial indicators are based on 2018–2023 averages; performance indicators (FIFA ranking, UEFA coefficient, squad value) refer to the 2023/2024 season.

Table 1 presents the raw financial and performance data collected for all 20 analyzed countries, serving as the foundation for the statistical comparisons and correlation analyses in this study.

Table 2. *Variance Analysis of Total Revenues*

Metric	All Countries	Balkan Countries	Top 10 Countries
Mean	€1,028,933,333	€153,466,666	€2,083,500,000
Median	€248,000,000	€77,500,000	€1,522,500,000
Standard Deviation	€1,608,968,261.35	€175,392,385.49	€1,818,632,082.09
Minimum	€4,800,000	€9,800,000	€494,000,000
Maximum	€6,453,000,000	€533,000,000	€6,453,000,000
Coefficient of Variation (%)	156.37%	114.29%	87.29%

Note: Total revenue values are aggregated averages for the 2018–2023 period.

Variance Analysis of Total Revenues (Table 2) provides important insight into the distribution and variability of income levels across different European regions. The analysis categorizes the data into three main groups: all countries, the Balkan region, and the Top 10 footballing nations in terms of revenue. The average total revenue across all countries is €1,028,933,333 (approximately €1.03 billion), indicating a relatively high mean at the national level. However, the high standard deviation (€1,608,968,261) and coefficient of variation (156.37%) reveal substantial dispersion, meaning that revenues are very unevenly distributed. The difference between the minimum (€4.8 million) and maximum (€6.453 billion) values further confirms the large income disparities among countries. In the Balkan region, the average club revenue is significantly lower, at €153,466,667 (≈€153.5 million). The standard deviation (€175,392,385) and coefficient of variation (114.29%) suggest that revenue inequality also exists within the region, though to a lesser extent than in the full sample. The range between the lowest (€9.8 million) and highest (€533 million) values illustrates significant differences even within this group. For the Top 10 footballing nations, the average revenue reaches €2,083,500,000 (≈€2.08 billion), which is more than 13.5 times higher than the Balkan average. Although the standard deviation remains high (€1,818,632,082), the coefficient of variation (87.29%) indicates a relatively more balanced distribution of income in this group. This suggests that Europe's leading football economies experience less internal disparity and fewer extreme anomalies.

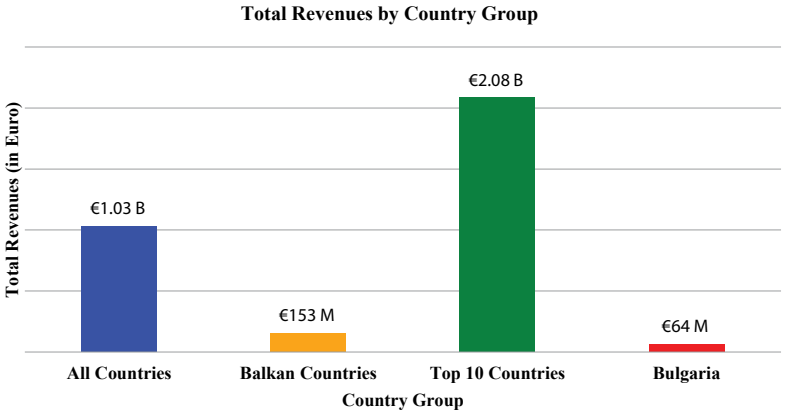


Figure 1. *Average total revenue in Euro*

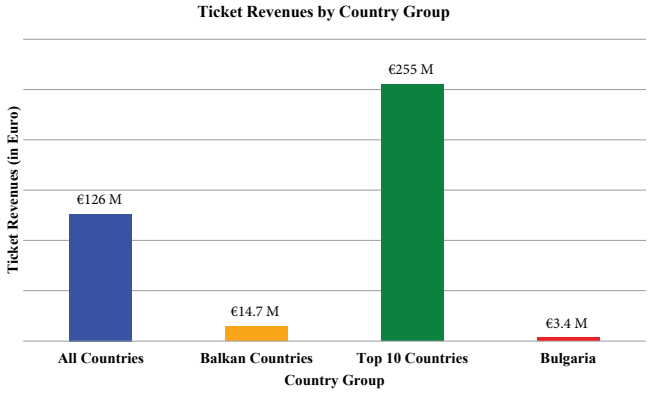
The average total revenue (Figure 1) for the Top 10 countries amounts to €2.08 billion, clearly highlighting the immense economic influence of these leading football leagues. The overall mean revenue across all analyzed countries is €1.03 billion. In comparison, the average revenue for the Balkan countries stands at €153.4 million, which is 13.5 times lower than the average for the Top 10. Bulgarian clubs generate a total of €64 million in revenue, which is 2.4 times lower than the Balkan average and 32.5 times lower than the average of the top 10 countries.

Table 3. *Variance Analysis of Ticket Revenues (in Euro).*

Metric	All Countries	Balkan Countries	Top 10 Countries
Mean	€126,233,333	€14,733,333	€255,200,000
Median	€54,000,000	€6,950,000	€175,000,000
Standard Deviation	€204,198,737	€18,360,979	€235,711,179
Minimum	€100,000	€100,000	€58,000,000
Maximum	€849,000,000	€54,000,000	€849,000,000
Coefficient of Variation (%)	162%	125%	92%

Note: Ticket revenue values represent the averages for 2018–2023 across all leagues.

Average ticket revenues across all analyzed countries amount to €126.2 million, with a high standard deviation of €204.2 million, indicating significant variability between nations. Values range from as low as €100,000 to a peak of €849 million. In the Balkans, the average ticket income is substantially lower at €14.7 million, which is 8.5 times less than the overall mean. Although the variability is lower (SD = €18.4 million), this reflects the region's relatively uniform economic and infrastructural context. The maximum observed value is €54 million. Top 10 football markets report an average of €255.2 million, which is 17 times higher than the Balkan average. Despite their wealth, a standard deviation of €235.7 million reveals internal disparities, likely driven by differences in stadium capacity, fan base size, and commercial infrastructure. Notably, even the lowest value among the Top 10 (€58 million) exceeds the Balkan maximum (Table 3).



Note: Financial data averaged for the 2018–2023 period.

Figure 2. *Average Ticket Revenues by Country Group.*

Average ticket revenues (Figure 2) in the Top 10 countries reach €255.2 million, underscoring their leading role in the football industry. While the overall average across all countries is €126.2 million, this figure is heavily skewed by the wealthiest football markets. In the Balkan region, the average is significantly lower at €14.7 million, 17 times less than that of the Top 10 countries. The maximum ticket revenue observed among Balkan nations is €54 million, which is even lower than the minimum value recorded within the Top 10 group. In Bulgaria, ticket revenues amount to only €3.4 million, which is remarkably low, even by Balkan standards—4.3 times less than the regional average and 75 times less than the average of the Top 10.

Table 4. *Variance Analysis of UEFA Revenues (in Euro)*

Metric	All Countries	Balkan Countries	Top 10 Countries
Mean	€113,728,571	€21,766,667	€227,200,000
Median	€29,000,000	€18,500,000	€204,000,000
Standard Deviation	€156,491,945	€14,612,970	€163,610,391
Minimum	€1,900,000	€3,600,000	€36,000,000
Maximum	€500,000,000	€49,000,000	€500,000,000
Coefficient of Variation (%)	138%	67%	72%

Average UEFA revenues in the Top 10 countries reach €227.2 million, reflecting their dominance in major European competitions. The overall average is €113.7 million, but this figure is skewed by top-performing nations, as indicated by a much lower median of €29 million. Several countries receive minimal income from UEFA, with the lowest value being just €1.9 million. Balkan countries average €21.7 million, 10.5 times less than the Top 10. The regional maximum (€49 million) is close to the minimum among the top countries (€36 million). The high coefficient of variation highlights the extreme inequality in UEFA revenue distribution (Table 4).

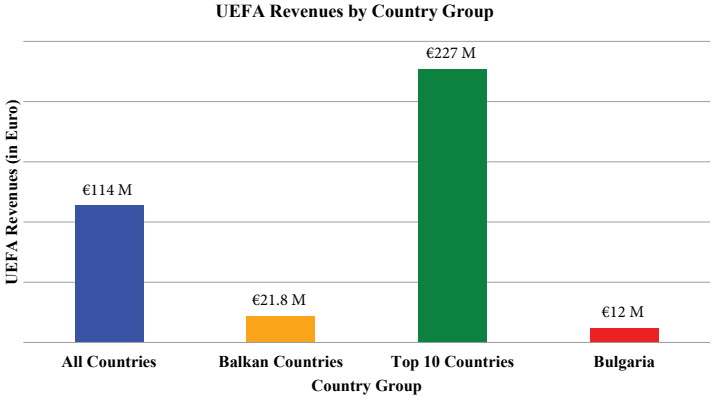


Figure 3. *Average UEFA revenues in Euro*

The average UEFA revenue for the Top 10 countries is €227.2 million, placing them in a significantly more advantageous position compared to other groups. The overall average across all analyzed countries is €113.7 million, although the wealthiest leagues inflate this figure. Balkan countries generate an average of €21.7 million from UEFA, which is 10.5 times less than the average of the Top 10. Bulgaria, in particular, receives just €12 million, which is 1.8 times less than the Balkan average and 18.9 times less than the average of the Top 10 (Figure 3). Note: UEFA revenues aggregated for 2018–2023; performance indicators reflect the 2023/2024 season.

Table 5. *Variance Analysis of Sponsorship Revenues (in Euro)*

Metric	All Countries	Balkan Countries	Top 10 Countries	Bulgaria
Mean	€330,952,381	€65,333,333	€669,200,000	€24,000,000
Median	€76,000,000	€24,000,000	€621,000,000	€24,000,000
Standard Deviation	€497,155,957	€86,847,887	€547,610,044	€0
Minimum	€1,000,000	€3,000,000	€111,000,000	€24,000,000
Maximum	€1,951,000,000	€254,000,000	€1,951,000,000	€24,000,000
Coefficient of Variation (%)	150%	133%	82%	0%

Average sponsorship revenues (Table 5) in the Top 10 countries reach €669.2 million—over 10 times higher than the Balkan average. The overall mean across all countries is €330.9 million, but major football markets heavily influence this. The median (€76 million) suggests that most countries earn below the average. Balkan nations report an average of €65.3 million, while Bulgarian clubs generate just €24 million, which is 2.7 times lower than the Balkan average; 27.9 times lower than the Top 10 average (Figure 4). (Note: UEFA revenue values correspond to club earnings over the 2018–2023 financial period; UEFA and FIFA rankings refer to 2023/2024). The high coefficient of variation indicates substantial inequality in the distribution of sponsorship revenue. (Note: Sponsorship revenues refer to 2018–2023 averages, while comparative performance data correspond to the 2023/2024 season.)

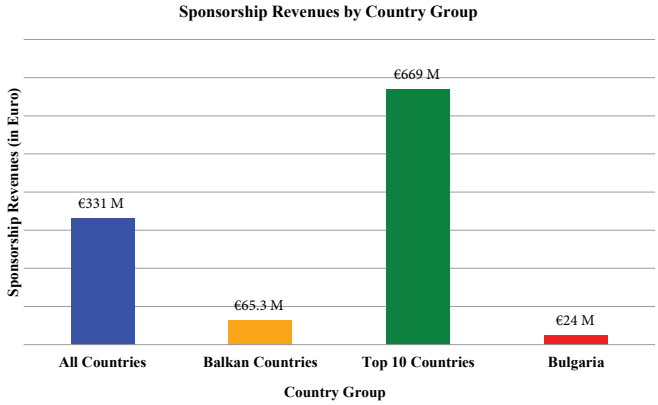


Figure 4. *Average Sponsorship Revenues by Country Group*

The correlation analysis measures the strength and direction of relationships between various financial and sporting indicators in the main dataset.

Table 6. *Correlation Matrix of Financial and Sporting Indicators*

	Total Revenue	Matchday Revenue	TV Rights	UEFA Revenue	Sponsorship	Other Revenue	Transfer Income	Transfer Spending	FIFA Ranking	UEFA Coefficient	Squad Value
Total Revenue	1										
Matchday Revenue	.977	1									
TV Rights	.982	.965	1								
UEFA Revenue	.939	.913	.906	1							
Sponsorship	.977	.939	.935	.889	1						
Other Revenue	.492	.437	.342	.486	.575	1					
Transfer Income	.909	.898	.865	.898	.895	.646	1				
Transfer Spending	.931	.950	.934	.816	.913	.435	.920	1			
FIFA Ranking	-.543	-.552	-.467	-.626	-.531	-.554	-.646	-.492	1		
UEFA Coefficient	-.586	-.584	-.516	-.660	-.574	-.553	-.685	-.533	.871	1	
Squad Value	.764	.784	.701	.877	.725	.540	.869	.727	-.792	-.800	1

(Note: Correlations are based on 2018–2023 financial data and 2023/2024 sporting indicators.)

The correlation matrix (Table 6) reveals several key relationships:

- Total Revenue shows strong positive correlations with TV Rights (r = .982), Matchday Revenue (r = .987), and Sponsorship (r = .977), confirming that these are the primary drivers of club income in top leagues.
- Transfer Spending is highly correlated with Total Revenue (r = .931), TV Rights (r = .934), and Sponsorship (r = 0.913) — suggesting that wealthier leagues (e.g., Premier League, La Liga, Serie A) invest heavily in the transfer market.
- UEFA Coefficient strongly correlates with Squad Value (r = .800), indicating that clubs with stronger European performance tend to have more valuable squads.
- UEFA Revenue also aligns with Squad Value (r = .877), as top-earning clubs in European competitions (e.g., Real Madrid, Bayern Munich) typically feature higher squad valuations.
- FIFA Ranking shows moderate to strong negative correlations with UEFA Coefficient (r = -.871) and Squad Value (r = -.792) — suggesting that national team performance does not always align with club-level strength. For example, Croatia has a high FIFA ranking but modest UEFA coefficients at club level.
- Transfer Income and Spending are strongly linked (r = .920), reflecting the transfer-driven strategies of leagues like Portugal's Primeira Liga and the Dutch Eredivisie.
- Sponsorship and Other Revenue show a moderate positive correlation (r = .575), indicating that commercially successful leagues also benefit from secondary income streams like merchandising and events.
- Interestingly, Total Revenue correlates negatively with UEFA Coefficient (r = -.586) in some cases, reflecting discrepancies between financial power and European club success (e.g., France's Ligue 1).

DISCUSSION

The analysis clearly demonstrates that top-tier European leagues dominate the football economy, while Balkan countries remain significantly underfunded. This financial disparity is not only quantitative but also structural. The average total revenue of the Top 10 football nations surpasses €2 billion annually, while Balkan clubs operate with just over €150 million—approximately 7.4% of that amount (Yiapanas, 2025; UEFA, 2023). In Bulgaria, this figure drops even further to €64 million, only 3% of the top-league levels. The primary revenue streams for elite clubs—TV rights, sponsorships, and UEFA competition earnings—are either minimal or absent in smaller markets. Broadcasting deals remain the largest driver of revenue, particularly in leagues like the Premier League, La Liga, and Bundesliga, where rights packages are sold globally for billions (Pifer et al., 2019; Özaydın & Donduran, 2019). In contrast, Balkan leagues are limited to regional broadcasting arrangements with minimal international reach (Yiapanas, 2025; OECD, 2024). Matchday income is also heavily influenced by infrastructure, audience size, and pricing strategies. Clubs in leading nations benefit from modern stadiums, large and loyal fan bases, and high ticket prices. For instance, the average matchday revenue in the Top 10 countries is €255 million, compared to just €14.7 million in the Balkans, and only €3.4 million in Bulgaria—75 times lower than the top-tier average (UEFA, 2023; Dolles & Söderman, 2005). Commercial sponsorships represent another area of disproportion. Top 10 leagues generate over €669 million annually from sponsorships, driven by global brand visibility and commercial sophistication (Plumley et al., 2017). In the Balkans, the average is only €65.3 million, with Bulgaria at just €24 million (OECD, 2024). This gap is exacerbated by the dominance of local sponsors, limited market exposure, and weaker domestic purchasing power (Shuv-Ami, 2016; Hogg, 2021). UEFA revenues mirror sporting success. Top clubs earn hundreds of millions through consistent participation in the Champions League and Europa League. Balkan clubs, which rarely reach group stages, average only €21.7 million in UEFA earnings. Bulgaria's €12 million places it 1.8 times below the regional average and nearly 19 times below top-tier clubs (Yiapanas, 2025; UEFA, 2023). Statistical correlation analysis confirms a self-reinforcing financial loop: high revenues lead to greater transfer spending, stronger squad value, and higher UEFA coefficients—generating even more revenue (Abd Ali, 2023). As Szymanski & Kuper (2009) argue, football has become increasingly closed to upward mobility due to entrenched financial hierarchies. The lack of international advertisers in the Balkans limits sponsorship appeal. According to recent reports, 93% of clubs in the top 15 European leagues have jersey sponsors, whereas many in smaller nations, including Albania and Bulgaria, do not (UEFA, 2023; Statista, 2024). Local com-

panies remain the main financial partners in the Balkans, while global firms dominate the "Big 5" leagues (Plumley et al., 2018; Runtian Zhu, 2020). Furthermore, clubs in wealthier leagues attract institutional investors, hedge funds, and sovereign wealth support. This creates a clear asymmetry in long-term planning and capital access, which directly influences infrastructure, academies, and global branding (Wilson et al., 2013). To address these structural inequalities, multiple authors recommend redistributive mechanisms and development-focused funding. Özaydın and Donduran (2019) propose modifying UEFA's solidarity system, while Yiapanas et al. (2023) suggest regional cooperation in TV rights. UEFA's latest Financial Sustainability report also hints at the need to enhance the competitiveness of emerging markets through targeted investment (UEFA, 2023). Without systemic change, Balkan clubs will remain dependent on transfer profits (currently 43% of income) rather than building self-sustaining football ecosystems. As Dolles & Söderman (2005) warn, commercial imbalance undermines the meritocratic foundation of European football and reinforces a cycle of dependency.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study highlight a deeply rooted financial disparity between Europe's elite football leagues and those in the Balkan region. Top-tier clubs benefit from structurally superior access to global TV rights, sponsorships, and UEFA competitions—mechanisms that create a self-reinforcing cycle of wealth and sporting dominance. In contrast, Balkan clubs are heavily reliant on transfer income and limited UEFA solidarity payments, with inadequate access to international markets and commercial partners. Statistical analysis confirms that financial capacity is strongly correlated with sporting success indicators, including UEFA coefficients and squad market value. The persistent underperformance of Balkan clubs is not merely a reflection of sporting deficiencies but of systemic underfunding, infrastructural limitations, and economic marginalization. Bulgaria, for example, generates only 3% of the average revenue seen in the Top 10 leagues. To promote a more balanced and inclusive European football ecosystem, the study advocates for the following measures: Redistributive mechanisms via UEFA and FIFA to support smaller markets; cross-border commercial partnerships to enhance broadcasting and sponsorship reach; and targeted investments in youth academies and infrastructure in underdeveloped regions. Without such reforms, financial inequality will continue to undermine sporting meritocracy and limit the global competitiveness of peripheral leagues.

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