

## RACISM IN SOCCER: CONTRADICTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FROM THE REGENCY IN THE PEDAGOGICAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev6n3-214>

Submitted on: 10/16/2024

Publication date: 11/16/2024

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### ABSTRACT

This summary exposes racism in football in a discriminatory way, with its implications in conscious or unconscious practices (Almeida, 2019). The theme was addressed in the training of students through Physical Education (PE) classes, in the Pedagogical Residency Program (PRP), of the Federal University of Alagoas – Arapiraca Campus, at the Aurino Maciel Field School, of the state network, in the municipality of Arapiraca-AL. General objective: to work on racism in football, with a view to overcoming racial discrimination in the social sphere. Specific objectives: to combat the different forms of prejudice that exist in football practices; Identify stereotypes and take a critical position in the face of prejudiced conduct; respect diversity of gender, ethnicity, among others. Methodology: Critical-Overcoming PE approach (Coletivo de Autores, 2012) and the method of social praxis of Historical-Critical Pedagogy (Saviani, 2021). Having social practice as a starting and ending point, starting from daily practice and instrumentalizing students, with a view to catharsis (incorporation of the constituent elements of sports practice). Activities developed: seminars, directed study, individual and group work, and practical classes with simulations of racist acts. Conclusions: racism was and still is very present in our society, and this becomes contradictory due to the existing measures to criminalize this conduct. People still insist on committing the act of racial discrimination, through gestures with athletes. Finally, we conclude that soccer was developed within a historical context, marked by racial prejudice.

**Keywords:** School Physical Education, Soccer, Racism, Pedagogical Residency Program.

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as a serious public health problem and a violation of human rights, characterized as a complex phenomenon, influenced by social, environmental, cultural, economic and political factors. Violence can be characterized by the intentional use of physical force or power, real or threatening against oneself, against a group or a community, that results or has a high possibility of resulting in injury, death, psychological damage, developmental disability or deprivation (WHO, 2002).

The present work started from the need to study racism in the current scenario of soccer and, consequently, to raise awareness among students in the 9th grade of Elementary School – Final Years of the Aurino Maciel State School, through multidisciplinary actions in the Pedagogical Residency Program (PRP) in favor of a critical, revolutionary and emancipatory School Physical Education. Theorizing about racism in Brazilian football is not an easy task, as Brazilian culture had a strong slavery influence, manifested, among other sectors, through a racist media, in which many people, including black people, are convinced that their lives are not complex experiences and, therefore, do not deserve reflection.

But to talk about racism in football, we need to understand that football is a sport born in the nineteenth century, it quickly gained the interest of several continents, becoming, in the twentieth century, the worldwide passion. However, we know that this beginning took place from the elitist relations of the time. In Brazil, football arrived in a turbulent context after the slavery period. For Almeida (2019), racism is a systematic form of discrimination that has race as its foundation, and that manifests itself through conscious or unconscious practices. Before entering the proposed theme, it is necessary to present the conceptions of racism, so that it is possible to understand how they are present in our society.

The author highlights three conceptions of racism: Individualism, institutional and structural. The individualist conception is the most open conception in society and, therefore, easier to see, because there would be no racist societies or institutions, but racist individuals, who act alone or in groups, that is, it is a very clear expression of the racism that is presented in our lives, and it is not only about individuals, but also about groups. In the institutional conception, racism is not limited to individual behaviors, but is treated as the result of the functioning of institutions. In the case of institutional racism, the dominance

occurs with the establishment of discriminatory parameters based on race, which serve to maintain the hegemony of the group in power. Brazilian institutions, public and private companies, are led by white men, the imposition of racist rules and standards that make it difficult for blacks to participate in these institutions.

In the structural conception, institutions are racist because society is racist. Racism is present in the social structure and is something that is not created by the institution, but is reproduced by it. Racism is not something abnormal, it is something normal in the sense that we should not accept, but that regardless of whether we accept it or not, it constitutes relationships in their standard of normality, and that racism not only constitutes conscious actions, but also unconscious actions.

Aware that racism is part of the social structure and, therefore, does not need intention to manifest itself, as much as being silent in the face of racism does not make the individual morally and/or legally guilty or responsible, silence certainly makes him ethically and politically responsible for the maintenance of racism. The change in society is not only made with denunciations or with the moral repudiation of racism: it depends, above all, on taking positions and adopting anti-racist practices. It is important to understand that institutional and structural racism are different conceptions. Institutional racism is within institutions, structural are individual actions of a racist society, where prejudice against black people is a rule.

In this sense, it is necessary to raise awareness and fight for the extinction of racism not only in Football, but especially in Physical Education classes. And through this, this work sees "sport, as a social practice that institutionalizes playful themes of body culture, is projected into a complex dimension of phenomenon that involves codes, senses and meanings of the society that creates and practices it" (Coletivo de Autores, 2012, pp.69-70). In other words, we need to overcome in the school environment the vision of performance and exclusion that characterizes the practice of sports, that is, Sport must be treated as a historical-cultural production, subordinating itself to the codes and meanings that guarantee its sporting essence, including the technical-tactical, media and spectacle elements.

Our base is based on the Historical-Critical Pedagogy of Education and the Critical-Overcoming Approach to Physical Education, with the general objective: to work on racism in football, with a view to overcoming racial discrimination in the social sphere. In the specific objectives: to combat the different forms of prejudice existing in soccer practices; to

identify stereotypes and take a critical position in the face of prejudiced behaviors; to respect the diversity of gender, ethnicity, among others.

## **SOCCER AS AN INSTRUMENT TO COMBAT RACISM**

In this proposal to combat racism, we need to understand Sport as a social, historical and cultural phenomenon, being treated as an element of Body Culture, especially Football, making necessary adaptations to the school community that practices, creates and recreates it (Coletivo de Autores, 2012). With regard to the socio-historical-cultural context of modern sport with regard to its bodily practices, it is necessary to understand what Assis de Oliveira (2001, p. 71) emphasizes that "[...] To retrace the genesis of the sport, it is not an interesting definition but an explanatory understanding, a plot capable of saying, not only what it is, but how it was, how it is and what it may become".

It highlights two approaches/assumptions that are crucial to understand the essence of modern sport, namely: historiographical and sociological approach. In the first, the origin of bodily practices is sought, that is, through a linear perspective to bring the historical rescue; in the second, it explains the sports sphere through cultural, philosophical and social phenomena. It is notorious to point out that in order to assimilate the origins of modern sport from its explanation, we have to identify two warnings, "[...] it should not be considered as the result of a linear process of development, nor as a completely autonomous institution." (Assis de Oliveira, 2001, p.73). Thus, to explain how modern sports began, we must rescue previous societies, in which we highlight the period of Greco-Roman Antiquity, where the practice of sports was focused on warriors, offerings and tributes to the gods, and gratitude for the agricultural apex; in the Middle Ages, "power" was given to the nobility, the feudal lord, and the Church, while the peasants and slaves were excluded from the experience of bodily practices.

In the contemporary world, with the event of the Industrial Revolution in England in the eighteenth century, the "modern sport" emerged, in which physical education and sport came to be seen as synonymous with health, that is, due to the excessive hours of work and the exhaustion of workers in factories, it was necessary for individuals to have healthy bodies, Strong, disciplined to endure the long and intense workday. According to the author, we see that:

[...] According to Bracht (1997b), in traditional societies, bodily practices are embedded in institutions such as religious and military, while in modern society, sport constitutes a new institution, becoming autonomous in relation to the former.

Autonomy that can also be understood in a relative way, given the interdependence with several other institutions (Assis de Oliveira, 2001, pp.74-75).

With this, two social classes are formed: on one side the "bourgeois class" and on the other the "working class", however, due to the "lack of time", the bodily practices were experienced only by the dominant class, in this case, the bourgeoisie. Thus, Assis de Oliveira (2001, p. 76) states that:

[...] the genesis of sport in eighteenth-century England is part of a very pronounced impulse towards pacification, with sport assuming a character of complementarity. In other words, Elias explains the emergence of sport as part of the process of self-pacification underway in England, in which the stability of the parliamentary government, unlike other countries in Europe, is one of the greatest examples. [...].

Thus, Assis de Oliveira (2001) points to two political ideologies: "Hygienism" and "Eugenics", the first has the purpose of maintaining, caring for and preventing the body from diseases; the second, the objective of elitizing a class as a "superior race", in this case, bourgeois society. Because of this, there was resistance on the part of the working class that began to claim its rights to experience bodily sports practices. Another factor is that:

Sport with regard to leisure occupations was created, unlike public or private routines, which require people to have perfect control of their states of mind. Thus, Elias considers that sport is a struggle in an imaginary framework and argues that its function, shared with other leisure occupations, is to 'control a pleasant absence of control of feelings' (1992a, p. 81). [...] (Assis de Oliveira, 2001, p.80).

From this, the struggle of the "working class" against the "bourgeois class" intensified, which the author emphasizes the dispute between amateurism x professionalism, in which the dominant class did not want to lose the hegemonic power of sport, because the professionalism of sport is seen as social ascension for the less favored class. As sport is sustained and governed by the economic system, capitalism, we can say that:

[...] The keynote of the discourses against professionalism, the amateur vs. professional dispute is configured as a consequence of the struggle for access and the practice of sports, with consequences in sports disputes. [...] The bourgeoisie and the aristocracy want to keep sport to themselves and the notion of amateur serves this purpose, as only the rich can have free time to devote to sporting activity. [...] (Assis de Oliveira, 2001, p.85).

With this, we detected three pillars of the sport, such as: growing competitiveness, seriousness in the way of involvement, and orientation towards results. Therefore, as sport is linked to the socioeconomic model, we see that the State acts significantly and actively in

this administration, in which "[...] sports organizations begin to fulfill public functions, in which the State has interests and its relations with it seem to be extremely stable, unlike what happens with the economy sector. [...]" (Assis de Oliveira, 2001, p.89).

However, the author encompasses and questions three conceptions so that we can understand sport in a more critical and systematic dimension, namely: naïve optimism; naïve pessimism; and critical optimism. This observation is based on the relationship between society and school, where he criticizes naïve optimism and naïve pessimism. In naïve optimism, school and society are separated, in which the school will act in a "saving" way and change social problems; naïve pessimism is the opposite, society will act/transform the school; however, critical optimism is brought by Assis de Oliveira (2001) in the following way, school and society will have a relationship based on the dialectic of the concrete and the real, where this connection will take place through the conflicts of reality and the possibilities of change.

It is perceived that Soccer as an integral part of Sport was developed in a competitive, exclusionary, racist, prejudiced and anti-democratic sphere. So our proposal is to work on a proposal for School Sport that should encompass game programs implicit rules, institutionalized by specific rules, where the technical aspects work as something primordial, but as it determined for the development of sports practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method is based on approximations to Historical-Dialectical Materialism that, according to Andery *et al.* (2012) enables a critical view for the understanding of the object under study. The interpretation of the object was based on the Pedagogical Approach of Critical-Overcoming Physical Education and Historical-Critical Pedagogy, that is, using the didactic method of social praxis, considering daily practice as a starting point. This method has five moments, namely: social practice, problematization, instrumentalization, catharsis and return to social practice. Social practice is the starting point and the point of arrival; the problematization starts from the difficulties that are evidenced in the classes; instrumentalization is linked to theoretical and practical instruments that seek to solve the problems found in Physical Education classes; catharsis starts from creativity, where the incorporation of cultural instruments into active elements of social transformation is carried out, and finally, the return to social practice that is constituted by the construction of synthesized knowledge about reality (Saviani, 2021).



Thus, the methodology in the Critical-Overcoming perspective implies:

[...] a process that accentuates, in the dynamics of the classroom, the student's practical intention to apprehend reality. Therefore, we understand the class as a space intentionally organized to enable the direction of the student's apprehension of the specific knowledge of Physical Education and the various aspects of its practices in the social reality (Coletivo de Autores, 2012, p.86).

For the Collective of Authors (2012, p.86), the class "[...] it brings the student closer to the perception of the totality of his activities, since it allows him to articulate an action (what he does), with the thought about it (what he thinks) and with the meaning he has of it (what he feels)". According to Coletivo de Autores (2012, p.86), in relation to the teaching methodology, the following guidelines are available:

[...] implies a process that accentuates, in the dynamics of the classroom, the student's practical intention to understand reality. Therefore, we understand the class as a space intentionally organized to enable the direction of the apprehension, by the student, of the specific knowledge of Physical Education and the various aspects of its practices in the social reality.

In this sense, the class should make the student analyze all the activities that are proposed to him, thus enabling an interaction where he acquires the ability to articulate an action, demonstrating what he thinks and what meaning it presents. Classes should be organized considering the student's reality, so that it is possible to have a greater assimilation of knowledge, where the student will be able to interact better in class, from the selection of contents and the development of the class, being able to confront his immediate reality with the current historical reality.

Thus, when situations of conflict or even debate arise on a given topic, the student will have more confidence to express his acquired knowledge to solve the problem situation that is presented to him. Based on the school reality, Physical Education, through body culture, can rescue the local culture of the community where the school is located, thus ensuring that the contents of body culture are not forgotten and are transmitted to new generations.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

In combating racism in sport, we made the classes in the form of a directed study with the following themes: contextualization of sport and the insertion of racism in football; the insertion of blacks in society; racist acts in the 1950 World Cup; Vasco da Gama, a

people's club, better known as the blackshirts; cases of racism with Brazilian players; and the impacts of racism on the lives of soccer players.

## THE INSERTION OF BLACKS IN SOCIETY

At the end of the nineteenth century, with the abolition of slavery in 1888, blacks began to be isolated by society, since newly arrived immigrants had more conditions in society, having a greater possibility of social mobility. With the advent of industrialization, there was a process of marginalization of the black population, which remained intact to the cultural standards of the slave society, being judged as inferior in relation to whites.

## 1950 WORLD CUP FINAL

During the final of the 1950 World Cup, held in Brazil, at the Maracanã stadium, the final between the Brazilian and Uruguay national team was being held, the public present that day did not expect what would happen after the final whistle, a match that was favorable for the Brazilian team changed fate after two players from the Uruguayan national team (Ghiggia and Schiaffino) tied and turned the match around in the final minutes of the second half in the middle of a crowded Maracanã. After the upset of the Uruguay team over Brazil, the Brazilian public present that day changed their behavior and started to curse the goalkeeper of the Brazilian team (Moacyr Barbosa Nascimento) for having taken the goals that resulted in the victory and title of the Uruguayan team, several criticisms were heard in the stadium, with racist shouts by the Brazilian fans with the goalkeeper of the national team, these curses were racist, because Barbosa was a black player.

## VASCO DA GAMA AND THE INCLUSION OF BLACK PLAYERS

In 1923, with the conquest of the second state championship of Rio de Janeiro, the Clube de Regatas Vasco da Gama, one of the largest in the state of Rio de Janeiro, received several criticisms from rival clubs, the clubs claimed that Vasco da Gama could not participate in the competition for racist reasons, that the club had black and poor players. The club was against this act of racial discrimination, the entity did not allow access to the club claiming that it did not have its own stadium, but the reason was that the club excluded its black players. "Vasco wrote a letter, dated April 7, 1924, denying the proposal. A milestone against racial and social discrimination in Brazil, the so-called "Historical Response" is found, in a replica, in the team's trophy room. It is considered the "Golden



Law of Brazilian football", because, in 1925, Vasco was admitted to the association, maintaining its dignity." (Nascimento; Veras, 2022). The Club spent a few years without participating in the competition, years after it returned to compete in the first division of the state championship of Rio de Janeiro. The other clubs (Flamengo, Botafogo, Fluminense and other clubs) did not accept that a team formed by black and poor players could perform better than a club formed by white players, so it was difficult to accept the Vasco da Gama team competing in the Rio championship.

### CASES OF RACISM WITH BRAZILIAN PLAYERS

Currently cases of racism with players within the four lines of the field have increased, cases with Brazilian players have drawn attention in the national and international media. A case happened with the Brazilian player Paulo César Tinga, but known by the name of "Tinga", the player defended the Cruzeiro club when this case happened, it was a game valid for the Copa Libertadores América, the most important tournament in South America, it was a Wednesday night, February 12, 2014, the Brazilian team played with the Peruvian team, Real Garcilaso, today known by the name of Cusco *Fútbol Club*, Cruzeiro opened the scoring and the home team of the match turned the game around, midfielder Tinga entered the second half replacing striker Dagoberto, racist manifestations began when the player Tinga touched the ball, the fans of the home team made gestures imitating a monkey, The next day, communication sites reported what happened to the Brazilian player and it had repercussions in the media. At the end of February 12 and throughout the 13th of the same month, 33 more articles were produced, totaling 35 publications in the first 24 hours after the match. 19 articles were collected in UOL Esporte and 16 in GloboEsporte.com, all of which reflected racist manifestations in some way (Diuana, 2016).

Another episode of racism with a Brazilian player caught the attention of international news sites, the case happened with the player Daniel Alves, a full-back of the Brazilian national team and of passages through major football clubs, this case was during a match for the Spanish Championship, when the Brazilian athlete defended Barcelona, it was a game between Villarreal and Barcelona, on April 27, 2014. The moment of the act of racism was when Barcelona's right-back went to take a corner, a fan of the home team threw a banana at the player, the fruit fell next to it, the player Daniel Alves simply went to

the direction of the banana, peeled it and ate it. Other spectators who were in the stadium applauded the player's attitude.

## THE IMPACTS OF RACISM ON THE LIVES OF SOCCER PLAYERS

Racism is a cultural and social problem that has been inherited since slavery, where blacks already went through various situations of physical and psychological suffering, as well as the barriers imposed by society in the post-slavery period. Analyzing the impacts caused by this racist culture that has been installed in football and whether they affect the subjectivity of blacks seems to be a need of today.

Soccer is, and always has been, a mirror in which the ways in which social relations are established are reflected, that is, it is a social factor and is not limited to a practice of leisure or entertainment. For many, professional football is a goal, a "dream" to be achieved, to change their lives, however, as much as this black player achieves professional success in football, we do not see a favorable trajectory, over the years, with regard to social democracy in football. On the contrary, we have seen successive attacks of racism against black players. And this is not only among the fans, but also on the field, among the players, as well as in the institutional issue. To see that racism is present in football is simple, just look at the existing football clubs. The number of black football managers and coaches, referees is very few. In other words, the idea of superiority of whites in relation to blacks still drags on, and this becomes clear when we watch a soccer match. In fact, it is a legacy of the elitist culture of slavery felt today.

A remarkable fact among the many that have already occurred was that of the Cameroonian Samuel Eto'o, in 2006, where he threatened to leave the field under the sound of imitations and the word monkey. So, it is very clear how aggressive racism is and how much it affects the subjectivity of the black soccer player. Let's see, this occurred in 2006, almost twenty years ago, and it remains the same. We do not see effective repression for this serious problem in today's society.

Figures: Exhibition of the work "Racism in Football".



After the topics covered in class, we took as a starting point Racism in Football in the world, in society and in our reality, the Aurino Maciel State School. And in this way, we found that on top of what was discussed in the scientific literature and the experiences lived in the day-to-day life of each member of the class worked, it was more than evident that racism is something structural and that it is Public Policies of inclusion, equality and diversity, as well as the need for severe laws that rigorously punish offenders. In the students' individual reports, documentaries, scientific literature, the issue of eugenics is clear, which is the ethnic domination of the white class over other races, whether indigenous and/or black. Racism does not choose financial issues, because in Brazilian society, slavery is very present to this day.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

From the studies analyzed, we observed that racism in football is a phenomenon that manifests itself throughout history, demonstrating that this act is recurrent on the pitches, showing that discrimination is still present, that the attempts of the authorities are still being inadequate. Therefore, racism was and still is very present in our society, and this becomes contradictory because of the existing measures to criminalize this conduct. People still insist on committing the act of racial discrimination, through gestures with athletes. Finally, we conclude that soccer was developed within a historical context, marked by racial prejudice.

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