

Portugal

Making sense of and tackling racism in football

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There is little doubt about the far-reaching socio-economic, political and cultural significance of sports in everyday life of modern societies, as they facilitate community cohesion and offer a framework for social engagement, sociability and stress relief (Ronkainen, 2023). Fostering healthy lifestyles, interpersonal, communal, and institutional relationships and contributing to knowledge and competencies that are transferable to other domains of social life, sport is an important and versatile field for human development (Eather, Wade, Pankowiak et al., 2023). Despite the well-documented positive effects of sport, including health, integration, inclusivity, sociability and the promotion of cultural exchange (Dowling, 2024), it can also be a source of conflicts, divisions, discrimination, oppression and violence (Jeanes and Lucas, 2022). Football is one of the sports where, in particular, racism, xenophobia, sexism, and homophobia affect athletes, negatively impacting not only their performance but also their well-being (Cable, Kilvington and Mottershead, 2022). In societies where racism is widespread, the likelihood of racist manifestations in football is higher (Kassimeris, Lawrence and Pipini, 2022).

Article 13 of the Portuguese Constitution clearly reflects the principles of the Human Rights Act and states that all citizens are equal before the law and have the same social dignity (Official Gazzete n.º 86/1976, Serie I, 1976-04-10). The same article affirms that no one is privileged, favoured, injured, denied any rights, or exempt from social duties based on ancestry, sex, race, language, area of origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, education, economic situation, social condition, or sexual orientation. And yet, human rights violations continue to persist in Portuguese society.

As a former coloniser of some African (Gonçalves, 2021), Asian and South American territories, Portugal still faces challenges related to the treatment of non-White people, including the realm of football. Stigmas, stereotypes and prejudices largely affecting non-White people often result in direct or indirect forms of aggression ranging from psychological to physical attacks. Manifestations of racist attitudes against non-White athletes are not rare inside and outside the football grounds, which demonstrates that racism continues to be

a pervasive problem in wider Portuguese society, as well as in this popular sport (Kassimeris, Lawrence and Pipini, 2022).

The socio-historical context

Racism is thoroughly interwoven with the political, social, and cultural past of Portugal, which for almost 600 years had the status of an empire (1414–1999). The heritage of colonialism, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, labour exploitation and the transatlantic slave trade still echo today in Portuguese society and continue to shape beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that reinforce systemic and structural inequalities (Coelho, 1998).

The imperial discourse in the twentieth century is closely linked to the country's fascist program and Antonio Salazar, who ran the dictatorship for most of its time from 1926 to 1974. It focused on 'racial' nationalism (Neves, 2023), which supports the concept of lusotropicalism, which is best explained as

the idea of a special skill that Portuguese ("lusos") people have for establishing peaceful and harmonious relations with other peoples and for mingling with people from the tropics, an absence of prejudice among the Portuguese, and their ability to adapt to the tropics.

(Valentim and Heleno, 2018, p. 34)

From the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Portuguese maritime expansion established and strengthened contacts between the Portuguese people and other communities across different continents, which led to the emergence of a colonialist philosophy. Despite being responsible for the trade of millions of slaves, the discourses regarding the Portuguese maritime expansion, symbolically known as *Descobrimentos* (Discoveries), glorified these events, praised bravery as a national identity trait, and massively downplayed the experience and suffering of the colonised (Bastos and Castelo, 2024; Valentim and Heleno, 2018).

Nonetheless, in the late nineteenth century, Portugal suffered from severe economic problems, exposing an underdeveloped country that did not recognise the opportunities of the industrial revolution but was rather tied to rurality. As a consequence, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and broad social discontent were widespread (Ferraz de Matos, 2019; Sobral, 2004). At the beginning of the twentieth century, a national strategy for overseas migration was developed, especially directed at Angola and Mozambique, to assist colonial administration services and a policy to attract labour to meet technical, industrial and commercial demands was pursued. It reached its peak in the post-Second World War years (Castelo, 2009).

The heterogeneity of the colonial societies led to asymmetrical power dynamics, legitimised through an ethnocentric and condescending lens, and

fuelled lusotropicalism narratives (Peralta and Frangella, 2012). Subsequently, these were adopted and adapted by the Portuguese regime and widely disseminated in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, until the decolonisation process (Bastos and Castelo, 2024). In 1961, the Government sponsored the publication of a book entitled *The Portuguese and the Tropics* in several languages. It became a key source for other textbooks, films, radio programs and official interventions, advocating Portuguese colonialism as benign, non-exploitative, humane and non-racist. Notions of the “empire” and “colonial” were cut out of that narrative. They were replaced with imagery of a “multi-racial nation” across the continents. The colonies were described as not being areas over which a foreign nation maintains control, subjugates the native population and exploits their land and resources but as parts of a singular nation that extended from Minho in Northern Portugal to distant Timor in Southeast Asia (Bastos and Castelo, 2024; Valentim and Heleno, 2018).

The Portuguese Empire’s dominance in the former colonies, such as Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, Brazil and Angola, along with the process of decolonisation, contributed, among other factors, to the persistence of prejudices against non-White people, specifically those of African descent, as several studies have shown (Ponte and Sousa, 2017; Abrantes and Roldão, 2019; Vala, Brito and Lopes, 2015). In a memorandum authored by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (2021, p. 1), concerns about the “increasing level of racism and the persistence of related discrimination in the country” [Portugal] were raised. Similarly, a very recent study by the European Commission (2023) shows that six in ten European respondents from the 27 European Union Member States reveal discrimination based on ethnic origin is prevalent in their country. Percentages range from 27% to 82%, with 59% of the Portuguese participants responding affirmatively. Regarding discrimination based on skin colour, percentages overall range from 22% to 78%. Portugal’s 61% sit comfortably at the upper end of this scale. In the same year, data from Portugal’s National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2023) revealed that 10.5% of all discriminatory incidents occurred within sporting contexts and that, in general, the geographical origin, ethnic group and skin colour of the people affected were the primary contributory factors. Even though manifestations of racism are now different from those during the period of colonialism (Casquilho-Martins, Belchior-Rocha and Alves, 2022), and significant advances regarding people’s rights have been made, new challenges at the national and European levels have emerged in the last decades. As far-right movements and political parties are growing in Europe, including Portugal, racist, sexist, anti-Islamic, anti-Roma, anti-Africans, anti-immigrant, anti-refugees and anti-LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex) discourses have become more explicit and louder (Council of Europe, 2023; Krzyżanowski, 2020). In Portugal, the far-right, populist political party CHEGA has gained considerable support in society, becoming the third largest political force in the Parliament since

the general elections in March 2024. Africans, immigrants, members of the LGBTI community and Roma people are singled out as threats to Portugal's national traditions, culture and identity and feature prominently in the hate speeches of prominent CHEGA members (Garcia-Jaramillo, Santos and Fernandes-Jesus, 2023).

Important legal parameters

Racism, rooted in discrimination based on 'racial' and ethnic characteristics, has multifaceted social implications (Casquilho-Martins, Belchior-Rocha and Alves, 2022). Aware of the need to eradicate racism, in 2021, the Portuguese Government (2021) launched the first National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination (2021–2025). Following the principles of deconstructing and dismantling stereotypes, coordination, integrated governance and territorialisation, combined with intervention in order to fight various, and sometimes overlapping, inequalities, the Plan defined ten areas of intervention,¹ sport being one of them. Among other measures, the Plan aims to "promote the implementation of initiatives to combat hate speech and discrimination at sports events to sports organisers" (2021, p. 134). In 2023, the Observatory on Hate Speech, Racism and Xenophobia was created to collect and disseminate information and knowledge on racism, xenophobia and discrimination (European Commission, 2024).

Besides the public policies, the Portuguese Penal Code (Official Gazzete n.º 63/1995, Decree-Law No. 48/95) punishes racism and discrimination with a prison sentence of six months to five years (article No. 240). In 2007, the Law was amended, reversing the burden of proof in crimes motivated by race, ethnicity, skin-colour, citizenship, ancestry and place of origin (Official Gazzete n.º 170/2007, Law No. 59/2007). In 2024, the Law was changed again, expanding the discrimination factors and also punishing those who founded or established an organisation or developed propaganda activities that incite or encourage discrimination, hatred or violence against a person or group of people based on their ethnic-racial origin, national or religious origin, colour, nationality, ancestry, territory of origin, language, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sexual characteristics, physical or mental disability (Official Gazzete n.º 10/2024, Serie I, 2024-01-15). The Portuguese Labour Code also establishes the Right to equality in terms of access to employment and in the workplace (Official Gazzete n.º 30/2009, Law No. 7/2009). Violations of this law can be considered minor or very serious, depending on the violation of the provisions.

Although racism is an object of criminal penalisation, figures on the prevalence of racism in Portugal do not exist, and data on racist incidents are dispersed. The Annual Report of Internal Security (ISS, 2024) indicates that in 2023 police authorities recorded 367 crimes against cultural identity and personal integrity, accounting for 0.10% of the country's total crime rate. These

categories of crimes, where racism is included, are among the least recorded, which may reflect a social devaluation of the importance of such issues.

The Authority for Preventing and Combating Violent Behaviour in Sports (APCVD) is a state-run service under the government's remit for sport, which aims to prevent and oversee violations of the legal parameters for safety and combating racism, xenophobia, and intolerance in sports events and venues (Regulatory Decree No. 10/2018).

Of the 2,525 incidents recorded throughout the 2022/23 season in Portugal's First League of Football, *Primeira Liga*, the main type of incidents reported involved possession and/or use of pyrotechnic devices, with 1,806 cases recorded (71.95%). Sixteen cases of incitement of violence, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance were recorded, contrasting with 78 that occurred in the previous season. Fifty cases led to criminal convictions of the perpetrators (The Public Security Police and the Authority for Preventing and Combating Violent Behaviour in Sports, 2023).

Investigating racism in Portuguese football: some selected data

Currently, in Portugal, as in most countries that are signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, open racism and other forms of discrimination of individuals of certain social and/or ethnic groups are subject to public prosecution. Nevertheless, violence, xenophobia and more general expressions of intolerance (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2021), in particular manifestations of discriminatory behaviour persist in several areas, with football being one of the contexts where manifestations are frequent and very pronounced.

Because of the increasing mediatisation of racist incidents involving non-White footballers and driven by the desire to understand how 'race' intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as gender and sexual orientation, the first National Study on Racism in Football in Portugal was conducted in 2021 (Neves, Topa, Borges et al., 2023).² Besides determining the frequency and characteristics of racism, through observation, and experiences of different actors, other forms of discrimination were also investigated, in particular sexism and homophobia. Moreover, mechanisms for the (often unsuccessful) resolution of racist cases, and measures to prevent and combat racism in football in Portugal, were analysed. This pioneering study employed a quantitative approach, using an online 28-question questionnaire.

The sample was recruited online and comprised 1.681 participants aged between 13 and 61 years; 456 saw themselves as women and 1.221 as men. Almost 25% of participants are football fans, 20% are coaches, 16.5% are amateur athletes, 11.7% are members of the refereeing team, 8.6% are sports managers, 5.5% are parents, 3.4% are journalists, 3% are sports agents, 2.6% are staff members, for example, doctors or working in communication,

2% are professional athletes, and 2% are other members of the technical teams.

The perception of the existence of racism in football in Portugal was referred to by 60% of the participants, mainly females, amateur athletes and younger participants, with more than 90% considering that the main victims are male athletes. Most respondents aged 40 or older (62.6%) stated that there is no racism in Portuguese football. This considerable gender-based difference might suggest that females and youth are, due to a greater awareness of social inequalities and vulnerabilities, more sensitive towards discriminatory practices, which is possibly the result of their own experiences as marginalised groups. Furthermore, they appear to be more committed to social justice, and antiracist and anti-sexist initiatives and actions, which might contribute to a more informed understanding of what factors promote the risk of being exposed to social discrimination or even oppression (Rabelo and Cortina, 2019). Amateur athletes considered football in Portugal to be racist, as they are often the primary victims. Most of those amateur and also professional athletes who reported to have suffered or witnessed racist attitudes or behaviour had been affected on multiple occasions.

Older people may recognise racism less clearly because they may have a narrower view of what constitutes racist behaviour, which is very likely influenced by the cultural and social norms of their time, in particular their upbringing and education. Women's football has less media coverage and is therefore less visible on a global scale. That also applies to Portugal. There is also less academic research undertaken into women's football (Gredin, Okholm Kryger, McCall et al., 2023; Okholm Kryger, Wang, Mehta et al., 2021). Furthermore, as media reports about racism often involved men, it is no surprise that both women and men identified male athletes as the main victims. However, it is interesting to note that although both males and females identified male athletes as the primary victims of racism, women were more likely to also recognise female athletes and other female actors, such as female coaches, and technical staff as targets. Making sense of how racism targets, affects and is recognised by different groups certainly requires a more detailed understanding of individuals' social identities, personal experiences, background and upbringing.

Those who publicly display racist attitudes and engage in discriminatory behaviour in Portuguese football are primarily individual fans and larger groups of fans such as those organised in clubs. Racism occurs predominantly during the games in the grounds. There, the football culture is characterised by an environment of tensions in which fans, for example, through their chanting regularly reproduce racial stereotypes (Cleland and Cashmore, 2016). They tend to engage in abusive conduct towards rival clubs and players, with elements of hate speech gaining popularity in the last decades (Miranda, Gouveia, Di Fátima et al., 2023). As Chovanec (2023) has pointed out "football-related racist discourse simultaneously generates and

is embedded in the broader public and private discourses about football and racism, both in the media and elsewhere” (p. 943).

Skin colour is one of the major factors triggering racist discrimination, especially among football fans, both amateur and professional athletes, and younger individuals. Among participants under 18, skin colour was cited as the primary reason for discrimination (72.3%), followed by ethnicity (53.8%), gender (46.8%), sexual orientation/gender identity (45.1%), and disability (43.9%). Similarly, in the 19- to 24-year-old age group, skin colour featured as the main factor (71.5%), followed by ethnicity and gender (both 64.9%), sexual orientation/gender identity (55.8%), and nationality (49.1%). For participants aged between 25 and 39, skin colour continued to be the primary reason for discrimination (55.5%), followed closely by sexual orientation/gender identity (53.1%), gender (52.3%), ethnicity (50.5%), and disability (43.2%). In contrast, among those aged 40 and over, sexual orientation and gender identity emerged as the most prevalent factors (43.4%), followed by gender (40.4%), ethnicity (39.3%), disability (38.1%), and skin colour (36.1%). Thus, it seems that as the age of the participants increases, skin colour as a reason for discrimination becomes less important, while sexual and gender identity becomes more prominent.

Three-quarters of the women in our study considered that gender is a key source for discrimination in football, whereas half of the men referred to skin colour. In all categories, higher percentages of women, in comparison to men, showed an awareness of discriminatory practices. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of discrimination, where ‘race’, gender and other forms of identity construction intersect and often lead to individuals’ experiences of discrimination, violence, exclusion, and, when compounded, marginalisation.

Back, Crabbe and Solomos (2001) suggested that there are seven types of racial discrimination in football. This categorisation can also be applied to the situation in Portugal as the following examples demonstrate

- In February 2024, Chiquinho, a midfielder playing for FC Famalicão, reported being subjected to racist insults during a game in Faro, Algarve. The referee interrupted the match for five minutes and the police managed to identify the racist abuser, a 53-year-old man, who was later punished and banned from entering sports venues for two years.
- In August 2023, the Brazilian Otávio (Ataide da Silva), a FC Famalicão player, criticised the referee after the game against Sporting CP for not sending off Viktor Gyökeres after a second bookable foul. That angered Sporting CP fans who subsequently inundated Otávio’s Instagram account with racist insults such as “Slave”, “Monkey”, “F***ing Black”, and “Go back to the jungle”.
- In the aftermath of the match between FC Porto and FC Famalicão in May 2023, Pepe, the captain of Porto and Portugal’s national team, filed a complaint. According to Pepe, the Argentinian midfielder Santiago Colombatto had called him a *mono* (monkey) which he considered to be a racist

insult. Pepe criticised the referee who apparently observed the incident but did not take any action. Colombatto was later acquitted, as one of his teammates testified that he had called Pepe *boludo*, idiot.

- In February 2020, Moussa Marega, then a player for FC Porto, took a stand against racism during a match against Vitória de Guimarães. Marega scored a goal and celebrated it by pointing to his skin, a gesture emphasising pride in his identity and heritage. This was in response to persistent racist abuse from the stands, which had included monkey chants and other slurs. Some fans even threw chairs and objects at him. Despite being the victim of such abuse, Marega received a yellow card. As the hostile environment intensified, Marega ultimately decided to leave the pitch, visibly frustrated by the lack of support from officials and deeply affected by the racist abuse. This incident sparked a widespread debate in Portugal about racism in football, the responsibility of referees and clubs to protect players, and the need for stronger anti-racism measures in the sport.

Taking the aforementioned exemplary incidents into consideration, it is no surprise that 73% of women identified verbal attacks such as racist insults and slurs as the most common manifestations of racism in football in Portugal, followed by psychological violence, for example, intimidation (41.2%), social violence, such as spreading malicious rumours (16.2%), physical violence including beating, kicking, punching, etc. (11.6%), and sexual violence ranging from unconsented touching to rape (4.2%). Half of the male sample (49.6%) confirmed that observation. Second in this list is psychological violence (27.9%), followed by social violence (10.8%), physical violence (6.1%) and sexual violence (1.6%).

Like other forms of discrimination and violence affecting people from socially vulnerable groups, racism is explained by the participants of our investigation as having different types of manifestations resulting in multiple forms of victimisation (DeKeseredy, Pritchard, Stoneberg et al., 2022).

Female participants in our study most frequently associated racism in football with sexual violence, highlighting their greater vulnerability to gender-based violence. Along with racist experiences, female football players, as well as coaches and referees, are more likely to be exposed to gendered micro-aggressions, and being psychologically, physically, and sexually assaulted (Drury, Stride, Fitzgerald et al., 2022; Fenton, Ahmed, Hardey et al., 2023).

There is little doubt that football remains a male-dominated sport that exhibits, celebrates, and reinforces very traditional forms of hegemonic masculinity (Glynn and Brown, 2023). This concept has been widely used, debated, and refined (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). It refers to a culturally idealised performance of manhood, in both a personal and a collective project, that reproduces male dominance over women and other men, often from minority groups. The results of our study show that participants view

sexual orientation, gender identity, and non-compliance with the principle of non-hetero-cisnormativity as significant risk factors that may trigger discrimination in football. That corroborates other studies that analysed the intersection between racism, homophobia, and sexism (Dixon, 2020).

In the last years, there have been some significant shifts in how racist and homophobic attitudes and messages are communicated and shared. Nowadays, digital contexts, specifically social media, play a substantial role as they constitute an open, easily accessible, and anonymous field for several forms of general and targeted discrimination. These range from racist and xenophobic discourses to homophobic and misogynistic narratives. Equally diverse are the ways these discriminatory dispositions are expressed. They range from subtle micro-aggressions that are frequently normalised, to humorous discourses that perversely entertain the audience and/or more sophisticated othering processes and dehumanising narratives contributing to the stigmatisation of racialised, gay, non-Christian players (Cleland, Magrath and Kian, 2018; Glynn and Brown, 2023). Due to the advance of modern information technologies and the polarisation of politics, in particular the growing popularity of far-right ideas, social networks provide ample opportunities to disseminate discriminatory sentiments and hate speech directed at individuals and groups, threatening their well-being (Cable, Kilvington and Mottershead, 2022; Kassimeris, Lawrence and Pipini, 2022). Having said this, due to its systemic matrix, racist attitudes and practices are not always conscious, neither explicit nor always visible. They manifest themselves in many diverse ways including prejudice and overt bias, stereotyping or racial profiling, but also through micro-aggressions, amongst others (Santos, Santos, Kearns et al., 2024).

Direct and/or vicarious verbal assaults, as a form of hate speech, result in several traumas. Some studies have found an association between being exposed to racist hate speech and discrimination and experiencing psychological distress among people of colour (Moody, Tobin and Erving, 2022).

Preventative strategies and measures to combat racism in football

Our study revealed a widespread consensus regarding the inadequate responses to racism within Portuguese football, with only 17.2% of the men and 13.2% of the female participants believing that the problems were tackled adequately. The participants mentioned that three main factors were responsible for the inadequacy of responses: First, the depreciation of the issue's severity, noted by 58.8% of women and 36% of men; second, the lack of reporting to relevant authorities, indicated by 33.3% of women and 20.1% of men; and finally, the continuation of a prevailing culture of racism in Portuguese society, acknowledged by 31.6% of women and 15.1% of men. The overwhelming scepticism shown by the participants highlights the systemic

barriers to effectively tackling racism, as institutional responses fail to address the roots and causes of the problem and do not provide meaningful solutions to the various forms of discrimination in the world of Portuguese football.

Nearly 13% of the female respondents and about 11% of the men considered that Portuguese laws are insufficient to handle racism in football. To prevent and combat racism in football, 70.8% and 69.3% of women and 45.4% and 45.7% of men, respectively, identified the punishment of fans and the investment in continuous education as the most effective measures. Our investigation also exposed major difficulties concerning the effective application of laws and policies aiming to eradicate racism in sports, particularly in football. Despite the existence of laws and policies addressing racism in football, participants considered that they still are insufficient or ineffective, resulting in low conviction rates.

After FIFA's "Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination" (2015) and UNESCO's "Kazan Action Plan" (2017), the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) launched a platform named "Football for All" in 2021. It aims to provide a tool for all stakeholders to report discriminatory incidents and manifestations based on 'race', ethnicity, nationality, religion, identity or sexual orientation, political and ideological beliefs, economic status or other factors.

Considering incidents of discrimination both on and off the field, football clubs often endeavour to preserve a favourable public image and tend to downplay the activities of deviant fans, for example, hooligans, and shifting the blame for such events to wider society, thereby employing a strategy to evade their accountability (Kassimeris, Lawrence and Pipini, 2022).

In addition, numerous civil society organisations, such as *SOS Racismo*, have been crucial in fieldwork, closely engaging with victims, providing active support, developing awareness campaigns, and advocating for policy reforms. So far, the fight against racism and other forms of discrimination in the world of Portuguese football has not been very successful. A concerted effort involving governmental and non-governmental organisations, local authorities, sports federations and clubs, athletes, coaches, referees, supporters' groups, the media and others is urgently needed.

Summary

Football is more than just a popular and exciting sport, as it is embedded in, and often reflects, social, cultural and political values of the host society. This chapter focused on Portugal, a country that is marked by a racist cultural heritage, with football mirroring persistent propensities to discriminate against people of colour, women, and ethnic and sexual minorities. Racist, xenophobic, sexist and homophobic chants and slogans are still common in many Portuguese stadiums. Some of these receive extensive media coverage and public condemnation.

Although the results of the aforementioned empirical study cannot be generalised, they offer interesting insights into the intersection of different axes of discrimination and the relationships between different stakeholders in the world of Portuguese football, for example, players, clubs and fans. According to our investigation, racism in football is widely perceived to be a prevalent problem that affects primarily, but not exclusively, male athletes. Individuals and organised groups of fans are the principal perpetrators, and verbal abuse, through chants and slogans, is the most frequent form of racist behaviour. Skin colour is the main trigger for racism. Therefore, non-white players as well as migrants continue to be frequent targets of racism. And yet, reports of racist incidents to police authorities and subsequent criminal convictions remain scarce in Portugal, which may reflect not only a reluctance and/or inability to identify racist practices but also legal and/or procedural challenges pursuing such charges.

Gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability also appear to be significant risk factors. Thus, alongside racism, other forms of discrimination, such as sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia, can be observed in various football settings. Members of the LGBTI community and women continue to be frequent targets, with gender, sexual orientation and gender identity overlapping with other forms of discrimination.

The EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025 urges member states to recognise and encourage diversity, fairness, and equality in sports at institutional and societal levels. These principles could constitute an ideal basis for a holistic approach and successful initiatives in Portugal to promote equal treatment and prevent and combat racism and discrimination.

It was beyond the scope of this book chapter to list, describe and evaluate the various policies, strategies, projects and initiatives that aim to fight the aforementioned discriminatory practices in Portuguese football. Instead, we prefer to offer some guiding principles that need to frame that battle in order to make it more effective. By doing this, we implicitly identify some of the weaknesses of the contemporary approaches that are obvious to knowledgeable and critical observers of Portugal's football scene.

Recommendations

Despite several but largely uncoordinated efforts made by the Portuguese government as well as non-governmental organisations to prevent and combat racism and other forms of discrimination in football, discriminatory behaviours persist and are easily identifiable within Portuguese football. Therefore, developing a holistic approach and implementing policies through grassroots initiatives that actively oppose racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia and other discriminatory practices is essential for embracing diversity. It is crucial to develop effective policies that lead to practices and, for instance promote bias-free language, and tackle subtle and blatant forms

discrimination while emphasising culturally aware leadership strategies (Cooper, Newton, Klein et al., 2020). These efforts need to be in line with, and guided by EU and other international legal and policy frameworks, that promote diversity and non-discrimination and combat hate crimes and hate speech. Furthermore, victims' rights should be fully recognised and applied, and racist acts must be effectively penalised. The fight against racism must be institutionalised in governmental agencies and coordinated with civil society organisations, and educational institutions. Ultimately, we suggest that the focus needs to be on three major dimensions: education, in general, vocational training of key stakeholders in the world of sport, and establishing a differentiated legal framework that includes a clear set of policies and, for example, introduces systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures.

With regard to education, both formal and informal strategies need to be further developed and adopted. Educational institutions, including elementary and secondary schools as well as universities, should incorporate multicultural education into their curricula to foster an appreciation for diversity, a culture of tolerance and acceptance among children from an early age (Buiskool and Giannetto, 2021). Educational programs centred on Human Rights and intersectionality approaches would be most suitable to disseminate information about the harmful consequences of racism in sports. Issues, such as structural racism, also need to be addressed as the underrepresentation of historically marginalised groups, for example, in leadership roles within football organisations offers a useful example to demonstrate what racism is and how it is manifested (Cooper, Newton, Klein et al., 2020).

Likewise, community efforts, social initiatives and activist groups like *Black Lives Matter* that promote cultural dialogue may be able to contribute through their work to a reduction of racist remarks and actions inside and outside football games (Buiskool et al., 2021).

To increase the willingness to report racist incidents to police authorities or other organisations such as APCVD or FPF, and speed up investigations of racist incidents, information on how to report such incidents should be disseminated, especially among men and people older than 40 years. Thus, building coalitions against racism in sports by encouraging fans and football clubs to adopt charters with anti-racism clauses and creating a good practice award for combating racism and racial discrimination in sports is urgent (ECRI, 2024). The establishment and dissemination of detailed codes of conduct in football, implemented from the early stages of training, via internal and external channels, may also foster a culture of solidarity among athletes and other sports stakeholders.

As part of the coaching activities for key stakeholders in the world of sport, awareness-raising campaigns regarding diversity and inclusion, concerning the destructive nature of racism, are crucial in educating athletes, fans, sports actors and members of civil society. Using social media channels could be a powerful strategy to capture the youth's attention and involve them in

preventing and combating racism and other forms of discrimination in Portuguese football.

UNESCO suggests increasing the training of athletes, coaches, referees and other technical staff on sports violence prevention, with the help of innovative technologies for presenting topics on violence and discrimination to children and adolescents, thus providing them with skills for handling incidents, in partnership and interaction with parents, should be a priority (UNESCO, 2023).

Additionally, there is an urgent need to educate the police forces on how to best handle racist events inside and outside sports stadiums in conjunction with local security staff.

Regarding the existing legal frameworks and policies, a critical review of current laws and policies is needed to ensure that these capture the increasingly complex and differentiated matrix of victims and perpetrators. For example, the likelihood of being exposed to racism or other forms of discrimination depends on various social characteristics. Recognising the links between risk factors and victimisation will underpin prevention initiatives and allow them to target the most vulnerable people. It goes without saying that any changes should be evidence-based.

Furthermore, it would be important to establish monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the effectiveness and impact of existing strategies, projects, and initiatives. A critical evaluation of the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination (2021–2025) will certainly provide insightful indicators of which measures have been more impactful than others. Education, training programs, and legal and policy measures, while considering effectiveness and impacts, could be adjusted based on such monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, existing data on racism need to be merged into a common database, so that its manifestations, characteristics, dynamics, causes and repercussions can be fully analysed to ensure that future policy making is evidence-based. Right now, we can only see the tip of the iceberg. The fact that statistical figures on racism, in general, are dispersed, makes it difficult to map the size of the phenomenon. The iceberg metaphor obviously implies that the visible part is only a small portion of the whole. The iceberg's base, much larger and unseen, represents, amongst others, systemic and structural racism, that is closely linked to power and privilege in Portuguese society. Racism in Portuguese society and football is, of course, embedded in the country's social structures. These underpin deep-rooted beliefs and practices that (re)produce oppression to people of colour (Braveman, Arkin, Proctor et al., 2022).

Notes

- 1 Governance, information and knowledge for a non-discriminatory society; Education and Culture; Higher Education; Labour and Employment; Housing; Health and Social Welfare; Justice, Security and Rights; Participation and Representation; Sport; Means of Communication and the Digital.

- 2 More details of this study can be found in Neves, S., Topa, J., Borges, J. and Silva, E. (2023) "Racism in football in Portugal: perceptions of multiple actors", *Social Sciences*, 12(3), p. 165.

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