

## Are there Opportunities for Blacks in Brazilian Sports Command? The Case of Football

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### Abstract

*Although Brazil has built vital legislation to combat racism, this paper defends the thesis that practical actions have not effectively changed the scenario in the sports field. When we look at statistical data, we find a need for social movements to transform social policies. To present our conceptions, we surveyed to identify the representativeness of the black in the head coach positions in elite clubs of the Brazilian championship of male football. We conducted research to determine how many opportunities the black coaches received between 2008 to 2017. After the survey, we selected influential black coaches and conducted in-depth interviews. Findings show that black coaches occupied only 3.41% of the opportunities offered by elite clubs. About the interviewees, their responses contrast with the perceptions that black athletes and coaches have about racism and that we find in the reviewed literature. Despite the low representativeness and obstacles to black coaches in Brazilian football, respondents emphasized that affirmative action is unnecessary.*

**Keywords:** football; exclusion; affirmative actions; racism; race

### 1. Introduction

Brazil is one of the most critical countries in football. It is also the country outside the African continent with the most prominent black population (Castles, Hein and Miller, 2014). Football carries, in its essence, one of society's most valuable representations in its positive and negative aspects (DaMatta, 2006). Racism is an old theme; however, the nuances of discrimination create new phenomena, producing echoes that deserve our attention. Studies on racism and sports in the Brazilian and international literature have gained more and more space in the academic community (Hylton, 2009; Long, Robinson and Spracklen, 2005; Pérez, 2017; Sack, Singh, and Thiel; Silva and Votre, 2006; Singer, 2005; Tonini, 2010).

Long and McNamee (2004) explore responsibility and guilt for committed and unacknowledged racism in sports, critically assessing athletes who try to rationalize it. The authors argue that many correct responses to racism are undifferentiated, depending on the lesser or greater cruelty. There must be a distinct appreciation of racism and its myriads.

Scholars, who are critical of racism, claim that a 'colorblind' racial ideology dominates the modern period of ethnic-racial relations. They argue that while individuals continue to have conventional racial views, they tend to minimize racial discourse in public to avoid stigma; the open racist dialogue became denied in society (Pérez, 2017).

Burdsey (2011) investigated the presence and effects of racial micro-aggressions in English cricket. He identified a tendency to underestimate the repercussions of racist demonstrations. An ideology preserves white groups and forces groups that suffer aggressions to endorse dominant groups' thinking. The trend of the subjugated is to underestimate racial violence, seeing it as a joke.

Bradbury (2019) and Kilvington (2020) have studied the racial disparity between representation inside and outside the field of Blacks and South Asians. Although these studies reflect an emerging concern, racism is not a new problem. We could doubt that this problem could exist since individuals in their daily activities would be very concerned with survival and the practical issues to be resolved and would not perceive the subject's discrimination (Silva, 1998).

However, although the black player makes the difference with a notorious contribution to Brazilian football, black coaches still have few opportunities (Tonini, 2010; Silva, 1998, 2002, Silva and Votre, 2006). Thus, investigating this problem and understanding how this gear works can add new insights to the discussion. Given Brazil's legal paradigms, the questions about affirmative actions and their implementation in sport are among the paths covered in this study.

The idea of individuals who are stuck to physical characteristics and find barriers in developing their professional careers, the lack of representativeness in decision-making, leadership, and management are issues that merit deepening. Affirmative actions are tools to mitigate this lack of representation.

There is the representativeness of the blacks in the position of coach in Brazilian football. Tonini (2010) proposes a study on the racial problem in modern Brazilian football from the oral histories of blacks that acted between 1970 and 2010. Silva and Queiroz Filho (2005) discussed the participation of black coaches in the 2004 Brazilian football championship when no blacks participated as the team's coach that competed that year.

Ben Carrington (2013) reviews the first 50 years of a critical sociology of race and sport and discusses C.L.R. James's book *Beyond a Boundary* (1967), the critical sociology of race and sport.

In Brazilian literature, we can consider Mario Filho's (1943[1967]) book, *The Negro in Brazilian football*, as the founding text on the ethnic-racial issue in Brazil sports. Furthermore, several authors have addressed the racial issue. We can mention, in addition to the classic Mario Filho, Helal and Gordan Jr. (1999); Murad (1999); Silva (1998); Soares (1999), among others. However, these studies discussed the ethnic-racial issue from a macro-perspective.

There is a lack of participation of the black coach in Brazilian football and the domination structures that make it difficult for blacks to enter as head coaches. The data prove that blacks find it challenging to enter the football coaches' job market (Silva, 2002).

Although we find national and international references on the representativeness of black in the head coach's position in different sports, we noticed a gap in the literature when focusing on Brazilian football. The Brazilian men's football championship series A is the competition that attracts the most significant number of sponsors, the most massive audience, and Brazil's most significant media attention. This research looked at data to understand how the participation of black coaches takes place. Unfortunately, few studies focus on this subject and not sufficient to provoke practical actions to transform this reality.

To identify the representativeness of the blacks occupying the head coach's position in the elite clubs of the Brazilian league, we listed the first question investigated: (a) How many blacks held the position of coach in the Brazilian men's football championship series A between 2008-2017?

It is necessary to reflect on the reasons that limit this individual's access to the desired position; what considerations can we collect and discuss? Therefore, to gather enough data on the subject, it is essential to answer the second question: (b) Does the black coach and journalists see racism as a barrier to professional advancement?

There are places and not places for the blacks; structurally, even under the inevitable fabric imposition of what can and cannot for these individuals (Crelieir and Silva, 2018). We emphasize that even when he obtains command position, the black coach lives under unfounded pressure, sometimes accentuated by the media's treatment. To promote the material conditions of happiness to be carried out uniformly for society, equal opportunities require actions that emphasize this goal's affirmation.

The expressions black (preto) and negro (negro) are not yet a consensus in Brazil. Historically, the term negro constitutes, for example, the "Movimento Negro do Brasil". However, there are criticisms about the term negro. In the Brazilian census, the term used is black (preto). We would also like to clarify that black people in this study include African descendants and those who call themselves blacks, despite not presenting the phenotype. However, we do not have those from Asia and their descendants.

Analyzing the representation of the black coaches in the coach's position in the Brazilian football league can collaborate to understand how this relationship between the job and the individual develops. Considering the history of Brazilian social construction and its overflow to the field of sport, it becomes imperative to think about this exclusion. Looking at the need to include the black, we started thinking about the possibility of a legislative proposal that meets the policy of affirmative action already implemented in our country and analyzing an international sports paradigm.

This study aims to identify the opportunities for blacks in Brazilian football command.

## **2. Material and methods**

We extracted the results presented in this article from a study that examines testimonies of sports journalists, black coaches, and a survey of the hiring of black coaches in the main Brazilian men's football championship. This study is descriptive, seeking to expose the phenomenon investigated from data and in-depth interviews with black coaches and journalists, with a qualitative approach.

We used the triangulation between the data collected through the bibliographic review, interviews, and survey to increase reliability. We were combining points of view, data sources, theoretical approach, or data collection methods in the same research to obtain a more accurate picture of the reality of the phenomena to be analyzed. Furthermore, participants reviewed the researcher's analysis results to confirm their interpretations reflected their experiences/ideas/feelings (Coutinho, 2008). The Institutional Ethics Committee in Brazil approved this research with CAAE 01842918.3.0000.5289 and process 3005626.

The analysis of the opportunities for black coaches in the Brazilian Championship comes from a survey conducted between seasons 2008 and 2017, which included all coaches enrolled in Brazilian men's football championship series A. The database, covering the ten seasons of football, was prepared based on the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF). We analyzed how many entry opportunities the black coaches had and how many signings were made by the clubs during the Brazilian championship for each season.

We also analyzed in-depth interviews with six journalists (four whites and two blacks) and three coaches who declared themselves black (Marques and Brito, 2018). The criteria used to choose the interviewees prioritized their importance in the Brazilian football scene. Due to the extension of the Brazilian territory, we concentrated on Rio de Janeiro, which received the largest contingent of black slaves in Brazil. We looked for black coaches who had won a prestigious competition in Brazil's main championships.

After the data collection, we pass the interpretation of the reports presented by the research subjects. In this way, we try to understand the general ideas, identifying the explicit and implicit content displayed in the interviews. We used the NVivo program to map the terms issued by respondents. With the defined rate, we observed the themes and sub-themes in the set of sentences.

### **3. Results and discussion**

#### **3.1 The presence of blacks in the head coach's position**

We investigated the black participation in the head coach's position in Brazilian men's football championship series A between 2008-2017. The data are per year of competition, with the number of opportunities given to non-black and black individuals holding the head coach's position in the clubs. Finally, it developed the percentage of occupation of this position by black and non-black individuals each year.

It turns out that the participation of black coaches is meager. The total number of entry opportunities in the position of head coach was 468 in ten years. This time-cut shows the exclusion of the blacks from these employment opportunities in the country of football; in 468 job opportunities, only 16 times was the opportunity for black coaches. The distances between blacks and non-blacks in education, the labor market, and justice, among others, result from past discrimination, from the heritage of the slave period, and an active process of prejudices and stereotypes discriminatory procedures (Bento and Beghin, 2005). Black coaches occupied only 3.41% of total opportunities, or less than 5%, while non-blacks had a chance to hold this position in 96.58% of cases.

#### **3.2 Interviews with coaches and journalists**

We analyze the data collected through in-depth interviews conducted with six journalists and three black coaches. The three coaches declared themselves blacks, and the age varied between 39 years and 57 years.

"I am black. I am not white. I grew in an environment mixed with whites and blacks walking together. I continue in this environment. I am 57 years old, and I have been in football for 34 years since I started working with football and not counting boy playing season" (Coach 1). "I am black; my childhood was in a black environment. Football allowed me to live in a mixed environment outside the family environment because I am a former football player who played football for almost 20 years of my life and had the opportunity to live with other people" (Coach 2). "I consider myself black. I live in a black environment, even because I am born and raised in a poor community. I have many black friends, and people who are color is complicated to achieve, so something in life, then that I see a football player and singer, the rest for you to get a space is tough to enter the social environment" (Coach 3).

The relationships that the interviewees built with the terms black and football emphasize the environment in which they grew, whose culture reflected specific characteristics and impacted their education. Football has created opportunities for them to live in other settings, with other people and different cultures. However, one of the speeches points to blacks' difficulties in these new environments that football has provided.

Another idea that appears refers to each one's life experience; it is the term 'years.' The argument presented in the speeches was that the years experienced in football contributed to the fact that they access new environments outside the family environment. 'My,' 'white,' and 'created' are the other three elements that appear in the interviewees' speech. 'My' is used to reinforce the terms 'black,' 'environment,' and 'football' to show their experiences and development. The word 'white' appears to make explicit perceptions that society makes distinctions between white and black environments.

Two interviewees were professional football players and obtained several titles in junior competitions while athletes, already in the professional, passed through several clubs in Brazil. Two have a higher education level with a background in Physical Education and specializations focused on football. However, of these, only one owns a football coach training course. This first moment of the interviews all emphasizing the difficulties that the blacks find in society. Regarding training, respondents reported the following:

“I have an undergraduate and a specialization in football from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). I did more than 2 or 3 courses, thereby the union, the Brazilian Association of football Coaches (ABTF), made me more specific to football” (Coach 1). “I have a degree in physical education, I have a specialization in sports training and exercise physiology; as we talked about before, I think about continuing the studies” (Coach 2). “My level of education is incomplete first degree, I did the training course, to be a coach” (Coach 3).

'Specialization,' 'football,' and 'courses' were the terms that stood out at this stage of the interviews, showing concern about the technical improvement. Two interviewees received a degree in physical education and specialization; the third held a training course for a coach. Suppose there is a lack of opportunities for black coaches. In that case, the reports indicate that it is not for lack of theoretical-practical knowledge, given the experience acquired as athletes and, later, with the continuation in the studies. The literature discusses the absence of blacks in the position of a football coach in elite clubs. One of the parameters for hiring these professionals is the sieve of the clubs' leaders.

When asked about the low representativeness of black individuals occupying the head coach's position in elite clubs, and if this phenomenon had any relation to racism, prejudice, and a need to implement affirmative action that could somehow modify the current situation, responses were as follows:

“I worked with some black coaches, maybe eight or ten. I know many, I do not believe that I should have this need for quotas. I think one runs behind to study, seek to specialize, and arrange their opportunities as to the difficulty of hiring the guy to be black. Although we see that you count on the finger in Brazilian elite football, I do not believe much. I think there are one or two, not much more than that. I do not know to tell you why I never stopped to think about this subject. I think it's a matter of fact understood. I think it's all a matter of a sudden, and the staff opts for other things. Suddenly they've experienced something inside the football, and they prefer not to take chances in this area; they go to the other side. Many of us see great players with proper training and have up to a leadership profile because football coaches choose to work in another function managing, coordinating as a manager, and not deepening in a coaching career. I think we have made good progress; because the country is very open. We have observed the arrival of Africans to Brazil. Unlike other countries where there is even some resistance here, people receive great tranquility, with high receptivity, here we do not see it” (Coach 1).

“I have worked with some head coaches, but there have been few, very few coaches and black leaders, but what I see, what I perceive is that generally the black who is ex-athlete and works with football he helps a lot behind the scenes, in the training of an athlete. It helps a lot to give the activity because you had that practical experience, but the representative figure thereof the main one is not one of the black ones. If you notice, in the base category of all Brazil, former black athletes work but are not the central figure of the special commission; they are always there doing an important part but still there. I think a lot that the opportunities have to be for all of the same forms. I'm afraid I have to disagree with a quota for merely being black. Because today the country has already evolved. Some blacks live in a social class who can study. So, I think this question of quotas must be egalitarian; what instrument improves our access to education? There you will say that I am contradictory. Still, no, I think it has to start from own black desire to seek, to study, to graduate, to improve their training but that people would accept you more if you go if I have the same training as another teacher, is another coach, yes they will choose another coach. The question is not just the quota; the issue is training and how the country will give you the opportunity and see you. The big problem is that if more black leaders, more black coaches, would increase the range of opportunity for us, as long as we do not have to go looking, we can not let go of that” (Coach 2).



“I think it is difficult to change this in Brazil because it is an extreme resistance. We see Andrade, who was champion for Flamengo now a short time and has no space in Brazilian football. So, I quoted Andrade because it is recent; there are many others there like Lula Pereira. I already saw that I suffered racism, too, understood, but changing this in Brazil is very difficult, very difficult indeed. I think it is very wrong to have a quota of black to study, so it had to be a natural thing. I do not think I should have no laws even because we are all the same” (Coach 3).

Coaches show us that they are aware of the low representativeness of black individuals occupying positions head coach in elite clubs. In the base categories, there are many black coaches. However, when they go to the main level, the situation changes. In the speeches, former qualified black athletes opt to take up other positions behind the scenes. However, there is also recognition of the inequality of opportunities when the Coach points out that if there are a black coach and others with similar resumes, the black coach will probably lose. The imaginary is that black has to be twice as good to get the job. We have found that black individuals' occupation of leadership positions is a factor that could substantially increase the entry of black individuals into coach positions. We hardly see blacks in high-ranking posts in companies, we rarely see the black individual as hired, and thus, we seldom see these individuals hired to take positions of decision-making.

The reports confirm some studies conducted in Europe and Australian society. The Branbury (2013) study examined the extent and ways to which institutional racism practices have disproportionately impacted limiting access by minorities. The 'practices of institutional racism are underpinned by patterns of white hegemonic privilege embedded within the pre-existing core structures of decision-making bodies at the highest levels of football.' Maynard (2009) discussed aboriginal under-representation in Australian football. A combination involves a racist government policy, which restricts the movement of Aboriginal people, which creates barriers to access to football, as the distance from indigenous reserves in many cases prevents the approach of football in good places.

Therefore, this social hierarchy overflows to the sports institutions, lowering the opportunities, placing the black who opts for the profession of coach on the margins of the market. One Coach alluded to coach Andrade, Brazilian champion in 2009, by the Clube de Regatas Flamengo, including receiving a prize of best coach of that year, and that later had no more space, even with the merits of the national conquest. Lula Pereira, another recognized coach and winner of the national championship, did not have great opportunities in the elite of Brazilian football.

Despite the Coaches' recognition of the low representativeness and obstacles presented, highlighting the race issue for the lack of opportunities, all were emphatic that they do not see the need to implement affirmative action. They emphasize that they do not think it right to have quotas so that the black individual can occupy the position of a professional football coach in the clubs of the Brazilian elite.

Maguire (1988) already pointed out that blacks suffer explicit and implicit discrimination and, in a way, he contested that football was a means of access to mobility for blacks.

Recognizing to some extent the disadvantage of blacks in the opportunities offered to this position, they also acknowledge the need for blacks' academic training. There is a low representation that occurs due to ethnic-racial questions answering the second question investigated. However, do not recognize that affirmative actions are necessary to rebalance the offer of opportunities for the blacks to occupy the position of coach in the elite clubs of Brazilian football.

The complexity of the ethnic-racial question does not only inhabit the Brazilian scene. The need to move away from on/off conceptions led Long and McNamee to seek a way to distinguish between inexcusable racist behavior and as excusable. The reports collected from three football coaches in Brazil reflect that hiring black coaches is ethically excusable and would not require actions to mitigate the problem.

Despite recognizing the low representativeness and the obstacles to the black ones to occupy the head coach position in Brazilian football, they emphasized that they do not see the necessity to implement affirmative actions. The findings in the interviewed coaches' speeches contrast with the perceptions of black athletes and coaches found in the researched literature. Numerous football professionals in Brazil and abroad reported forethought, neglect, and racist character behind the scenes (Abreu and Silva, 2016; Bradbury, 2013, 2019; Burdsey, 2011; Silva, 1998, 2002; Tonini, 2010).

We must remember the Rooney Rule adopted by football to increase the participation of ethnic minority individuals in the United States as coaches in the National Football League (NFL) teams (Solow, Solow and Walker, 2001). Therefore, pondering and discussing the possibility of implementing affirmative actions along the lines of the NFL Rooney Rule and those already existing in Brazilian law is justified.

The issue was widely debated in the United States, as Duru (2008) emphasized, until the implementation of Rooney Rule, recalling that this was a social agenda that led the NFL, after analyzing the data, to realize the need to promote equality through of institutional regulation. The same demand was brought to the UK, as there is also the same phenomenon, the same *modus operandi*. As a result, the English Football Association, in 2018, adopted the Rooney Rule to choose England's new coach and implement it in the Premier League (Corapi, 2012).

However, according to white players, coaches, leaders, it is common to see black people's claims rejected because they are super sensitive to race. Some white rugby and cricket players acknowledged the legitimacy of these complaints. Still, there was no such recognition among football respondents, despite reports from black players recognizing these complaints' legitimacy. However, there was no such recognition among football respondents, despite reports from black players. The argument is that everything is part of the game. Statements from white coaches Luiz Felipe Scolari (Felipão) and the player Dunga suggest that this discussion is silly. Abreu and Silva (2016) shows the speech of Felipão and Dunga given to the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*. To them, these cases of racism are stupid, and we should not even discuss this. Dunga, a white player, during the *Copa América* of 2015, treats the racial issue as something commonplace, which is part of the game, and says: 'I even think I'm afro-descendant because I picked up and I like to catch.' Dunga is white, "gaúcho", of European origin. His speech reflects the representation he has of the blacks: black likes to catch. Although the discourse on ethnic-racial issues is dominated by a colorblind racial ideology, since open dialogue on racism issues has been denied in public, in many cases, it arises through jokes, humor, bullying as in the reports of Felipão and Dunga (Burdsey, 2011).

We could say that Felipão and Dunga are not malicious and do not have a typically racist character. However, their speeches reflect racism incarnated in the imaginary. There is a positive side to their lines: by stating that one should not debate racism or ridicule the discussion, they challenge and subverting dominant racial meanings. However, one can not neglect or minimize the negative aspects since racism is not an extreme and marginal incident on the periphery of football. It is, in fact, a contumacious process of daily life and reproduces surreptitiously in society.

The interviewees' reports indicate that blacks tend to opt for less prestigious or behind-the-scenes activities since the difficulty of reaching higher posts is considerable (Silva, 2002, Silva and Votre, 2006). However, we would like to disagree with that. The three coaches interviewed make up a sporadic group of black coaches who have gained space in the select Brazilian football scene. In this case, and similar issues in Brazilian society, very successful blacks start to reproduce a racist stereotype in the social imagination that embodies the idea that the successful black is a black with a white soul.

In the Brazilian literature of football, we have a classic book written by Mario Filho (1943 [1967]); in a passage, the author speaks one of the few black players in the history of the Fluminense Football Club, a club of the Brazilian elite. This player, named Robson, was once in an automobile with a white friend driving the vehicle. The friend had to break a sharply black couple crossed the street in front of the car. The friend shouted, "dirty, filthy blacks." Robson, a black individual, trying to calm his friend, said this pearl: "I was once black, and I know what this."

The coaches' speech maintains that there is no need for affirmative policies to reduce inequality of access in Brazilian football. In this way, the possible black leaders in Brazilian football seem to reproduce the popular adage that blacks can only ascend if he ceases to be black; this greatly hinders the social movements needed to achieve social justice. The interviewees' discourse has the idea of meritocracy, personal effort, individualism, that is, a white, right-wing, and discriminatory ideology.

Studies have demonstrated the need for an intersectional perspective on ethnic-racial relations in sport. The issues already at stake require complex thinking to analyze the processes of exclusion and inclusion in sport. The notion of meritocracy is one of the targets to be questioned. "In a racially structured arena, such as sports coaching, whiteness is often left unremarked for those racially privileged" (Rankin-Wright, Hylton and Norman, 2019: 13). What surprised us was the interviewees' lack of perception of the whiteness in sport management positions.

Bradbury's contribution is vital to implementing affirmative action measures, such as goal setting, cooperation, and quotas. For this author, these actions would significantly help "open" access to suitably qualified qualifications, encouraging federations to follow suit (Bradbury, 2013). However, we disagree with "it is much easier to break a glass ceiling by stamping from top to bottom than to drill from below." We think that there is no social justice without social movement. We mean that the glass ceiling does not will be broken from top to bottom if there is no active participation by those under the glass.

In addition to the three coaches, we interviewed six journalists who work on Brazil's leading radio and television networks. The majority view is that there is systemic racism. For example, one of the journalists says:

"The difference in treatment in the appreciation of the black player and the white player is automatic. The saga of the black in Brazil did not end on May 13, 1888; it continued and still. We are no different than North Americans. North Americans have racial prejudice. Here we fight against that prejudice, but it exists. There is, beyond any doubt. I also notice that there is an inferiority complex." (Journalist 1)

Another journalist claims that the process of exclusion of blacks from society is historical. When they were released, they were thrown on the street, without housing, without money, without any rights. Then the government of Brazil stimulated the arrival of Europeans, granting them land and incentives. This journalist said, exemplifying with the 1958 World Cup:

"When we went to the World Cup, there was a severe problem. They said that Brasil was cowed because there were blacks in the team, which was a race that had an inferiority complex. There was, for example, a preference for the player De Sordi, who was white and with an Italian name. Djalma Santos was black and played ten times more than De Sordi, but they made De Sordi the starter. However, in the final game, De Sordi was injured and had to climb Djalma Santos. With a single game, the organization elected Djalma the best side of the World Cup" (Journalist 2).

"I think that there is still an undeclared racism, but it's well clear. It's well clear because if the most of the soccer professionals, inside the field, the most part of them is composed by blacks, in last, why nearly none of them are in command?" (Journalist 3).

Journalist 4 reinforces the previous testimonies. However, when he recognizes the small number of black trainers, he forgets the name of one of them working at Flamengo.

"I think, this issue of soccer coaches, for example, you see that there is something wrong, as a large number of soccer players are black. Then, you have the segment of coaches for who there are a lot of ex-football players. Then, among football coaches, you don't see almost black people in the first level. In Brazil, for example, there is this one from Flamengo .... (long pause). The name has eluded me now". (Journalist 4).

One of the journalists confirms: "It is evident that there is racism; there is systemic racism today, but I think it breaks when black people are successful" (Journalist 5).

We asked journalist 6 about social policies and social movements; the population's participation in the transforming structural racism in Brazil.

"No, it will start from the outside. Historically it is so. In Brazil, the abolition of slavery took place only with pressure from outside because England made tremendous pressure. How could it fight with Brazil when it industrialized and Brazil had slave labor. It was evident that in Brazil, everything was cheaper. Brazil was the last country to abolish slavery; it was only due to external pressure. You have slaves there, and we don't, but we pay to have our things, our product is more expensive. I don't know these things there. The oligarchy of the cane planters is maintained by ignorance. The people do not claim their labor rights, the workload, food, health care, education, and do not complain because they do not know the people do not read." (Journalist 6).

Sport and, in this study, football is like sounding boards for social problems, asymmetries, injustice. In many scenarios, football exposes serious conflicts noticed. It is both a place of resistance and oppression. We are on the side of those who advocate football as a space for social emancipation. Thus, searching for ways to reduce inequalities and social justice necessarily involves football (Long, Fletcher, and Watson, 2017).

#### **4. Conclusion**

This paper aimed to identify the **opportunities for blacks in Brazilian football command**. The time cut for this identification was from 2008 to 2017. In this period, we found that black individuals never occupied more than 7.8% of the opportunities offered, since the year in which black individuals held more opportunities was 2016, with four (7.8%) of the opportunities out of 51. However, even though the 2009 Brazilian championship was won by a team headed by a black head coach, Andrade, in 2010, no other black individual had the opportunity of the 55 offered. The most typical case is that of Andrade himself, who, even the Brazilian champions of 2009, never again had a chance in clubs of the elite of the Brazilian championship, putting in doubt the meritocracy and its system.

Can be raised many arguments in this case since his identification with Flamengo, his difficulty in diction, or even lack of openness with other clubs' leaders. However, the fact is that Andrade is black with a spectacular curriculum. We can see that his professional, economic and personal progress curtailed due to invisible, veiled, and undeviating barriers to opportunities given to non-black individuals with less relevant curricula, as happens with so many other black individuals in society at large. This identification of representativity also brought the information that the black who had the most opportunity was Cristóvão Borges, who worked as a professional in six chances, having held the position in 2011/2012 in Vasco da Gama, 2013 in Bahia, 2014 in Fluminense, 2015 in Flamengo and 2016 in Corinthians. One noted that the Flamengo team gave the most opportunities to black individuals in this time, five, Andrade in 2009, Jayme de Almeida in 2013/2014/2015, and finally, in 2015 Cristóvão Borges.

The NFL's Rooney rule has proven results; after the implementation of the practice in the NFL, there was an increase of more than 100% in the participation of black coaches. The English Football Federation discusses implementing the same rule in Breton football, including having applied in the national team; thus, two great sports powers recognize the necessity of the law.

During this study, a lot happened. However, we undertook to answer the questions of the investigation proposed. Thus, we identified that the black coaches occupied only 3.41% of the total of opportunities, less than 5%, while non-blacks had a chance to hold this position in 96.58% of cases.

Two of the three coaches recognize that ethnic-racial barriers hinder their professional development, including explicit and veiled racism. The discrimination in Brazil often occurs in a veiled way.

Contrary to the arguments put forward by the Brazilian leaders, the NFL, when perceiving that this happened in their sport, used affirmative action to guarantee equal opportunities. According to Long and McNamee's contribution, we intended to discuss aspects of excusable and inexcusable racism in this study. However, we cannot see the level issue because even discrimination that could be considered justifiable brings about more significant problems as this idea could convey a misperception. Every human being acts and makes decisions, even when he omits himself. Therefore, we cannot believe that a person can have excusable racist behavior. All racism is inexcusable.

In Brazil, in the legal-social sphere, affirmative actions are used to equal opportunities between races. The most famous is the quota laws for entering the public university and entering public office. However, there is no instrument to mitigate this imbalance in Brazilian sport, which, in our view, helps maintain the status quo. Thus, the difficulties encountered by black individuals in their ascension to the desired position will continue to exist and demand better professional training, great resignation, and resilience.

The position taken by the authors of this study is that there is a need for affirmative action for Brazilian football. However, these actions cannot come from the top down. Black coaches need to implement spaces of consensus for proposals to be sent to the National Congress. The time has passed for Brazil's policies, such as those that resulted in Rooney Rule, but this will not be effective without the active participation of black coaches.

This study finds that the perceptions of black coaches about affirmative actions do not follow the perceptions of the interviewed journalists. The consulted literature also goes in the opposite direction of coaches. Why do the coaches not accept the idea of affirmative actions? What reasons influence these coaches to reproduce the dominant ideology?

One of the limitations of this study is that it does not aim to seek explanations. The study is limited to describing collected data. Another limitation was to interview only successful coaches in their careers, in addition to the low number of coaches interviewed. Nevertheless, these limitations only impel us to continue studying the opportunities and constraints for black coaches.

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**Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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