

****Is the English Premier League truly ‘post-racial’?**

Chapter. Lawrence, S. (2017). A Critical Race Theory analysis of the English Premier League: Confronting the declining significance of race and racism myth. In R. Elliott (Ed.). *The English Premier League A Socio-Cultural Analysis* (pp. 133-149). Routledge

Link: [\(99+\) A Critical Race Theory analysis of the English Premier League: Confronting the declining significance of ‘race’ and racism myth](#)

Aim. This research questions the belief amongst some that the English Premier League (EPL) is a beacon of racial equality, despite the large number of Black players. It challenges the idea that football is ‘post-racial’ and argues that racism continues to exist, not necessarily through overt acts, but through more subtle and ingrained systemic issues. The study also investigates whether the English Premier League (EPL) operates as a true meritocracy, where success is based solely on skill and effort.

Methods & Theory. The research uses a framework called Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is a way of understanding how racism isn’t just about individual prejudice, but is built into the very structures of society and institutions. It prioritizes the lived experiences of people of color and examines how power dynamics maintain racial inequalities. The researchers analyzed the EPL through this lens, looking at things like the lack of Black managers and British South Asian players, and how incidents of racism are handled. Existing research is reviewed as well as news reports and examples of racial disparities within the league.

Key findings. The study found that while blatant racism like racist chanting has decreased, more subtle forms of racial bias are still present in the EPL. These include unconscious biases in hiring decisions, a lack of diversity in leadership roles, and a tendency to minimize or excuse racist behavior. The EPL is not a true meritocracy; the historical advantages given to White individuals and the ongoing barriers faced by people of color mean that opportunities aren’t equally available. Simply celebrating the presence of Black players on the field doesn’t address these deeper, systemic problems. Current ‘color-blind’ or ‘anti-racist’ approaches, which ignore race, are insufficient. The research suggests that tackling these issues requires directly addressing issues of privilege and actively working to dismantle systemic inequalities.

Limitations. The study focuses specifically on the English Premier League, and the findings may not be directly applicable to other football leagues or sports. The analysis relies on existing data and interpretations of events, and doesn’t include new data collection.